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1. Sports and Spirituality

Date: 14 January 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi, Sports Meet

What greater misfortune can there be Than the failure of Bharatiyas To understand the true greatness Of their ancient and sacred culture? To cavil at others' faults And to be blind to one's own; To jeer at others' looks, Not noticing one's own ugliness; To make fun of others

And not see one's own follies; To have such qualities from birth Can there be a greater sin than this? STUDENTS, boys and girls, and teachers, embodiments of love! The observance of morality in daily life, the divinisation of all actions and thoughts related to life, and adherence to ideals together constitute culture. Students today do not make the requisite efforts to understand the sacredness and value of this culture. Samskrit, Samskriti, Samskara are all terms which have been derived from the roots, Sam and Krit. Bharatiya Samskriti (culture) is a composite of purity, divinity, sublimity and beauty. This combination is reflected in sports and games.

Sports help players experience joy

Although there may be differences among nations in their food and recreational habits, the spirit of harmony and unity displayed in sports is a gratifying example to all. It is a distinctive quality of sports that differences are forgotten and persons engage themselves in games in a divine spirit of friendliness and comradery. Sports help the players not only to improve their health but also to experience joy.

Students, however, should not be content with realising these benefits. Man has another body besides the physical. It is the subtle body, otherwise known as the mind. It is equally essential to promote purity of the mind and develop large heartedness. True humanness blossoms only when the body, the mind and the spirit are developed harmoniously. The enthusiasm and effort which you display in sports should also be manifested in the spheres of morality and

spirituality. You must endeavour to experience the divinity that permeates Bharat's sacred culture.

Bharatiya culture is not a product of narrow-minded ideas and ideals. It is filled with profound, sublime and ennobling ideas. "Loka samasthas-sukhino bhavanthu!" (May all the people be happy) is the benedictory motto of Bharat. There is a prayer in the Purusha Sukta which students recite regularly, but they do not understand its full meaning. "Sahabavavathu; sahanau bhunakthu; sahaviryam karavavahai." What is the inner meaning of this mantra? "Let us grow together in harmony; let us move about in friendliness; let us spread together the light that we have gained from our studies. Let us live in harmony without discord. Let us promote in harmony the use of our talents and skills." This is the profound inner meaning of this Vedic hymn. No other language can stand comparison with Sanskrit in its sweetness or range of expression. The sages prayed for the happiness and well-being of every one on earth. "Sarve bhadrani pasyanthu" (May all see only what is auspicious). Such were the benedictions pronounced in the Sanskrit language.

Glory of Sanskrit, mother of languages

Many European languages have a large number of words which are derived from Sanskrit roots. Words like mother, father, brother, etc., in English are derived from Latin words which are themselves derived from Sanskrit words like, Pitru, Mathru and Brathru. Thus English is like a grand-daughter, while Latin is a daughter and Sanskrit is the mother of languages. Sanskrit enjoys this privilege of being the ancient mother of many languages. A great French scholar, Louis Renou, spent many years in India studying the Sanskrit language. On the eve of returning to his native country, he was given a big farewell party by many teachers and students. At that gathering Louis Renou was full of tears, feeling sad at having to leave India. Controlling himself, he said he was feeling extremely sad to leave India. "Indians are treating the immortal Sanskrit language as a 'dead' language. Educational institutions and students are not making adequate efforts to study Sanskrit. Having this immortal language with them, they are not making any effort to enjoy its glories. There can be no greater misfortune than this," he lamented.

Max Mueller was another savant who explored the greatness of Sanskrit. He traced the Sanskrit origin of many English words. After completing a study of the Rig Veda, he inscribed an introduction to his work in Sanskrit in which he described himself as a native of Germany who had received his education at Oxford University. He coined Sanskrit equivalents for Germany and Oxford ("Sarmany" and "Gothirthapura") and Sanskritised his own name as Mokshamula Bhat. When great foreign scholars and savants show so much regard and esteem for Sanskrit, it is regrettable that Indians do not have the same regard for this great language.

Bharatiya culture is based on Sanskrit

Bharat's entire culture is based on Sanskrit. Culture means that which sanctifies the world, which enhances the greatness and glory of a country and which helps to raise the individual and society to a higher level of existence. Culture contributes to the refinement of life. The process of refinement or transformation is essential for improving the utility of any object. For instance, paddy has to be milled and the husk has to be removed before the rice is fit for cooking. This is the process known as Samskriti or transformation. This means getting rid of the unwanted elements and securing the desirable elements. With regard to men, Samskriti (culture) means getting rid of bad qualities and cultivating virtues. The cultured person is one who has developed good thoughts and good conduct. In Sanskrit, the term Atma refers to the Self ("I") and "mine". Where the "I" and "mine" are present strong attachment develops. This is described as Atmabhimanam (attachment to the self). Even in relation to trivial matters, when there is mention of "I", the person concerned places his hand on his heart. This shows that the self ("I") that is referred to is not the body but the spirit. When a person declares, "Whatever the disaster, whatever the trouble I may be confronted with, I am not afraid," he reveals his confidence in his Atma (Self) which is the basis for his fortitude.

Maintain comradeship in every action

Unfortunately, nowadays it is attachment to the body that is cherished, with

the result that one's outlook becomes narrow and limited. It should be recognised that the Atma (the indwelling Spirit) is one and the same in all beings. You have to develop this spirit of oneness and equality. Then the divinity in you will be manifested and your human nature will get sanctified and divinised. In every action, you should be comradely and cooperative. Today such a spirit prevails in the sphere of sport, although occasionally there are deviations from it. In the beginning, sports and athletics were intended mainly to promote health and experience joy. Today these objectives are being forgotten. Everything is being commercialised. Self-interest is getting predominant. Consequently, peace and happiness are being lost. If a person is invited to sing, he asks: "How much will you give me?" In cricket and tennis matches today lakhs of rupees are involved. When sports become a kind of business, there is no room for human values and peace becomes a casualty. It is essential, therefore, that the sense of spiritual oneness should prevail, transcending differences of nationality, language and religion. Only thus can real bliss be experienced.

Teachers role in encouraging the students

During the past five days, our boys and girls have been engaged in games and athletics with enthusiasm and vigour. The teachers should also attend these events to sustain the enthusiasm of the students. Teachers should not confine themselves only to their classrooms. In the Anantapur campus the teachers have given great encouragement to the students in their sports and games programmes. In the Brindavan campus also the teachers have actively promoted the students' preparations. Above all, in the Primary School at Prashanthi Nilayam the teachers have worked hard to train the children in various games so that they could present a delightful programme at the Sports Festival. The teachers laboured all night to stitch the dresses and other materials for the programme. It was because of their efforts that 700 small children could put up such an impressive show. All credit goes to the 45 teachers who are rendering dedicated service without any salaries.

In the years ahead, it is the responsibility of teachers to train the students to become ideal citizens of Bharat. In the Prashanthi Nilayam campus we have

Dr. Sunder Iyer, who practised day and night himself and also trained a number of students to perform a variety of gymnastic feats. It was because of his enthusiasm and encouragement that so many students in the Prashanthi Nilayam campus could win so many prizes in the various events. His own performance was astonishing. There are many other professors and senior students like Dr. Sunder Iyer. They should also take active interest in games and sports. The teachers have a great responsibility not only to encourage the students participation in sports but also to promote in them the qualities of good citizenship. Students by themselves are very good. They have plenty of energy and enthusiasm. What they lack are an adequate number of teachers to enthuse them and encourage them. The students should be given proper guidance and encouragement. If these are provided, our students can develop into exemplary models for the whole world. There is no doubt about this.

Aim of Sai Education

Even in their classes many students achieve "O" grade in their subjects (This means securing 90 percent marks in the examination.) That students getting "O" grade have taken part in the sports events testifies to their all round abilities. These talents are not given to them by their professors. They have been developed by the students own intense efforts. The basic reason for all this is their devotion and love for Swami. All of them have come here for the sake of Swami and not for the sake of any specific learning. If for such students, the teachers can also serve as helpful guides, how much can be accomplished!

Education should develop right understanding

To give another example, the children of the Primary School, who conduct themselves with so much humility, discipline and goodness in the primary classes, lose some of these qualities when they go up to the Secondary School. When they go to college, almost everything is gone! What is the reason for this phenomenon? It is the teachers who account for their discipline and good behaviour in the Primary School. In the higher classes,

what is done, by way of precept and example, to promote character and spirituality among the students? Unless spirituality and morality are promoted among the students, what purpose will be served by running these colleges? There are any number of colleges in the world. Here you have to impart the sacred precepts of our culture to the students. Along with this, academic subjects have to be taught. Education is for developing right understanding. Work is for earning a living. Today education is sought for getting a job. This is not proper. Students should imbibe culture along with academic knowledge.

It is only when teachers understand the basic purpose of our educational institutions will they be able to make a success of them. If a student goes astray, he alone is affected. But if a teacher is bad, hundreds of students will be spoilt. Of all the professions in the world, that of the teacher is most estimable. The teacher has to teach the students what is good and ennobling for them. This is the true relationship between teachers and students. This is what should be developed in our educational institutions.

Let me tell you that Swami alone knows what efforts were made by the Primary School teachers to prepare the children for the sports programmes. They worked all night for several days to prepare the dresses and other materials for the display. All this was done with no masculine help. Even in the Brindavan campus, to get the appropriate outfit for the international dances to be presented by the students, one student went to Indonesia to get the right headgear for the participants. They themselves prepared all their costumes. This shows the degree of their enthusiasm. It is the duty of teachers to foster such enthusiasm and initiative shown by the students.

In appreciation of the special efforts made by the teachers and students of the Primary School and the Brindavan campus, I am presenting special cups as a token of my love.

The Universe is an instrument to reveal the majesty of God. The inner firmament in the heart of man is also equally a revelation of His Glory. He is

the Breath of one's breath. Since he has no specific form, He cannot be indicated by words. Nor can His mystery be penetrated by the other senses. He is beyond the reach of asceticism, beyond the bounds of Vedic rituals.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. Devotion in action

Date: 08 February 1990 / Location: Chennai

EVEN though it is said that in Kali Age even mere reciting the name of the Lord is enough for realising God, without active service, the Divine Namasmarana alone is not enough. Everyone should combine Namasmarana with dedicated service to the Divine in one form or another. Hanuman is the Supreme exemplar of devotion based on service. The Supreme, who is the embodiment of Ashtaiswarya (the eight forms of Divine wealth), permeates the cosmos through eight potencies. This vast universe of animate and inanimate objects is called Viswam. Viswam is the epithet applied to the Divine who enters into every part of the cosmos. "Viswam Vishnu Swaroopam" (The cosmos is the manifestation of Vishnu). Vishnu means the One who pervades everything. Vishnu is the Cause, Viswam (the cosmos) is the effect. The universe is manifestation of the creator and the creation. It is because the Lord is manifest in the Creator-Creation relationship that we are able to recognise the Divine.

Different forms of manifestations of Divine

In the cosmos, the first manifestation of the Divine is as water. Man cannot live without water. Water is present everywhere, though in some places it will be visible on the surface and below the ground in others. The Divine is protecting all living beings in the form of water. Water is known by another name as Jivanam (Life). God is making His presence manifest in the world in the form of water.

The second manifestation is Agni (fire). It is on account of fire that everything is illumined and can be perceived. The same fire is present in man as the jataragni (digestive fire). It is this fire that enables the conversion of the food one consumes into blood, flesh, bone and other things (seven basic constituents) and sustains the body. Without these seven primary constituents life cannot exist for a moment. For all of them, God in the form of fire is the basis. The third manifestation is the earth. All living beings flourish

on the earth. Birth and death go on the earth. The phenomena of birth, growth and death testify to the manifestation of God in the form of the earth. Man secures all the things needed for living from the earth. Hence the earth must be regarded as a manifestation of God. As God cannot be experienced in any specific form, He must be recognised in manifestations like the earth. The fourth manifestation is air. Every moment we are engaged in breathing air. We are sustained by the oxygen in the air. Man inhales and exhales air 21,600 times a day in 24 hours. While inhaling, the sound "So" is produced. In exhaling, the sound "Ham" is produced. Together, they make up the term "So-ham", meaning "He is I", proclaiming the inherent divinity of man. God is to be recognised in the process of inhaling and exhaling. That being so, what is the need to go in quest of God elsewhere? When the Divine is within us and present in the form of the pancha bhutas (five basic elements), men strive to search for God everywhere else.

The cosmos is rifled with sound vibrations

When the Lord is present everywhere, within and outside you, why go in search of Him anywhere? In this context, the question arises 'Is it true that devotees are going in search of God or is God searching for devotees? In my view, it is God who is searching for devotees. Akasa (space) is the fifth manifestation. The distinctive quality of Akasa is sabda (sound). The cosmos is filled with sound vibrations. Sound is the means of cognising most things in the world. The entire cosmos is permeated by sound waves. Creation itself has originated from sound. When man inhales air, it is this sound that emanates from him in the form of So-Ham - Ham-So. Where is this Akasa? People imagine it is somewhere high up. Only the clouds are above. Wherever you have sound vibrations, you have Akasa (space). When I speak, it is Akasa. When you strike this table, you can experience Akasa. Akasa is present in the clapping of hands during the bhajan. Akasa is present in the process of breathing. It is because of Akasa that living is possible.

The Sun, the Earth and the Moon

The sixth is the Sun. All living beings are able to survive because of the Sun.

Birds, beasts, trees and crops, all thrive on the energy got from the Sun. The world will cease to exist without the Sun. Human intelligence is a reflection of the effulgence of the Sun. The enquiring nature of the intellect is derived from the Sun. Without the power of discrimination man will be a moron. The Moon comes seventh. The moon principle confers tranquillity on man. The mind is reflection of the moon. Man's primary goal is to secure peace of mind. The earth came from the Sun and moon from the earth. The Sun, the earth and the moon are forms of the same substance. These three find their expressions in man in the form of mind, intellect and Vijnana (consciousness).

The eighth element is the authority of the Veda (Veda-pramanam). The Vedas proclaim the eternal Truth. There is the saying: There is no greater Dharma than Truth. God, who is embodiment of Truth, though eternal and formless, manifests Himself in the eight forms in the cosmos. When the Divine is recognised in these forms, man will realise his true nature.

It is naive to try to search for God in any particular place. Man is himself the cause of all his sorrows and difficulties because, forgetting his inherent divinity, he regards the body as real and pursues mundane and physical pleasures. Man forgets that it is the Spirit that activates all his senses. When a fan turns or a bulb burns, it is the current that makes them work. When a car is driven, the engine revolves and the horn works because of the current from the battery. Likewise, for the car of the human body, the eyes are the lights, speech is the horn and all sense organs function because of the current from the Atma (the Spirit). The Atma is the unified form of three constituents: Mind, Intellect and Samskara (sacred actions). If anyone is asked, "What is the mind?" the answer comes: "It doesn't matter." When one is asked, "What is matter?" the reply is "Don't mind." If people are not concerned to know what is mind and what is matter, what is it that concerns them in this world? Without understanding mind and matter, how can one enquire into anything?

Mind is the cause of bondage

In the life of man, the mind, which is continually engaged in thought, is most important. All sorrows arise because of the failure to understand the workings

of the mind. The mind is constantly engaged in thinking. This important function of the mind must be properly understood. The mind is not a mere physical entity. It is not the body but an expression of the enquiring quality of the Atma (Spirit). Hence it is that the mind is regarded as the cause of bondage or liberation for man. If the mind is turned towards God, it becomes the means of liberation. When it is turned towards the things of the world, it becomes the means of bondage. The Godward mind results in detachment. The world-directed mind leads to attachment. Hence, turning the mind towards God must be man's primary aim. The powers of the mind are indescribable. The speed of thought is greater than that of anything in the world, faster than light or wind. Though endowed with this immense power, it is a pity man considers himself a weakling. There is no connection between the mind and the heart. The heart is doubtless a vital physical organ in the body. It is the supplier of blood to every part of the body. But the mind manifests the Atmasakti (power of the Spirit).

Difference between Medha Sakti and Buddhi

The second constituent is Buddhi (intellect). Buddhi is generally regarded as the Medha-sakti (power of intelligence). This is not correct. It is really the discriminating power of the Atma. There is a vital difference between Medha sakti (intelligence) and Buddhi (the discriminating power). Intelligence exists as a physical entity in man. It is the centre of the nervous system, a kind of control-room for man. But Buddhi represents a superior power derived from the Spirit. It is not related to the physical body or to the physical phenomenal world. By its relationship to the Atma, it has divine attributes. The third constituent is Samskara. This term is usually defined as "way of life." But it is much more than that. It represents righteous conduct, based on reason and tradition, embodying the mores of the society. Without righteous conduct, man's life is utterly worthless. Righteous conduct must be based on an enquiry into what is transient and what is of enduring value in human existence. The mind and the Buddhi have to be utilised for determining what is spiritual and what is non-spiritual. It is only when knowledge of the eternal verities is obtained by such enquiry that one's conduct can be reflected in Samskara (righteous behaviour), which is the divinisation of life.

We witness today many attempts at reform of society - political, economic, social, etc. But all these are of no avail, because they are ignoring the essential factor of transforming the mind of man.

Many people complain that their troubles have not ended and God has shown no compassion towards them. They would do well to learn a lesson from an episode in the Ramayana. After Vibhishana had become friendly with Hanuman, he once asked the latter, "Hanuman! Although you are a monkey, you have been the recipient of the Lord's grace. Although I have been ceaselessly engaged in the contemplation of Rama, how is it I have not secured His grace?" Hanuman replied: "Vibhishana! It is true that you are ceaselessly chanting the name of Rama. But to what extent are you engaged in the service of Rama? By merely contemplating on the name of Rama you cannot get Rama's grace. When your brother Ravana brought away Sitadevi, what is the help you rendered to her? Did you do anything to relieve even partially Rama's distress?"

Practice should follow the precepts

Devotees should realise that by merely uttering "Rama! Rama!" you cannot ensure the Lord's grace. To what extent are you carrying out the injunctions of Rama, Krishna or Baba? How far are you practising the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita ? Without practising the precepts, no amount of repetition of the name of the Lord is of any use. It is merely like playing a gramophone record. The Lord's name must get implanted in your heart. Today, on account of the special prerogative of the Kali Age, people think that it is enough to recite the Lord's name alone for achieving the goal of life. But this is mistake. Can you have the current merely by having the negative wire? Only when the negative and positive lines are combined will the current flow. Devotion must find expression in dedicated service to the Lord.

Chant God's name and perform sacred acts

Embodiments of love! When you recite the name of the Lord with love, when you carry out with your limbs the injunctions of the Lord, and look upon the

world as a manifestation of the Divine, you are bound to receive the grace of the Lord. Have this firm conviction. Do not labour under the misconception that mere chant of God's name alone is necessary and adequate. Along with it you have to take part in sacred activities. You must not mind whatever obstacles you may encounter. This is the lesson which Hanuman conveyed when he overcame everyone of the obstacles he met with when he set out on the search for Sita. Hanuman stands out as a supreme example of dedicated and determined service to the Divine. Devote everyday at least five minutes for reciting the Lord's name and a few minutes for rendering some kind of service to the needy and the forlorn. Include in your daily prayers a prayer for the welfare of all people in the world. Do not be engrossed in your own well-being and salvation. Try to lead a life free from ill-will and harm to others. Regard this as a type of spiritual discipline and redeem your lives.

3. Human values in business management

Date: 10 February 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THERE are many ways in which the basic human values - Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence - can be practised in the day-to-day conduct of business. There are different aspects of management such as marketing, finance, industrial relations, etc., but the most important aspect is "man-management." Each country has its own historical and cultural background and Indian managers should not mechanically copy practices imported from abroad but should keep in mind the Indian milieu and our national ethos. There is specific need for MBA students of the Sathya Sai Institute to infuse management practices in India with the cardinal values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. All the values are interrelated. For example, a burning electric lamp, can be compared to Prema. For the lamp of love to burn, there should be a bulb. That bulb is Santhi. The bulb had to be connected to an electric wire. That wire is Dharma. And then the current has to flow in the wire. The current is Sathya. With the current of Sathya (Truth) flowing in the wire of Dharma (Righteous conduct), connected to the bulb of Santhi (Peace), the lamp of Prema (love) burns and sheds its light. Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema constitute a single whole and not separate values. All the four values have to be adhered to equally.

Honesty in business is a form of social service

With regards to Truth, it is often said that to be truthful in business will result in loss. This is not so. Though initially there may be some difficulty, in course of time integrity and honesty will bring their own reward. The MBA students must convince their chiefs in their respective firms how truth in accounts and audit helps to raise the image of the firm. They should be content with reasonable profit margins. Even if this policy does not pay in the beginning, in the long run it will be most rewarding. This is the way to inspire confidence. Running a business honestly must be regarded as a form of social service and spiritual sadhana. In the practice of Dharma, marketing practices should be fair to the consumers and there should be justice in the dealings with the

workers. In the observance of peace, the MBA students should realise that they should not get ruffled by any kind of difficult situation. They have to maintain their calmness and try to pour oil on troubled waters. They should use the weapon of love in such situations.

Fraternal relations bring industrial harmony

Prema must express itself in the business world by the executives developing the feeling that all engaged in the business - managers, workers and others - are members of one family. They must develop fraternal feelings towards all. With mutual love and regard, industrial harmony can be achieved.

As regards Ahimsa, in the context of industrial management, it has a wider social meaning than merely avoiding causing harm to others. The avoidance of pollution of the atmosphere or of natural resources like rivers is one of the ways in which an enterprise practises Ahimsa. In these different ways, a great deal of good can be done to our people and nation by business managers who adhere to basic human values and who adopt a spiritual approach to the tasks of the business world.

MBA students should develop firm faith in God and carry out their duties in the businesses in which they may be employed with a sense of dedication to the business and a spirit of service to the community.

Discourse at a seminar in Madras for students of the Faculty of Business Management, Sri

4. What the Avatars mean

Date: 23 February 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma!

The Atma is the basis for the Divine life. The body enshrines the Atma. Worldly life should be in consonance with spiritual aspirations. Because man today is identified with physical existence as the only reality, he has to be taught the knowledge of the Spirit.

The Divine Will is the determinant of the destiny of the individual or of society. Society itself is a reflection of the Divine Will. It is only when man conducts himself on this basis that he will be able to discharge his duties free from ego. Hence man's supreme duty is to act according to the Divine Will.

Dharma (duty) is the spiritual expression of the Divine Will in relation to society.

The term Aiswarya is derived from the word Easwara (The Supreme Lord). The terms Siva or Sankara mean "Auspicious." Sam means Chitananda (Blissful Awareness). Kara means "the one who causes it." "Sankara" means the One who causes blissful awareness. Sankara is the One who confers Chitananda on those who take refuge in Him or adore Him.

Symbolism of the Siva form

The secret of Creation is evident from the description of the form of Siva. The crescent moon on Siva's head symbolises the consciousness in human beings, the Ganga symbolises the Life-Force and the snakes on Siva's body represent the myriads of living beings. He resides on a silver mountain. His dearest friend is Kubera, the Lord of Wealth. Despite being endowed with all these,

why was He obliged to carry the begging bowl? To demonstrate to the world that every kind of wealth is a hindrance to spiritual advancement, Siva renounced everything. It is through renunciation Siva became the eternal embodiment of supreme bliss. The Lord has another name. It is only when the love principle underlying this name is rightly understood, the real form of the Cosmos can be recognised. That name is "Sambasiva". Sa means divinity. Aruba refers to the cosmos. Siva means Purusha (the Supreme Person). Easwara has yet another name Yogasikha. The sky is His blue form. The Dik (directions) are His garments. Hence He is known as Digambara. He is also known as Panchanana - the Five headed One. The five are Earth, water, fire, air and space. His five heads represent the panchabhutas (five basic elements). Siva is also described as Bhuthanatha - the Lord of all created beings. Bhutha refers to creation. Easwara is the Lord of every creature in the universe. Hence, the entire cosmos is reflected as an image in the Lord.

Siva is the source of all prosperity

Siva is known as Subhankara - the one who is ever good (Subham). In the world, whoever takes a bodily form - whether it be humans, deities or avatars sometime or other the body becomes Asubham (tainted). The prefix "Sri" is affixed to the names of such persons to indicate that without the prefix they are tainted by their bodies. That is why "Sri" is added to the names of Krishna, Rama, Venkateswara and so on to confer beatitude on them. With regard to Easwara, however, the epithet "Sri" is not applied because Easwara is ever in a state of beatitude. "Sankara" remains "Sankara" without a "Sri." Siva is not called "Sri Siva." Easwara is not referred to as "Sri Easwara." He is the embodiment of all auspiciousness and holiness. Hence he needs no other appellation. He is the source of Sakala Aiswarya (all prosperity and well-being). Man is the product of interaction of Purusha (the Supreme) and Prakriti (Nature). Consequently man should have the perennial bliss of the Divine and remain perpetually blessed. Man is made in the image of Nature. Man can divinise himself only by contemplating on the attributes of the Easwara (Divine). The three eyes of Siva represent the three lokas (worlds). Siva's trident is symbolic of the Past, the Present and the Future the three aspects of Time. The three gunas (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas) are images of the

Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The three worlds, the triune aspect of Time, the three gunas (qualities) are thus manifestations of the Easwara Principle. When the Divine is installed in the heart in this manner, man can raise himself to the level of the Divine.

It is for the well-being of the world that Siva swallowed the Halahala poison. Again, it is for the sake of the world's good that Siva contained the Ganga in His matted locks. Siva bears the moon on His head to confer peace of mind on mankind. When man moulds himself on the pattern of Easwara, he will get rid of all his evil tendencies and offer to the world what is good in him. This is the meaning of the worship of Siva. It is only when man gives up utterly his bad thoughts, evil desires and wicked deeds, he will be able to transform himself into divinity.

The process of Self-realisation

The spiritual process may be compared to the conversion of milk into butter. The body is like a house. The heart is the vessel in which the milk of consciousness is boiled over the stove of devotion. The vessel is covered by the lid of sraddha (earnestness). When the fire of Viveka (discrimination) is lit, the cream of understanding comes up from the boiling milk. To prevent the cat of Maya from getting at the milk, the door has to be barred by the gate of Sujnana (wisdom). After the milk is cooled by Santhi (tranquillity) and the buttermilk of the Divine Name is added to it, the curd of Divine Grace is formed. When this curd is churned with the rod of knowledge and the rope of love, the whey of ignorance is separated and the butter of the Atma Reality (the Jiva) emerges. It is such a realised Self who attains oneness with the Divine. Man today fails to recognise his own true nature. He adores men, but does not realise the humanness in them. He worships avatars like Rama and Krishna, but is not aware of the exemplary ideals offered by them to mankind. Because of his failure to recognise the avatars' exemplary character, man is a prey to all kinds of doubts. Everyone should try to understand the highest human ideals represented by the avatars. He must consider how far he has lived upto those ideals. Real worship consists in practising the ideals to the greatest extent possible. Instead of worshipping in this manner, man is

degrading himself by resorting to mundane rituals. It is by constant control of thoughts and desires that man can purify himself and raise the level of his consciousness. To the extent man reduces his desires, his ichcha sakti (will power) will grow. Today man has lost his will power because of the insatiable growth of desires. In the process, he has weakened his intellect, his memory, his powers of discrimination, his intelligence and his powers of speech and thought.

When to experience the sense of equality

Without understanding fully your human nature, how can you expect to fathom the nature of the Divine or recognise the divinity present equally in all beings? For instance, you are told that God is present in a cat, a dog, a donkey, a pig, a snake or a scorpion, and you also talk about it. But if your parents, friends or anyone else hails you as "You ass! You swine!," you get angry and feel that you have been insulted. Likewise, if God is described in this manner, is it not an affront to God? When can you experience the sense of equality of all living beings? It is only when you have realised your oneness with God that you are entitled to speak about the equality of all beings. Till then, the dog is a dog, the donkey is a donkey, a man is a man. As long as you regard yourself as a human being, respect other fellow-humans, show love towards other creatures, but do not go about saying all are one and all are equal.

The eleven Rudras man has to conquer

Embodiments of Divine Love! The auspicious and sacred Easwara principle is present in every man. This divine principle can be manifested only through the practice of pure thoughts and actions. Today's Sivarathri observance conveys a significant lesson. According to numerology, the three letters "Si", "va" and "Ra" make up eleven ("Si"=5, "Va"=4 and "Ra"=2). These eleven are known as the Ekadas Rudras, the eleven Rudras. The fourth syllable "thri" means "three". Thus Sivarathri is the day devoted to overcoming the eleven Rudras by adoring the Supreme Lord, who is master of them all. The Rudras turn the Buddhi (intellect) towards sensuous objects and thrust the individual

in the sea of Samsara (worldly life). The Paramatma (Supreme Spirit) is master of all the Rudras. Only the man who has conquered the eleven Rudras can expect to realise the Supreme. Who are the eleven Rudras? They are' the five Karmendriyas (organs of action) the five Jnanedriyas (organs of perception) and the Buddhi. Man must seek to control as much as possible these eleven organs. From ancient times, the sages have stressed the supreme importance of sense-control as the means to God-realisation.

No distinction should be made between Siva and Vishnu. The composer Annamacharya declared: "While uttering Linga! Linga! Sivalinga! do not forget, oh man! Ranga! Both are one." Whether the vehicle of the Lord is a bull or an eagle, the Lord is one and the same. Annamacharya indicated how this Lord is to be worshipped. To perform ablutions for the idol of the Lord he went in search of pure and sacred water. He could not find it in the Ganga, which was polluted by water coming from the mouths of fish and frogs. He lamented over his inability to get completely pure, unpolluted water from any source. He declared: "The only pure water with which I can wash your Linga, Oh Siva, is that coming from my tear-filled eyes, which have been moved by the devotion in my heart filled with the sense of utter dedication to the Lord." Annamacharya felt that only the tears filled with love of the Lord are pure enough for washing the Lord's idol.

How to receive the plentitude of God's grace

Each devotee has his own conception of the Divine. No single specific form can be ascribed to the Lord. The Lord's grace is conferred on each devotee according to the level of his spiritual consciousness. Annamacharya exclaimed: "Oh Lord! You appear to each devotee according to the nature and measure of his realisation." The ocean is vast and boundless. But the amount of water you can carry from it is determined by the size of the vessel you take. If the vessel you carry is small, you cannot fill it beyond its capacity. Likewise, if your heart is constricted, Divine grace will be equally limited. Broaden your heart and receive the plentitude of God's grace. How is one to broaden his heart? It is by getting rid of narrow differences and by curbing desires. By developing insatiable desires, the heart gets shrunk. A broad

heart means recognising the truth that the Divine dwells in everybody. Only then can you obtain the Reality that is unchanging and eternal.

It is vital that every one should inquire into the true, the pure and the permanent. For, there is at present delusions about values. Even the leaders of people are hugging the false hypothesis that happiness can be got by means of wealth or health, or housing, or clothing, or the cultivation of skills in handicraft and manufacture! The bird sits upon the bough that sways in the storm, confident of its wings, not confident of the bough whereon it sits! So, you too should feel strong because of wings - the wings of Sraddha and Bhakti - not because of the bough of the objective world, whereon you have perched.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5. More potent than portents

Date: 27 March 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Ugadi

FIRM faith in God's name will ward off of the portents indicated by the planetary conjunctions in the new year Pramoduta. There are indications of various kinds of conflicts and dangers from fire disasters during the year, but many joyous events are also likely. I advise the devotees to carry on their duties in a spirit of dedication, with firm faith in God. Embodiments of Love! Time is the embodiment of God. Hence one of the names of God is Samvatsara. Because Time is the essential spirit of God, He is also known as Kalatmaka (The Time-Spirit). God is called the protector of the wise. The wise man directs his intelligence and talents towards God, not content with using them for mere living. God is also known as the Lord of Aeons because He creates and dissolves aeons like Krita Yuga, Dwapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. God is thus not only the creator of yugas (aeons) but also their extinguisher. Hence God is described as Yugadi-krit. Because He contains within Himself everything and protects everything, God is also called Kalagarbha (The One who is the womb of Time). We regard Yugadi as marking the beginning of a new year. In fact, it is one of the forms of God. The entire cosmos is bound by Time. It is permeated by Time. It is a product of Time It is destroyed by Time. No one can fully comprehend the power of Time. The Bharatiyas, from ancient times, recognising the sacredness of Time, followed certain observances to propitiate Time. They viewed every object, not in terms of its external appearance, but from its inner spiritual essence and based their life on that principle. Even if something appeared externally beautiful, if spiritually it was valueless, Bharatiyas used to discard it.

God is not attracted by external appearances

People in the world attach value to all 'kinds of objects, ideals and personalities. God, however, is not attracted by external appearances but values only the inner spiritual urges. Here is a simple example. Parvathi was the most beautiful woman in the world. Conscious of her charms, she wished to wed the Lord Himself. But the Lord does not succumb to external

attraction. Disappointed by her failures, Parvathi embarked on a very severe penance. Indifferent to sun-and rain, wind and weather, Parvathi concentrated her thoughts on the Lord, wearing out her body in her tapas. Because of the penance she lost all her beauty. All her physical powers were gone. At that moment, the Lord accepted 'her as one half of his body. What is the inner meaning of this episode? Prakriti (Nature) is Parvathi. This Prakriti is filled with various kinds of prides: the pride of wealth, strength, beauty, knowledge, virtues, power and penance. Man's ego is inflated by these different kinds of pride. It is only when man gets rid of these eight categories of pride will he become acceptable to God. So long as ego prevails, the power of the Spirit will not be cognised. Without realising the power of the Spirit man cannot experience the bliss of the Divine. It is out of a recognition of this truth that Bharatiyas declared that only through renunciation can immortality be attained.

The primary qualities to be renounced

What is it we should renounce? Is it hearth and home, wealth and possessions? If God could be realised by renouncing these things, Self-realisation should be quite easy. But, it is not the external appurtenances that have to be sacrificed. The road to man's liberation is barred by three gates' Kama (lust), Krodha (hatred) and Lobha (greed). The primary things which have to be given up are these three. When a man is filled with these three, he is steeped in folly. When a man is subject to Kama (lustful desire), he loses all sense of right and wrong. Greed destroys man's devotion. Krodha (hatred) undermines Jnana (wisdom). The man filled with anger and hatred becomes utterly thoughtless. He loses his sense of discrimination. These three destroy a man's spiritual practices - Karma, Upasana and Dhyana (rituals, worship and meditation). When there are no spiritual practices, man becomes a creature of whims. Man has a Vijnana Prajna (higher wisdom) which is obtained only by spiritual sadhana. The purpose of the sadhana is to realise the Atma (Self). What is the Atma? It is the combination of Manas, Buddhi, and Prana (mind, intellect and life). This triune combination is called Triputi. Man is the embodiment of this Triputi. It is otherwise known as the Mano-vak-kayam (mindspeech- body complex). Vak (speech), represents life. Man should seek

to sanctify these three.

A man's Karma reveals his nature

True humanness consists in the harmony of thought, word and deed. When there is no accord between words and deeds, of what value are one's words? It is for the purpose of harmonising thought, word and deed that Karma, Upasana and Dhyana have been prescribed for man. Karma is like a mirror in which a man's good and bad deeds are reflected. A man's karma reveals the nature of man - whether he is Satwic, Rajasic or Tamasic - even as a thermometer reveals the temperature of the body. Therefore, all actions should be turned towards Satwic purposes. The Bhagavad Gita describes such actions as Nishkama Karma (desireless actions). It is only when actions are performed in this spirit that the body accomplishes its purpose. It is only when the body and the actions are sublimated that the mind gets transformed. Right action results in purity of mind.

Men today are not aware of the sacredness of action. They are caught up in the pursuit of their desires. They are impelled entirely by selfishness and self-centredness. Man is moved by desires and not by ideals.

What we should aim at is a life inspired by ideals. The ideal life is one in which there is complete harmony and purity in thought, word and deed - Trikarana suddhi. Man is judged by the nature of his actions. To make the proper use of time, man has to engage himself in right actions.

Strive to make proper use of Time

Embodiments of Love! Remember that time is fleeting. Time and tide wait for no one. Time will not submit itself to you. You have to surrender to it. Time is its own master. Hence, you must strive to make proper use of Time. I have often told you how God represents Time in its various aspects. God is described as Samvatsara. Vatsara means one who is engaged in sport. Govatsara, referring to Krishna, means one who sports with cows. Samvatsara means "playing with all." This Time is available equally to all - whether he is a

millionaire or a pauper. Even an emperor is subject to the passage of Time. Time is a witness to what everyone is doing. On a stage, there are a number of lights. One light is turned towards an actor in the role of a king. Another light is turned towards a beggar. Yet another light is focused on a man reading the Ramayana. Another light may be focused on a fighting scene. Although the lights illumine a variety of scenes, they remain unaffected by the behaviour of the actors. The lights simply bear witness to the actions but no blame attaches to them for what the actors do. The actors alone are affected by what they do. In the same manner, the Divine, as the Lord of Time, remains only as witness to the passing show. Your actions may be unholy. But Time remains untainted. Your primary duty is to make right use of Time. For this purpose, there is no need for you to wait for the beginning of a new year. Every moment is a manifestation of Time. From seconds to minutes, from minutes to hours, from hours to days and months, and from months to a year - this is the endless procession of Time. The second is the basis for the year. Hence every second should be filled with purposeful action. What is the meaning of a life in which from waking in the morning to sleeping at night one is concerned only about his belly and has no thought of God? What is the result of all this hectic activity? Has it given a single moment of real joy? Purposeful living can come only by contemplation of God. People talk about service. Whom are you serving? When you render service, you are really serving yourself. You have to perform all actions in a spirit of dedication - to please the Divine. Men today are misusing all their knowledge, wealth, energies and talents for purely material ends and wasting their lives. Leading a worldly life is unavoidable. But in doing so, the spiritual goal should be borne in mind. The goal is spiritual; actions are worldly. It is when actions are dedicated to spiritual ends that they become sanctified. Unfortunately, today even spiritual practices are tainted with mundane motives.

The spiritual heritage of Bharat

It is because of the intensely spiritual life led by kings, sages, scholars and pious men and women in ancient days that even today the spiritual heritage of Bharat has survived the vicissitudes of centuries. Men should realise their inherent divinity and live up to their true nature. If their real nature is

forgotten and their behaviour is far from human, they cease to be human beings. For instance, sweetness is the basic quality of jaggery. If it loses its sweetness it ceases to be jaggery and is just a piece of clod. Likewise for man to be regarded as man, he has to manifest his humanness by practising Trikarana suddhi purity in thought, word and deed. Without this purity, man is merely a lump of clay. Man engages himself in various exercises, pursues all kinds of studies and makes various enquiries. What is the use of all this? He fills his mind with a vast mass of information, but there is no change in his behaviour or living. There is no end to economic changes, political and social reforms. But no mental transformation is taking place. People have been listening to Bhagavan's discourses and reading Swami's books for years. How far have you changed as a consequence? Of what use are studies if they are not put into practice even to a small extent?

Portents and warnings of the New Year

Today it is the beginning of the new year Pramoda. Pramoda means that which is filled with excessive joy. It includes such expressions as Nityananda, Sat-Chit-Ananda, Advaitananda and Brahmananda - - the supreme forms of bliss. The name of the year should fill us with infinite joy. But when you consider the conjunction of planets at the beginning of the year, it forebodes a period of conflicts. There are likely to be many conflicts with no apparent reason. Even good men are likely to fall out. Apart from conflicts, there are likely to be dangers from fire disasters. Along with these evil portents, there are likely to be joyous events also. This year is a mixture of good and bad events. Life is like that. Embodiments of the Divine Atma! This is a year in which everyone will have to be on his guard. One should keep a watch on every word he uses. Even a small slip of the tongue may have serious consequences. Every action has to be done after due deliberation. Differences are likely to arise among kith and kin and members of the family circle. Conflicts may arise all over. In such a dire situation, contemplation on God is like a shower of grace. Placing your firm faith in God, if you carry on your duties, none of your actions will have untoward results. Remember the name of God at all times. In the Kali age, God's name is the only refuge. Without firm faith in the Lord's name, all other studies and worship are of no avail.

Yearn for the love of God. From the beginning of this year, with its dire portents, engage yourself in good thoughts and good deeds and overcome the forces of evil by full faith in God.

The tendencies towards hate, malice and greed which cause individual and social conflicts and complexes can be overcome by Yoga and Thyaga, the practice of emotional imperturbability and the reduction of wants and mental cravings. This is the message of Bharat, through the centuries.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. Rama, the Indweller

Date: 03 April 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Rama Navami

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! Every man takes birth in this world to discharge three kinds of debt. The first is the debt to God. The second is the debt to the Rishis (sages). The third is the debt to one's parents. The Divine permeates every cell in the body, endowing it with divine energy. It is the power of the Divine which keeps every limb in the body functioning through the action of this Divine energy.

It follows from this that man has to be conscious of this energy and be grateful to the Divine for sustaining and protecting him. If he fails to do so, his life is a waste. Discharging the debt to the Divine means engaging oneself in sacred actions and in serving others and thereby dedicating every action of the body to the Divine. It is when such a divinely endowed body is consecrated for holy purposes, by constant performance of sacred, sublime and dedicated actions, that the debt to the Divine is discharged.

Debt to the sages and parents

Next comes the debt to the Rishis. The ancient sages, by devoting all their energies to penance and spiritual enquiries, have bequeathed to mankind the great scriptures which should serve as guides for ordering their lives in the world and beyond. It is the sages who have offered to mankind the Upanishads, the puranas and the epics for the proper regulation of their conduct in life along ideal lines. We must recognise the supreme significance of the scriptures for making our lives sublime. The paths laid down by the Rishis show what are the actions to be avoided and what are the right actions which are obligatory for everyone and their injunctions should be scrupulously respected. The prescribed duties should be performed and the prohibited actions should be eschewed. It is only then that the debt owed to the Rishis gets discharged. The third one is the debt to the parents. One's body is derived from the flesh and blood of the mother. How much sacrifice is involved in giving birth to a child and rearing him with continuous care and

love is beyond description. The food you eat, the clothes you wear, the life you lead are all the gift of your parents. It is one's primary duty to please one's parents. Only thus is the debt to the parents discharged. Nor is that all. The debt to the parents has to be repaid by acting properly and rendering service to society. It is for these reasons that Emperor Dasaratha paid his debt to the Divine and through his yagas and yajnas, he discharged his obligations to the Rishis. But he was unable to discharge the Pithru runa (debt to his parents). He did show due reverence to them. But owing to the lack of a worthy son capable of sustaining Dharma, he could not fully discharge the obligations he owed to his parents. Dasaratha was one who realised the supremacy of Dharma. Hence, to overcome the lack of a son, he decided to perform the Putrakameshti yaga (the special sacrifice for getting blessed with a son).

Why Dasaratha performed Putrakameshti yaga

The desire to have a son should not be for the protection of one's possessions and properties. Nor should it be for ensuring the performance of one's funeral obsequies. Nor for rendering any type of service to oneself. The main purpose should be to have sons who will practise righteousness in the service of society. It was with this aim that Dasaratha decided to perform the Putrakameshti yaga.

The sages Vasishta and Jabali and others heartily welcomed the Emperor's decision. At this stage, the Emperor's Prime Minister Sumantra recalled to him the advice which the Sage Sanatkumara had given previously. Sumantra said: "Oh King! You have forgotten what Sanatkumara told you. Sanatkumara had enjoined on you to get the blessings of the great Sage Rishyasringa and perform the yaga with Rishyasringa as Brahma at the sacrifice." Thereupon, Dasaratha, accompanied by a number of priests, proceeded to the ashram of Rishyasringa. Rishyasringa readily responded to the Emperor's appeal and came for the yaga together with his spouse Santha. Conforming to the procedure laid down for the Putrakameshti yaga, Dasaratha first embarked on an Aswamedha (Horse) sacrifice. For this sacrifice, a horse that has certain specific characteristics is required. It should bear all the prescribed insignia.

In the season of Vasantha (Spring) the search for a suitable horse was started. It was only by the return of the next Spring season that it could be found. Another year went by before the horse could be appropriately prepared for the yaga. Then, the horse was released to go round the realm. It returned from this sacred mission in the next Spring season. This means that the preparations for the yajna were spread over three years. Brahma then appeared. Who is this Brahma? He is described as a deity with four faces. The fourfaced Brahma told Dasaratha: "Oh king! Your desires will be fulfilled. Complete the yajna with expedition." Heartened by the deity's assurance, Dasaratha distributed largesse to one and all generously and completed the yajna. The scriptures declare, "Yajna is the very form of Vishnu." Who is Vishnu in this context? It is not the form bearing Sankha (Conch) and Chakra (Wheel). Vishnu refers to the Supreme One who permeates everything in the cosmos.

The four Vedas born as four children

At the completion of the yajna, a deity rising from the sacrificial fire appeared before. Dasaratha carrying a bowl of Payasam in his hands. What is the unique greatness of this Payasam (a sweet liquid)? It represented the essence of all the Vedas. When Dasaratha's three queens drank the payasam, the four Vedas were born as four children for Dasaratha Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna. Rama represented Yajur Veda, which is the embodiment of Dharma. Lakshmana, who was always immersed in reciting the name of Rama and ever dedicated to his service, represents the Rig Veda. Bharatha, who loved always to sing the name of Rama and revelled in chanting the Divine name, represents the Sama Veda. Satrughna, who was ever devoted to serving the other three brothers and who had conquered the internal and external foes, represents the Atharvana Veda. The four brothers thus represented the four Vedas. It is only when the Ramayana is studied for its esoteric significance, rather than from a superficial point of view, that the full meaning of the epic be clear to us.

Manifestation of Pranava

The significance of the advent of the four brothers may also be realised from another point of view. The Pranava mantra "Aum" has been equated with the Supreme Brahman. In this threeletter word "A" stands for Lakshmana, "U" stands for Bharatha and "M" stands for Satrughna. The Omkara that emanates from the combination of these three sounds represents Rama. Hence the scriptures have declared that the Rama Principle symbolises the primordial Omkara. Moreover, Valmiki brought out the unique significance of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita as a manifestation of Omkara. Lakshmana, representing "A", stands to the right of Rama; Rama, representing "U" is in the middle; and Sita, representing "M", is to the left of Rama. Valmiki described the combination of the three as the embodiment of divinity. The symbolism of the Ramayana may be viewed from another angle. The human body, with the five organs of Jnanendriyas (perception) and the Karmendriyas (five organs of action) represents the chariot, Dasaratha. The heart is Ayodhya, that which is not easily penetrable. The heart is, however, subject to pleasure and pain. The body is related to the three gunas - Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. Symbolically, of the three wives of Dasaratha, Kausalya represents Satwa, Sumitra represents Rajoguna and Kaikeyi represents the Tamoguna. This means that the human body is wedded to the three gunas. What is the Dharma that should be followed by this body? The fourfold Purusharthas (goals of life) are the goals prescribed for man: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The four brothers may be regarded as symbolising these four goals. Artha (the acquisition of wealth) should be related to Dharma (Righteousness) and Kama (desires) should be related to Moksha (liberation). Man today ignores Dharma and Moksha and goes only after Artha and Kama. Consequently he becomes a prey to sorrow and misery.

Anything can be achieved with purity of heart

Of the four Purusharthas, Dharma is most important. What is this Dharma? It is essentially Trikarana suddhi - purity in thought, word and deed. The complete harmony between thought, word and deed is the mark of a Mahatma (high, souled being). Without unity of thought, word and deed, there can be no fulfilment in life. It is the duty of every man to achieve such fulfilment by leading a life of triple purity as Dasaratha did. The

consummation of all sadhana (spiritual practices) is purity of the heart. It should be realized that there is room in the heart for only a single person. It should not be regarded as a long sofa or as a musical chair. God alone should be installed in the heart. It is because today men change their loyalties from moment to moment that their devotion gets diluted and their aspirations remain unfulfilled. With a pure heart and one pointed devotion anything can be achieved in this world.

Always keep Lord by your side

Sita demonstrated her complete disregard for all worldly pleasures when she chose to accompany Rama to the forest. All arguments of Rama about the hazards of life in the forest, with wild animals roaming about, were of no avail. She said when she had the Lord of all beings by her side what danger could befall her. However, when on seeing the golden deer in the forest, she expressed a desire for it, she distanced herself from Rama and her troubles started. As long as you are attached to the things of the world, whatever worship you may do, you will not have God-realisation. It is not necessary to give up everything; it is enough if you enjoy everything as a gift from God and offer everything to God. Everything is a manifestation of God. You can enjoy anything with that awareness. Even some of the rakshasas understood the Divine Reality of Rama. Maricha was one of those who realised the omnipresence, the omnipotence and the Divine greatness of Rama. The sage Vishwamitra took Rama (and Lakshmana) for the protection of his yaga from the depredations of Tataka and her sons. Maricha was one of the sons. After Rama had killed Tataka, Maricha appeared to disturb the yaga. Rama aimed an arrow at him which threw him off miles away. That experience made Maricha realise the Divine puissance of Rama. He declared that he had not seen anyone who could equal Rama in power. Going to Ravana, he explained to him the unique powers of Rama even as a young lad. He told Ravana: "Oh Ravana! There is no one in this world who is as powerful as Rama. There is no parallel to him anywhere. His unexcelled beauty is beyond words. His form fascinates even men. I have beheld his divine beautiful form." Ravana kept in mind all that Maricha had told him.

Surpanakha's description of Rama

Later, Ravana's sister came to Ravana with a bleeding ear and nose, wailing before him. Ravana asked her: "How is it, sister, that anyone could cut your ear on one side and the nose at another place? With all your powers, what were you doing when the ear was cut first and the nose later? It is impossible for anyone to cut both of them at the same time." Surpanakha replied: "Oh brother! What shall I say? All the time I was looking only at the beautiful form of Rama. While I was gazing on his face, I was not aware of what was being done to me. All my senses were paralysed while I was lost in seeing the charming form of Rama. After Rama left, I realised my plight. That is not all. Even more beautiful than Rama is Sita." She told Ravana that after seeing the beauty of Sita she got the feeling that Ravana alone was worthy of Sita and that she did not deserve to stay in the forest. As she spoke in this strain, Ravana's passion was stirred. He again summoned Maricha and told him that he needed Maricha's help in an important undertaking. He told Maricha: "You are a preeminently capable person. You can understand demons and deal equally with the Divine. You are capable of assuming any form. You must therefore go to the Dandakaranya forest and separate Rama from Sita." At that stage, Maricha told Ravana: "This is a disastrous proposal. It is said that men who are destined for destruction develop disastrous ideas. No one can conquer Rama. You can never hope to acquire Sita in all your life. Rama is God incarnate. Give up this suicidal idea." Inflamed by passion, Ravana paid no heed to Maricha's warning. He told Maricha that if he did not act as Ravana wanted, he would be beheaded. Maricha thought within himself. "Either way, my life is in danger. Rather than die at the hands of this wicked Ravana, it is better for me to meet with my death from the Divine hands of Rama." It was with the desire to be slain by Rama that Maricha agreed to obey Ravana's command. It was thus a Rakshasa who first recognised the divinity of Rama. It was later that Viswamitra announced Rama's divinity.

Rama is embodiment of the three gunas

The Rama Principle is manifested in the Gayatri mantra. Rama is the embodiment of the three aspects of Time. He is the Lord of the three worlds

and is the embodiment of the three gunas. Hence Sri Rama is the indwelling spirit in every human being. To realise this truth, it is not necessary to be a great scholar or scientist. However great a scholar may be, if he has no eyes, he cannot see the world. However great a scientist may be, when he is fast asleep he cannot see anything. But a man with open eyes if he is no scholar or scientist, can see the world when he is awake. The power of sight is not derived from scholarship or science but is a gift of the Divine. Moreover, scholarship does not enable a pandit to understand his own true nature, though he can teach others. True scholarship consists in cultivating a pure heart. Every person who has a purified heart experiences the Divine some time or other. We have any number of examples of such realised souls. Valmiki was originally a highway robber. By the grace of sages he became the author of the Ramayana. Nanda experienced the Divine though he was an outcaste. Kuchela, steeped in poverty, secured the grace of the Lord. Gajendra, the Lord of the elephants, and Dhruva, a mere stripling, could get the grace of the Lord by their devotion. Sabari, an illiterate denizen of the forest, became a great devotee by the constant remembrance of Rama's name. Through her devotion she could get the blissful experience of welcoming Rama, Lakshmana and Sita in the sage's ashram.

Appeal of the Ramayana is inexhaustible

There are in the world many such devotees who have achieved God-realisation without profound scholarship or elaborate austerities. Hence the Divine Rama Principle is not something to be remembered once a year but every moment of our life. Ramanavami falls in a period of the year when Nature puts on her new vesture after shedding the old. Rama thus represents all that is beautiful in Nature. The Ramayana has been divided into two parts Purva Ramayana and Uttara Ramayana. Purva Ramayana (the earlier part) deals with the prowess of Rama as a Dheera (hero) who destroyed Vali, Ravana and others. The Uttara Ramayana reveals the compassion of Rama. (It is filled with Karuna Rasa). Valmiki has compared the sweetness of the Ramayana to the sweetness of the sugarcane juice. The sugarcane has a hard rind and is full of knots. Nevertheless the juice from it is sweet. Likewise despite the many evil characters in the story and the sad episodes in it, the

epic maintains its sweetness. The appeal of the Ramayana is inexhaustible. When the Ramayana story is understood in its inner essence, it will transform human nature. Rama should be regarded not as the Prince of Ayodhya, but as the Atma-Rama, the Indweller in every heart. Dedicate your mind, speech and body to the Divine and thereby raise yourselves from the level of the human to that of the Divine.

Proper interpretations of various acts of Rama

Some of Rama's actions have been criticised by scholars on various grounds. Seen, however, in the right perspective, it will be found that Rama acted in each case according to the nature of the person. In killing an ogress, Rama is accused of committing Strihathya (the sin of killing a woman). But it is not so. He was destroying the Tamo guna which she symbolised. He gave liberation to Sabari, who represented the Rajo guna. He purified Ahalya, who represented the Satwa guna, absolving her of all her lapses, and restored her to Gautama. In the case of the Rakshasa brothers, he destroyed Kumbhakarna and Ravana, who represented the Tamo and Rajo gunas, and made Vibhishana, who symbolised the Satwa guna, the ruler of Lanka. It is only when we destroy the Tamo and Rajo gunas within us that we can make the Satwa guna reign in our hearts. This is the primary duty of every human being. This should be our ideal. It is by imbibing these great qualities of Rama and regulating our lives in this way, we shall be able to divinise ourselves.

A student had referred to the advice given by Siva to Parvathi to chant Rama's name. The term Manorame used in the sloka has two meanings. One refers to Parvathi. The other signifies that one should "enjoy in the mind" the name of Rama. The Rama Principle is one which delights the heart.

Spend every second of your life usefully and well. If you possibly can, render service to others. Engage yourself in nursing the sick, but when thus engaged in service, don't worry about either the result, or the act of service, or the person to whom it is rendered. The service is made holy and

pure if you ignore both the good and the bad, and keep on silently repeating in your heart the Manthra that appeals to you.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Give up selfishness: Cultivate unity

Date: 27 April 1990 / Location: Mumbai / Occasion: Dharmakshetra

ALL the ills Bharat is suffering from are due to the lack of unity. The prevailing deplorable situation in the country after four decades of Independence and the disorder and violence prevailing everywhere are due to the ubiquitous growth of selfishness and self-centredness. It is only when you have ideal leaders, ideal parents and ideal teachers that the students will be inspired to act on right lines. Embodiments of Divine Love! The people of Bharat have long been the upholders of Truth and Righteousness. Justice has been their basic way of life. Every Bharatiya is the inheritor of Truth and Righteousness. It is the bounden duty of every true Bharatiya to adhere to Truth and right conduct without deviation. The welfare of the world is the basic belief of Bharatiyas. This is their vow and their penance. True Dharma (Righteousness) consists in constant practice of Truth and right conduct. In this lies victory. Forgetting this sacred truth and pursuing transient worldly pleasures, man has become a prey to all kinds of troubles. What Bharatiyas have to protect is not the country but Truth and Righteousness; these will themselves protect them. Every Bharatiya youth should have Sathya and Dharma as his twin ideals and regulate his daily life on that basis. Today the advance of modern science and technology has swept away the old culture and moral values like a typhoon. Moral values are fundamental for human life. Alas! these values have been almost totally destroyed. Science and technology have created formidable problems for mankind in their physical existence. Man's entire life is absorbed in selfish and selfcentred pursuits.

Benefits and harm brought by science

It is true that science and technology have conferred some benefits. But they have done greater harm than good. They are undermining the very root of humanness. While providing temporary and transient comforts, science and technology have turned humanity away from the spiritual quest altogether. They have served to encourage ostentation, possessiveness, self-interest, selfconceit and jealousy.

As a result, you do not find any trace of those good qualities which ought to distinguish man as a human being. At every step, man is straying from righteousness. In every word that is uttered, falsehood prevails. Love is absent from his vision. Every desire is misconceived. Every craving is inspired by greed. Sublime ideas have vanished. Spiritual concepts are treated with levity. The human consciousness is getting weakened. Likes and dislikes, attachment and aversion are having free play. In short, what we are witnessing is the eclipse of all that is human. Entire life has become artificial. The urgent task today is to nourish and cherish the human Spirit.

Youths then and now

Fifty years ago, young people strove for the freedom of the country in a patriotic spirit. They tried to follow the example of great national leaders like Sivaji, Samarth Ramdas, Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Sardar Patel and others. They walked in their footsteps. They used to adore the pictures of these leaders.

If you examine the attitude of young people today, you will find chaos and confusion in their hearts. Patriotism has disappeared. Self interest and selfish concerns rule the roost. In their rooms, in the place of pictures of national heroes, you see only pictures of film stars. These are the deities whom they worship. On their tables you see transistor radios and video sets. Love of the nation has vanished from their thoughts. What is the reason for this? The root cause is the absence of exemplary parents and teachers. Even among the leaders, there are few that can be considered ideal examples. It is only when you have ideal leaders, ideal parents and ideal teachers that the students will be inspired to act on right lines. Therefore, if today we seek to set the students on the right path and raise them to a higher level, the parents should consider it their primary duty to set the right example. But parents do not seem to pay much attention to this.

Peace has become a casualty

In society today, love of God, fear of sin and social morality have disappeared. It is only when these three are promoted that you can have real

human advancement. Peace has become a casualty all over the world, because people have lost the fear of sin, the love of God and basic ethics in social relationships. Wherever you turn, you see only disorder and conflict today. Nor is that all. Fear has gripped everyone. You are haunted by fear whether in your home or out in the streets. Fear grips you when you get into a bus or a train, whether you are going in a car or in an aeroplane. How is life to be rid of fear?

The whole nation is afflicted by fear in many ways. When will we be utterly free from fear? "Thyagenaike amrutatvam anasuh," declares the Upanishad (Only by renunciation can immortality be achieved). It is through desirelessness or vairagya (detachment) that fear can be banished.

Today people do not understand the meaning of desirelessness. They think that giving up hearth and home is renunciation. This is not what vairagya implies. Whatever we do should be done in a spirit of goodwill and service. Everything you do should be regarded as conceived for the nation's well-being. The welfare of all must be looked upon as the motto of the nation. From very early times, Bharatiyas have been offering to other countries treasures of the Spirit. From times immemorial they have lived upto the ideal: "May all the worlds be happy!" To uphold this ideal, the rulers, the scholars, the sages and others made many sacrifices. Today the spirit of sacrifice is not to be seen anywhere. It is selfishness that is the cause of all the cruelty and violence today. It is more than four decades since Bharat achieved its freedom. What is it we have accomplished after attaining Independence? All that we have achieved are strife, disputes, riots and violence. Selfishness has reared its head in these forty years.

Get rid of selfishness

Embodiments of Love! Get rid of selfishness. Regard yourself as an integral member of society. Develop the faith that your welfare is bound up with the welfare of the society. Develop your social consciousness.

In human life, there are three important things: One is the individual; the

second is the family; the third is the society. Today in whatever he does, man is concerned primarily about his individual interests. From there he proceeds towards concern for the family. But few care to take any interest in what concerns society as a whole. If society is not in good shape, how can individuals be well? Individual welfare is based on social well-being. Consider every human being as a spark of the Divine. Every man is a child of immortality. Today we are failing to cultivate that sense of unity. All the ills Bharat is suffering from are due to the lack of unity. Union is strength. Lacking unity, we are becoming weak. To promote unity, we have to give up selfishness. People talk about spirituality. What does it mean? Is it performance of Japa or sitting in meditation? No. Spirituality means the quest for oneness. It means discovering the underlying unity in the apparent multiplicity. Preoccupation with one's own destiny is not spirituality. That also is a form of selfishness. Hence, in every way, the awareness that "Viswam Vishnuswaroopam" (Cosmos is manifestation of the Divine) should be obtained. The truth of the Upanishadic declaration, "Isavasyamidamsarvam" (All this is permeated by the Divine), should become a firm conviction. Everybody is like a bulb in each of which Truth shines as a manifestation of Divinity. The One has willed to become the many. Therefore, spirituality consists in recognising unity in diversity. All are children of one God. Like the waves of the ocean and the rays of the sun, Love emanates from the Divine in infinite drops. There is an inextricable relationship between God and Love. Hence, "Love is God; live in love." Your lives have to be lived on this basis.

Mental transformation is the need of the day

These days men go through changes but minds do not change. The clothes are varied, but qualities remain same. We need today mental transformation. I have been coming to Bombay for the past nearly thirty years. You have listened to many discourses and read many books. You have gone to many high-souled persons. You have performed many kinds of service. But how far have you reformed yourselves? There is little change in you. The essence of spirituality is mental transformation. It has been said: "The mind is the cause of bondage or liberation." Without mental transformation, what is the use of all spiritual sadhanas? What is the use of prayers? Prayer does not mean

uttering words with the lips. Prayer must come from the heart. Embodiments of Love/ Remember that the hands that serve are greater than the lips that pray. Dedicate yourselves to service to all. Real humanness consists in the spirit of service. Quantity does not matter; it is the quality of service that counts. There is competition whether in performing japa, dhyana (meditation) or bhajana. This is not proper. Whatever is done should be performed wholeheartedly and spontaneously. The primary requisite is purification of the heart. When the heart is purified, man gets Jnanasuddhi (the Supreme Wisdom). Fill your heart with the Divine. Dedicate every action to the Divine in a spirit of detachment. Divine love can be secured only by dedicated service to the Divine. God responds bounteously to what you offer. Kuchela got, in return for a handful of parched rice given to Krishna, limitless prosperity. Draupadi was rewarded likewise. How can you expect God to love you if you do not love God? God's grace is like a bank. You can draw money from that bank only to the extent to which you have built up deposits through Thyaga (sacrifice). Earn God's grace through love and sacrifice.

Lead ideal and exemplary lives

When people claim to be Sai devotees, they should lead ideal and exemplary lives. Broaden your minds. Cultivate human values. Love, Truth, forbearance and compassion are the highest human qualities. Hatred, envy and greed are animal qualities. If you develop at least a few human qualities, you can progress towards God-realisation. At present, when you approach God, it is only out of selfish concerns. Selfishness is rampant in every action. It is most essential to get rid of selfishness. Only then divinity will manifest itself in you. Develop sacred love in your hearts. The feeling "I and you are one" should grow. Spirituality consists in filling the heart with love, dedicating all actions to the Divine and striving for the welfare of all.

There are two evil sirens that entice youth into futility and frivolity, diverting them along the paths of ruin. One of them is called Dame Cinema, and the other is named Dame Novel. The film

contaminates and corrupts; it pollutes young and innocent minds; it teaches crime, violence and greed; it destroys the basic humanness and degrades it into bestiality. Even ochre-robed monks are steadily dragged down to sin by its insidious influence. Dame Novel too corrupts equally, with salacious pictures of bestiality. They both lead the young away into the wilderness of vice. They do not know, nor do they care to know, how to shape the young into self-reliant, self-confident, self-knowing citizens.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8. Sathyam vada; Dharmam chara

Date: 29 April 1990 / Location: Mumbai / Occasion: Dharmakshetra

WHAT greater misfortune can there be than the fact that Bharatiyas make no effort to understand their great and Divine culture, based on the most sublime ideals? Love is the form of Brahman. Brahman is filled with Love. Love can be secured only through Love. Only when one is firmly established in Love can he be qualified to experience the One without a second.

Embodiments of Divine Love! "Sathyam vada; Dharmam chara" (Speak the Truth, pursue Righteousness). This is the great pronouncement of the ancient Upanishads and scriptures of Bharatiyas. Truth and Righteousness are the stepping-stones to human greatness. The puranas have also declared: "Sathayameva Jayathe" (Truth alone triumphs). Victory adores Truth, "Sathyanasthi Paro Dharma" (There is no greater Dharma than truth), declare the Puranas. Truth is God. It is supreme folly to forget this fact and seek to obtain the grace of God by all kinds of practices. The Bhagavatha has indicated a more arduous path. Emperor Bali told his Guru Sukracharya, "Can there be a greater sin than going back on one's plighted word?" The same truth was revealed by Bhoodevi (the Goddess of the Earth) in another context in the Bhagavatha. Bhoodevi lamented: "Oh Lord! I can bear the burden of any number of sinners. But I cannot bear to carry those who have betrayed Truth." The glow of Truth has been proclaimed by the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and the epics. The Upanishads have expounded the characteristics of Sathya (Truth). "Sathyanna Pramadithavyam, Dharmanna Pramadithavyam" (Do not disregard Truth. Do not be indifferent to Dharma). "In any circumstances do not give up Truth. Overcome all difficulties by adhering to truth" is the teaching of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and other texts.

Harischandra's life as an example

Harischandra, who gave up his kingdom, wife and son and even chose to serve as a watchman in a burning-ghat, is the supreme example of one who

stood for Truth. Vishwamitra, who subjected Harischandra to the most severe tests and ordeals, ultimately declared: "The whole earth can be held in the palm of one's hand. The entire ocean can be drunk at one gulp. The earth and the sky can be rolled into one. But it is impossible to make Harischandra utter a lie." Through Truth not only can the world be subdued, but it is possible even to realise the Lord of the universe. Today in Bharat, because people have given up Truth and Righteousness, they are not able to achieve unity and all kinds of divisions and antagonisms have developed. You have to dedicate yourselves to Truth. In offering worship to Rama. and Krishna, prayers are offered to their manifestations as Truth. "Sathyam vachanaya namah," "Sathyapriyaya namah," "Sathyaswaroopaya namah" (Salutations to the One whose speech is Truth, who is a lover of Truth, who is the embodiment of Truth). In the cause of upholding truth, Sri Ramachandra had to go as an exile to the forest. Rama told the sage Jabali: "For rulers in the Ikshwaku dynasty, the greatest calamity is going back on the plighted word."

Pothana's faith in Lord Rama

God should be worshipped as the embodiment of Truth. This is the primary duty of every Bharatiya. Srinatha was a great scholar and writer who was the Court poet of the Andhra ruler, Singabhupala. He came to his brother-in-law, Pothana, who was living in poverty, and entreated him to dedicate his Bhagavatham to Singabhupala. "If you dedicate your Bhagavatham to that ruler, he will reward you with all kinds of riches," said Srinatha. Pothana replied: "Sri Ramachandra is Lord above all kings. When I have Sri Ramachandra, the King of Kings, what need is there for me to submit to earthly rulers? It is God who offers spiritual benefits, earthly benefits and other benefits to everyone. Cannot the protector of so many countless beings, take care of me?" Pothana firmly held to this belief. Provoked by Pothana's stubborn attitude and attributing it to Pothana's conceit, Srinatha conveyed his feelings to Singabhupala. The ruler became furious. He sent his soldiers to wrest the Bhagavatham from Pothana. Pothana was prepared even to give up his life, but would not surrender the Bhagavatham. On the orders of the ruler, his men set fire to Pothana's house. Pothana prayed: "Oh Sri Ramachandra! Will you not protect atleast your own life-story, apart from protecting your

devotees?" Appealing to Sri Rama to protect the Bhagavatham, Pothana closed his eyes in meditation. Except the Bhagavatham, everything else was consumed by the flames.

Realise the infinite worth of Lord's name

Singabhupala heard about this remarkable phenomenon. From that moment he became a devotee of Rama. It is only when one's devotion is firm, pure and unwavering that the Lord is ready to extend every kind of protection. Unfortunately, in this Kali era, faith is continually changing because of worldly desires. Man is willing to barter away the precious gem of his life for a piece of charcoal. If he realised the true value of human birth he would not treat it so lightly and go as far even to discard God. Tulsidas also said that the man who did not know the preciousness of the Lord's name, casts it away as worthless. Hence, it is essential to realise the infinite worth of the Lord's name. Mira also recognised the uniqueness and greatness of God's name. "Enjoy the nectarine sweetness of the Lord's name," says Mira. Instead of coffee and tea you must drink the sweet essence of the Lord's name. For the man who has installed the Lord in his heart, there will be no troubles of any kind.

It is not easy for all people to recognise the truth about God. When Socrates was attracting the youth of Athens to get interested in the pursuit of wisdom, his mission was misunderstood by the powers that be. The saint Thyagaraja lamented: "Oh Rama; the people do not understand the greatness of the Bhakti marga (path of devotion). People prefer the Bhukti marga (the path of enjoyment) to the Bhakti marga. Today men pursue worldly studies with diligence, but few are interested in the pursuit of Mukti (Liberation). How can such persons ever realise God, whatever may be their education? All efforts are directed towards worldly and material ends, but no effort is made to attain spiritual realisation. Education today enables one to develop intellectual abilities, but does not promote good qualities. Of what value is such education? Book learning may convert the head into a library. But it is of no practical use.

Convert ordinary duties into acts of worship

Socrates was condemned to death for turning the minds of the youth away from worldly concerns to spiritual matters. Socrates preferred to end his life by drinking poison received from the hands of his disciples rather than die at the jailor's hands. This means that more value was attached to spiritual purity than to the physical life. Today, only sensual pleasures, which are transient and unreal, are valued. Those who imagine that they are deriving pleasure through their senses do not realise that it is the senses that are enjoying them and weakening them. What is devotion? It is not doing Japa or sitting in meditation or doing bhajans. Essentially it consists of two things: one, lack of interest in worldly things, and two, love of God. Whatever you do out of love for God is devotion. You may engage yourselves in the ordinary duties of life. Only convert them into acts of worship by offering them to the Divine.

Sadhaks are children of immortality

All of you are devotees, but for want of proper advice you are confused and feel depressed. On account of this confusion and depression you develop doubts. Sai does not ask you to renounce the world. But, in what way should you live in the world? You should enjoy the world with a spiritual outlook. You should realise that you have come down from the Atma to the realm of Nature. Today the reverse view prevails among sadhaks. They wrongly think that they are proceeding from Nature to the Spirit. You have emerged from the Atma and not evolved from Nature. You are the children of immortality. You are sparks of the Divine. You must recognise the Divinity that is in everyone. Learn a lesson from the birds and insects. If a crow sees some edible, it does not start eating it all alone. It summons other crows and enjoys the food in their company. Look at the ants. If one ant chances upon a lump of sugar, it will not start eating it all by itself. It will bring other ants and enjoy the repast all together. Is man worse than crows and ants? Should he not have the sense of unity which these creatures have? Even the ants seem to have some sense of the Divine. That was why Thyagaraja sang: "Oh Rama! May the Brahman, which is present as love in the ant and in the Supreme, protect me!" Thyagaraja recognised the omnipresence of the Divine in

everything from the smallest to the vastest. People recite Thyagaraja's song. But in practice, if Brahma were to appear before them they will offer worship, and if an ant crawls on them they will kill it. Does this demonstrate their sense of oneness? The presence of the ant is not relished. But the spirit of sacrifice and sharing which the ant has is not to be found in man. Neither the practice of hoarding nor that of plundering others is to be found among animals and birds. But today the acquisitive and exploiting tendencies are growing among men from day to day. Embodiments of Love! Realising that human life is precious, fill your hearts with sacred thoughts and lead noble lives, dedicated to the service of society. Such service is indeed service to God. If you offer worship to one idol in your shrine you are worshiping only one. But when you render service to society you will be offering worship to innumerable forms of the Divine.

Among men, each one is himself the cause of his fortune - good or bad. He is himself the builder, the architect, fate, destiny, predetermination, the Will of God - everyone of these explanations is toppled by the principle of Karma.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. The Glory of Bharat

Date: 20 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

DEAR Students, embodiments of Divine Love! Teachers! Patrons of education! To every man born on earth Truth is the visible manifestation of God. The entire cosmos composed of moving and immovable objects has emerged from Truth, is sustained by Truth and merges in Truth. "Sathyam-Jnanam-Anantham Brahma" (Truth is Brahman. Truth is eternal). Vedantins equated Truth with Brahman (the Supreme). Hence everyone has to revere Truth alone.

Sathya and Dharma will not submit to any one. Every kind of strength, physical or otherwise, will have to come under their sway. Success follows Sathya and Dharma. Whatever your scholarship or position, you have to cultivate respect for human values. Indian culture is unexcelled and stands supreme. Students have forgotten its grandeur and glory. In the pursuit of modernity, students are oblivious to their inherent divinity.

Protect Sathya and Dharma

What the students have to safeguard is not the nation. They have to protect Sathya and Dharma only. These two will protect all. Giving up Truth and right conduct, educated persons, in the name of country and nation, are undermining the country. It is more vital to cultivate virtues than go after scholarship or other possessions of a transient nature. It is a pity that even the elders, lured by modernity, are following occidental ways, giving up their own ancient culture. It is no wonder the younger generation is following their example. Leaders, parents and teachers are not setting the right example to young people. Our ancients led exemplary, noble lives because of their practice of virtue. They pursued the four Purusharthas (goals of life) and shared the benefits and joys derived therefrom with others. Young people today indulge in all sorts of practices. Of the four Purusharthas - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha - they have given up Dharma and Moksha and are only pursuing Artha (material welfare) and Kama (sensual desires). As a

consequence, disorder and insecurity have grown in society. The loss of peace and security is the direct result of forgetting Truth and Righteousness. Students! Do not forget our ancient culture. This is the very life-breath of Bharatiyas. Bharat has offered to the world the gems of this culture. Samskriti refers to the process of refinement of every object before it is made fit for human use. For example, paddy has to be converted into cooked rice before it is fit for consumption. In the process it undergoes many changes and acquires added value. Likewise, man should not remain in the state in which he was born. He should manifest his inherent divinity. Students should therefore try to acquire, in addition to academic knowledge, qualities like humility and discrimination, which will help them to become full-fledged human personalities. As a seed finds fulfilment in a fruit-bearing tree, man should find fulfilment in a purposeful life.

Show love towards all living beings

Love is a great quality in man. But it should be shown not only towards other human beings, but also towards all living creatures. This is the mark of the culture. "Adveshta sarvabhoothanam" (There should be no ill-will towards any living being), declares the Gita. The Upanishads, the Gita and the Puranas have all declared that there is no greater Dharma than Truth and that victory goes to those who have truth and righteousness on their side. Dear students! Take note that you have to live for the sake of an ideal and not for mere living. To lead an exemplary life, you need love of the nation and love of the Atma (Spirit). Realise the greatness of your nation, its sacredness, its purity, its vastness, its sublime ideals and how it is overflowing with love. Belittling their own country, Indian students are going abroad. No country in the world has all that Bharat has. Born in this land of Karma, Yoga and Thyaga, students should understand and cherish its cultural heritage. Their ignorance of this culture is due to the absence of teachers and parents who could convey the elements of this culture to the students. During the fifteen days of the summer course, you have to learn how to harmonise this ancient culture with the needs of the modern world and to lead lives governed by Truth and Righteousness. Position or power is not important. They are transient. One should not be proud about wealth, progeny or youthful vigour. All of them

may go in a moment. Adolescence is a precious period in one's life. It should be rightly used.

Remember that Bharatiya culture transcends the limitations of time, space and circumstance. Endeavour to know its unique greatness. In the coming weeks I shall be speaking on the functions of the body, the senses, the mind, the Will and the Atma from the spiritual point of view, as desired by the Vice-Chancellor in his welcome address. It is essential that students should know about these matters. Of what avail is it for one to know all about the external world without knowing who he is in reality? You have to know the nature of the Brahmam and the Self. Devotion is the most important requisite. Without devotion to God, nothing can be accomplished.

Indian Culture and Spirituality for students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. Sanctify the body

Date: 20 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

STUDENTS! Embodiments of Divine Love! The body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are vestures worn by man. Only when you understand the significance and purpose of these activities can you make proper use of them. You wear trousers, coat, banian, shirt etc. Only when you know how to use each of these items can you use them in the right way and get the benefit thereof. Otherwise you may make bizarre use of them, like putting on the banian over the shirt. Hence, you see to it that the clothes are worn properly. Likewise, your body is a garment. It is only when you know how it should be worn and how it should be used that you can make good use of it and get the best out of it. "Dahyati iti deha" (The body is that which is burnt). This is the derived meaning of the word deha (the body). It is well known that the body is burnt after death. But the body experiences burning even when it is alive. This is because of worries. "The body is inert. It is contaminated and riddled with disease. It is a bundle of bones. It will not save you from the ocean of birth and death. Therefore, cling to the lotus feet of Hari, Oh mind!" This was the prayer of the sages. The body is made up of the five elements and is impermanent. Only the Indwelling Spirit is eternal and unchanging. You may accept the body that you have assumed and even enjoy it. But you should know how to guard it and enjoy it. Another name for the body is Sarira. The word is derived from the term, "Siryathi iti sariraha" (That which is liable to decay). At birth the body is a lump of flesh and blood. As it grows it acquires beauty of form in youth. Then it is overtaken by the ravages of old age. The body is thus subject to many changes.

View the body as a Temple

A third name for the body is Mandir (temple or shrine). It is described as a temple enshrining the eternal divine Atma (individual soul). Viewed as a temple, it has to be regarded as the sacred and pure abode of the Divine. As such it should not be misused. This implies that the body is intended to be used for having good thoughts and good deeds. Because the body is given for

performing right actions, it has to be maintained in a fit condition. It is the instrument for all activity and therefore should be maintained well. Every time before you do anything, you have to put to yourself this question: "I am the indwelling divine Atma in this body. As such, is it proper for me to do this action or not?" You have also to determine whether the particular action is proper or improper. Only then you will be using the body in the right way. You dare not use the body according to your whims just because you have got it.

Kshetra and Kshetrajna

The body has also been called Kshetra. The Gita enjoins that one should know what is kshetra and who is the Kshetrajna. You are the Knower of the field dwelling within the kshetra (body). You have to remain as a witness and see that the body is properly used. We describe Kasi (Varanasi), Badrinath, Tirupathi as Kshetras, because they are associated with the Divine and enjoy a holy atmosphere. Sacred actions like worship are performed in these places. Similarly, in the kshetra of the body, good thoughts and good actions should prevail. This is the inner meaning of the appellation kshetra (holy place). The other meaning of the term kshetra is field. In this field of the body, the fruits we reap are dependent on the seeds we sow. If you sow good thoughts, you reap the fruit of good actions. Evil thoughts will yield only bad results. The body is thus a field in which the seeds of merit and sin are sown. In cultivating a field for growing crops, we wait for the right season and the appropriate conditions to sow particular seeds. The suitability of a land for growing a particular crop has to be decided. Sowing cannot be done indiscriminately. However, for this body, considered as a field, there are no such constraints. It can be cultivated in all conditions and at all times. It can be utilised night and day. When you sow seeds on cultivable land, you may get a good crop or a poor crop. You may not realise your expectations. But in the case of the human body, you are bound to reap the fruits of the good or the bad thoughts you sow as seeds. You will have cent percent return. As you sow, so will you reap. The crop depends on your thoughts and the harvest will be determined by your actions. You must therefore ensure that only seeds in the form of good thoughts are sown. You should not misuse the body as you like.

Role of food in maintaining thoughts

Those who wish to use the body properly and see that they have good thoughts and perform good acts, have to take note of two factors - regulation of diet and regulation of their environments. You must seek to know what kind of food you should eat. You should not consume any kind of food merely to appease hunger. You must take only Satwic food. Our thoughts are determined by the kind of food we consume. The body is cleansed by water. The mind is purified by Truth. It is only when what is conducive to truth is taken that you can pursue the path of Truth. As the body is a sacred shrine you should not take in any intoxicating substances. Articles of food which promote Rajasic qualities (like anger) should be eschewed. What is Satwic food? The prevalent view is that fruits and milk constitute Satwic food. This is not all. What is consumed by the mouth is not the only thing that goes into the body. The other sense organs like the eyes, the ears, the nose and the hands also "consume" objects from the outside world. Through the eyes you have to see only what is pure. To see all kinds of things indiscriminately is fraught with dangers. The power of sight should be used only for sacred purposes. Unfortunately the vision of youth today is getting increasingly perverted (Keechaka Drishti). The result is they meet with the same fate as Keechaka (in the Mahabharata) who was destroyed by Bhima. Students should be particularly careful in this regard. It is only when they use the eyes in a pure and godly way will they be receiving Satwic impressions through the eyes. The ears also need pure food. This means that you should listen only to sacred speech and hear only matters about the Divine. Always hear good and pleasant things about others. In this way you must safeguard the ears from pollution. Only then will you be "consuming" Satwic food through the ears.

Only fragrant and sweet smelling scents should be absorbed through the nose. When foul smell is inhaled disease sets in. If you inhale foul air, you are likely to breathe in disease-producing germs. You must inhale pure air in a clean open space. Even the hands must "consume" pure food. This means that you must perform good acts with your hands. That is the way to treat the body as a temple.

Five gates for the temple of body

When you get rid of the evils associated with pollution of speech, hearing, sight, thought and action (arising from the misuse of the five sense organs), you will be able to become the Paramatma (Divinise yourself). If the senses are fed with polluted stuff, you cannot become pure merely by taking milk and fruit. You must take in pure Satwic food through all the five sense organs.

There are many doors to a temple. They are intended to let in devotees who seek to worship God. Gateways in temples are intended only for devotees to enter. Similarly there are for this temple of the body five gates. What is the purpose of these doorways? If we build a house and erect doors in it, they are for the use of our kith and kin and not for all stray animals to walk in. If such animals enter, the doors are shut against them. Likewise, the doors in this sacred body should be kept open only for sacred and Divine entrants. Only then it deserves the name Kshetra (shrine). It ceases to be a temple if unholy objects are allowed to enter it.

Eschew all bad company

Next comes Vihara (moving in different places). You will have to consider seriously what sort of places you should visit, what kind of environment in which you should live and what type of persons with whom you should associate yourselves. You should eschew all bad company, because your thoughts are related to the company you keep. Young people today are cultivating bad company. They take easily to bad ways. This is an affront to the human body. The sages of yore chose to live in solitude for directing their thoughts towards God. But even this is a sign of weakness. For instance, if you want to subdue anger, can you do it by any amount of penance in a forest? As your anger arises in the midst of people, it has to be conquered only in the same milieu and not in an unpeopled forest. You may remain tranquil as long as you are in the forest but when you come back to a crowd, you will be the same old irate person. If you want to control your senses, it is a delusion to imagine that this can be done by some kind of rigorous penance. It can be achieved easily if you understand the subtle workings of

the body. You can utilise your new car well, for instance, only if you know all about its working and how it should be run.

Ensure proper use of the body

All the troubles of man are due to the fact that he does not know how to make proper use of his body. Hence, he is a prey to sorrow and disease. One thing should be remembered: No one can go against the Divine Will. No one can alter the Lord's law. It should be realised that the body functions because of the chaitanya (consciousness) within it. Just as the lights, the horn and the engine in a car, though inert in themselves, begin to function when the power is supplied to them from the battery, likewise the organs in the vehicle that is the human body (the eyes, the ears, etc.,) can function well only if the Atmic consciousness animates and activates them. Just as a magnet attracts iron filings by its magnetic power, the Atma is responsible for the operation of all the organs which are inert by themselves. Man is prone to three kinds of mistaken ideas. One is to consider what does not belong to him as his own. Another is to regard persons who do not belong to him as his own. The third is to regard the evanescent as the eternal. Man considers the body as his real self. If that is the case, why should he say, "This is my body." The statement clearly implies that he is different from the body. (The owner is different from what he owns). When a man says, "This is my kerchief," he is apart from the kerchief, which he can cast away. Hence, how can one say that he is the body? This is the first mistake.

Secondly, in worldly affairs man is misled by the belief that he is the owner of properties of various kinds - houses, vehicles, etc. You build a house and call it yours. You sell it and it is no longer yours. Likewise, you buy a car and call it "Mine." When you sell it, it ceases to be yours. So, it is yours as long as you use it. Forgetting that all these possessions are temporary, you develop attachments for them. Nothing is yours. How can those which belong to the body be yours? All these are caused by Maya (delusion), the sense of possessiveness and the aberrations of the mind. All of them are passing clouds. Before marriage, no one can say who is the husband and who is the wife. Before birth, no one can say who is the mother and who is the child.

Only after birth, you declare, "He is my son." Only after marriage, you say, "This is my wife." All these relationships are associated with the body. The same person is called in different ways according to various relationships.

Realise that the body is not permanent

You have to do your duty to your kith and kin. But while discharging your duties, you have to keep the Supreme always in mind. The worldly life has to be led, with spiritual relation as the goal. As long as you live in the world, you have to conform to the ways of the world. But the ideal must be based on the recognition that nothing belongs to you - neither mother, nor father, kinsmen or wealth. All these are related to the changing body, which is the basis for all mental aberrations. It is wrong to regard the body as permanent. But it is essential to keep the body in good health as long as there is life, just as you must ensure that your boat does not spring a leak till you cross the river. The body has to be kept clean and for this purpose you have to practise chanting the Lord's name and doing japa. The Divine cleanses the heart, when you offer it to God.

Students/Besides the body, you have to reckon with the sense organs, the mind and the Buddhi. It is only when their nature is properly understood will one be able to lead a full human life. In the absence of such understandings, man becomes a prey to many difficulties. There is constant talk about Sadhana but no special sadhana is needed if one gets at the Truth. All sadhana is aimed at perceiving the Truth. During the ensuing fortnight, if you are able to grasp the nature of the body, the senses, the mind, the Buddhi, and the Atma, which is the Supreme Witness presiding over all of them, you will be able to master the mystery of the cosmos (which is made up of the five basic elements, the Pancha Bhutas). As God is the basis of everything, you have to develop faith in God.

If each one does his duty, in the spirit of dedication, the Light can illumine all. But, if the doors of the heart are shut against the Light, how can

darkness disappear?

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. The abode of the Spirit

Date: 21 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! The human body, although it is valueless in itself and is impermanent, has to be carefully protected because it enshrines the Divine Atma. This is man's foremost duty.

Without a strong physique, man is subject to numerous ailments. The ancient Romans, who were aware of this truth and who were the forerunners of western civilization, displayed deep concern regarding the development of the body. The body is a world in itself. It is not merely the outer form. It is the collective embodiment of various organs and limbs. Each organ has its own beauty, which has to be fostered. A body afflicted with disease is incapable of any resolute action. Pure and sublime ideas can emanate only from a healthy and strong body. Men of all faiths are agreed on this. The Divine Spirit illumines the body though it is compounded of flesh, blood and many impure things. The Atma does not grow with the body's strength nor does it decay owing to the body's weakness. The Atma Principle is not subject to growth or decay. It is ever pure, precious and immutable.

Body is the temple of the Lord within

People professing different faiths are all agreed on the need to nourish the health and happiness of the body because they regard the body as the temple of the Lord within. Instead of practising right actions and putting the body to proper use, many subject the body to various ordeals in the name of worship and observance of austere penances. Can the Self be realised by starving the body?

Man's primary aim should be to achieve Atma Jnana (Self-knowledge). The first step in this quest for Self-Knowledge is to understand the nature of man. However many lives one many have had, the body he has assumed now is new. Divinity is inherent in man. The discovery of his real Self calls for appropriate enquiry leading to the perception of the Real. Through this

perception, man can experience the cosmos in its entirety. Without going through this process, man remains merely human in form, with no realisation of his true Self.

When we regard the body as an instrument, we should realise that the prescribed limits for its use have to be observed. Every object in the world is governed by certain regulations. Likewise this body is also subject to restrictions. In our actions, in our speech, in what we see and what we hear, in our thoughts, we must seek to promote purity and sanctity. When this is not done, all God-given limbs and organs are misused and man ceases to be human and becomes a demon. As the body is a kind of 'Limited Company', limits have to be observed with regard to food, drink, speech and hearing etc. Excesses in these spheres result in great harm. Every individual thinks that it is enough if he takes care of himself. He should realise that he is a part of society and that he should be equally concerned about the welfare of society as a whole.

Do not indulge in excesses of any kind

Man today is subject to more maladies caused by mental worries than by consuming bad food. There should be a limit even to intellectual speculation. Excessive cerebration leads to delusions and mental aberrations. Various mental diseases also arise as a result. A study of university students showed that 80 to 90 percent of the students in several universities were suffering from one or other type of ailment caused by psychological factors. Students should see that in this most precious stage of their lives they do not become a prey to illhealth and disease. They should keep their minds free from worries and not indulge in excesses of any kind. They should not waste money, food, time and energy in any manner. The country today is faced with grave economic problems. It can progress only when selfishness and self-interest are given up. The spirit of cooperation has to be promoted. A balance has to be maintained between individual interests and national interests. Everything in life depends on maintaining the balance, whether it be walking, riding a bicycle or driving a car. Today this balance has been lost because of excessive knowledge and misuse of technical skills. Through sight, hearing,

speech or thought, knowledge is being misused or wasted. Every action involves using of energy. If the energy in the body is properly utilised, then balance will be maintained and the body will be in good shape. Students! Life is wasted in brooding over the past and worrying about the future. What is the root cause of man's sorrow and sickness? Not being content with what he has and lamenting over what he does not have, man forfeits peace of mind. There is no need to enquire into what is past or what is in store in the future. What is most important is the Present - which contains both the past and the future. Hence make the best use of the present and lead ideal lives. Develop selfconfidence. With self-confidence, you can accomplish anything and secure joy. You will be able to face any difficulties and overcome them.

Performing duty confers God's Grace

However long you may live, whatever scientific knowledge you may acquire, whatever positions you may hold, sometime or other you have to know the truth about your Self. Start knowing it from now. You have to be on the alert all the time. You can never know when the Lord's Grace, His Love and Benediction will be showered on you- -at what time and at what place and in what circumstances. You cannot see what is happening in the spiritual world, nor can you understand the workings of the Spirit. When you go on performing your duty and enjoying what you do, that itself will confer bliss on you. Only man is endowed with the capacity to discover his Divinity. All other species live on what is provided by Nature. Man alone lives on prepared foods of various kinds. Birds and animals which live on natural foods are not prone to diseases. But man by becoming a slave of his palate cultivates tastes of various kinds and consumes different kinds of non-vegetarian food.

Food, Head and God are inter-related

It is significant that those who live on vegetarian food are less prone to diseases while meateaters are subject to various diseases. Man should consume what is in accord with the needs of the human body. Doctors speak about proteins. Are there not proteins in vegetables, milk and curds and pulses? Non-vegetarian food not only affects the body but also the mind.

Food, Head, God - these three are inter-related. By consuming animal food, animal tendencies are aroused. As is your food, so are your thoughts. Men today are behaving in a manner worse than that of wild animals in the forest. They have become cruel, pitiless and hard-hearted. There is no sympathy or understanding between man and man. The main reason for this condition is the kind of food that is consumed. Students! Be careful about the food you eat. See that it is conducive to your health and happiness. The ancient sages used to eat only once a day. They declared that the man who eats only once is a Yogi (Godcentred person), the one who eats twice a day is a Bhogi (enjoyer) and the one that eats thrice a day is a Rogi (a sick man). Today people go on consuming food at all times, not to mention drinks and snacks in between. With the result that indigestion sets in. Young people should be satisfied with 2000 calories of food per day. This is enough to sustain them. Anything in excess will cause indigestion and sleeplessness. Loss of sleep gives rise to many ailments. Don't worry about sleep. If you go to bed without any worry, you will get sound sleep.

Purity of mind and body bestows Balam

Our ancients wished to live long for the sake of a Godly life and for that purpose preserved their health in body and mind. Today people look aged by the time they are 60 or 70. You may have read in the Mahabharata that Krishna was 86 years old and Arjuna was 84 at the time of the Kurukshetra war. They were in the vigour of youth and fought great battles. Bhishma, who was the Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava armies, was 116 years of age. Today very few survive upto that age and many are decrepit long before they reach that age. Bhishma was engaged in fierce battle for nine days. What was the source of his strength? Strength of mind, strength derived from food and, above all, Atma Balam (strength of Spirit). Today spiritual strength is totally lacking among the people. Self-confidence is constantly going up and down. There is no steadiness of mind. When the will is weak from moment to moment, how can there be any firmness in life? Everyone must endeavour to develop the courage to face the vicissitudes of life, joys or sorrows, gains or losses, with equanimity. There are many today in the country who claim to be believers in God. Because these believers do not conduct themselves

properly, many are turning atheists. They talk about bhakti (devotion), but in their actions they are Bhukti (epicures). Devotion is what the sage Narada expounded after churning the Upanishads and gathering the nectarine cream out of them. It is only when devotion is constant and unchanging that its fruits can be realised. Students! The body, the sense organs, the mind, the Buddhi (intellect) and the Atma are the five vital elements constituting man. Students should learn the secrets about each of them. Once they have understood the truth about them, they need no other spiritual discipline. This Summer Course has been organised to give you an insight into the mysteries of these five entities. Once an old woman came to me and said that her mind was causing her endless trouble by its restless wandering. I asked her, "Where is your mind? Show it to me, I shall destroy it". She said: "I don't know where it is." I told her "If you do not know where the mind is, how do you say it is troubling you? Is it the mind that is troubling you or are you troubling yourself?. When you do not know the cause of your trouble, to blame the mind is meaningless." You have to understand how the mind and the senses function. All are valuable, as the Divine never creates anything that is valueless.

12. Be Master of the senses

Date: 22 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

DEAR STUDENTS! The body wields influence over the senses. The senses have even greater influence over the body. The body cannot exist without the senses and vice versa. They are inextricably interdependent. Each is useless without the other, like the positive and negative ends of an electric current.

Proper protection of the body is an essential duty of the individual. In this connection the role of the senses is remarkable. The wonders performed by the Divine defy description. Equally the part played by the senses is marvellous. The senses are subtler than the body. Although the potencies of sound, touch, sight, hearing and taste exist within the body, the senses exercise extraordinary power over all of them. Joy and sorrow, heat and cold are experienced when the sense organs come into contact with external objects. Without sensory objects the senses cannot function. It is not easy for anyone to comprehend or describe the myriad facets of the sense organs.

The indriyas (senses) have another name called Matrah (Matra is that which measures). The sense organs have the capacity to measure. How is this done? Take, for instance, a fruit. Which of the senses has the power to determine whether it is sweet or sour? Which sense organ decides the taste of an object? It is the tongue. The tongue determines whether an eatable is tasty or not and makes it known to the person concerned. Which organ has the capacity to declare, in the case of a picture, whether it is attractive or otherwise? The determining organ is the eye. In the same way, the power to determine whether an object is fragrant or foul-smelling is given to the nose. The ear determines whether a certain note is harmonious or discordant. It is because the sense organs have this power of measuring and determining the particular characteristic of sense objects that they are called Matrah (Measuring instruments).

The senses are like horses

In the Kathopanishad, the senses are described as horses yoked to the chariot of the body. In regarding the senses as Aswa (horses) what is the inner significance? Aswa means that which is continually restless. It is common knowledge that a horse, whether it is running or standing or sleeping, moves some part of its body or the other all the time. The tail, or the leg, or the back or the nose, some part or other is kept moving. It is because of its restless nature that the horse is called Aswam. Take the example of a peepal tree: Whether there is any breeze or not its leaves are always rustling. Hence it is called Aswattha tree. In ancient times, the rulers used to perform a Yaga (sacrifice) called the Aswa-Medha Yaga. Aswa means that which is fickle and restless. Medha means Buddhi (intelligence). Aswa-Medha means "fickle-minded." The horse that is used in the yaga symbolises a fickle mind. Whoever is capable of capturing and controlling that horse is described as a Dheemantha, a man of heroic intelligence, worthy of meeting in combat. Here we see the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the term Aswa-Medha. It is only when both the meanings are synthesised that we get at the whole truth. It is the duty of every person to control the horse-like senses. Only then can he become a hero. Whatever yagas or yajnas one may perform, whatever scripture he may have mastered, if he has no control over his senses, all these accomplishments are worthless.

Use and misuse of senses

The term Matra as applied to senses has yet another meaning. It indicates that there is divinely prescribed limit to what each indriya (sense organ) can experience. For instance, the eye can only see, but cannot hear. The mouth can only speak but cannot see. Thus each organ has been endowed by God with a specific talent. Only those who use these organs according to the divinely prescribed functions will be acting up to the will of the Divine. Those who violate the prescribed limits will be going against the Divine Will. Hence everyone should try to use the sense organs with due regard to their prescribed functions. The nose, for instance, has been allotted a specific assignment. It should inhale and exhale air for the purpose of preserving an individual's health. The nose should distinguish between good and bad smells and take in only what is good and fragrant. This is the specific role ordained

for the nose. Unfortunately the nose is used for taking snuff and inhaling foul air. By these practices, one violates the injunctions pertaining to the use of the nose. Thereby he commits a double offence: one, violating a Divine injunction and the other causing damage to his health,. As a result, man becomes a prey to disease. Likewise, in the case of tongue, it has been given to man so that it may decide what is wholesome and what is bad in the food that is consumed so as to promote one's health, to speak sweetly and give joy to others, and to communicate one's innermost thoughts to others. The tongue, which has been given for these edifying purposes, is being grossly misused today. It is used for consuming narcotics, eating animal food, smoking, indulging in abuse of others, carrying tales, using harsh words (language) and causing pain to others. In these ways the injunctions of the Divine are violated by setting at naught the prescribed limits. As a consequence, man experiences numerous troubles.

Control the senses to attain Divinity

It is only by using the divinely given senses for the purposes for which they are intended that man can rise to the level of the Divine. You should not use the sense organs as you please just because you have them. They are like horses yoked to a chariot. You must know how to handle them properly so that the chariot can be used well. The horses must be in front of the chariot. Today, on the contrary, the horses are behind the chariot. This leads to dangerous consequences. If, on the ground that you should respect the senses and give them a place of honour, you place the horses (senses) in the chariot, what will be the result? The chariot cannot move at all. While fostering the senses, no effort is being made to bring them under control internally. This is like feeding a horse excessively, but not giving it adequate work. This also is likely to have untoward results. We are failing today to engage the senses adequately. They are being allowed to run amuck. As a consequence, the senses are threatening to dictate to the master.

The ten wives of the Mind

This situation may be likened to that of a man with many wives. Uttannapada

had two wives and because of the differences between them, the child Druva had to go to the forest to perform penance. Dasaratha had three wives. To comply with the demands of his youngest wife, Dasaratha had to endure the departure of his dearest son, Rama, to the forest. If such difficulties can arise for those having two or three wives, imagine the plight of one who has to manage ten wives. The mind has ten wives - the five sense organs and the five organs of action. Each organ seeks to enjoy objects of its own choice. The nose smells some good edible and wants to have it. The ear hears some sweet music and wants to enjoy it. The eye hankers after a new film. When all of them are keen about their own particular desires, how can the master (the mind) satisfy them all at the same time? Unable to satisfy them the mind gets frustrated. How can one wedded to ten wives get peace? It is only when the senses are kept under proper control that man would be happy himself and share that happiness with others.

Cultivate equanimity to control the senses

There is a method by which the demands of the senses can be reconciled and harmonised. This is by treating both good and bad with equal-mindedness. There are people who display such equanimity. Tukaram is an illustrious example. He was a saintly person. His wife was a termagant. By his calmness and forbearance, Tukaram managed to get on with her. Once, Tukaram was bringing home in his cart the sugarcane crop harvested from his small farm. As he was going home, the children of the village gathered round him and pleaded for a piece of sugarcane. In his boundless goodness, Tukaram allowed the children to help themselves to the cane on the cart. By the time he reached home there was only one stalk of cane left. Seeing this his wife got enraged, abused Tukaram, and taking out the cane, struck Tukaram with it. The cane broke into three pieces. Tukaram calmly remarked, "I was wondering how to distribute the single remaining cane to the members of the family. You have solved the problem. You can keep one piece and give the other two to the children." Such forbearance and equanimity can be found only in a few high-souled persons. These qualities can be acquired only through devotion and faith. You need not feel disheartened at the prospect of being unable to control the senses. By developing one-pointed devotion, the

senses can be brought under control. Kabir is an example of a godly man in a different situation. His wife was highly devoted and faithful, totally dedicated to serving the husband. One day, Kabir was plying his loom, chanting the name of "Ram" all the time. Suddenly, he called his wife and said that one thread had snapped and asked her to bring a lamp. It was noon and when she brought the lighted lamp, Kabir told her to take it away as it was not necessary. She silently took it back without any argument. With such a dutiful wife, Kabir was able to develop his devotion and expressed his gratitude to God for His grace.

A lesson to be learnt in sense control

Here you have two examples of saintly men, who, despite their different family situations, pursued their godly ways equally well. It is not the environment that matters. It is the purity of our impulses which count. Don't worry about the external environment. The ancient sages regarded sense-control as a form of penance. Disciplining of senses calls for an understanding of how the senses function. A Christian priest learnt a lesson in sense control from the driver of a horse carriage in which he was travelling. The priest noticed that the driver was beating the horse severely as it was approaching a railway crossing. Taking pity on the animal, the priest asked the driver why he was beating the horse unnecessarily. The driver explained that at the level crossing there were some white painted stones which caused a fright in the horse. He was beating the animal as the horse was more afraid of the whip than the white stones. The priest learnt that diverting the mind away from one undesirable thought was the way to turn it in the desirable direction. The senses have been compared to pasu (animals) whose vision is externally oriented. Man should strive to be a master of the senses and not their slave. For this purpose, first of all, man should not pamper the senses. Man should realise that the pleasure derived from the senses is momentary and ends only in grief. If the senses are kept busy the right way, there will be no trouble from them.

Atma is not affected by abuse or praise

In the Mahabharata when Sisupala abused Sri Krishna in Yudhishtira's audience hall and after Sisupala was slain by Sri Krishna, a flame emerged from Sisupala's body and merged in Sri Krishna. Yudhishtira was surprised at this phenomenon. He questioned Narada how a vile enemy of Krishna like Sisupala could have such a glorious end as the merger of his spirit in Sri Krishna. Narada explained as follows: "Abuse or praise relates only to the body and not to the Atma. The one Supreme Paramatma dwells in all beings. That being the case, who is the cavalier and who is it that is cavilled? Who is a friend and who is an enemy? All are the same. The blood that constantly remembers God becomes an offering to God., (This is a reference to the blood flowing from Sisupala's body to the feet of Sri Krishna). Whether out of hatred or jealousy or attachment, if the Lord's name is remembered that is sufficient. Sisupala remembered Sri Krishna's name more often than many devotees. Devotees remember the Lord at the time of worship alone. Sisupala in his intense hatred of Krishna, had Krishna in his mind all the time, whether waking or sleeping. It was because of this constant remembrance of Krishna's name that Sisupala's soul could merge in Krishna." Laymen look only at the superficial aspects of things. The Lord does not see things that way. He is free from hatred or envy, likes and dislikes. When these are attributed to the Lord they are only a reflection of one's own feelings. God is like a mirror. What you see is only a reflection of your own action and posture. God neither punishes nor rewards any one. Punishment or reward is the outcome of your own actions.

Hence, no one is entitled to question the actions of God, accusing God of favouritism or indifference to someone or the other. Who has the authority to prescribe to God how He should conduct Himself?.

The divinity that is present in everyone will find expression in varying types of behaviour. The actions of the Divine are totally free from self-interest. Because God is the embodiment of Love, no taint can adhere to God's actions. As God is the embodiment of all that is pure and untainted, any defect that is attributed to God is only a projection of the defect in the individual concerned. Your defective vision makes you see defects which do not exist in creation. If the senses are properly used, they will offer the right

impressions. Everyone should embark on the Sadhana for disciplining the senses.

13. Royal road to realisation

Date: 23 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Control of the senses should be one of the primary aims of students.

More than the sense organs, the sensory perceptions are powerful. They are sound, touch, form, taste and smell.

Among the sense organs the most important, one is the mouth (or tongue) with the power of Vak (speech). If one can conquer the tongue he will be the master of all the other senses. The tongue has two functions: speaking and eating. Whoever is able to master these two faculties, will be able to raise himself to the level of the Divine. When the tongue becomes silent, the mind begins to talk. To control the mind's talk, the Buddhi (intellect or intelligence) has to be awakened. Then one should strive to turn the Buddhi towards the Atma (the Divine). True sadhana (spiritual striving) consists in turning the tongue towards the mind, the mind towards the intellect and the intellect towards the Atma. While this royal road is available to man, he chooses to immerse himself in worldly pleasures and gets submerged in sorrow.

Atma is the basis for the external world

No one tries to find out what is the base for the senses. Nor does one seek to know who is the enjoyer of the pleasures derived through the senses. Students should recognise the intimate relationship between the external phenomenal world and the world within oneself. Is it the body or the senses or the Atma which derives pleasures from consuming food, or seeing a beautiful sight or smelling a fragrant object? It is not the body, much less the sense organs. It is the Atma, which fosters, presides and rules over all of them, that is the root cause. The Atma is the basis for the external world and is the motivator of the internal world. When the cardinal role of the Atma is understood as the root cause of everything, the temporary and transient sense organs will cease to have dominance over us.

The most important sense organ is the tongue. Mastery over it will enable one to master all other sense organs. The Kathopanishad has compared the senses to horses. What are the characteristics of a horse? It can run fast. But once a bridle is put in its mouth, its entire movement can be controlled. How is it that a small bridle is able to control such a large animal? For the horse the mouth is most important. Once the mouth is bridled the entire animal comes under control. In the human context the mouth is the most important among the five sense organs. With a small flame we can kindle a big fire. The power of speech is like the flame. With its fire we can do many things. By controlling speech (and the tongue) you can acquire the capacity to master the world. Using the power of vak (speech) you can achieve something splendid or indulge in something mean. Speech can be employed for blessing one or blaming one. In a dithyramb in praise of the tongue, Jayadeva sings: "Oh tongue! You are pure! You are sweet! Do not indulge in idle talk. Sing the glories of the Lord - Govinda! Damodara! Madhava!" "A slip of the foot may not cause much harm. But a slip of the tongue may take you to hell," says a proverb. When the tongue is used recklessly, it can cause great pain to the heart. There is no doctor on earth who can heal the wound caused by a harsh word.

Free the senses from worldly objects

When the senses are associated with worldly objects, they can give rise to pleasure as well as pain. For instance someone outside is abusing you; as long as the abuse is outside the range of your sense organs, you are not affected by what is said. But if the abusive words reach your ears, you get excited and enraged. What is the reason for this excitement and anger? As long as there was no contact between the external happenings and the sense organs, the individual was unruffled. It is the contact with the sense objects that provoked the strong reaction. To take an opposite example: some one is praising you, expatiating on your great qualities. As long as the words of praise have not reached your ears, you derive no joy nor do you feel a sense of endearment. But once you have heard the words of praise, you rejoice in them and develop a love for the speaker.

What is the reason for disliking one or loving another? It is the contact with the things in the external world. The senses will be able to get on peacefully only when they have minimised their contacts with the world outside. In the alternative, if the individual is able to treat good and bad, the pleasant and the unpleasant, with equanimity, he will remain unaffected by the impressions received by the senses.

It is not so easy to control the sense organs. The easier path is to develop an attitude of equipoise. You have to enquire how to achieve equal-mindedness, without giving way either to elation or agitation. You have to develop the conviction, "I am not the sense organs. I am not the body. I am the Atma." When you have acquired this conviction the sense organs will cease to be a bother. By constant contemplation on the idea that you are the Atma, you can transcend the human limitations and experience the Divine.

The story of the noble Englishman

You may have heard about the great and noble Englishman Philip Sydney. While he was at school his father wrote to him a letter giving some words of advice. He wrote, "My dear Son! Every day offer your heartfelt prayers to God. Strive always to turn your mind towards God. Behave with respect and humility towards your teachers and fellow students. Do not give room for anger, greed or discontentment. Don't take to heart any criticism levelled at you. Don't get elated by the praise of others. Don't indulge in criticism of others." Towards the end of the letter the father described an important warning. He said, "If you have to make a promise to anyone, make it only to God and to none else. Speech is a gift of God. Hence the plighted word must be offered only to God. You have no right to give a pledge to any one else. You will be guilty of misusing your word. If you follow this rule your glow will shine. Your wisdom will grow. You will stand forth as an ideal student. Always control your tongue. Never allow it to run amuck." Philip Sydney followed his father's advice and achieved great eminence.

Students should note that excessive talk pollutes the mind. Students should not concern themselves with any matters other than their studies. A Vidyarthi

must be a seeker of knowledge and not a Vishayarthi, a seeker of sensory objects.

The four vices of the tongue

The tongue is prone to four types of vices: [1] Uttering falsehood, [2] Talking ill of others, [3] Indulging in scandal and [4] Excessive talk. These four tendencies undermine peace of mind. Students should try to avoid these four evils and adhere to truth and righteousness. Thereby they will be sublimating their lives. The five sense organs subject man to different kinds of troubles. In the case of animals each sense perception affects only one animal. For instance, the deer is affected by sound. On hearing certain sounds the deer gets frightened. The elephant is influenced by touch. The touch of the mahout's goad makes it obey him. The moth is a victim of sight. It is attracted by a flame and falls in the fire. The fish is a victim of taste. Attracted by the taste of a worm it swallows the bait and is caught. The bee is attracted by smell and falls a victim to this temptation. Each of these is subject to the power of one of the five sense perceptions. But man is a victim to all the five allurements!

Consider the story of Prahlada. He was unaffected by all ordeals to which he was subjected by his father on account of his unflinching devotion to the Lord. Though he was a young lad he had such control over his senses that every attempt to lure him into the sensual ways failed. He was resolute in his faith in God. Nothing could shake it. The sense organs are subtler than the body. The mind is subtler than the sense organs. The Buddhi (intellect) is subtler than the mind. Subtler than all of them is the Atma. They will have to come under the sway of the Atma.

Students should know how to behave

Because the sense organs are highly potent, the first task for man is to bring them under his control to lead an ideal life. Because young people today have not developed sense-control all their actions and behaviour are devious. They are unaware of how they should sit in the classroom, how they should walk

about, how they should read, how they should sleep or how they should behave towards their parents, elders and friends. They have no concentration while talking to anyone. By constant practice of right conduct they will acquire control over all their senses. Constant practice alone can bring about proper behaviour in every situation walking, talking, eating etc. While walking on the road, students should have their eyes on the ground. They will then have no distractions. Young people today do not know how to sit properly. They sit with their backs bent. This causes various ailments and leads to premature old age. While walking or sitting, you must be straight like a stick. There is a physiological reason for this. A very important nerve, the Sushumna Nadi, runs through the spinal column, from its base in the Mooladhara to the top of the head, the Sahasrara. If this gets bent the results will be serious. The importance of the Sushumna Nadi is known only to those engaged in spiritual sadhana such as Kundalini Yoga. Do not interest yourselves in affairs that do not directly concern you. Students have to cultivate self-discipline during this precious period in their lives. The body and every organ in it has to be kept in good trim. The body is the instrument even for God-realisation. The ancient sages lived long years in good health because of their physical and spiritual discipline. Students should follow their example to make their lives sublime. They should stand out as the inheritors of their great spiritual legacy. Only then they will shine as living exponents of Indian culture. There is no difference between culture and spirituality. In fact the culture of all countries is based on spirituality. The two are integrally related. Dividing cultures on the basis of nationality or religion is a sign of narrow-mindedness. Religion is a much misunderstood word. Religion really means Realisation. It is the same common experience for all who have realised God.

14. The human chariot

Date: 24 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

DEAR Students! Man is a combination of body, mind and Atma. The three together help man to reach the highest stage. The body is the instrument for actions. The mind is the means of cognition. The changeless and permanent Reality is the Atma. This is the divinity in man. Doing, awareness and being are the three important aspects of man. Body, mind and Atma have different names and characteristics, but it is their joint role which helps man to divinise himself. Their alienation from each other degrades man to the animal level. Antahkarana is used both in common speech and in spiritual parlance. What is its form, its nature, its special quality, and what is its purpose? When we enquire along these lines, we find that the mind itself takes the subtle form of Antahkarana (the inner activator). The mind assumes four forms: Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara. (mind, intelligence, memory and ego). Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara are three subtle forms of the mind. According to the function that is performed, the particular name is given. The same Brahmin, when he is performing in a temple, is called a priestly poojari (Brahmin); when he is working in the kitchen, he is called a Brahmin cook; when teaching students, he is called a Brahmin teacher, and when interpreting the Panchanga (almanac) he is called a Panchanga brahmin. In the same manner when the mind is engaged in thought processes, it is called Manas. When it is engaged in the process of enquiry and discrimination between right and wrong, it is called Buddhi (intelligence). The third name is Chitta, the will or the decision-making agency. It has the function of memory. When the mind identifies itself with the body in action it is called Ahamkara (I-am-the-doer).

Mind, thoughts and actions

The mind, although one, displays these varied forms on account of the different roles it assumes. The mind is the cause of all things. The whole cosmos is a projection of the mind. "Manomoolam idam Jagat" (The mind is at the root of the cosmos). Man derives his name from the possession of the mind. "Yad bhavam tad bhavati" (As a man thinks so he becomes). Man

means mind and mind means man. What is the mind? It is a bundle of thoughts. The good and bad things in the world are dependent on man's actions. What we enjoy or suffer in this world are the consequences of these actions. What is the impulse for these actions? Thoughts. It follows that only when man's thoughts are good, his life will be good. Thoughts are highly potent. They survive the death of a man. Hence it is essential to keep out bad thoughts from our minds. It is bad thoughts which separate man from man and make them forget their common divinity. When men realise that the Spirit in everyone is one and the same, there will be no room for differences. Proceeding from the individual, man gets related to society, the nation and the world. The peace of the world depends on the individual. The individual as well as the world are based on the mind. Hence the need for proper disciplining of the mind. Like a fish swimming against the current and saving itself from dangers, man should combat the evil thoughts within and protect himself from dangers.

Different colours that attribute the mind

Man today is bringing all troubles upon himself by his thoughts. No one else is to blame for his condition. The mind is the source of all thoughts and because different persons have different thoughts, there are differences amongst them. Because of these differences, different colours are attributed to the mind.

For instance, the mind that is filled with anger is red in colour. A selfish mind is brownish. An egoistic mind is of the orange hue. The mind dedicated to God is pure white. We stain the mind with different colours. They do not come from outside. It is each one's thoughts which impart a particular colour to his mind. Hence it is only when the mind is filled with good thoughts that one's life can be peaceful and safe. Today the world is riddled with fear. Whether you are at home or out in the streets, you are haunted by fear. The root cause for this ubiquitous fear is the absence of pure and sacred thoughts in the mind. The whole world is a maze filled with fear at every turn. You know how to enter the Padmavyuha (maze) but you do not know how to get out of it. This was the tragedy of Abhimanyu. You know how to enter the maze of

worldly pleasures but you do not know how to get out of it. You will know the way out only when you submit your thoughts to the scrutiny of the Buddhi (intelligence).

The mind and intelligence

In the Kathopanishad, the body is compared to a chariot, the senses to horses, the mind to the reins and the Buddhi to the charioteer. What is the role of the mind in this analogy? The reins (mind) are between the horses and the charioteer. This means that the mind is between the senses and the Buddhi. If the mind follows the dictates of the Buddhi, it will be safe. If it gives free rein to the senses, it will be a bond-slave of the senses and as a result experiences sorrow. Allowing the senses free rein is the Pravritti Marga (the external path). Controlling the senses is the Nivritti Marga (the internal path). Most people are content to pursue the external. Few are concerned to explore the internal. In the Upanishad analogy it must be noted that unless the Buddhi (charioteer) holds the reins (the mind), the chariot cannot be managed properly. If the senses (the horses) are given free rein, the chariot will be in trouble and everyone in it will be in trouble. What is happening today is the misuse of the body and violence to the Atma. Most people today are engaged in causing harm to others. Even if they succeed in this, they do not realise that the ill they do will come back to them many-fold. An outstanding example is found in the Mahabharata. Duryodhana and Dussasana subjected the high-minded Pandavas to innumerable hardships. What was their fate ultimately? They were utterly destroyed.

Whatever evil you do will recoil on you

Students! Don't think of doing harm to others. Whatever evil you do will recoil on you sooner or later. There are some persons who cavil not only at other men, but even against God. This seems to be natural to them. In fact God has done them no harm. Yet they revile against God. It is the nature of some evil-minded persons to do harm even to those who have done them no harm. Students should totally avoid bad company, because bad traits are contagious. Cultivate the company of the good.

Remember that when one is born he comes with a garland given by the Creator - the garland of the fruits of good and bad actions done by him in previous lives. Engage yourselves always in good thoughts and good actions. Be grateful to God for all that He has given you.

15. Purity of the mind : Role of the senses

Date: 25 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

DEAR Students/What man has to achieve are not the four Purusharthas - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (Righteousness, Wealth, Fulfilment of desires and Liberation). The primary goal of man should be the purification of the Antahkarana (The Inner Activator) and subduing it. The world is based on the mind. All that happens in the world - joy or sorrow, sin or virtue, truth or untruth - has its origin in the mind. The mind is like a mirror; it has no inherent power of its own. It is dependent on the indriyas (sense organs). It sees through the eyes. It cannot see by itself. It hears through the ears and has no inherent hearing capacity. Likewise it functions with the aid of the sense organs. Consequently, the offences committed by the senses are reflected in the mind. The senses are associated with the mind's various processes. If anything goes wrong, who is to blame - the senses or the mind? No blame attaches to the mind by itself. It is the association with the senses which pollutes the mind.

The scriptures have declared that there are three defects relating to the mind' Mala, Vikshepa and Avarna.

Mental purity is related to purity of food

Man commits many offences, knowingly or unknowingly, not only in this life, but also in previous lives. The imprint of these actions is carried by the Chitta (the associative memory) over many lives. When the mirror of the mind is soiled by these relics, the mind cannot perceive anything in its true state. This is the reason why man is unable to recognise his own true nature. Hence, it is necessary to cleanse the mirror of impurities on it. How is this to be done? By regulating one's food and recreational habits. It is important to ensure that the food that is eaten is obtained by righteous means. Many of the ills which men suffer today are due to the fact that the things they consume have been got by unrighteous means.

Hence, to purify the mind the first prerequisite is pure food. But it is not always possible to ensure such purity in every respect at all times. To get over this difficulty, the way out is to make an offering of the food to the Divine and regard it as a gift from God. To the question, "Who is God?" the answer is given in the Gita sloka which declares that the Lord dwells in everyone as Vaisvanara and digests the food that is consumed. When before eating, the food is offered to God, it becomes Prasada (a gift from God). All the impurities in the food are thereby removed. This helps the process of cleansing the mind. This practice has to be kept up continuously. Vikshepa is a defect in the mind caused by wavering and lack of steadiness. Arjuna confesses that he is unable to control the mind, which is restless and ever-changing like the wind. Various practices like meditation, concentration and prayer have been recommended for steadying the mind. Students are not trying to cleanse their minds by the proper methods. Instead they are polluting their minds in all possible ways. It is only when you have the body, the senses and the mind under your control, that you will be master of yourself.

Learn to love and serve thy motherland

Why is the country today afflicted with so much disorder and chaos? Because people are preoccupied with the external and are totally ignoring the Spirit within. The entire educational process is vitiated by selfishness. Without any regard to whether the methods adopted are righteous, fair and just, or not, educated people are engaged in acquiring money and position by any means. It is the same motive that is impelling many students to go abroad. Why this crazy obsession over acquiring wealth? Real wealth consists in the practice of virtue. Learn to love and serve the land of your birth.

Of what avail is your life if you cannot love your own Motherland? Take a pledge to serve your country with all the knowledge you have acquired. Use your talents for the benefit of others and not only to enrich yourself. When you develop such broad-mindedness, your mind will come under your control spontaneously. Your foremost duty is to show your gratitude to your parents to whom you owe everything. You have to take care of them in their old age.

Such discharge of duty is itself a Sadhana, a form of Yoga. No other spiritual discipline is necessary. By this means you can divinise yourself. Avarana is the covering which envelops the mind and prevents it from seeing things properly. It makes you feel that the body is your true self. The cover which distorts your vision is made up of the six enemies of man - lust, anger, greed, pride, delusion and envy. Of these evil qualities the worst is mada (pride). Students should totally eschew pride and cultivate humility and reverence, which are the hallmark of true education. To get rid of Avarana, love has to be developed. You have to be rid of the sense of Ahamkara ("I") and Mamatva ("mine").

The constitution of Antahkarana

Students! The mind, the intelligence, the Chitta (memory or will) and the Ahamkara (ego) together constitute the Antahkarana (the Inner Activator). What is the Antahkarana? Karana means an instrument.

Antahkarana means the inner instrument. There is no need to get bogged over the meaning of Antahkarana. For instance, the eyes see the external objects. The ears hear sounds from outside. The mouth speaks to those outside. The nose recognises smell coming from outside. The hands are engaged in external actions. All these organs have a form. But the mind, the Buddhi (intelligence), the Chitta and Ahamkara (ego) have no form. The Antahkarana is the formless combination of these four.

The Antahkarana is subject to four kinds of defects. One is Bhranthi (delusion). The second is Pramadam. The third is Karanapatana. The fourth is Vipralipsa. These four defects sully the Antahkarana.

Delusions lead to dangerous situations

Bhranthi is the deluded state of mind in which one mistakes a rope for a snake and a snake for a rope, regards the unreal as real and the real as unreal, the temporary as permanent and the permanent as temporary.

These delusions lead to Pramadam (dangerous situations). If you hold on to a snake, thinking it is a rope, you are bound to have trouble. Man today regards the body as real. This is not correct. The body is like a water bubble. It will perish some time or other, somewhere, somehow. It is a bag of bones. Treating the body as real, people are forgetting the power that can use the body on right lines. If it is the sense organs that enable one to see, hear, and so on, how does it happen that even when all the organs are there a dead man is unable to see, or hear? This is because the power which enables the organs to function is not there. The body may be compared to a torch-light. The eyes are like the bulbs. The intelligence is the switch. If with all these, there is no light, what may be the reason? There are no battery cells inside. The blood cells in our body are like those battery cells. They carry a divine energy in them. There may be cells, but if the divine power has left them, we cannot make the senses function. It is only as long as that divine power remains in the body that it can do many wonders. But to regard the body as real by itself, is fraught with danger. You attach value to various relationships. All these are temporary and passing. No doubt you have a duty to do by your parents. But this applies to every relationship, which carries its own specific obligations. All relationships arise in course of time and end in due course. They have nothing permanent about them. Hence they are not Sathya (unchanging truth), but Mithya (momentary).

The third defect is Karana-apatana. Karana means instrument. Apatana means weakness. The weakness of the organs is the third defect. The senses are prone to certain kinds of afflictions. These afflictions affect the mind and cause mental illnesses.

Diseases of the senses

What are the types of illness to which the senses are liable? The senses never function in their fullness to perceive totally things as they are. They tend to behave according to the circumstances. This may be illustrated by a story. In a village there were two farmers, one the village headman, the big landlord of the village, and the other a small farmer. One day, the bulls of the two farmers were involved in a fight as a result of which the head man's bull died.

The small farmer was deeply worried about the incident and was at a loss how to explain the matter to the village chief. In his nervousness and fear, while relating the incident to the big landlord, he stated by mistake that his bull had been killed by the headman's bull in a fight. Immediately the landlord started consoling him, saying, "Even intelligent human beings kill each other. When unintelligent animals do so, you should not make much about their conduct." Meanwhile the small farmer realised the mistake he had committed. He hastened to inform the big landlord that it was the latter's bull that had died in the encounter between the two animals. Immediately the landlord got enraged and asked: "What nonsense is this? It is a serious matter if your bull has killed my bull. You must be very arrogant indeed to let your bull commit such an outrage. You have to pay a penalty of Rs. 500." The big landlord considered it a natural occurrence if his bull had killed another's bull. But he considered it a crime for another's bull to kill his animal. It is because the senses are prone to such varying responses according to circumstances that they tend to view right as wrong and wrong as right.

The senses lose their natural capacities when they are ailing. For instance, when a man suffers from malaria, the tongue loses its natural capacity and finds everything bitter including sweets. When one suffers from jaundice the eye fails to distinguish colours in their true hue and sees everything as yellowish. Karanaapatana refers to the ailment the mind suffers from on account of afflictions affecting the senses.

Give no room for envy

Vipralipsa refers to jealousy. It is a very bad quality in a man. He cannot endure the happiness or prosperity of another. There is no cure for this disease. Feel happy when you see someone who is happy. Do not give room for envy. Develop fraternal feelings towards your fellow-students. Rejoice in their achievement, without any feeling of envy. All that you have to do to achieve purity in thought, word and deed is to follow these five injunctions: See no evil; see what is good. Think no evil; think what is good. Hear no evil; hear what is good. Talk no evil; talk what is good. Do no evil; do what is good. When you adhere to these five prescriptions as the very breath of your life,

you will achieve purity of mind and experience ineffable bliss. From this moment, you have to cultivate control of the body, the mind and the senses, when you have the vigour and strength of youth. Acquire God's grace in abundance now, when the time is opportune. Your future will then be bright and secure.

Remember, God never forgets devotees, it is the devotees who forget God. God never gives up the devotee; only the devotee leaves God.

All activities of man must result in cleansing his Chitta, the levels of awareness. When these are done as offerings to God, they advance this cleansing process a great deal. The way he works shapes the destiny of man. Work is sublimated into worship which fructifies into wisdom.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16. The Buddhi and the Atma

Date: 26 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! According to the Upanishads, the human body is comparable to a chariot, the sense organs to horses and the mind, to the reins. The body, the mind and the senses are by themselves of little use. However beautiful a chariot may be, however fine the horses and however efficient the reins, without a charioteer all of them are of no use. In the journey of life, the Buddhi (intelligence) is most important - "Nischayatmaka Buddhi." The intelligence is the determinant in life. In daily life, many difficulties and problems arise like waves, which man has to solve. What is the basic agency for resolving these difficulties. It is the Buddhi. Without the intervention of the Buddhi none of our problems can be solved. The man filled with doubts perishes "Samsayatma vinasayathi." Because the Buddhi helpsto end doubts, it has been described as one beyond the sense organs - "Buddhi grahyam athindriyam." The Bhagavad Gita has laid down two banks to channel its message. Without these banks the river of life will be subject to many hazards and difficulties. The two banks consist of two eightsyllable mantras. One is "Sraddhavan labhathe Jnanam" (The man of earnest faith acquires supreme wisdom). The other eight-syllable mantra is "Samsayatma Vinasayathi" (The one filled with doubts perishes). When life flows between these two regulating principles, it will be blessed with peace and happiness. It is only when man is guarded on either side by Sraddha (earnest faith) and Nissamsaya (freedom from doubt) will he be able to reach the goal of life.

One should be guided by the inner voice

The Buddhi (intelligence) has some other names. One of them is Antaryami (the In-dweller). Man is guided by the voice of this Indweller in the conduct of his life. When problems arise, man waits for the directives of the Inner Voice. If this Inner Voice is not giving him satisfactory answers, he will be in a quandary. When he gets satisfactory guidance from the Inner Voice, he will be able to come to terms with the external world. Sometimes, one is found to remark: "My conscience does not approve of this." The Inner Voice is the

voice of conscience. When one is asked to "Follow the Master," the "Master" is one's conscience. When you follow the dictates of your conscience, you can reach the proper destination. Another name attributed to Buddhi is Vijnana (confirmed knowledge). Vijnana helps to decide the truth relating to external objects. As it investigates internal processes also and comes to decisions on them, it is not entirely correct to describe it as Vijnana. Vijnana relates to the phenomenal objective world. Buddhi relates to the subtle realm of the internal. Hence the role of the Buddhi (intelligence) has to be correctly understood.

Role of the ego in comprehending Atma

Occasionally, however, Ahamkara (the Ego) tends to envelop the Buddhi. The senses are subtler than the body. The mind is even more subtle than the senses. The Buddhi is far more subtle than the mind. The Atma is the subtlest of them all. If it is said that Ahamkara (the ego) is able to envelop the Buddhi, it must be deemed subtler than the Buddhi. The ego is extremely subtle. It is all-pervasive. It enters into all one's actions. This is the reason why man is unable to transcend the ego and comprehend the Atma. Once, a king summoned an assembly of scholars in his court. He posed the following question before them: "Here you are scholars who have mastered the scriptures. Which of you is capable of attaining Moksha (Liberation)?" Not one of them, despite their scholarship, had the courage and confidence to stand up and give the answer. The whole assembly was stunned into silence. At that stage, one lay member of the public got up and said: "Maharaja, I may possibly attain Moksha" ("Nenu pothe povachchunu"). All the pandits felt outraged by this impudent claim from an unschooled person, who was totally ignorant of any of the scriptures and had done no spiritual exercise whatever. They wondered on what basis such a person could make such a claim. The Maharaja asked the man: "On what grounds do you make your claim? It appears to be an insult to all the scholars present here." The man replied: "Maharaja! Please forgive me. When I said, 'Nenu pothe, povachchunu,' its meaning is: 'If the 'I' goes, liberation can be attained.' This is what I meant." When the Aham ("I") acquires a form, it develops into the Ego. The lesson of this story is that only when man gets rid of the body-consciousness, he will be

fit for achieving liberation. It is the identification with the body that promotes the sense of Ahamkara (I-am-the doer). As long as one suffers from egoism, his intelligence will not shine.

Buddhi is close to the Atma

Hence, efforts must be made at the outset to throw off the cover imposed by the ego on the intelligence (Buddhi). The Buddhi is very close to the Atma, and is therefore well situated to receive the illumination from the Atma. The Buddhi is in a position to receive 90 percent of its energy from the Atma. The mind derives its power from the Buddhi. The mind in its turn activates the senses. The power of the senses is spread over the body. If you want to illumine a dark room with the rays of the sun, it can be done by reflecting the sun's rays through a mirror on the dark room. Sunlight cannot reach the room directly. The light that is reflected through the mirror is not as powerful as the direct rays of the sun. In the same manner, the illumination emanating from the Atma when it passes through the Buddhi to the mind, from it to the senses and from the senses to the body, gets considerably dimmed by the time it reaches the body. If the Buddhi is kept totally pure and untainted, it will be possible to transmit to the body the full power of the Atma. Hence man has to strive to keep the Buddhi pure and holy.

Buddhi as compared to a bird

In the Taithiriya Upanishad - one of the ten important Upanishads - the Buddhi is compared to a bird. Sraddha (earnest faith) is the head of the bird. The right wing of the bird is Rita (the cosmic order). The left wing is Sathya (Truth). The main body of the bird is Mahat Tatwa. The tail is Yoga. The Buddhi is thus composed of these five constituents. Hence, the Buddhi is an extraordinary power. It is only when all the five constituents are actively present that the Buddhi (intelligence) acquires its full form. Once King Vikramaditya posed before an assembly of scholars the question whether Sraddha or Medha or Buddhi is most important. Buddhi is of no use if it does not have Sraddha (earnest faith) as its motivator. The assembled scholars gave varying answers to the King's query. Ultimately the consensus amongst

them was that Medha Sakti (talent) was the most important. The King was disappointed with their conclusion. The King told the assembly: "Of what use is Medha if there is no zeal and no determination?" There may be many who are highly talented. But if they have no Sraddha (earnestness) what can they accomplish with their talents? If they lack determination (firmness of purpose) what can they achieve? Only when they have Sraddha and Sthiratva (firmness) will they be able to develop the zeal for pursuing their objectives. Hence, Asakthi (zeal) is the first requisite. The next is Sthiratva (firmness of purpose). These are the primary requisites for the Buddhi (intelligence) to function at its best. It would be foolish on the part of man to depend only on his cleverness for leading a meaningful life. He has to develop a zeal for life and impart firmness to it. Then he will be able to accomplish any great undertaking. That is why the Vedanta has declared: "Sradhavan labhathe Jnanam" (Only the man of earnest faith can acquire the higher knowledge). Without Sraddha, nothing can be achieved. If you have a small piece of burning charcoal, you can fan it and create a big fire out of it. If a man lacks Sraddha, he will allow even a blazing fire to die out. Man doubtless has Sraddha, but only for securing the fruit, but not for the labour required for getting it. He does not have the "spirit of work" in him. The advances in science and technology have made man a lover of comfort and ease with no interest in hard work. There is nothing wrong with science. It is the improper use of science that is leading man astray.

Food and the five sheaths

Today we are witnessing radical changes in almost every field - political, economic, social, scientific, etc. But there is no mental or spiritual transformation. This is because the nature of the mind is not properly understood. The state of the mind depends on the food that is consumed. After digestion the grossest part of the food is thrown out as excreta. A subtle part becomes blood and flesh and provides sustenance for the body. The subtlest part goes to the mind. Hence the tendencies of the mind are based on the food that is eaten. First the food becomes the Annamaya Kosa (the sustainer of life). Then it affects the Manomaya Kosa (the mental sheath). Only after that, the Vijnanamaya Kosa is reached. Beyond the Vijnanamaya is

the Anandamaya Kosa (the sheath of Bliss). Of the liquids we consume, the grosser part goes out as urine. The subtle part sustains Prana (life). The subtle part of the food that goes into the mind and the subtle element in the fluids which gets into the Prana (life-force) together enter the Vijnanamaya Kosa.

Three qualities needed to maintain balance

The bird of Buddhi (in the Upanishad analogy), in addition to Sraddha, has Sathya and Rita as to two wings. Although Rita is equated with Sathya (Truth), it has a wider connotation than Truth. It represents the triple purity - of thought, word and deed - that transcends time and space. The bird's tail is Yoga. What is the purpose of this tail? It is through Yoga that balance is maintained between the two wings of Sathya and Rita. Man has to maintain this balance in daily life. An aeroplane has a tail in addition to two wings. Likewise in man, Sathya, Rita and Yoga are needed to maintain balance in the body and regulate the course of life both in the mundane and spiritual spheres.

The Buddhi can function properly only when it is governed by Sathya, Rita and Yoga. What is the Yoga that is envisaged here? It is not the physical exercises of various kinds. Yoga here means control of the senses "Yogah Chittavriti nirodah." Then there is the Mahat-Tatwa ? What is the Mahat-Tatwa? It is the recognition by the Buddhi of the true nature of the Self. The man of intelligence is one who has realised his own true Self. The Buddhi, thus, is not to be regarded as an ordinary aspect of the mind. It could be described as an image of the Atma, a reaction and an echo of the Atma. Only after understanding the true nature of the Buddhi will the students be able to know whether they are guided by intelligence or by mental delusions.

Spiritual guidance from the Avatars

After Rama's return from Lanka, Kaikeyi, who felt penitent about all that she had done, sought Upadesha (spiritual guidance) from Rama to atone for her wrongs. Rama did not give her the advice directly, but indicated it indirectly.

This is characteristic of all Avatars from ancient times. Avatars seldom give advice directly. What they wish to convey, they give indirectly. The reason is: there is divinity present in each human being and it is by making man realise it that he should be enabled to correct himself. If the correctives are applied directly, man will never try to realise his divinity. The indirect method is used to give to man the capacity to understand his divinity. Every one should first seek to know the answer to the question: "Who am I?" Without knowing who you are, what is the meaning in trying to know all about others? At birth you cry out "Koham?" (Who am I?). You should not die with the same question on your lips. When you die, you should end your life with the assertion "So-Ham" (I am He). To get rid of Ahamkara, there is only one path' it is to pursue the Godly way of life. When you are puffed up with the sense of ego, sit silently in a corner and observe what your breathing is telling you. It is declaring: "So-Ham." ("So" while inhaling and "Ham" while exhaling. Swami demonstrated how the breath is conveying the message). So-Ham is made up of the two words' Sah (He, that is Brahman) and Aham ("I"). "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman). If this is constantly meditated upon and this consciousness grows within, the Aham ("I") will cease to be a bother. This Mantra has been described as Hamsa Gayatri in Vedantic parlance.

"I am Brahman" is the message of inner voice

Students! You must note that this "So-Ham" mantra goes on in each of you 21,600 times a day. "I am Brahman" is the message of the inner voice all the time. Ignoring this, each one identifies himself with the temporary name given to the body. In this way there can be no God-realisation. You will remain what you were according to the name given to the body. "So-Ham" is the name with which you were born. That alone is permanent. That is your real self. When you realise it, you will experience Sat-Chit-Ananda. Krishna is described as Parthasarathi (the Charioteer of Partha). Partha does not refer to Arjuna alone. It applies to all children of the Prithvi (Earth). So, make Krishna your charioteer. As the Buddhi is a reflection of the Divine, make use of it to realise the Divine. Recognise also that for every endeavour, Prema (Love) is essential. The Lord is the embodiment of Love. He is the Sun of Truth. He is the abode of Truth. Through Love, seek to know your true Self with the help of

the Buddhi and purify your mind. This is what I expect from you.

17. Lessons of a debate

Date: 27 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

I am not merit nor sin. Neither happiness nor sorrow. Neither mantra nor holy water. Neither Veda nor Yajna. Neither food nor the enjoyer of food. I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroopa; Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram. THIS mantra is likely to arise in everybody. In the world man is a seeker of happiness, an aspirant for bliss. He strives ceaselessly, night and day, to achieve this comfort and bliss. In every sphere man desires two things: enjoyment of happiness, removal of sorrow. What is the inner significance of man's perennial quest for happiness? The answer is given both in spiritual and scientific terms. Man's natural state is bliss. He is the embodiment of happiness. He is therefore entitled to seek happiness. If sugar loses its sweetness, it ceases to be sugar. If a rose loses its fragrance, it ceases to be a rose. Likewise, if man loses his natural condition of happiness and bliss, he has forfeited his human state. For instance, if one notices on the road a man with sad looks, he enquires why the other man is miserable, what is the cause of his sadness. This enquiry is made by every passerby because it is not natural for a human being to be sad. Everyone is surprised at the man's sorrowful state. In the same bazar, somebody is going in joyous mood; no notice is taken of him and no one questions him why he is not sad. His joy and gaiety are regarded as his natural condition and cause no surprise.

Role of food in increasing sensuous pleasures

Man has been endowed with the body, the senses, the mind and the intelligence to experience his natural state of bliss. But unfortunately, because these agencies are polluted and misused, man is plunged in misery. The body is enveloped in the tainted cloaks of Raga and Dwesha (attachment and hatred). The senses are shrouded in the soiled cloth of desires and sensuous pleasures. The mind is enveloped by all these four coverings. As a result, man is prevented from recognising his true nature. He believes that the physical and worldly pleasures and attachments and aversions are natural to him. These are all transient and ephemeral like passing clouds. Realising

that man's attraction for sensual pleasures is due to the kind of food that he takes, the ancients devised an easy and sacred method for purifying the food before eating. They used to sprinkle some water on the food and utter the mantra: "Annam Brahma! Raso Vishnuh! Bhokta devo Maheswarah!" (The solid food is Brahma, the liquids are Vishnu and the enjoyer of the meal is Maheswara). The sprinkling is done with Sathya and Rita (Truth and the Cosmic order which together sustain the universe). In performing this rite, the partaker of food is praying to the trinity to protect him with "Sathya and Rita." The prayer to the deities is to endow him with Trikarana Suddhi - the triple purity of thought, word and deed. By this rite, the food was being sanctified. The intellectuals of today, full of pride in their knowledge and skills, are ignoring the potency of Sathya and Rita.

A historic debate

Adi Sankaracharya, during his victorious philosophical travels through Bharat met Sri Mandana Misra and had a debate with him on Medha Sakti (intellectual ability). Both of them agreed on Ubhaya Bharati, a high-souled scholar, pure-hearted and utterly selfless, as one most competent to decide who was the victor in the debate. Ubhaya Bharati was none other than the wife of Mandana Misra. The choice was unique in many respects. That Sankaracharya was willing to have as judge in the debate his opponent's wife was remarkable. It was the greatest testimony to his faith in the utter impartiality of Ubhaya Bharati. Sankaracharya knew that the discriminating power of the Buddhi (intelligence) was superior to the intellectual ability of the Medhas. Students should understand the power of the Buddhi. It is not Buddhi as commonly understood - mere intellectual ability. It is intelligence in which Rita and Sathya are combined with Asakthi (zeal) and Sthiratvam (steadfastness). Ubhaya Bharati was endowed with such intelligence. Buddhi includes Yoga and Mahat-Tatwa also, which have a purifying influence on the Buddhi. Buddhi is, thus, not only the capacity to think. Nor is it only the power of deliberation or the discriminating faculty. Beyond all these, it is the power of deep enquiry and judgement. Endowed with this capacity, Ubhaya Bharati decided in favour of Sankaracharya and against her husband. She declared that Sankaracharya had the better of the argument in the debate. This

decision is based on Sathya and Ritam.

Example of Ubhaya Bharati

Sankaracharya was extremely pleased with Ubhaya Bharati's verdict. Ubhaya Bharati then declared that in accordance with the understanding between the two disputants before the debate started, Mandana Misra, as the vanquished, should take to Sanyasa and become a disciple of Sankaracharya.

At the same time, as the devoted wife of Mandana Misra, acting upto the ideals of Indian womanhood, according to which the wife should follow the husband in weal and woe, Ubhaya Bharati decided to become a Sanyasini herself. Although she was under no obligation to adopt a monastic life, she decided to do so to set an example to the world. After that, she established an ashram in which she wanted to show to the arrogant scholars, who relied on mere intellectual acumen, that it was inferior to the intelligence that was associated with Sathya and Rita. One day when she was going to the river for a bath with her women disciples, she saw an ascetic, who had renounced everything in life, sleeping on the wayside, resting his head on a hollow water jug, using it as a pillow and at the same time ensuring that nobody took it away. As long as you have attachment and ego, you can never understand the Atma or experience Atmic bliss. In order to convey a lesson to the ascetic, Ubhaya Bharati spoke within his hearing the following words to one of her disciples: "Look at that ascetic, who has ostensibly renounced every kind of attachment. But he has not given up his attachment to his water jug!" On hearing these words, the ascetic got enraged. He thought: "Is a mere woman entitled to teach me how I should behave?" While Ubhaya Bharati was returning from the river, the ascetic threw the jug at her feet and said: "Now, see what my renunciation is?" Ubhaya Bharati remarked: "Alas! You are not only filled with Abhimana (attachment) but you are also filled with Ahamkara (ego)." On hearing these words, the ascetic ran upto her, fell at her feet and pleaded for forgiveness of his faults.

The root causes of man's bondage

The root causes of man's bondage are Abhimana and Ahamkara, the possessive sense of "Mine," and the arrogance of egoism. Both these are the result of consuming improper food. When one gets rid of the feelings of "I" and "Mine" he will realise his true Self. These feelings are caused by the kind of food that is consumed. In the Mahabharata the grandsire Bhishma was expounding all aspects of Dharma to the Pandavas from his bed of arrows. At one stage, Draupadi burst into laughter. The Pandava brothers were upset by Draupadi's unaccountable levity. Understanding their distress, Bhishma told them that Draupadi was an exemplary woman in every respect and there must be a good reason for her laughter. He asked Draupadi to explain her reason. She said: "Grandsire! The lessons which you should have taught to the evil-minded and wicked Kauravas, you are now teaching to my high-souled and righteous husbands. This appeared to me ironic and futile." Bhishma explained that he had been serving the Kauravas and living on their bounty. "Consuming the food received from such unrighteous and evil-minded persons, my blood got polluted. Arjuna's arrows have drained away all that bad blood. And the Dharma which was deep in me is now coming forth."

Inner meaning of "Drau-padi"

Students should realise from this episode how important food is in determining one's thoughts and actions. They should also understand the esoteric meaning of "Draupadi". Bhishma was full of praise for Draupadi's devotion to her five husbands. But there is an inner meaning for "Draupadi" which has a relevance to every person. "Drau-padi" refers to the five pranas Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana - which are the life-breaths in everyone. All these five function in harmony in every person - man or woman - and maintain the balance in life. The ways of the mind are remarkable. The scriptures have pointed out that when man follows the senses he becomes an animal. When he follows the mind he becomes a man. When he acts according to the Buddhi (intelligence) he achieves the state of Mahat-Tatwa (recognition of his great potentialities). When he recognises his identity with the Atma, he becomes Brahman. If man cannot follow the Buddhi or the Atma, he should at least follow the mind so that he may be human. It may be asked whether the mind is not prone to bad tendencies. The truth is, the mind

by itself is pure. It is by succumbing to the senses that it goes astray. If the mind allows itself to be guided by the Buddhi, it will not go astray.

The flower is Karma (work), the emerging fruit is Bhakti (worship) and the ripe sweet fruit is Jnana (wisdom). 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.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18. Trigunas and Panchabhutas

Date: 28 May 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

STUDENTS! Embodiments of Divine Love! Everything in the cosmos is Brahman. "The Divine shines in the rays of the sun. It is the Divine that reveals to man through his eyes the vastness and glory of the world. The whiteness and coolness of the moon which confer peace on men are derived from the Divine. The universe, which is based on the triple nature of time and which is sustained by the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara), is permeated by the Divine in the form of the three gunas - Satwa, Rajas, Tamas." (This was the meaning of the Sanskrit sloka with which Bhagavan began His discourse). Nature presents a marvellous picture. No one can fully comprehend it. Whether it is blessing or bereavement, joy or sorrow, gain or loss, it comes from Prakriti (Nature). Nature presides over the destinies of all creatures. This Nature comprises the three gunas. The Trinity represent the three gunas. The three qualities account also for the processes of creation, sustenance and dissolution - Srishti, Sthithi, and Laya. All the varied experiences in the world arise from the three gunas.

Man should aspire not for a deergha (long) life, but for a Divya (Divine) life. In the cosmos, which is permeated by the Divine, man should seek primarily to divinise his life.

Seek the nature of the Creator

The secret of creation is known only to the Creator. Others cannot hope to understand it. Scientists are engaged in exploring the secrets of creation. But none can plumb the depths of Nature's mystery. In scientific investigations, today's discovery is overtaken by tomorrow's findings. That again gets outdated in its turn. Continual change is in the very nature of creation. It is not permanent or immutable. The Creator is the only eternal unchanging Entity. The spiritual path aims at seeking the nature of the Creator and thereby understanding the nature of creation.

The entire Cosmos, consisting of living and inanimate objects, is based upon the three gunas. Man should strive to understand the principle that transcends the three gunas. God is Atma (Spirit) incarnate. When terms like Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Brahma, Atma or "God" are used, they all refer only to one Entity. At the beginning, the Pancha Bhutas (the five elements - space, air, fire, water and earth) emerged from the Atma. The five elements contain five characteristics. From the five elements began the Panchekritam (process of fusion). Out of this fusion, came the three gunas. The Cosmos is the visible form of the three gunas.

The elements and the gunas

The Cosmos is permeated by the three gunas : Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. The nature of the Satwa guna has to be properly understood. The Antahkarana (the Inner Instrument) in man represents the Satwic quality found in the five elements. Akasa (Space or ether) has pre-eminence among the elements in representing the Satwic quality. From Akasa emerged what is known as Suddha Satwa (Pure Satwa). This accounts for the human form. Akasa accounts also for the emergence of the organ of hearing - the ear. The second element is Air. The skin is the product of the principle represented by Vayu (Air). The eye is the organ representing the principle of the Agni (Fire element). The individualised aspect of the fourth element, Water, is the tongue. The nose represents the individualised aspect of the fifth element, the Prithvi (earth). These five elements account for the five faculties of Sabda (sound), Sparsa (touch), Roopa (sight), Rasa (taste) and Gandha (smell). As each of these faculties has emanated from one particular element, the five faculties are distinct in every individual.

Akasa (Space) is represented by sound and the corresponding sense organ is the ear. The ear can only hear and not perform any other function. Likewise the skin can only experience the sense of Sparsa (touch) associated with Vayu (Air). The eye (which is the organ associated with Agni), can only see and do nothing else. The tongue (representing the element, water) can only taste. The nose can only smell, but cannot taste.

Role of Antahkarana

While each of the sense organs is limited functionally to its specific role, the Antahkarana (Inner Instrument) combines the functions of all the five organs. This alone has the capacity to experience all the perceptions of the five Jnanendriyas (five senses). Are these sense organs functioning externally or internally? The answer is that they perform a dual role (both internal and external). If the physical organ, the ear, is present, but if the faculty of hearing is absent, the ear serves no purpose. If the faculty of the hearing (jnanendriya) is present, but there is no ear (to receive sounds from the outside world), the faculty is of no use. The combined operation of the Jnanendriyas (the sense organs concerned with the inner faculties of the senses) and the karmendriyas (the organs of action) accounts for the human personality. Here you have a loudspeaker. Without a mike, the loudspeaker is of no use. Without a loudspeaker, the mike serves no purpose. It is the presence of both which enables what is spoken inside to be broadcast outside.

The five faculties of the senses (sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell) are the Satwic expressions of the five elements. The five elements in their Rajo guna give rise to Prana (the life force). While the combined operation of the five elements in their Satwik quality is seen in the Antahkarana (the Inner Instrument in man), the collective functioning of the five elements in their Rajas quality expresses itself as the Prana (life-force). Among the five elements, in their individual expression of their Rajasic quality, Akasa (space) is represented by Vak (the faculty of speech). Vayu (air) finds expression in the hand. Agni (fire) finds expression in its individualised Rajoguna as the foot. The fourth and fifth elements (water and earth) find Rajasic expression in the excretal organs in the body. You must take note of some significant facts in this posture of the elements. In its Satwic aspect, Akasa (space) expresses itself as ear. But the same Akasa, in its Rajasic aspect, appears as the Vak. It may be inferred from this that Akasa has two children; the ear representing Satwa and the Vak representing Rajas. The ear, which is Akasa's first child, receives the sounds coming from outside. The second child, the Vak responds from inside through the spoken word.

Receive the Satwic and reject the Rajasic

The skin is the first child of Vayu (air) in its Satwic aspect. The second child, in its Rajasic aspect, is the hand. The skin recognises an ant crawling on the body. Immediately the hand tries to remove it.

It will be seen from these examples that the Satwic quality consists in receiving impressions from outside. The Rajasic quality consists in casting them out. In the world today what is happening is the exact opposite. What is Rajasic is being taken in and what is Satwic is being rejected. In the natural scheme of creation, what should be received is that which is Satwic and what should be rejected is all that is Rajasic. The primary quality of Prakriti (Nature) is Satwa. Prakriti is called "Stri", made up of the three syllables Sa, Ta and Ra. The significance of this term is: First of all, "Sa" implies that you have to take in what is Satwa. Secondly, "ta" implies developing some Tamoguna qualities, like submission, humility and modesty. "Ra", representing the Rajoguna, implies that there are occasions in life when some harsh firm resolutions will have to be taken. The Rajasic quality comes last and it means that Rajasic actions have to be done as a last resort when they are unavoidable.

In the cosmic process, it is the Satwic quality (the "Sa" kara) that comes first. Hence it is the duty of every man to develop the Satwic quality in every respect in thoughts, actions and attitudes.

Panchikaranam of the elements

The Tamoguna brings about a mixture of the five elements. In this mixture, the five elements are not present in their full strength. The five are fused together (panchikritam) in a manner which may be illustrated by the following example for purposes of easy understanding of a highly complex process' Suppose the five elements come together as five individuals each having one rupee worth of change. Akasa retains half a rupee and distributes among the other four elements one-eighth of a rupee each. The second element Vayu (air) also does likewise retaining half a rupee for itself, Agni (fire), water and

Prithvi (the earth) follow the same procedure. In the result, each has one rupee, but its composition is affected by the exchanges among the elements of parts of their respective natures. Originally each element was whole by itself. The process of mixing has resulted in the presence of all the five elements in every "rupee." In relation to the human being, the process of panchikrita makes man a mixture of the five elements and produces diversity in qualities. These have been described in spiritual parlance as shodasa kalas (the sixteen aspects). What are these sixteen aspects? They are the five jnanendriyas (organs of perception), the five karmendriyas (organs of action), the five elements, and the mind. Every individual has these sixteen constituents, although the sixteen kalas are attributed only to the Divine. Man has to realise his divinity.

The devotee and the Goddess Lakshmi

The ways of the Divine are not easily comprehended. Wishing the welfare of everyone in the universe, the Divine uses a myriad methods. It may be illustrated by the story of a devotee, aspiring for riches, who performed a severe penance for getting a boon from the Goddess of Wealth, Lakshmi. Man is prepared to undergo any ordeal for achieving material wealth, but will not take any trouble to realise the Divine. Lakshmi appeared before the devotee and asked him what he wanted. He replied that he wanted Lakshmi Herself. She agreed and said that adorning Herself with all ornaments, She would follow him, and asked him to go ahead. She said She would come to his house and hand over all Her ornaments to him. She imposed, however, one stipulation, "You must go ahead and never look back. If you look back, I will stay at that spot." Filled with joy, the devotee strode ahead towards his home. The Goddess's jewels were making all kinds of sounds as She walked behind. Unable to restrain his curiosity to find out what all jewels She was wearing, he turned back to have a look at Her. He could not restrain his curiosity till he reached his home. The moment he looked back, Lakshmi stopped there and did not follow him. This is what happens when one cannot restrain one's desire. Even though he got the grace of the Divine, the devotee could not benefit from it. This means that even if you are blessed with an abundance of Divine grace, you must acquire the capacity to benefit from it. To get this

capacity, you have to obey implicitly the injunctions of the Divine. If the devotee in the stow had adhered to Lakshmi's conditions, he would have benefitted from Her favours. Failing to abide by Her conditions, he forfeited what he had been offered.

Visible proof of the existence of God

The situation in the world is something similar to this. The world is permeated by the potency of the three gunas - Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. Even our vision of the world is influenced by the three gunas. Examine your eye. The outer rim of the eye is red, representing the Rajo guna. After that, you have the white area, representing Satwa. At the centre is the black circle, representing the Tamoguna. So, even our vision is tainted by the three colours, red, white and black. When you pose the question, "Where is God?" the answer is given by Nature itself. The revolution of the earth around itself at the speed of 1000 miles an hour accounts for the phenomenon of night and day. The earth's revolution round the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour accounts for the various seasons, for rainfall and the cultivation of food crops. Thus the divinely ordained motions of the earth enable living beings to get their food. This is a visible proof of the existence of God. The Veda declares that the foolish person, even while seeing the acts of God, declares he has not seen God. He does not realise that Nature is the vesture of God. What is the lesson to be learnt from the observance of Nature? It is Kriyaseelata, excellence in the performance of duty. It is because Nature ceaselessly performs its duty that the world is able to derive so many sacred benefits. The secret and mystery of creation lies in the due performance of one's duty with earnestness and sincerity. In the pursuit of the mirage of sensual happiness, men are going on the wrong path. This can be seen in the life-style of people going to work or carrying on business. After what they imagine is a day of hard work, they go to clubs, where they become slaves of drink and ultimately ruin themselves.

Real happiness can be got only by rendering service to the public. Go to the help of the poor and the forlorn. You will derive strength as well as peace from such service. Your conscience also will feel satisfied. It is a pity that

neither the rich nor the administrators are inclined to do such service.

Pure love can achieve anything

It is all the more essential that students should have some ideals before them and look forward to serving society selflessly. You should realise that you are a part of society and that your welfare is bound up with the good of society as a whole. Students! Whatever sadhana you may do, your primary concern must be to develop the love of God. When you develop that pure love, you can achieve anything. In this context, the advice which Hanuman gave to Vibhishana, when the latter lamented that though he had been chanting the name of Rama he had not had the benefit of a vision of Rama, is relevant. Hanuman told Vibhishana that it was not enough to chant the Name. One should engage himself in the service of the Divine. Hanuman declared that while meditating on the name of Rama, he was also engaged in constant service to the Lord. That was how he had earned Rama's grace and had become near and dear to Him. "I am ignorant of the scriptures, but I have dedicated my life to the service of Rama," declared Hanuman.

If man is valued at his true worth, and treated as a Divine Spark enclosed in the body, then, he will rise to new heights of achievement and produce all the necessities of life in profusion. He will not grab or cheat; he will be a good worker, a pure person and a sincere Sadhaka. He will cultivate the inner vision and realise that he is not the body or senses or mind or even intellect. He will be full of Prema and self-confidence.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. Know thyself

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EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! "Aham Atma Gudakesa sarvabhoothasaya sthithah" (Oh Arjuna! I am the Atma that dwells in all living beings). "I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all things," declares Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. All that you see in the cosmos - the moving and stationary objects - is a manifestation of the Atma. In the spiritual realm, what you hear at every step is the Atma. What is seen is Atma. What is heard is Atma. What makes you forget is also Atma. That is why Krishna declared to Arjuna: "In this universe there is nothing that is not Atma." What man needs today is to take the resolve to realise the Atma. This is tantamount to realising one's true Self. It is Atma-jnana (Knowledge of the Self). The first aim of human existence should be to experience Atma-Ananda (Atmic Bliss). Everyone should keep in mind the Atmic Principle. This Atma is called Eruka (Awareness). This Awareness produces in every being the sense of "I-ness." It is expressed in the term, Aham ("I"). When this "I" identifies itself with the body, it takes the form of Ahamkara (I-am-the-Doer, the Ego). This is what is called Mithya (delusion). It is not the real "I".

"I" is the first sound emanating from Atma

It is the mind that continually interposes itself against the Atma. Like the cloud, formed out of the water vapour produced by the sun, which hides the sun, the mind, which has arisen from the Atma, covers the Atma. As long as the mind exists, man cannot comprehend the nature of the Atma or realise the Atma. Only the person who is aware of the Atma in all the different states of consciousness can be said to have direct vision of the Atma (Sakshatkara). The first sound emanating from the Atma which one hears is "I." It is only after the emergence of "I" that the whole process of creation began. If there is no "I," there is no creation. The terms, "I", Atma and Brahmam are all synonymous. The "I" not associated with the mind is Atma. The "I" associated with the mind is mithyatma (pseudo-self). There is only one Atma. That is the real "I".

Man undertakes a variety of spiritual exercises to realise the One that subsumes the many. In fact, all the endeavours made in quest of the Atma are born of ignorance. The Jnani (Realised person) makes no such endeavours. All the efforts made by man to realise the One are only attempts to satisfy the mind. When what is required is the elimination of the mind for experiencing the One, it is futile to strengthen the mind for this purpose by so-called spiritual sadhanas. If you seek to embark on sadhana, you must first get rid of the Anatma bhava (identification with the body-mind complex). To experience Atmic bliss, you have to turn your vision towards the Atma. In reality, all efforts made for experiencing Atmic bliss are aberrations of the mind. Seeking liberation man adores a myriad deities. Of what avail is all this, when all the different religions have declared that there is only One God. These pursuits are products of a deluded mind.

As long as the mind exists, desires will persist. When desires are present, attachments and possessiveness cannot be got rid of. And these sustain the ego. While the ego lasts, the Atma cannot be experienced. Atmic knowledge, Atmic bliss and Atmic vision cannot be had till the Ego is eliminated.

From the Brahman to the Brahman

The mind, the Buddhi, the Chitta and Ahamkara from where did they originate, how do they grow and where do they merge themselves? That is the Brahman, that is the Atma. That being the case, how can you discover your source or your true Self by searching for it elsewhere (than within you)? Such a search is like that of a thief putting on the uniform of a policeman and searching for the thief. To know your own Self, why do you need any assistance? There is a story which illustrates the absurdity of such a situation. Ten ignoramuses who were in a group attempted to cross a river. After crossing the river, they wanted to assure themselves whether all the ten had crossed the river. One man started counting and noted that only nine had crossed the river and started wailing that the tenth man must have been swept away by the river. Each of them counted the others in the same manner, leaving out himself, and found one man missing. A passerby noticed their plight and enquired them the cause of their distress. They all said that

one of the ten in their group had been lost in the river. The intelligent traveller found that while counting, each one had left out himself and counted only the remaining nine. Lining them up in a row, he counted all the ten and revealed to them that earlier at each count, the man doing the counting had left himself out. This indicates that the individual who is not aware of himself cannot understand anything aright. When you are yourself the Atma, if you pray to someone outside, how can you recognise the Atma?

Unity that underlies the apparent diversity

"The One willed to become the many." Hence, you must realise the unity that underlies the apparent diversity. All the myriad forms you see are reflections in a mirror of your own image. You are ignoring the primary form and are concerned about the images. This is the delusion you are afflicted with. Brahman will elude the one caught up in bhrama (delusion). All the sadhanas you do are of little use for realising the Atma. They may help to tranquilise the mind. But what you have to do is to eliminate the thought process of the mind altogether. Calming the mind is only a palliative. The mind will get agitated again. Only those sadhanas which aim at eliminating the mind will be of use in the Atmic quest.

Come out of egoistic delusions

It is the identification with the body that is causing the Aham (ego) to flourish and grow. The feeling, "I am the doer," "I am the enjoyer," "I am achieving success," is growing constantly in man. Students! You must realise that victory or defeat is not the result of your actions or sadhanas. Immersed in your egoistic delusion, you are imagining that you are the architects of your fortunes. You can see in the world numerous instances of failure in spite of heroic efforts. You can also see examples of successes achieved through very little effort. Instead of courting failure, relying on your own efforts, and getting dispirited, put your trust in God and offer all your actions to Him. You have to realise that little depends on your efforts alone. You can have proofs of this in your own body. For instance, what efforts are you making to see that your heart beats regularly? How far are you responsible for the breathing

process that goes on continually? What is your contribution to the digestive process that goes on within you? Are these the results of human efforts? No. Can you continue to live merely by wishing that you should go on living? Are you able to end your life when you wish it? Are you responsible for your birth? Not at all. When you enquire into this problem, you will realise that it is your sense of doership and enjoyership which is causing all difficulties. All actions done by man today are intended to satisfy the mind. But however much you may try to satisfy the mind, it can never feel contented. What is this mind? It is Maya (delusion). It is desire. It is ignorance. It is Prakriti (the phenomenal world). It is Bhranti (aberration). Immersed in this mental aberration, if you wish to realise the Brahman, how is it possible? You are afraid of your own shadow. Your thoughts frighten you. The truth is there is only the One. It is called by different names. It is the Atma. The pandits describe the Supreme as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). This is not correct. He is Sat, He is Chit and He is Ananda. These are not three different qualities of the Divine. He is the embodiment of each of them.

Believing mithya you are giving up sathya

Some people resort to meditation in the belief that there is some power greater than themselves which they must experience. People also undertake arduous exercises to realise some secret, mysterious and marvellous power other than themselves. This is action born of ignorance. As long as you think that there is something higher than yourself, you are steeped in ignorance. There is nothing higher in the world than yourself. But belief in the existence of such a power is a creation of your mind. For example, in a dream you see all kinds of scenes and have various experiences. How far are these real? Only as long as you are in the dream state. When the dream ends, the scenes become unreal. Likewise, as long as you are in a state of mental delusion, the joys and sorrows, the gains and losses you experience are all real. When the delusion is removed, they all become unreal.

Hence, all the phenomenal experiences caused by delusion are mithya (real-unreal). Basing your life on this mithya you are giving up Sathya. Identifying yourself totally with the body you are encouraging the Ego to grow. If you

grasp one simple truth, you will develop a wide vision. There is nothing in the world separate from you. All the diverse objects are images of the One. For all worldly things there is a Kartha (a creator), Karma (causal action) and Kriya (the end product). In the sphere of the spiritual, however, there is only the Kartha (Creator). There is no Kriya. He is the Doer. He is also the one who gets things done. He is the outcome of what is done. The Atmic principle, which represents the unity of all these three, is the One that pervades the entire Cosmos. It is the universal consciousness. It is impossible for it to be present in some and not in others.

The cosmic consciousness

It is this Cosmic Consciousness that has been presented to the common people as Sat-Chit- Ananda so that they can comprehend its nature. The Vedantins looked upon these three as reflections of each other. These three have also been called Asthi, Bhati and Priyam in Vedantic parlance. In fact, all three are one and the same. When one says, "Here is a tumbler," the Is-ness is Asthi. This is Sat. We are seeing it. The quality of being perceivable is Bhati. This is Chit (cognisability). "I am enjoying it." This is Priyam or Ananda. Sat, Chit and Ananda are one. It is one and the same thing which is, which shines and which gives Ananda. Though there is only One, because of our mental processes, we are seeing It in many forms and names. Hence Atma-tatwa (the true nature of the Atma) is to be experienced by recognising the unity underlying the diversity. The Atma (Spirit) has no form. It is capable of assuming the form of the container which it fills. When air is filled in a balloon, it has the form of the balloon. When it fills a football, it has the form of the football. When it is present in a pneumatic pillow, it has the form of the pillow. Air, thus, has no form but it has one quality, that is Chaitanya (consciousness).

Conscience is a part of Consciousness

It is not easy to understand this quality of Chaitanya (consciousness). When you want to understand the nature of consciousness, you have to understand one part of it, namely, Conscience. Conscience is a Witness. It is also known

as Awareness. A witness requires a basis for its functioning. That basis is that of which you are "conscious" in the waking state. There are these three levels of understanding. Being "conscious" (of the objective world), the Conscience and the Consciousness. The first state is related to the senses. Conscience is related to the mind. Consciousness is related to the Atma (the Spirit). These three divisions have been made for the purpose of understanding and grappling with the concerns of daily life. This process may be illustrated by an example.

For instance, a conference of doctors is held in a hall. There can be different specialists present in the hall. But all are described as doctors. Each one may have specialised in one part of the body-the heart, the ear, the brain or other limb. The body is one, but for the purpose of specialisation it is divided into many parts. Likewise, all are embodiments of the Atma. But for the purpose of earning a living, one may be labourer, or an official, or a trader, or a farmer. These differences are based on the occupations pursued by different persons. They are based on the occupations and have no permanent significance. Similarly, although the Atma is one and the same in everybody, distinctions are made among different persons on the basis of their physical and other characteristics and their relationships. One's interest in these distinctions is based on one's attachment. For instance, if there is an accident to an aeroplane, one's interest in the fate of individual passengers is increased if one's kith and kin were travelling by that plane. Otherwise one is interested in the accident only out of curiosity. In the same manner, as long as the Atma is not considered as your own, your interest in the Atma is concerned with mere information. Once you know that the Atma is the Self that is present in everyone, the process of transformation takes place. The Real is only One. But as long as the mind and body remain, it is difficult to experience this oneness. In spite, however, of the difficulty, everyone must strive to discover his true Self.

Understand the Atma first

We have seen how the body is comparable to a chariot, the senses to horses, the mind to the reins and the Buddhi to the charioteer. But besides these

there is the master of the chariot, the Atma residing in the body. Hence, in addition to knowing how the body, the senses, the mind and the Buddhi function, you have to regard the understanding of the Atma as the primary goal. Giving up the sense of "I" and "mine", you have to do your duty as a spiritual discipline. "Karthavyam yogamuchyathe" (The performance of one's duty is yoga). When you practise this yoga, you will experience the joy of Atmic bliss. It is the absence of this yoga which is making men Rogi (sickly). When you examine the activities of the mind, with a view to finding out whether they are leading you to bondage or to liberation, you will find that they are only leading you to bondage.

The primary cause for the chaos of divisions, conflicts, disorder and violence in the world today is the absence of the sense of oneness among men. There is urgent need for cultivating the spirit of love which will serve to promote the feeling of oneness. All education today is a process of proceeding from ignorance to ignorance. If you seek to know where is the Atma, it is the Chaitanya (Consciousness) between one state of consciousness and another. This is not easily understandable by all. There is a state which is between waking and sleep. Few know what this state is. We seem to be in the waking state and then we close the eyes and fall asleep. Only the yogis have observed this phenomenon. That which is conscious between the waking and sleeping states is the Atmic principle. The waking state represents the Rajo guna. Sleep represents the Tamo guna. In between is the Satwa guna - that is the Atmic Consciousness.

20. Kshetra and Kshetrajna

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DEAR Students! Bhagavan is purer than the sky. The sun, the moon and the stars are the eyes of the Lord. He pervades the entire Cosmos. It is only when you understand the nature of the body, the senses and the Buddhi, which are the instruments of comprehension for man, that you can understand the truth relating to the all-pervasive and sacred Atma. As declared in the Gita, the Cosmos is a combination of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna (the Field and the Knower of the Field). True knowledge consists in the awareness of the relationship between Kshetra and Kshetrajna. The human body, which is called Kshetra, is a reflection of Prakriti (Nature). All the conscious and inert objects in the Cosmos are immanent in the human body. The Cosmos itself is a reflection of what is within man. It is a "reflection of the Inner Being. It is not enough to recognise the role of the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. There is within the body the Kshetrajna, the Indwelling Knower, who oversees these agencies. If you understand the Kshetrajna (knower) in the kshetra, there will be no need to enquire about the kshetra (the body, etc). But till you have that understanding, you have to reckon with the kshetra (the body-mind complex).

Atmajnana is true awareness

To know the Kshetrajna you have to acquire Jnana (the Supreme Knowledge). This transcends every other kind of knowledge, which is related to the physical and the phenomenal. No one can understand the Atma through these types of knowledge. You need a diamond to cut a diamond. To understand the Atma, you have to acquire Atmajnana (knowledge of the Spirit). All that you regard as knowledge in the phenomenal world today is only ignorance. Knowledge of the Spirit alone is Jnana (true knowledge). Atma and Jnana are one, though called by different names. True Awareness is Jnana. The knowledge that is gathered by the analysis of physical objects or through the senses is one form of ignorance. It has three elements: What is known, what is to be known and who is the knower. These three are aspects

of the mind. Only that is Jnana (true Knowledge) which is known when the mind is eliminated. All investigations associated with the mind are delusions of various sorts. They are subjective. All that man does - seeing, hearing, experiencing and doing - are all mental delusions caused by association with the body. The mind cannot keep still even for a moment without thinking about some object or other. Hence, the mind is dependent on the body. The mind experiences all that relates to the world made up of Pancha Bhutas (the five elements) through the sense organs, the eyes, the ear, the nose and mouth. The mind sees the world through the eyes, hears through the ears. The mind has no form. It is Maya. It is Desire. It is Nature. It is Avidya (Ignorance). Delusion is its very nature. It is extremely difficult to understand the pure and immutable Atma through an instrument subject to delusions.

Existence of the unchanging Inner Voice

What is true Jnana? When the senses are brought under control by the mind, the mind itself ceases to function. It disappears as it were. Then man experiences a profound silence. That stillness resulting from the absence of the mind is true Knowledge. This knowledge cannot be acquired by intellectual ability or mental agility. Nor can it be acquired by following an example. It is sui generis. It is not something new to be got. It is like the ashes which cover a burning charcoal or like the moss which covers a sheet of water. The ashes have come from the charcoal. The moss has originated from the water. The cataract that dims the vision of the eye, wherefrom has it come? It has come from the eye itself. When the screen that blinds the vision is removed, the true Self will be seen in its real form. Atma Jnana (Knowledge of the Self) is not obtainable through books. Nor can preceptors impart it. It is not even given by the Paramatma (the Supreme Self). You are yourself the Paramatma, the Jnana, the Atma. How does this Atma exist in all beings? How is this Jnana present in everyone? When you meditate on this in solitude, a permanent, unchanging sound arises from the mind. All objects in the world are continually subject to change of substance and form. All objects manifest the power of the atom. Every object is composed of atoms. It is the nature of atoms to combine and to separate. But in all human beings there is one unchanging and indivisible divine entity (the Inner Voice). The body

undergoes change from infancy to old age, but the Inner Voice remains unchanged. Men experience three different states of consciousness in the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. But the Inner Voice has no change in the gross or subtle states of the body. What is that Voice? It is the divine Inner Voice issuing from the Atma-tatwa (Atma Principle). It is continually declaring: "I","I", "I" - Aham, Aham, Aham. This is the Truth that is subtler than the atom. It is more fundamental than the atom.

Divine cannot be realised through scholarship

It is from the Aham that the declaration, So-Ham (I am He) has come. When this Aham (the "I") identifies itself with the body, it develops Ahamkara (egoism). Egoism is a common mundane condition. But Aham (the "I") is the word of the Divine. This cannot be realised through scholarship or dialectics. However great a pandit might be, he would not be able to see an object if he is blind. Equally, with all his scholarship, he would not be able to see an object that is not there even if he has sight. But whether one is a scholar or an ignoramus, a man endowed with eyes will be able to perceive objects. Even a great scholar proficient in all the scriptures will not be able to see objects of the phenomenal world in his dream state. But the man that is awake, whether he is a scholar or not, can see the objects in the world. In the same manner, the Atmasakthi (the power of the Spirit) which cannot be readily recognised, will be evident to one who has attained Atmic knowledge through purity of the mind.

The Atma is all-pervading

If you look at things below the mind, you perceive the phenomenal world. But if you look beyond the mind, you recognise the Atma. All knowledge and experiences are associated with the mind externally. They do not go beyond the mind. The aspirant who seeks to experience the Atma will not be able to have it by performing worldly actions. The Atma is all-pervading. The Cosmos is permeated by the Chaitanya (Atmic Consciousness). To believe that because you have a body you will be able to experience it is a fancy of the mind. Whether there is a pot or not and whether there is water in it or not,

the reflections of the sun can be found everywhere. When there is a pot with water, we can directly see the sun's reflection. But the absence of a pot does not mean that there is no sun or reflection of the sun. Irrespective of whether there is a body or not, whether there is a mind or not, the Atma is present. There is no need for a body or mind to experience the Divine. But till this is properly understood, good care has to be taken of the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. They have to be set on the right course and not allowed to go astray. All troubles arise because they take to wrong paths.

It is believed that every man has a free will. This is a mistake. It is also believed that it is through the individual's ideas and efforts that many things are accomplished. This is based on misconceptions regarding man's doership and egoism.

Devotional Love is itself God

Despite all his prowess in arms and his intelligence, what happened to Karna? Strength derived from the Divine alone is true strength. All else is weakness. To realise the Atma, physical prowess is of no avail. It is only by developing the sense of spiritual oneness that the Atmic Consciousness can be realised. Today the world is plunged in chaos and conflict because this feeling of oneness has been lost. Man engages himself in strenuous efforts to achieve worldly comforts. But he does not make even a minute fraction of such efforts to meditate on God. How much greater happiness would he enjoy if he were to devote even a few moments to thoughts of God! To experience this Divine bliss, the best means is to cultivate devotion to the Lord. There is no difference between Bhakti (devotion) and Jnana (knowledge of the Spirit). Through loving devotion, the Lord can be made captive. Devotional Love is itself God. It is permanent. With devotion you can overcome any ordeals in life.

21. The Spirit of freedom and freedom of the Spirit

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IT IS not easy for the common people to understand what is spirituality and what is meant by freedom of the individual. People should not think that Spirituality means being alone and living in solitude. The aim of Spirituality is to sow the seeds of love in all mankind and enable the buds of Peace to blossom in their minds. If we seek divinity in this exercise, there will be no room for either spirituality or freedom of the individual. ("Spirituality and Freedom of the Individual" was the theme of a debate which preceded Bhagavan's discourse). Participants in the debate did not recognise the role of the heart. They seemed to think that freedom consists in speaking out whatever they feel.

No one in the world has absolute freedom. Freedom came to be used as a political concept. It was believed that to liberate the country from foreign rule and establish Government by the natives of the country constituted freedom. This is neither individual nor Fundamental Freedom. What were done in the name of freedom were really manifestations of egoistic impulses. After the foreign rulers left, we thought the people had won freedom. In what respect did the people acquire freedom? There is no use merely mouthing the word Freedom. Only when unity is achieved will freedom be meaningful. Without unity, to talk about freedom means only freedom in words and not in real life. Freedom should express itself from the heart. Heart here does not refer to the physical heart. "Heart" is not related to any particular place, time or individual or a country. Hridayam (heart) refers to that Divine principle which is equally present everywhere, at all times and in all people in every country. This heart has no form. What is regarded as heart in a human body is a transient thing. The freedom consists in the recognition of that Divinity by knowing which all else is known.

Knowledge of the Self is most essential

"As in the microcosm, so in the macrocosm" (Brahmanda) is a scriptural saying. The microcosm is a part. The macrocosm is the universal. Man today seeks to know many things, but does not know his own true self. In the Upanishads, there is an episode relating to a great pandit, Uddalaka, and his son, Swethakethu. Uddalaka sent his son to another preceptor for studies. Swethakethu studied under the Guru for 12 years and learnt all the different subjects. Puffed up with pride about his vast learning, he came to his father and told him that he had learnt everything. The father asked him: "Dear Son! Did you study that by knowing which everything else is known?" The lad's conceit was deflated. Of all forms of conceit, the pride in one's scholarship is the silliest. Uddalaka impressed on Swethakethu that Brahmajnana (knowledge of the Atma) was most essential.

Try to understand the "I" which is the heart

When anybody asks you, "who are you?" and if you reply, "I don't know," you will be considered a crazy person. How are you better than that person if without finding out who you are, you embark on enquiring into the nature of other things? You have first of all to find out who you really are. If you give your name as Ramayya, you are disclosing the name given to your body. When you say, "I am Ramayya," there is an entity (the "I") which is different from Ramayya. You must try to understand that "I." That "I" is the heart. It is the Atma. It is Brahmam.

In the world, there are all kinds of differences, high and low, good and bad, merit and sin, joy and sorrow, truth and falsehood, and the like. But although these differences are apparent, no differences can be seen in the heart. That which did not exist in the beginning and which will not last for ever has only a brief illusory existence in the middle. For instance, this silver tumbler has a name and a form. But originally it was just silver and ultimately will remain as silver. The name and form as tumbler are only passing phases. All that is transient and changing is called Mithya.

"Ekam Sath" (The Real is only One). Only when there is a second entity can you speak about freedom or bondage. Freedom and bondage are creations of

the mind. When you are not engaged in spiritual enquiry, the mind gets prominence and is the cause of involvement in matters like freedom and bondage, the worldly and the otherworldly, and other dualistic phenomena.

Limits to freedom in respect of three situations

In respect of three situations, man has no freedom: karthavyam (the discharge of duties), nirbandham (actions done under compulsion) and sambandham (obligatory actions arising out of certain relationships). If a poor man, unable to get food by begging, resorts to stealing, he cannot claim that he is exercising his freedom to appease his hunger. Even if, for his own selfish reasons, he may try to justify the stealing, his conscience will tell him that he is committing wrong. When he acts against his conscience, how can it be an act of freedom? True freedom can come only when one is free from the impulses of the mind. Swachcha (freedom) is made up of the words: Swa + ichcha. "Swa" refers to the Atma. Only when the will of the Atma prevails can there be real freedom. Actions done by the promptings of the mind or the senses cannot be regarded as free actions. There are some actions which are done according to the laws of Nature. Even these are not free actions. Man is also subject to rules and regulations laid down by the appropriate authorities. Human life is carried on between these two types of restrictions. In view of this, no one can claim that he is free to act as he pleases. Only the Divine is free. But this cannot be described as freedom, because the Divine is One.

True meaning of surrender and samadhi

Some devotees declare that although they have surrendered themselves totally to Swami, their troubles and difficulties have not ceased. In My view this does not indicate Saranagathi (real surrender). If it is true surrender, there is no place for speaking about the continuance of troubles and difficulties. Some others claim that they have experienced moments of Samadhi during meditation.

What is samadhi? In common parlance, in the eyes of worldly people and in the books written by worldly individuals, Samadhi may be described in

various ways. One may be in a state of trance during meditation. But this cannot be called Samadhi. It may be an emotional or mystical experience or it may be the result of a fit. It may even be due to weakness. It is not Samadhi. Samadhi means merging the mind in the Atma. In that state, there are no two entities. Samadhi is a state of equal-mindedness. In that state there are no dualities like joy and sorrow, profit and loss, sin and merit, Nature and Paramatma. It is the state in which the oneness of everything is experienced. As long as differences and distinctions remain, there is no realisation of Samadhi. As long as the mind is active, no one can be truly free. In the worldly sense, one may claim that "This is my money. I am giving it to him. He may think that he is acting freely. But this is not real freedom. It is an act of goodwill arising out of the Satwic aspect of the mind. The mind is a mixture of all the gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). At various times, different qualities are prominent. If you give a donation in response to the appeal of a man in need, it is a mental reaction to a particular situation and not an exercise of freedom. A man swinging a stick on the top of his terrace may be free to do so. But he cannot do the same thing on the public road lest he should hit someone who has an equal right to the use of the road. If he swings the stick on the road, either he may be arrested by the police or taken to a mental hospital. What a man does in his own house is not freedom but indulging in satisfaction of his wishes. There is a real distinction between the exercise of freedom and the satisfaction of one's desires. The latter is based on self-interest. Freedom consists in the spontaneous expression of what comes from the heart in respect of any object or any individual, at any time. This is true freedom.

Everyone has the Divine potential in him

You should not think that men who have achieved eminence or the high intelligence displayed by some persons owe their accomplishments to some external power. The talents have emerged from within themselves. All powers are within you. You have no need to go to someone outside for achieving anything. All that is needed is the external manifestation of the powers within you. The main sadhana you have to do is to control the vagaries of the mind. Krishna told Arjuna that his mastery of archery was not conferred on him by

his preceptor, but the preceptor only drew out the abilities that were already in him. No preceptor can enable a disciple to accomplish what is not potentially within him. When you dig a well and find water at a level of 100 feet, the water was already there. You merely found it by removing the earth above it. Likewise, men tend to forget the Divine potentialities in them because of identification with the body. People talk glibly about Free Will. There is only one seat of Freedom and that is the heart (the spiritual heart). It is permanent and unchanging. As long as man is swayed by the mind, there will be differences and distinctions. These are due to the waywardness of the mind and are not indications of individual freedom. A student seeking an answer for a certain problem has to adopt the proper procedure for approaching the teacher. He should not regard asking the question and obtaining the answer as an exercise in freedom. It is part of your duty as a student. A clear distinction should be made between what has to be done as one's duty and what is obligatory in other contexts.

Spirituality itself is freedom

Keeping the Atmic consciousness in the forefront, you may perform any act. You will be acting in freedom. There are no two different types of freedom - individual freedom and spiritual freedom. Spirituality itself is freedom. You convert milk into curds, get butter by churning the curds and get ghee from the butter. The milk has gone through many changes, but it is the same milk in different forms at different stages. In the same way, there are four stages in the realisation of the Divine! Salokyam (to be in the realm of God), Saroopyam (having the vision of God), Sameepyam (proximity to God) and Sayujyam (mergence in God). These appear to be different from each other, but are all merely steps in the realisation of oneness with the Divine. Any talk of freedom for man in this phenomenal world can only refer to an insane or egoistic freedom. It may also be used in respect of certain relationships like a man's attitude to his child or wife. But the exercise of freedom towards them in an authoritarian manner can be described only as a travesty of freedom. It is a sign of foolishness. It is unbecoming of anyone calling himself a human being to behave in such an egoistic manner. Man can raise himself to a higher level only if he gives up such egoistic behaviour. You must recognise that you

must accord to others the same amount of freedom which you claim for yourself. Freedom is thus interdependent and cannot be absolute or unrestricted. Your freedom to use the public road is subject to traffic regulations, which you have to observe. If you violate them, you run the risk of action by the police or meeting with an accident.

Man is bound from the time of birth

In whatever way the question of freedom is considered, it will be clear that man is bound from the time of birth. A cow tethered to a post has freedom to move about limited by the length of the rope tied to its neck. A freedom limited in this manner cannot be called freedom. It is not even "limited freedom." It is really a form of restraint. Today people do not use words in their proper sense. For instance, the term Hridaya (Heart) is used as relating to the physical heart. But this is not the right meaning. Hridaya refers to the spiritual heart, which is common to all. It is present everywhere. It has no form. Like sugar in a variety of sweets with different forms, it is present in all beings as one and the same Spirit. All differences are reflections of mental aberrations. The Divine makes no difference between one person and another. All differences of caste or community relate to worldly associations. Even to describe Rama as a Kshatriya, Krishna as a Yadava and Sai Baba as a Kshatriya is a sign of narrow-mindedness. The Divine transcends such distinctions.

We and God are one

In this vast cosmos, you must develop a universal outlook based on an understanding of the spiritual principle. You cannot aspire for the spiritual from a narrow point of view. All forms of worship and meditation, which are regarded as spiritual exercises, are in fact mental excursions intended to please the mind. God is described as father, mother, brother, friend and so on. But all these are unnecessary epithets if it is recognised that we and God are one. You are in God and God is in you. There is no room for the feeling of duality. Students! Spirituality essentially means realising oneness with God. God and you are not separate. Once you acquire this conviction there is no

need for any kind of spiritual sadhana. This oneness should not be a mere intellectual concept. It should be a living reality. Then you will experience true freedom - the freedom of the Spirit, divorced from any association with the body and the mind. When you experience your inherent divinity, you will be free from sorrows and difficulties.

Students! You may not be aware that the Divine is changeless and unaffected by sorrow. Whether you believe it or not, the truth is I do not know what is grief. Worry is totally alien to me. I am not aware of any difficulties, disparagements or pressures caused by others. You should remain unaffected by what others say or do. When someone comes and tells me, "Swami! I am suffering greatly,"! reply, "chala santhosham" (very happy). I am always happy. When some one tells me about the death of a near relation, I say the same thing. I am equal in my response to everything. When people lament about their sufferings, I often wonder what suffering means. It does not approach me.

People come to Swami with every conceivable kind of problems and views. On one side are those who adore Swami. On the other side there may be those who deride Swami. The two may be like two hillocks with valleys below them. Both the hillocks and the valleys are the same to me. This is the proper spiritual attitude. Occasionally I appear to be displeased with the behaviour of the students. But the anger is only apparent externally It does not come from inside. In some cases I do not speak to a person for months together. This is the remedy for his malady. This kind of medicine has to be used for curing the disease. What right has anyone to ask why Swami is not talking to him? That is my pleasure.

Remedies are according to maladies

This may be illustrated by an example. Four patients come to a doctor for treatment. Superficially they all appear to suffer from stomach ache. The doctor examines one patient and tells him: "There is nothing wrong with you. You will be all right if you give hot water fomentation for the stomach." To another patient, the doctor gives a mixture of soda bicarb and Magsulph and

tells him that if he takes it, his gas trouble will go. To the third man, he says: "I shall give you a purgative. You will be all right after two motions." After examining the fourth man, the doctor declares that he must undergo immediately an operation. Does the doctor bear any ill will towards him? Not at all. His ailment is different. He suffers from appendicitis, which calls for immediate operation.

Different treatment to different people

Likewise, judging from the thoughts and behaviour of different persons, I mete out different types of treatment appropriate for each of them. I do not look at some persons. I do not talk to some others. I turn away from some others. All these are different types of prescriptions. Why am I giving these medicines? I have a certain principle. I attach great value to my words, irrespective of how you regard them. When I notice that some do not respect my words and act properly I do not like to waste my words on them. Because I desire to maintain the value of what I say I refrain from talking to some persons. People who complain that Swami does not talk to them, why don't they realise that they have not acted according to Swami's words? Once you realise that your behaviour is responsible for Swami's attitude, you will correct yourself and behave properly in the future. Devotees tend to complain against Swami, but do not recognise their own lapses. There is no need to appeal to Swami to speak to them. When you correct yourself, Swami will talk to you of His own accord. If you pray for rain, all other things like growing crops and reaping the harvest will follow naturally. Separate prayers are not needed for each of these operations. If you implicitly carry out Swami's injunctions, Swami's grace will be obtained immediately. First of all, impart value to your own words. You are endowed with a pair of eyes, with two ears, but only one tongue. Truth is the life-breath of speech. The ways of the Divine are not easily comprehended. God will not succumb to abuse or feel elated by praise even if the whole world joins in either blame or adoration. When you have the conviction that the Divine is pure and unsullied, you will have no need to worry about any other thing.

You are living now, in the dark, in ignorance. The knowledge that you are the Divine Spark, encased in the sheaths of bliss, intelligence, feelings, sensations and organic substances - this knowledge is the Light. You must light your own lamp. You cannot walk in the light of another's lamp. You cannot exist on the money in the purse of another. Have your own money; then alone are you free. Earn knowledge, yourself. Even knowing it is not enough; you must experience it. The well has water; but, that is not enough. It must be brought up in the bucket and used to wash and to quench thirst.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22. Love God and the Motherland

Date: 01 June 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

DEAR Students ! The world we live in is transient and impermanent. All objects in it, all relationships and possessions, are of a temporary nature. What, then, is enduring and lasting? Dharma (righteousness) and Keerthi (reputation). These two are permanent. All that you see in the phenomenal world, living and inanimate, is swallowed up by the tide of Time. "Yaddrisyam Tannasyathi" (What is seen, perishes). The eye that sees as well as the world that is seen are both transient. Physical eyes are not given to human beings alone. Birds, beasts and insects have eyes. What is the unique distinction of man? He alone is endowed with the eye of wisdom. If he does not develop it, he is no better than animals and insects. Human life is precious and should be used for acquiring knowledge of the Atma. The physical eyes can see the external world, but are of no use for recognising the subtle presence of the Divinity. The physical eyes cannot see themselves. Nor can a man see his own except through a reflecting medium. When the eyes are not able to see even the gross body, how can they help man to recognise the subtle mind? When they cannot notice the mind, how can they recognise the Atma, which is extremely subtler than the mind?

Nature assumes the colour of your vision

Physical eyes are useful only for seeing the phenomenal world. Every man needs to develop the Inner Vision of Wisdom to experience the Atma. Jnananethra (the Eye of Wisdom), Divyanethra (the Divine sight) or Atmanethra (the Spiritual eye) all mean one and the same thing. It is only when you feel that the Cosmos is permeated by the Divine that the Cosmos will appear to you as a manifestation of the Divine. What you see is a reflection of your inner feelings. Nature assumes the colour of your vision. When you convert your vision into a Jnanamaya drishti (vision of spiritual wisdom), then the Creation becomes Brahmamayam (the embodiment of Cosmic Consciousness).

Whatever the colour of the glasses through which your physical eyes see the world, the whole of Nature appears in that colour. All that is seen is subject to change. The unchanging Brahman is the basis for the changing forms. It is when the divine basis of the Cosmos is recognised that the mystery of the universe can be easily understood. It is the mind that is responsible for the failure to understand the world properly. The mind is externally oriented. Life is wasted in the pursuit of worldly objects. Not for this has the human birth been conferred on man. Man takes birth for the realisation of the Divine. You must try to have a vision of the Divine and be in communion with the Divine. This alone is true religion. Man must realise God, feel God, see God, talk to God, this is Realisation. This is Religion.

Divine Atma is the root of Cosmic tree

Earlier Anil Kumar spoke about Botany. We seek the flowers and fruits that grow on trees. But these derive their sustenance from the unseen roots of the tree. It is only when the roots are nourished, that you can get the fruits and flowers. You have to provide water and manure for the roots and not for the flowers and fruits. For the tree of this Cosmos, the Divine Atma is the root. This is the purport of the statement in the Gita: "I am the seed of all living beings." How is God the seed and how does He become the seed in all beings? When we enquire into this we can see that we plant a seed in the earth, it sprouts, grows into a plant and bears numerous fruits in each of which there is a seed. Out of one seed have come numerous fruits with seeds within them. The seeds in the fruits belong to the same variety as the original seed. Now look at the world. For this world, the seed is the Atma. The world is one huge tree. In it the different countries are branches. Each branch carries many fruits in the form of living beings. In each of these beings, the Atma exists as the seed. Hence in every individual the Divine exists in the form of Atma. "Eko vasi sarvabhuta antaratma" (The One dwells in all beings as the Inner Spirit).

Students today are not interested in acquiring knowledge of these mysteries. They seek to specialise in some subject or other to earn a living. They make no effort to understand the basic truth about life itself.

Renunciation leads to immortality

The primary mantra of the Vedas is that immortality can be achieved only by renunciation. What has to be renounced is that which causes bondage, namely, the identification with the body. When the delusion of body consciousness goes, liberation is obtained. Disinterestedness in the body, devotion to God, these two will serve to free man from bondage and lead him to liberation. Regard all that is associated with the body as mere instruments to be cast off after they have been properly used.

Students! You have to realise your true strength and potentialities. Take, for instance, an elephant. It is a very powerful animal. But a small man with a goad is able to control it. The bee can bore a hole through any hard object. But when it gets into a lotus, it gets bound and perishes. It is unaware of its own strength. Man has bliss and divinity within him, but makes no effort to realise them. Men are like the musk-deer, which has the musk in its own navel, but searches for the source of its fragrant smell everywhere. When it is exhausted by the search and discovers that the musk is in its navel, it laments over its folly. Man behaves in the same way. He has within him, Nithyananda (perennial bliss), Brahmananda (Divine bliss) and Atmananda (bliss of the Spirit). They are verily his nature and form. But, being caught up in external worldly pleasures, he fails to realise this truth. He is unable to make the search or experience the bliss. His Atma is always indicating the various paths to the experiencing of spiritual bliss, which is untainted by grief. When the source of this bliss is within you, why are you caught up in worldly concerns which are the cause of sorrow? From ancient times, the Sages of Bharat realised the evanescence of wealth and power in the material world and sought that which was enduring and unchanging. How many kings and emperors have come and gone? Did any of them take his kingdom with him? Does anyone even remember their names? When one leaves the world, only two things accompany him' his good and bad deeds. Therefore engage yourselves only in good actions. You will enjoy the fruits of those actions. As you sow, so shall you reap.

Have belief in law of Action and Reaction

Students! Do not ignore this basic truth' Sometime or other in the future you will have to reap the consequences of your actions. If you sow the seeds of thistles or fruit-bearing trees, the plants will be according to the seeds. Bharathiyas had firm belief in this Law of Action and Reaction. Therefore, in whatever you do, consider well whether it is in harmony with your divine nature. Then, your actions will be pure and untainted. You will be free from attachment and disappointment and will be devoted to the Spirit. What is the use of all your education and the degrees acquired by you? Is it for getting a job and earning money by hook or crook? You are endowed with two hands. If you work hard with both hands, you can not only satisfy your needs, but also render help to others. Perform good and pure acts. Lead an exemplary life. Be helpful to others. Dedicate your life to the uplift of humanity.

The patriotism of Subhas Bose

What kind of existence will you have if you do not revere the Motherland as your mother? While Subhas Bose was studying in the Calcutta University, there was an English professor, who used to speak disparagingly about India and Indians. Subhas Bose, who was intensely patriotic, could not bear listening to such denigratory remarks about the Motherland. He was patient for a while, but when the professor continued in the same strain, he got up, jumped over three desks, caught the Englishman by the neck and beat him with sandals. Bose declared, "I can bear anything, but I cannot bear my Motherland being abused and ridiculed. It does not matter what happens to me, but I must defend my country's honour." The students who watched the incident were stunned. The English professor cried out: "Help me! Help me!" News of the incident reached the authorities, who held an emergency meeting and rusticated Subhas Bose for five years. Subhas was determined to dedicate his entire life to the service of the Motherland. As Subhas could not continue his studies in Calcutta, his father sent him to London. But even there Subhas cherished his love for the Motherland. He was determined to finish his studies and return to India to serve the motherland. He studied hard and passed the I.C.S. examination. He returned to India and plunged into national

politics. "I owe my food and everything else to my country. I must be grateful to the nation by serving it." This was his firm resolve.

Here is his example. You students should realise what you owe to your educational institutions for your status and position in life and be ever grateful to them. This is the pledge you should take. This is true sacrifice. Giving up selfishness, developing faith in the Divine, you must realise the Supreme.

Scriptures are intended to serve as guides

Students/ Remember that great scriptures of the different religions - the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, the Koran, the Granth Saheb or others - have not been given for mere ritualistic reading. They are intended to serve as guides for action. Of what avail is mere recitation of slokas or writing learned articles? There are persons who recite the Gita everyday and know by heart all the 700 stanzas. Can this be called devotion? No. Unless the teachings are put into practice, it is of no use. It is not enough to be human in form; you have to be human in your conduct. The world will benefit only from those who behave like human beings. Whatever official titles you may receive, they are not equal to the Vedic title, "Amruthasya Putrah" (Children of Immortality). Students! Do not hanker after positions and name. Develop love of the Motherland, love of God and love of Dharma. There is no greater religion than Truth. Sathya and Dharma (Truth and Righteousness) are inseparable twins. Try to put into practice at least a fraction of what you have learnt. Only then you will have a glimpse of Bliss. Verily you are embodiments of bliss. You have recourse to various means like acquiring wealth, getting married rearing children, and so on, to secure happiness. The means vary, but the goal is one, namely, Ananda (bliss). Do not discuss the merits of other faiths or draw comparisons between them. The basic teachings of all faiths are the same. The basic truth of all faiths is the same. When you develop this kind of equal-mindedness, the divinity in you will manifest itself in due course.

You might say that the Karma of previous births has to be consumed in this birth and that no amount of Grace can save man from that. Evidently, someone has taught you to believe so. But I assure you, you need not suffer from Karma like that. When a severe pain torments you, the doctor gives you a morphine injection and you do not feel the pain, though it is there in the body. Grace is like the morphine; the pain is not felt, though you go through it.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

23. Morals make the man and the Nation

Date: 02 June 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

THE DIVINE is present in the mountains, in all high places, and in the noble thoughts that inspire human beings. The Divine is present in forests, in the peace that prevails in quiet streets, in the cool breeze that blows and the pure air that you breathe. In every village where there is a sacred atmosphere and harmony prevails among the people, the Divine is present. In the cities, God is present in the beautiful edifices, in the amenities enjoyed by the citizens and in the enlightened lives led by the people. The omnipresence of the Divine was proclaimed by Mallamma in Karnataka in inspiring verses. She declared in one song: "The lotus lends beauty to the pond. Houses lend charm to villages. The waves confer beauty on the ocean. The moon beautifies the sky." Wherever there is beauty, the Divine is present. That is why the Upanishad described the Divine as "Sathyam (Truth), Sivam (Auspicious) and Sundaram (Beauty)." For human beings, it is humanness that confers beauty on them. The most essential requisite in any society is Manavathvam (humanness); whatever one's scholarship or scientific knowledge or position, he has to develop human qualities. To the extent these qualities are developed, to that extent the society, the state and the nation will progress. Where human qualities are absent the society ceases to be civilised. And the nation itself forfeits its place of honour.

Morality and integrity are two abodes of Divine

It is only morality and integrity which entitle human beings to be respected. Students have to cherish human qualities. Only by adhering to the spiritual path can human qualities be promoted. They will not flourish in other conditions. A seed will sprout and grow into a plant only if you sow it in proper soil and water it. It will not grow in a tin can; it will only rot. Morality and integrity can grow only from the human mind. Morality is the basis for all human qualities. Good behaviour is based on one's 'morals. Morality elevates man to the highest stage. Bharat has been the teacher for all nations in upholding the greatness of morality based on spirituality. Morality and

integrity are the true and enduring abodes of the Divine. What the nation needs today is morality. Morality must be regarded as a fundamental requisite at all places at all times. A great General said that whether in war or in any difficult situation, one should not give up moral principles. Gladstone, who was Prime Minister during Queen Victoria's reign, always adhered to morality in all situations. The people had more regard for him than even for the Queen.

Morality can be upheld only through control of the senses. Only the person who has self-control is competent to exercise authority over others. How can one who is too weak to control himself be able to control others? There must be unity in word and deed. Only then can one achieve great things.

World needs men who have sense-control

Today there is little accord between words and actions. Truth prevails when words are matched by deeds. The mind is in harmony when words and actions are in unison. Students should bear in mind the nation's honour, well-being and progress and lead exemplary lives. Students today have no conception of sense-control. In Vedantic parlance, control of the senses is termed Samyama. Samyama is a quality which is unique for man. By giving a free rein to the senses and leading a libertine's life, man is forfeiting his divinity. The Sanskrit term for sense-control is Dama. One who has cultivated Dama is called a Danta. The world needs today men who have control over their senses and not men who preach metaphysics. All Vedanta is now confined to words. Cleverness in speech and ostentation in behaviour have increased, while good conduct has been on the decline, with the result that men have lost the joy of living. Every student must become a Danta (one who has control over his senses). Students have developed ostentatious habits even before embarking on their studies. They have no conception of humility. They are not aware of how they should conduct themselves before elders. For this they are not to blame. Their parents and teachers have not instilled and encouraged in them these qualities.

Students today are interested in small talk and trivial gossip. They treat

spirituality with levity It is because these tendencies are continually growing that students have no idea of what is proper education. They should not regard education as only a means to earning a living. They should look upon education as the basis for the good life.

Education is not for acquiring wealth

It is doubtless necessary to seek a job for one's livelihood. But they should not regard jobs and earning of money as the be-all and end-all of life. Even in a job, one should try to uphold morality and integrity' and set an example to others. Looking at the world today, it would seem that education is for the purpose of practising fraud on the people, making money through bribes and other immoral and unrighteous ways without regard for truth. Certainly this is not the purpose of education. Its aim is the acquisition of knowledge. The true values of education have been lost owing to excessive concern for making money There is nothing wrong with money or education. Every thing depends on how it is acquired or utilised. Students! You have to exhale as much as you breathe in. This is inescapable. If you do not exhale, the lungs will burst. Likewise, while you have to acquire education and earn wealth, you must utilise both in a righteous way. The education you have received must be given back to society for promoting public well-being. Equally what is earned should be given back to society. Unless this is done, your education and wealth are utterly worthless. What has been got from the community should be given back to the community. That is true seva (service). This kind of sacrificing spirit is rare among students. They are interested in acquiring more and more. Life is reduced to a one-way traffic. This is not proper. What is earned should be utilised properly and shared with others. This is the way to ennoble life. In swimming, you have to push the water back so that you may move forward. Likewise, renouncing material things is the way to spiritual progress. But, what you have to renounce is not wealth alone. You have to get rid of all your bad qualities. That alone is true sacrifice. Giving up hearth and home is not a big sacrifice. It is the giving up of all vices that is true renunciation. That alone can result in the blossoming of the human personality.

Education is foundation for life

Students! For a man to behave like a human being is itself a great task. Nothing is so degrading as for a man to behave like an animal. Man is being battered today by the six notorious enemies' lust, anger, infatuation, greed, pride and envy. When all actions are dedicated to God, the Divine will protect you always.

It was in this spirit of complete dedication that the poet Pothana began the writing of his Bhagavatham (in Telugu). The Bhagavatham deals with the union of Paramatma (the Super Spirit) and the Jivatma (the individual spirit). Beginning with Bhakti (devotion to God), one gradually acquires Jnana (the Supreme Wisdom) and reaches the stage of Vairagya (complete detachment). The Truth is discovered only through detachment. And the Truth leads to Mukti (liberation).

The educational process is the foundation for life. Students are described as Brahmacharis. On the foundation of the life of a Brahmachari the walls of Grihastha (family life) are raised. Over the walls, there is the roof of Vanaprastha (the life of a renunciant). Unless the foundation is well and firmly laid, the entire edifice will collapse. Hence, students (who are in the Brahmachari stage) must cultivate good qualities which will serve as protective shields in life. Without such qualities there will be no peace in life.

Give a back seat to the ego

People should realise that they are born in society, grow in society and live in society. Today most people are content to think only about themselves and their families and are indifferent to their obligations to society. As a result, they lose peace and happiness. Even devotees are more concerned about their personal interests and give secondary place to God. Consequently they are unable to experience real bliss. They lead purposeless and meaningless lives. The Kauravas are an example of persons who sought worldly gains and power, forgetting God. Although they had immense wealth, what happened to them in the end? They had many valiant heroes and preceptors fighting on

their side. But all their material resources, their intellectual abilities and their armed might were of no avail. The Pandavas relied on the strength of the Divine and the power of righteousness. The Bhagavad Gita has clearly explained that the Divine helps those who adhere to Dharma. The Pandavas relied on God for everything. Hence they were crowned with success. No doubt the Pandavas had to encounter many difficulties. But these did not overwhelm them. The Pandavas placed God first, the world next and the "I" last. Hence they were successful. The Kauravas placed "I" (the ego) first, the world next and God last. Hence, they lost everything! Students! Give a back seat to the ego. Our history is full of instances of persons who set an example in sacrificing the ego.

Humility is the insignia of true education

It may be natural for warm-blooded youth to be filled with egoistic pride. Students! Regard humility and discipline as the insignia of true education. There is a well known Telugu saying: "Education confers humility. Through humility one acquires competence. Competence gives the capacity to earn wealth. Through wealth God will be realised." You can see how humility leads you to God. If out of egoistic pride, you are indifferent to the Divine and Dharma, you will not have these sacred thoughts. Make the best use of the body, the time and the opportunities given to you. Study well and make use of your knowledge for the benefit of society. There is no value in the mere acquisition of degrees. Only arrogance grows with the increase in academic knowledge. There is a corresponding decline in your spiritual potential. If spirituality grows, egoism will decline. It is because men have forgotten their Divine heritage that they behave worse than wild beasts.

Material wealth is not the summum bonum of life. Power, pelf and position have no permanence. Egoism is man's worst enemy. It has no real foundation. It is because of this foolish pride that man is not realising his true identity.

There should be change within

Despite all the religious practices that many are wont to adopt, there is little change in their mental attitudes. Changes in external behaviour have little meaning. It is the mind that must change. Altering the apparel means nothing, Your gunas (qualities) must change. Students will be the leaders of tomorrow. If you reform yourselves, the nation can be changed. The future of the country depends on you. If you adhere to morality and integrity, the country will become an ideal to the world.

Bharat has been known from the earliest times for its glorious culture. You must all strive to restore Bharat's greatness as the cultural and spiritual leader of humanity. Bharat gave to the world the supreme message of its Upanishads and epics by its own example of harmonious and righteous living. Because these sacred ways of life have been neglected today, no one is able to recognise the greatness of Indian culture. Students! Bear in mind three things: Bharatiyas have always been votaries of truth and righteousness. Justice has been their watchword. Students must ceaselessly endeavour to adhere to Truth, Righteousness, Morality and Integrity. Live up to the Vedic injunction: "Speak the Truth. Follow Dharma."

Try to put into practice the teachings you have learnt during these fifteen days and thereby make your lives meaningful. You must always love your Motherland. There is nothing wrong in anyone loving his country. But he should not have any antipathy towards any other country. "In the sacred land of Bharat, tolerance has been the most precious treasure. Of all forms of spiritual discipline, the most difficult penance is adherence to Truth and Right Conduct." This has been the basic credo of the sacred land of Bharat. Forgetting this blessed heritage, Bharatiyas are going after exotic practices and ways of living. Students! You have a supreme duty to protect and nourish the culture of Bharat. Pray for the welfare of all nations and people. Have a wide allembicing vision. Give up all narrow ideas. Above all, whatever anyone may say or do, you should not give up your devotion to God. Without the love of God, this cosmos is an empty void. Love is God, God is Love. Develop this Divine Love. Cherish it in your hearts at all times and in all situations. Do not give it up, whatever troubles or difficulties you may be faced with. That Love will be with you, in you and beside you and protect you.

Don't blame God if difficulties confront you. Regard even those difficulties as gifts from God intended for your good. Life is a succession of good and bad. If you take in your stride these ups and downs of life with firm faith in God, the Divine will take good care of you. Always remember the Lord's name.

24. Message of the Vedas

Date: 03 June 1990 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1990

DEAR Students!

There is no disease equal to greed. There is no greater enemy than anger. There is no misery than poverty. There is no happiness greater than wisdom. Man is ignoring these sacred truths. Faith in God has been replaced by disrespect for reverence and righteousness. Atheism is rampant and preceptors are not honoured. Devotion is at a discount and the ancient wisdom is being given up these days. In education character has reached its nadir.

"I am in the Light. I am the Light. The Light is in Me. The Light is Myself."

When this awareness arises in the heart, it will lead to oneness with Brahman. The Vedas are the most ancient among the world's scriptures. They are a vast storehouse of wisdom. They enabled man to have an overview of the universe. Historically, they are the earliest known book of knowledge. They are the roots of human culture and striving.

Manu has declared: "Everything is derived from the Vedas."

All knowledge, all the principles of right living, all qualities are derived from the Vedas.

"Anantho Vai Vedah"
(The Vedas are infinite).

The Vedas are immeasurable, unrivalled and filled with bliss. Veda is derived from the verb *Vid*, to know. Knowledge of the Supreme is Veda. It represents *Atma Jnana* (Knowledge of the Spirit), *Brahma Jnana* (Knowledge of the Universal Consciousness) and *Advaita Jnana* (Knowledge of the One that subsumes the many). These different terms are synonymous.

Vedas embody the cosmic sound

It is not easy for laymen to understand the Vedas. But whether they are understood or not, their truth permeates the universe. They embody the *Sabda Brahman* (Cosmic Sound). They are not confined to a particular place, time or person. They pervade the cosmos. Realising that it is not easy for common people to understand the Vedas, Vyasa codified them in four groups. They have been propagated and practised in three sections. The *Karma Kanda* (dealing with rituals), *Upasana Kanda* (dealing with forms of worship) and *Jnana Kanda* (dealing with the path of Knowledge).

"Karmanyeva Adhikarasthe" (You have the right only for the performance of actions), declares the Gita. These actions have to be in accordance with Dharma. It must be realised that the body has been given only for the practice of Dharma. When man's actions achieve ripeness, they become Upasana (worship). When the worship is offered with full devotion and love for the Divine, it becomes Jnana (Pure Knowledge). Thus all three stages are really integral. Just as a flower by stages becomes a ripe fruit, similarly through Karma, Upasana and Jnana, the final stage of Self-realisation is reached. It is to enable the common people to go through these three stages that the puranas and epics were produced as aids to spiritual advancement. The Upanishads are the culmination of the Vedas. Hence they are known as Vedanta.

Three kinds of Yoga offered by Upanishads

The Upanishads have offered three kinds of yoga for mankind. With regard to actions, the dedication of every action to God is commended. As regards Upasana Yoga, what is required is wholehearted devotion to God, with purity

in thought, word and deed. Love for the sake of securing some worldly benefit or return is not true love. Love must be for its own sake. The third is Jnana Yoga.

"Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath"

(The cosmos is pervaded everywhere by the Lord).

Everything is a manifestation of God. The Divine is in every being. This awareness is Jnana.

Students may have a doubt. Is it possible to conceive of this sense of oneness when forms, names, thoughts and actions are so varied among beings? You watch the waves on the ocean. Each wave appears to be different from another and unrelated to it. Yet the water in all of them is the same. The waves are not different from the ocean. Likewise, though names and forms and thoughts and actions may be different, all of them are like waves on the ocean of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. This Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss) is present in everyone in a subtle form. The Gita emerged from the Upanishads. It expounds the Karma, Upasana and Jnana (the threefold path) in three sections of six cantos each. Thus from the Vedas to the Upanishads and then to the Gita the eternal teachings has come to divinise mankind. The Gita does not belong to any one nation or people. It is for all mankind. It is the Voice of God. God is one for all people though He may be worshipped under different names and forms. Whether they are Hindus or Muslims, Christians or Parsis, Buddhists or Sikhs, God is one for all. Whatever the form in which worship is done, it reaches the one God. The sun is one and does not vary with the nation on which he sheds his light.

Gurus and sishyas of ancient times

The Vedas are infinite and boundless. Because of their profound meaning, those who studied the Vedas went through an arduous exercise. The

preceptors were men of severe austerity. It is because of their great discipline and devotion that the Vedas could survive to this day. They are not recorded in a book. They have come down through an oral tradition from a succession of gurus and sishyas (preceptors and disciples). Great care has to be taken in reciting the Vedic hymns, observing the rules regarding accent, pause and rhythm. The gurus of those days were utterly selfless, pure-hearted and dedicated to the Divine. They were filled with love for the disciples and dedicated their lives to imparting Vedic knowledge to the students. The students also were highly disciplined and adhered to all prescribed regulations. Those who violated the preceptor's injunctions were placed beyond the pale. No quarter was given to those who exhibited the five defects: indifference, lack of humility, egoism, envy, and bad manners.

Vaisampayana and Yajnavalkya

Vyasa had many disciples who were learning the Vedas from the sage. Chief among them was Vaisampayana. He was an ideal disciple, who implicitly carried out the guru's injunctions and studied the Vedas diligently. After completing his studies under Vyasa, Vaisampayana established a gurukula (Preceptor's ashram) for imparting Vedic knowledge. Gurukula is regarded as some kind of special educational establishment. It is not so. Gurukula was the dwelling place of the guru and it was also the abode of the sishyas (the students). The guru, after taking his meal, would distribute the food as prasadam to the students who used to spend their entire time with the guru. The guru and the disciples enjoyed everything in common and had the same ideals. The preceptor initiated the students in the spiritual quest. One day, the sage Yajnavalkya came to Vaisampayana's gurukula. Yajnavalkya was a brilliant intellectual with keen intelligence. Yajnavalkya was proud about his intellectual attainments and this was responsible for his downfall. Pride always goeth before a fall. Yajnavalkya developed indifference to his studies and started behaving in an unbecoming manner. Vaisampayana was noticing all this. The preceptors of those times would give even their lives for deserving disciples, but would give no quarter to those who were proud and ill-behaved. Displeased with Yajnavalkya's conduct, Vaisampayana called him to his presence one day and told him: "Yajnavalkya! You have no right any

longer to study in this gurukula. You must leave it at once. And before leaving, you give back all that you learnt here." Yajnavalkya, who realised his mistakes, disgorged all that he had learnt. The vomit was eaten by the Thithiri birds. Then the birds began to recite the Vedic hymns, which came to be known as Taithriya Samhita.

The birth of Sukla Yajur-Veda

There are two traditions relating to the Vedas. One is known as the *Brahmasampradayam* (the Brahmic tradition). The other is *Aditya-sampradayam* (the Sun tradition). What Yajnavalkya gave back is known as the Brahma-sampradaya. It is also known as Krishna Yajur-Veda. Subsequently, feeling penitent about his misconduct, Yajnavalkya did penance in the form of *Suryopasana* (worship of the Sun), giving up food and drink. In this manner he was atoning for his misconduct.

The Sun-God appeared before him in the form of *Vaji* (a sacred horse) and told him: "Child! What has happened, is past. Remember it is a grievous crime to be disloyal to your preceptor or ungrateful to the Divine. You should not indulge in this kind of behaviour. Be careful in the future." Saying this, the Sun-God himself taught the Vedas to Yajnavalkya. Why did Surya appear before him in the form of Vaji? Yajnavalkya's ancestors were noted for their *vajasanam* (offerings of food) to the hungry, Hence they got the name Vajasam. For this reason, the Sun-God assumed the form of Vaji and taught the Vedas to Yajnavalkya. This Veda is known as Sukla Yajur-Veda. It is also called Vajanaskanda. The Yajur-Veda thus got divided into two parts: Krishna Yajur-Veda and Sukla Yajur-Veda.

Greatness of gift of food to the hungry

It should be noted that it was because of the gift of food made by Yajnavalkya's ancestors that the Sun-God himself came down to teach the Veda to Yajnavalkya. This shows the supreme efficacy of the anna-dana (gift of food) to the hungry and the starving. There is no greater gift than the gift of food.

There is no God higher than one's parents.
There is no japa or tapa higher than righteousness.
There is no Dharma greater than compassion.
Nothing is more profitable than the company of the good.
There is no worse enemy than hatred.
No disease is worse than indebtedness.
Death is preferable on earth to infamy.
No wealth is more precious than a good name.
There is no ornament superior to the Lord's name.

Realising these truths, Yajnavalkya taught his disciples the value of service to parents, reverence for the guru, and efficacy of the gift of food.

Dear students!

The summer course began on an Ekadasi day, is concluding on an Ekadasi. Regard these classes as a sacred Ekadasi observance. In this holy exercise, many veterans and experienced scholars have spoken on many vital subjects. It is not easy to get such eminent persons to address you. You have greater access to Swami than to these lecturers. It is not enough to listen to them. You must try to put into practice at least some of the things they have taught you.

What you have been taught during these fifteen days is the essence of the Vedas. You have received also the nectar churned out of the sastras, the puranas and the epics. You will be the future leaders of Bharat. You have to practise *Dharma* and lead ideal lives. **Never give up Truth and Righteousness.** The Vedas have indicated what are to be followed and what are to be avoided. Unfortunately today people follow what is prohibited and have given up what should be followed.

You students should consider yourselves extremely fortunate in having an

opportunity like this. Whatever enterprise you may engage in, do not forget your duty and your faith in the Divine. Perform good actions. Thereby you will purify your mind. When you worship God with a pure mind you will achieve Self-realisation. The Lord does not seek from you material offerings. When you love Him with all your heart He will shower His grace on you. This is evident from the examples of Valmiki, Kuchela and many other devotees. Whatever you do, do it as a dedicated offering to God. Bear in mind the example of Sabari, whose devotion to Rama beggars description.

Keep in mind the sacred things you have heard, act upto the teachings, purify your hearts and be exemplary citizens of Bharat. This is my benediction for all of you.

25. The Guru within

Date: 07 July 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! As long as a dream lasts, all that is experienced, heard or seen in it appears as real. Likewise, in samsara (worldly existence), filled with likes and dislikes, everything seems real till the dawn of Jnana (wisdom). When one attains the state of Supreme Realisation, all that happens in the world appears as a dream. The human body is composed of the five basic elements - Prithvi, Apa, Agni, Vayu, and Akasa (earth, water, fire, air and space). These five are compounded together in an orderly way. The human body is described as the Bhautika Sarira (physical body). It establishes all types of relations with the world. This may be described as "Pancheekaranam" (the bonding together of the five components). In the body, in its waking state, all the sense organs are active. The body is the abode of pleasure and pain. It has three forms: Sthoola (gross), Sookshma (subtle) and Karana (causal). The gross physical body is Annamaya (permeated by food). It is inert. It is comparable to an instrument. What we see is only the physical body. Believing that this is real and permanent, man tends to forget the all-pervading and eternal Atmic principle. The five pranas (vital breaths), the mind, the intellect and the ten sense organs (of perception and action) constitute the sookshma-sarira (subtle body). It functions in the dream state. In this state, the individual is oriented inwards. In it, man creates for himself a new world. The dream is itself the proof of its reality. It is self-constituted with no external relations. In the dream state, everything is created by the mind - forms, sounds and taste, which are experienced without any physical basis for them. This entire experience is limited to the individual concerned. If, for instance, ten persons are sleeping in one room, each person's dream is unique to himself. Each one's actions in the dream are unique to himself.

Mind creates both waking and dream states

There is no relationship between the dream and the waking state. One individual has a dream in which his friend harasses him in many ways. If after

waking up in the morning he accosts his friend and asks the latter why he harassed him, the friend replies: "You madcap! I have not seen you at all!" This means that the friend in the dream and the troubles he gave are all self-created by the dreamer. All other dream experiences are also self-created. Hence, all the experiences in dreams are confined to the individual concerned and have no connection with others in the real world. The joys and sorrows experienced in the dream are the stuff of the dream state. It is in the dream state that one goes through the consequences of good and bad actions in previous lives. This means that the experiences are related to the sookshma sarira (subtle body). In this, the mind is the most important factor. It is the mind that creates everything. Although the mind is one, according to the different functions performed by it, different names are given to it. When it is engaged in the thought process, it is called Manas. When it is engaged in discriminating between what is permanent and what is transient, it is called Buddhi (intelligence). In its role as a reservoir of memory, it is called Chitta. When the mind identifies itself with the body, it is called Ahamkara (ego). The four names are related to the mind and their combined aspect constitutes Antahkarana (the inner instrument). Thus, both the waking and dream states are creations of the mind.

Mind causes both bondage and liberation

The third state is Sushupti. SU means good. Shupti means sleep. Sushupti means sound sleep. In this state the mind is absent. When the mind is not present the world also is absent. In the absence of the world, there are no experiences of joy and sorrow. The world exists as long as the mind is present. Joy and sorrow are experienced through contact with the world. Hence, the world is associated with joy and sorrow. The mind is said to be the cause of both bondage and liberation.

There is, however, one other state which transcends these states: the Atmic state. It is because of his identification with the body in the first three states that man forgets his spiritual reality. But, for all experiences the Atmic principle in everyone is the cause, though the physical forms are varied. Man is a prey to ignorance because, forgetting his Atmic reality, he identifies

himself with the mind-body complex. The waves appearing in an ocean appear as different from each other. But they consist of the same water. Likewise, though man appears in innumerable forms, all these are like the waves appearing on the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Names and forms may be different but the basis is the same.

The Atma alone is self-effulgent

The Atma, however, is covered in the human being by five sheaths: Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya Kosas (sheaths). As a result, the Atma is not easily cognisable. The physical body is the Annamaya kosa (the sheath of food). The sheaths of Pranamaya (life-force), Manomaya (the mental sheath) and the Vijnanamaya (imbued with intelligence) form the sookshma sarira (subtle body). The Anandamaya kosa is the Karna sarira (causal or seed body). Although it has the name Anandamaya (blissful), it is not real bliss. It is the blissful state of the Atma that is reflected as an image in the sheath of Bliss (the causal). The mind is like the moon, which is not self-luminous. The Atma alone is self-effulgent. It is this light which illumines the body, mind, the Buddhi and the senses and invests them with consciousness.

It is this Chaitanya (Atmic consciousness) which makes the cosmos function. For the entire creation, consisting of living and inanimate objects, this consciousness is the basis. All that is experienced by the body and the mind has no real connection with the Atma. Relying on the light coming from the sun, many people perform different actions. Some may do good deeds and some others may be indulging in bad actions. The Atma is unaffected by the consequences of these actions, just as the sun is not affected by the activities done with the help of sunlight. The Sun is a witness. Likewise the Atma also is a witness to what is done by the body, mind and other organs.

But man, because of his identifying himself with the body and other organs, attributes all their activities to the power of the Atma. For all this, the mind is the root cause. It is the mind that assumes these multifarious forms. For instance, if a person builds a house, he erects within it a bedroom, a drawing

room, a kitchen and so on. All these separate rooms are for his comfort. But if the separate walls are knocked down, only one hall remains. Likewise if the walls created by the mind are removed the Atma alone will be experienced.

Man can experience his true Self

If man embarks on the process of casting off one by one the five sheaths which envelop the Atma, he will experience his true Self. This process consists in the practice of Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana (hearing, reflection in the mind, and meditation on the Divine). The body, the mind and the senses are merely like the husk which encases the grain. When the husk is removed, the rice alone remains. As long as man is enveloped in this husk, he cannot escape birth and death. When the husk (in the form of the five sheaths) is cast off, man is freed from rebirth, just as the rice without husk cannot sprout. Even as you do not need a lamp to see the sun, there is no need to search for the Atma when it is omnipresent. The Atma shines eternally. No other sadhana is required to recognise it. As long as man is not aware of his own true nature, he will be under the delusion that the Atma is somewhere else remote from him. Like the ashes hiding the fire in burning charcoal, the delusion regarding the body is covering the Atma. Once the delusion goes, man will experience true bliss and understand the Cosmic Reality.

Aham and Hridaya refer to the Atma

In this context, the significance of the use of the term "I" by everyone should be rightly understood. Without the "I", the world will have no existence. What is this "I" ("nenu" in Telugu)? It is the basis (Uniki). Because the same basic entity exists in all beings, it is called Atma. It is also called Brahman. Another name for it is Hridaya (the spiritual heart). It is also called Aham ("I"). All these different names refer only to the Atma. When we use the term Hridaya, we generally consider it as referring to the physical heart in the body. This is not correct. Hridaya has no physical limitations. Hridaya in the true sense of the word refers to that which is all-pervading. Forgetting this omnipresent spiritual heart, we tend to regard the physical heart in the body as the true heart. This betokens a narrow mind. In ordinary parlance we use the term

Aham ("I") in every context. This Aham is Brahman. When you declare, "I am a householder," the first reference is to yourself as "I." Another says, "I am a sanyasin." Here, again, the "I" comes first. Similarly in other references, the "I" comes first and then the description follows. When you separate the "I" from the person who used it, the "I" alone remains distinct from the different individuals. This shows that the "I" is basic to everyone, whatever his status or form. This "I" which is present in everyone is the Atma, which is omnipresent. Because man forgets this basic truth, he is the victim of endless sorrows and doubts. What we should love and cherish is the Atma and not the body.

Atma is the only source of lasting bliss

People have love for their parents, wife, children and other kinsfolk because of the relationships. But these relationships are essentially impermanent. In cultivating: these ephemeral attachments, men are failing to love the Atma, which is ever present and is the source of lasting bliss. If you have doubts regarding Atma, it is because you have no steadfast love for the Divine. To develop firm love for anything, you have to get the conviction that "it is mine." Unless you acquire such a conviction regarding the Atma, you cannot become a Sthithaprajna (a man of steadfast wisdom). You will not achieve real bliss. You cannot reach the permanent state of Self- Realisation.

Develop the unshakable conviction that the Divine is present in everyone. Then there will be no room for developing differences of any kind. Conflict and disorder will have no place. Likes and dislikes will go.

Once you direct the mind towards the Atma, you have learnt the supreme mantra: "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am the Brahman). Whatever you do, eating or walking or seeing or speaking, do it with the Atmic consciousness. There are two "I's" in everyone - the "I" that is associated with the mind and the "I" associated with the Atma. Consciousness of the Atma is the real "I." When this "I" is wrongly associated with the mind, it becomes Ahamkara (the Ego). When the "I" associated with the Atma experiences Atmic bliss, it realises that the universal consciousness is One, though it may be called by different

names. When you eliminate the Anatma-bhava in you (that is, the body consciousness), you will have the Atma-bhava (consciousness of the Universal), within you. Without this consciousness all sadhanas are of no avail. The water vapour produced by the sun becomes a cloud and hides the sun itself. Likewise, the thoughts arising in the mind conceal the Atma. When the mind is eliminated the Atma alone remains.

For eliminating the mind and removing the delusions from it, desires have to be controlled. But the sadhaks of today have not reduced their desires. It must be realised that selfishness and selfcentredness have to be got rid of. Selfishness is the root cause of all the afflictions plaguing man.

Reform of the individual is the basic need

If the world is to be transformed, we must begin with the individual. His evil traits have to be removed. He must fill himself with sacred thoughts. To start with, the individual must reform himself. Without the individual realising his true nature, all other accomplishments are of no avail. Man is exploring the most distant regions in space, but is not moving even an inch towards understanding his heart. Is this the journey man should undertake? He must turn the mind inwards. Turning the mind towards the external world can only breed sorrow. Enduring bliss can be got only by directing the mind towards God. That is the real sadhana. Without mental transformation all other changes are meaningless. Without changing your qualities, you remain in the same state as before. Develop good qualities and sanctify yourself. This is the message for everyone.

Your true Guru is God alone

Today is Gurupoornima. Poornima refers to the full moon with all his 16 aspects being illumined by the sun. In man there are sixteen black spots: the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy), the two Gunas, Rajas and Tamas, and the eight types of mada (conceit) based on lineage and scholarship, wealth, youth, beauty, position and penance. It is only when man gets rid of these sixteen evil traits that he will be able to realise his oneness

with the his poornatva (Divine). Who is the one who enables man to achieve this state of Poornatva (fullness)? It is the Guru. Guru refers to one who has transcended the gunas and has no form. The gurus of today are filled with qualities of all kinds. The disciples seem to be better than the preceptors. The disciples are making sacrifices. The preceptors are acquiring possessions. In this situation it is difficult to say who are gurus and who are disciples. People today tend to be naive in their actions. Whenever they see some aged persons, they seek some mantra (spiritual message) from them. What is the mantra they really need? It is the understanding of their true nature. This mantra is within them. Each contains within himself the mantra, tantra and yantra (the spiritual message, the method of practising it and the instrument for implementing it). Your process of breathing contains the mantra you need: "So-Ham", "So- Ham". (Bhagavan demonstrated how this should be done). "I am That," "That is I." This is the mantra. What is the yantra (the instrument)? It is your physical body. What is the tantra? Your heart! When you have in you all the three, why go to anyone for a message? It is a sign of weakness and ignorance.

Your true guru is God alone. He transcends all gunas. He is beyond all forms. He is the only one who can dispel the darkness of ignorance and light the lamp of Prajnanam (Supreme Wisdom). It is a mark of ignorance to go after nondescript preceptors and seek messages from them. When they are wallowing in bondage themselves, how are they going to free you from bondage? How can one who is filled with delusions himself rid you of your delusions? Can one who is begging for food relieve your hunger?

Have confidence in the Atma

Do not go in search of gurus. Strengthen your faith in the Atma. Seek to enjoy the Atmic bliss. Strive to develop the conviction: "I am the Atma." That is the true message. When you have grasped this Truth, all other things will be unnecessary. For experiencing this Guru, there are no restrictions as to time, place or circumstances. Only for the man steeped in the mind, changes in time exist and he is bound by them. But to the man who has transcended the limitations of time, everything remains immutable. This spiritual state can be

reached only through confidence in the Atma. Gurupoornima is observed as a day for honouring the Guru. Some types of gurus welcome this day as the day which brings them income. They are an inferior breed. The real Guru is only one. He is the One, the God of gods, who is hailed as father, mother, teacher, knowledge and wealth and all else. He is the Supreme whom you must seek by your sadhana. God alone can transform your spiritual efforts into a transcendental experience. You have the vision of the Divine (sakshatkara). The vision does not come from outside. It is within you, because the Divine is omnipresent. Only the person who considers himself separate from God will have the feeling that the vision of God comes from outside. God is everywhere. You are God.

Dedicate every moment of life to the Lord

It is the agglomeration of body, mind and the senses which is preventing you from recognising your inherent divinity. You are covering yourself in this manner. You are the cause of your bondage through the body and the mind. When you understand the nature of the body-mind complex, you will realise your true essence. It is enough if you develop the conviction that you and the Divine are one - "Aham Brahmasmi." Cultivate steadfast faith in this Divine oneness through love. That love will lead you to Self-realisation. Wherever you may be and whatever you do, regard yourselves as instruments of the Divine and act on that basis. You need not wait for a whole year to observe Gurupoornima. Treat every moment of your life as being intended for dedication to the Lord. This is the way to experience the Divine all the time at all places. This is true Sakshatkara. Serve all and love all. Firmly believe that the Divine is in everyone and constantly act on this belief. Only by continual practice can you develop this sacred attitude. Fill yourself with self-confidence and courage. Make your life a complete offering to the Divine, who is the real source of all that you are and all that you have.

There was an old woman in Uttar Pradesh who used to give away many things in charity. She used to go about with her head bowed. Some people asked her why she was humbling herself in that manner when she could hold her head high because of the numerous gifts she was making to all and sundry. She

modestly replied: "When the Lord is giving me so many things with His thousand hands, all that I am giving is only with a single hand. What reason is there for feeling proud about what I am doing? Should not people feel ashamed about giving to others with one hand what God gives to them with a thousand hands?" Hence, everyone must develop the spirit of Thyaga (sacrifice). You must serve the people with your body. You have to cherish good and noble thoughts in your mind. You must use your wealth for supporting educational and other institutions to help the people. Give food to the starving. This is the way to lead a purposeful and sublime life. Life has been given to you not to fatten yourself. The body is the basic instrument for the practice of Dharma. Dedicate your entire time to service and the discharge of your duties. Your sadhana must not be for selfish ends. It must promote the good of others. Giving up selfishness, cultivating selfless love for others, sanctify your lives.

26. Role of the Avatars

Date: 14 August 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Like a feast to a starving man, Like rain for the parched earth, Like a child to one yearning for a son The Lord comes to protect Dharma And save the virtuous and the good. SAHASRASIRSHA Purusha Sahasrakshas-sahasrapad. The Lord has a myriad heads, a myriad eyes and a myriad feet. The entire cosmos and every living being in it are reflections of the Divine.

Oblivious to the presence of this sacred Divine within himself, man embarks on the quest for God. He behaves like a man who goes to his neighbour for milk, forgetting the wish-fulfilling cow in his backyard. Avatars are of two kinds: One, Amsavatar; two, Purnavatar. All human beings are Amsavatar (partial incarnation of the Divine). "Mamaivamso jeevaloke jeevabhutah-sanatanah" (A part of My eternal soul Self has become the Jiva - individual soul - in the world of living beings), says Krishna in the Gita. These partial incarnations, caught up in Maya, develop egoism and possessiveness and lead worldly lives. The Purnavatars, however, subduing and transcending Maya, manifest their full divinity to the world in their lives. The Purnavatar may behave, according to the circumstances, as if He were subject to Maya, but in fact He is free from Maya at all times.

The Lord manifests in different Avatars

In the Rama Avatar, for instance, Rama conducted himself as if he was subject to Maya, but upheld Dharma for promoting the welfare of the world. The Krishna Avatar was different. Keeping Maya under control, He manifested His leelas (miraculous deeds). This was why Vyasa, in his Bhagavatha, characterised Krishna as "Leelamanusha Vighraha" (The Divine manifesting as man for performing His Leelas). The Bhagavatha has described in detail the leelas of Krishna and proclaimed His glory to the world. In the Krishna Avatar, Krishna not only performed many marvellous deeds, but also taught the Supreme Wisdom to the world. He was one who had transcended the gunas, but, for the sake of regeneration of the world, behaved as if He was

influenced by the gunas, and delighted the world by His deeds. Sanjay Sahani (who had spoken earlier) said that whatever Krishna did was for the welfare of the world. Krishna did everything, whatever He spoke or whatever action He did, for the good and well-being of the world. But some people, not understanding this truth owing to their own limitations, attributed wrong motives for some of Krishna's actions. In this they reflected their own feelings.

The Parama Bhakti of the gopikas

Prema (Love) is nectarine in its sweetness. Bhakti (Love for the Lord) was the highest expression of devotion among the gopikas (the cowherdesses of Gokulam) because they were saturated with the sweetness of Divine Love. They did not seek liberation or higher knowledge. The ecstasy they derived from merely seeking Krishna, they did not get from any other source. Narada coined the phrase, "Parama Bhakti" (Supreme Devotion) to describe the devotion of the gopikas. These supreme devotees regarded the Lord as their companion and most precious treasure. So intense was their devotion that they used to go about as highly intoxicated persons who were unmindful of the world. Leaving their homes, on hearing the music of Krishna's flute, they rushed to the forest in search of Krishna, oblivious to everything. The Gopikas realised that Jnana (supreme wisdom) consisted in experiencing oneness with the Divine and that all other knowledge was only mundane and related to the physical. Krishna was everything for them. In their feeling of oneness with the Divine, they made no distinction between the animate and the inanimate. They saw the Divine in everything. Pothana (author of the Telugu Bhagavatham) has beautifully described the feelings of the gopikas when they went in search of Krishna in the forest. (Bhagavan recited the poem in which the gopikas describe Krishna and ask the jasmine creepers to tell them whether Krishna is hiding in any of their bushes). Having tasted the nectar of the devotion of Krishna, the gopikas would not think of seeking anything else.

Krishna is said to have stolen butter from the houses of the gopikas. The butter which He stole was the pure, milk-white hearts of the gopikas. Butter is pure and soft. The hearts of the gopikas were like butter. (Bhagavan recited poems in which Yasoda tells Krishna about the complaints she had received

from the gopikas against Him and says she will tie Him to a mortar so that He may not go to other houses for stealing their butter). Yasoda did not realise the divinity of Krishna, though even in small things Krishna used to reveal His Divine powers.

From Rama and Krishna to Sathya Sai

In the Treta Yuga, Rama came as the very embodiment of Sathya and Dharma (Truth and Righteousness). In the Dwapara Yuga, the Lord incarnated as Krishna, the embodiment of Santhi and Prema. Today the Avatar has come as the embodiment of all the four - Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema.

The world cannot so easily understand how the Love principle works. The Bhagavatha has clearly expounded the connection between Samsara (family life) and the world. Family life is concerned with the bringing up of a family, the acquisition of properties, the enjoyment of comforts and other material benefits. Nature provides all that a man needs, air to breathe, land for shelter, water to drink, and food to eat. But man is forgetting how to live in harmony with nature according to Nature's laws. Man craves for all kinds of artificial comforts. This was the teaching of Suka to Parikshit (in the Bhagavatha). The world is full of egoism and acquisitiveness, lust and hatred. When man tries to utilise Nature to get rid of these bad traits, then he will be able to experience peace, love, and forbearance. Love can be got only through love and by no other means. Hence, spiritual aspirants should develop Divine love. Love is Divine. It seeks no return. Its only aim is to realise God.

The Lord incarnates to protect Dharma

It may be asked whether it is possible in the contemporary world to practise such love. As declared by Krishna in the Gita: "The Lord incarnates from age to age to protect Dharma." Every human being takes birth to pursue Dharma. The human body is given for practising Dharma. In this context, it should be noted that protection of the body takes priority over the protection of Dharma. It is only when the body is taken care of that, Dharma can be protected. This is the rationale of the statement: "Health is Wealth." It must

be realised that the protection of the body is solely for protecting Dharma. What is Dharma ? It is the harmony of thought, word and deed. This is the mark of true humanness. What kind of man is he whose thoughts, speech and actions are not in accord with each other? Today man must strive for this triple unity. Dharma cannot be destroyed. But what is happening is the decline in the practice of Dharma. Today, the practice of Dharma is itself true sadhana. For the practice of Dharma, the triple purity - purity of thought, word and deed - is essential. Embodiments of the Divine! Do not think that celebration of the birth of Krishna relates to what happened some millennia ago in the Dwapara Yuga. Everyone has to cherish the Krishna consciousness in one's heart every moment ceaselessly.

The advent of Krishna

Who is Krishna? When was He born? Krishna was born in the month of Sravana, in the Krishnapaksha (dark fortnight), on Ashtami day, in a dark room, as a dark child. Sravana means that which gives sravanam (hearing), delight to the ear. It is significant that among the nine forms of devotion, the first place is given to Sravanam, listening to the glories of the Lord, and the final stage is Atmanivedanam (total surrender). Today men tend to listen to all kinds of evil things, but do not lend their ears to hear what is pure and holy. What you should hear - sravana is all about God and not other trivial gossip. Unfortunately, it is a sign of the Kali age that people are eager to listen to bad tales about others and do not seek to listen to the holy name of the Lord. You are given eyes to seek a vision of the Lord of Kailasa. You are endowed with the feet for going to the Lord's temple and not to loiter in alleys and bylanes. All organs and limbs have been given to man for adoring the Lord. Dharma, in essence, means making use of every limb for the sacred purpose for which it is intended. See good; think good; speak good; go to good places; do good deeds. What do we mean by the use of the word "good"? It is not what someone else advises you to do. The Divine is not somewhere outside. He is within you. The consciousness of what is good must arise from within you. That is the voice of Conscience. Act according to the dictates of your Conscience. When the question is asked, "Where is God?" the answer is given (in the Gita sloka): "Aham Vaiswanaro bhutva praninam

deham Asritah; Prana-Apana Sa-mayuktah Pachamyannam Chaturvidham." (As Vaiswanara I have entered every living being and I digest all the four kinds of food). The Lord thus declares that He is within everyone as the digesting agent, who supplies nourishment to all parts of the body. God is present in everyone as Vaiswanara. Therefore, while taking food, you should offer it to the Divine first by reciting the sloka: Brahmarpanam Brahma Havih, Brahmagnau Brahmanahutham Brahmaiva thena Ganthavyam Brahma Karma Samadhina. (Brahmam is everything: the offering is Brahmam, the sacrificial fire is Brahmam, Brahmam is the goal and the means).

From darkness to light

Krishna was born during the Krishnapaksha, the dark fortnight of the month. The effulgence of the Lord is seen with greater effect, when it is dark. In a world of disorder, Krishna was born to establish order. He was born on Ashtami day. Ashtami is associated with trouble and difficulties. When do troubles arise? When Righteousness is forgotten. Krishna's advent signifies the dispelling of darkness, the removal of troubles, banishing of ignorance and teaching mankind the Supreme Wisdom.

Krishna's primary role was that of teacher. He taught the Gita to Arjuna. He told Arjuna: "Be only My instrument!" Krishna thereby declared: "Using you as an instrument I am reforming the whole world." All the teachings of the Divine are related to Dharma and Prema (Divine Love). The gopikas prayed to Krishna that He should never leave their hearts in which they had installed Him. Mira also sang in the same strain. "I dived deep into the ocean and found a pearl. Will you let me slip it out of my hand?" (Swami sang the song in Tamil). Samsara (worldly life) is a vast ocean. Desires are like the waves. Our feelings constitute the depth of the ocean. In this deep ocean there are crocodiles, whales and sharks in the form of attachments and hatred. It is not easy for ordinary beings to cross this ocean. The gopikas declared that only with the help of the Divine name can people save themselves. People tend to look upon the devotion of the gopikas in worldly terms. Their minds never turned towards any sensory objects. They were completely free from sensual desires. All their desires were concentrated on God. They viewed the entire

universe as the manifestation of God.

Key to inner peace is within you

The gopikas did not concern themselves with the question whether the Divine was attributeless or full of attributes. They preferred to worship the Divine in the form of Krishna and they wanted their forms to merge in the Divine. "Thereby we shall be formless," they declared. It is when we forget our form that we can merge in the Formless. The Divine cannot be experienced through Dhyana (meditation) or japa (reciting Lord's name). This is a delusion. These practices may give momentary peace of mind. To experience permanent joy and the Knowledge of the Spirit you have to develop your Divine nature. For this, the environment must also be congenial. Such an environment can be secured only in a place with pure and Divine vibrations. This was the reason why the ancient sages sought the solitude of the forests for their penance in divinely charged atmosphere. They betook themselves to the forests because they felt that the happenings in the villages were not conducive to mental purity. This was sign of weakness. It is not necessary to go to a forest if you can concentrate on the Divine Atma dwelling in the heart. The forest is remote. Here you have "For rest" your heart. The key to inner peace is within you and not outside. In the atmosphere of a sacred Divine presence, you can promote more effectively your quest for peace.

Each Avatar has its own relevance

In the understanding of the role of Avatars, the easiest, and the sweetest means was revealed by Krishna Avatar to the largest extent. This does not mean that the other Avatars are irrelevant. Each Avatar is appropriate for the time of its advent. This may be illustrated by a small example. When there is a petty quarrel in the street, a policeman's intervention is enough. When there is riotous crowd, a Police Inspector may be necessary to deal with it. In an insurgency, the Inspector-General of Police will have to take charge of the situation. When Dharma was showing signs of decline, Rama appeared to protect Dharani (the earth), Dharma Patni (his consort) and Dharma (Righteousness). It was for these three-fold purposes that Rama Avatar took

place. By the time of Krishna Avatar, the forces of wickedness had grown to greater proportions. Krishna was not concerned much about the earth or the wife. His main concern was with Dharma. When Dharma is firmly established, the earth and the Dharma-Patni are also duly protected.

In this context, Rama is described as "Maya manusha vighraha" (Maya in human form). In the story of Rama, it is related that Rama lamented over the loss of Sita. In Krishna Avatar the picture is different. Women were in distress for the sake of Krishna. In Rama Avatar, Rama was provoked to take arms against evil-doers. In Krishna Avatar, Krishna provoked the conflict and fought the evil-doers. In Rama Avatar, Duty comes first and joy later. In Krishna Avatar, Joy comes first and then duty.

Bhagavan is always in a state of bliss

Looked at in this way, the difference between the Mayavatar of Rama and the Leelavatar of Krishna will be apparent. Krishna was always immersed in bliss. Whether it was a burial ground, or a battlefield or a haven of peace, he remained the same. Krishna was standing between two immense opposing armies and He sang a song. That is the Gita, which means song. Would it be possible for anyone to sing in such a situation? One sings only when one is happy. Krishna, because He was the embodiment of joy could sing even on the battlefield. I do not know whether you are aware of Swami's nature. When someone comes to Swami and says that he is suffering from an unbearable stomach ache, Swami says: "Anandam, Anandam" (Happy, happy). When a woman comes wailing over the loss of her husband, Swami says: "Chala santhosham" (Very happy). Swami is always in a state of bliss. Happiness is the very nature of the Divine.

What is the use of lamenting over anything? All things are passing clouds. Nothing is lasting. Why then, bewail over any loss? You should not bother about them. This is the teaching of the Avatar. Don't feel distressed over anything that may happen. Every pain is followed by some pleasure. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. It is on this basis that you should lead your lives.

Where there is God there is victory

There is a vast difference between Divine bliss and momentary pleasure. What is called happiness is incidental to a situation and is not permanent. But Ananda (bliss) is different. It is lasting. When you are hungry, you go to the canteen and feel happy after taking food. But that does not last long. Permanent happiness can be got only through devotion to the Divine. Avatars make their advent only to confer Divine bliss on mankind. The petty difficulties met with in everyday life can be overcome by love. Once you cultivate love, you can overcome any difficulty. Strive for God's grace. But do not regard God as different from you. He is within you. Where there is God, there is victory. That is the inner meaning of the last stanza in the Gita: "Yathra Yogeswarah Krishno Yathra Partho Dhanurdharah Tatra Sri Vijayo Bhutir-Dhruva nitir-mathir mama." The esoteric meaning of this sloka is: "The heart in which the Lord of Yoga dwells and where there is the courage and strength represented by Arjuna, there all prosperity and success are assured."

The meaning of the term "Krishna"

We must understand properly the meaning of the term Krishna. The word has three meanings. One is "Krishyathi iti Krishnah" (The one who cultivates is Krishna). What is it that has to be cultivated? The Hridayakshetra (field of the heart). Krishna cultivates the field of our hearts by removing the weeds of bad qualities, watering it with love, ploughing it with the use of sadhana, and sowing the seeds of devotion. This is how Krishna cultivates our hearts. The second meaning of the word is: "Karshathi iti Krishnah." (The one who attracts is Krishna). Krishna attracts you by His eyes, His speech, His sports, and by every action of His. By His words, He softens and calms the hearts of even those filled with hatred and makes them rejoice. Krishna displayed these qualities even as a small child. Once He had entered the house of a gopika at night, climbed a pillar to get at the butter that was kept in a pot suspended from the ceiling. The gopika woke up, caught Him in the act and held fast His legs, saying that she would now expose Him before His mother Yasoda. She asked Him what he was doing at the top of the pillar. Krishna, in the most

innocent manner, answered that he was searching for the calf that was missing from His house. The gopika could not contain her laughter at the answer. And as she laughed, she let go Krishna's feet and this gave Him the chance to jump down and make good His escape.

A third meaning of the word Krishna is "Kushyathi iti Krishna" (one who is always blissful). Krishna was always in a state of bliss. It was because He had these various qualities, the sage Garga named Him Krishna. The ordinary meaning of the word Krishna is "one who is dark." But people think only of this meaning and forget the deeper and truer meanings of the Lord's name.

Krishna delighted the world by His Leelas

The essence of Krishna's life is, He proclaimed the Truth to the world, propagated the eternal verities and delighted the world by His Leelas. When Balaram told Yasoda that he had found Krishna eating mud, Yasoda questioned Him about it. In reply, Krishna said: "Oh mother, am I a child, a miscreant or a madcap to eat mud? See for yourself whether there is any mud in my mouth." And when He opened His mouth, Yasoda was awe-struck to see the fourteen worlds of the Cosmos in that Divine mouth. She could not believe her eyes and exclaimed: "Is this a dream? Or is it the Maya of Vishnu? Is it an illusion produced by someone? Is it true? Am I Yasoda or someone else? I am totally bewildered." Yasoda had no faith in herself and hence could not recognise Krishna's divinity. Confidence in one's self is the prerequisite for the recognition of Divinity. The reason in Yasoda's case is that she always looked upon Krishna as her son and the maternal attachment clouded her understanding.

Every episode connected with Krishna is a marvel. That was why Vyasa declared that all the stories relating to the avatars of Vishnu are full of wonder and beauty. Every Avatar is an amazing phenomenon. Not to recognise the Avatar is equally a matter for amazement. Even more astonishing is the incapacity to experience the presence of the Avatar. Most astonishing of all is to be in the presence of the Lord and feel miserable. To be in the proximity of the Avatar, to move about with the Avatar, to sing and

sport with the Avatar and yet fail to understand the truth of the Avatar is indeed a remarkable phenomenon. When the Avatar principle is understood, you experience real bliss. When you have faith in the Divine, life becomes a victorious journey.

If everything is dedicated to the Lord, there will be no room for worry or sorrow or even joy. If you rid yourself thus of attachment, Santhi can never be disturbed. I, my, mine, my own, your, yours, when these ideas take hold of the mind Santhi suffers a set-back. To get the attitude of sincerely offering all to Him, Prema is essential. Prema combined with faith in oneself. That is what is called Bhakthi. Cultivate it steadily every day and derive joy therefrom.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

27. Devotion and self-sacrifice

Date: 03 September 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

The world has had many great souls who sacrificed their lives for Truth; Even now there are many who have given their lives for the good of others, There are many who have not desired worldly pleasures even in their dreams; But there are few who seek to know why this body has been given. It has been given so that man may realise his true Self.

Heaven does not exist in some realm of the gods.

It is in the world of human beings. With good qualities if one conducts himself righteously

Why seek heaven? This itself will be Heaven. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love!

Men make various attempts to understand everything in the world. But no one makes any effort to understand himself. An enormous amount of time is spent on understanding other things, but man cannot find the time to know himself. Whatever one's scholarship, intelligence or position, he cannot have peace of mind and happiness if he does not know his real Self. Narada, who had mastered the sixty-four sciences and arts, could not secure the supreme bliss that comes from peace of mind. Troubled by this Asanthi (lack of peace) Narada approached the sage Sanatkumara and asked him what was the cause of his condition. Sanatkumara asked Narada what were his accomplishments. Narada told the sage that he was proficient in all the Vedas and Vedantas and had mastered the sixty-four different sciences including the training of elephants and the rearing of cows. Laughing within himself, Sanatkumara asked: "Are these your only accomplishments? Oh Narada, without knowing who you are, what is the use of knowing all other things?"

Narada, Brahma's mind-born son

Narada was no ordinary person. In his incarnation as Vamana, the dwarfish

young Brahmin lad, Vishnu, came to the Emperor Bali and asked from him the gift of three feet of land as measured by His feet. Bali agreed to make the gift. Vishnu (assuming His cosmic form) covered the whole earth by one step and the entire sky by another step. When Brahma recognised the sacred and puissant form assumed by Lord Vishnu, he wished to wash the feet of the Lord. To wash the foot of the Lord which was high up in the sky, a great amount of water was needed. To get that water, Brahma resolved in his mind how to go about it. At that very moment an individual appeared on the earth. Because he was the result of a thought in Brahma's mind, he is known as "Brahma-manasa putra" (Brahma's mind-born son). He had come to provide water. Because he brought water, he got the name "Narada" (the one who provided water).

Narada was thus born during the time of Emperor Bali. Despite the fact that he was the mindborn son of Brahma himself, he had no peace of mind.

The reason for mankind's loss of peace

What was the cause of Narada's loss of peace? Narada used ceaselessly to chant the name of Vishnu. He had no worldly desires of any kind. Brahma, who had created Narada for the purpose of propagation of devotion in the world and promoting good qualities among mankind, urged) Narada to get married. Narada asked: "I am perpetually in a state of bliss chanting the name of Hari. What need is there for me to get into this bondage? Revered father! I am ready to carry out any of your injunctions but I cannot agree to get involved in the bondage of family life." How is it possible for Brahma to attain the status of Pithamaha (grandfather) if the son refused to obey the father's command and agree to marriage? The human predicament is similar to this situation. Men claim that God is everything for them but they are not ready to abide by God's injunctions. And that accounts for their lack of peace. For a man who is immersed in worldly life, the chanting of God's name is undoubtedly a good medicine. But along with the medicine he has to adhere to Pathyam (the prescribed diet regulations). God's injunctions are the diet rules. Today's man, if he takes the medicine, he ignores the diet regulations. If he adheres to the prescribed diet, he ignores the medicine. And that is why

man is afflicted with the disease of peacelessness. In this context, God is the medicine and God's command is the prescribed diet. Devotion to God without observing the Divine injunctions destroys peace of mind. If Narada, despite his chanting of the Lord's name, suffered from lack of peace, it was because of a curse pronounced by Brahma. Brahma declared: "As you are not obeying my command, I declare that henceforth you shall have no peace." Sanatkumara, therefore, advised Narada: "As long as you have not known who you really are, you cannot get real peace, despite all your scholarship and all your pious actions."

"Know your true Self"

Man embarks on various kinds of sadhanas to achieve Mukti (liberation). Seeking liberation, even if man worships three crores of gods He will not get it as long as he does not know who he is. When man destroys his ego and sense of I-ness, what need is there for Liberation? He becomes liberation itself. Sanatkumara told Narada: "All the scriptures you study will enable you to earn a livelihood, but will not confer peace or liberation. They may secure for you name and fame, power and pelf, but not Mukti (liberation)." The scriptures are like a dense jungle of words. These words are capable of different interpretations. It is not easy to determine definitely which are the correct meanings. A man who has lost his way in a forest cannot easily reach his destination. Merely by conning the scriptures the heart cannot be purified. (In this connection, Bhagavan sang the opening stanza of "Bhaja Govindam.")Worship of Govinda is the only way to save one's self at the time of death, when verbal scholarship will be of no avail.

Develop thriпти and spirit of thyaga

In ancient times, people used to revere elders, purify their hearts by getting rid of selfishness, seek the guidance and blessings of saintly teachers and put into practice their teachings. With the passage of time over the centuries men tended to grow more and more selfish and self-centred. Men steeped in selfish pursuits could find no time or occasion for revering elders. Even if by chance they happened to meet some wise elders, they paid no heed to the

advice of the elders. The result is that men today have lost mental peace, though they have progressed in many fields. How can there be any happiness without peace? Today there is no limit to human desires. For the disease of insatiable desires, the remedy is thriпти (contentment). Without contentment man can have no happiness. Along with contentment the spirit of thyaga (sacrifice) has to be developed. What we are witnessing today is a limitless growth of wants without any concern for reducing them. This growth of desires was described by Adi Sankara as "trishna" (thirst). Drinking water quenches thirst for a time, but the thirst arises again. Likewise as long as life lasts, the thirst (for material pleasures) lasts, though it may be quenched from time to time. This thirst is a strong kind of fetters. Its strength does not diminish, but grows from day to day. Iron chains will rust in course of time but the chains of desire grow stronger every day. Therefore, Sankara declared: "The desire for more and more wealth is dangerous. Cultivate the good sense to give up your desires. Wealth is the result of past deeds. Therefore be content with what you have." (Swami recited a Telugu poem). The Vedas have taught that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice and not through rituals, progeny or wealth. Great men who have made supreme sacrifices and taught to mankind thyaga (sacrifice) itself as yoga have been born in Bharat time and again over many yugas (aeons).

Emperor Bali and Sukracharya

Although his preceptor Sukracharya appealed to Bali repeatedly not to make the promised gift of land to Vamana, the Emperor declared he was determined to make the gift. Sukracharya upbraided Bali: "The young Brahmin is no ordinary person. He is Lord Narayana Himself. You have ventured to offer a gift to him. What an ignoramus you are! How foolish of you!" Rejoicing at the guru's rebuke, Emperor Bali said: "Guruji/The seeker of the gift is Lord Narayana. When the hand that blesses the universe, the hand that holds out the promise of freedom from fear to everyone, the hand that bears the Sri Chakra in its palm, is stretched out towards me with the Dehi (appeal) for a gift, what greater good fortune can I have? The hand that seeks is underneath and my hand, that of the giver, is above it. How fortunate I am! When I am blessed in this fashion, you are coming in my way by your plea. I

am not prepared to obey you." Saying this, Emperor Bali went ahead with the gift. Which man can have such a sacred and precious opportunity? There are indeed several kinds of gifts which are commended gift of land, of gold, of food, of houses, clothes and so on. It is not any of these which Bali offered as gift. He offered himself as gift. He did not give any material gifts. He gave himself completely. This is true Arpitham (offering to the Divine). By this offering, Vishnu and Emperor Bali became one.

Sacrifice - true and false

Samartha Ramdas and Saint Tulsidas have declared that whoever comes in the way, whether he is the preceptor, father, mother, or anybody else, when a sacred offering is to be made to God, he should not be obeyed come what may. While making the offering, Emperor Bali said: "Oh Lord! I am offering to you the heart which you gave to me. I offer to you all my wealth, my kith and kin and everything else. Protect me, who has surrendered to you.

It is because such supremely self-sacrificing, great men have existed in Bharat from times immemorial, that Bharat has shone as a Thyaga Bhoomi (the land of Sacrifice), Yoga Bhoomi (the land of Yoga) and Karma Bhoomi (the land of sacred deeds). Today sacrifice and charity have become a fashionable pastime. It has also been turned into a business. If a trivial donation is made, it must be blazoned in the press! In the old days, the great souls and rulers who gave away kingdoms and all their possessions, indulged in no fanfare, but experienced the bliss of giving in their hearts. Those great souls totally ignored those who came in the way of their acts of sacrifice.

Examples of Mira and Karna

After her marriage with Rana Kumarabhoja, Mira was given many facilities by the Rana for her worship of Krishna. Unfortunately, the Rana was killed in battle when Babar invaded his kingdom. Mira was left helpless. Her brother-in-law, Rathnasimha, ascended the throne. He harassed Mira in many ways. He hid snakes in the clothes sent to her. He mixed poison in the milk or water given to her. The people, incensed at the cruelties inflicted on Mira, rose

against Rathnasimha and killed him. His younger brother, Vikramsimha, succeeded to the throne. He placed every conceivable obstacle in the way of Mira visiting her Krishna mandir. She was denied all help.

In this situation, Mira sent a long letter to Tulsidas. She asked: "What is my duty? In my present plight, should I leave my home? Should I safeguard the reputation of my family, or merge in my Lord who is the breath of my life?" Tulasidas sent her the following reply: "Mira! whoever comes between the devotee and God - whether he is the father, the mother, friend, husband or wife, or guru - should be given up. God is the eternal protector before birth and after death. To realise the eternal and ever-present Lord, one should be prepared to ignore the objections of transient persons." Thereupon, Mira decided to give up everything and went forth, singing bhajans all the way to Dawaraka (the abode of the Lord). Many heroic men and women have been born in Bharat in the past who have been prepared, for the sake of God, to give up father, mother, husband, wife, or all their possessions. Take the example of Karna. He was one who had been blessed by the Sun-God. Even as Bali went ahead with his gift to Vamana despite the strong plea of his preceptor, Sukracharya, Karna discarded the warnings of the Sun-God and parted with his ear ornaments and his armour (to Indra). Even ordinary people in Bharat are filled with the spirit of sacrifice. Here is the example of Tanaji. All was set for his wedding. He was seated on the ceremonial seat. News came that invaders had entered the country. He got up in his sacred yellow wedding dress. He went straight to the battlefield, vanquished the enemy and lost his life in the battle. It is only when the life of Bali is seen from the perspective of sacrifice for the Lord that its full meaning will be apparent. It should not be regarded simply as an instance of a gift being made to Vishnu when He came in the form of Vamana.

Welcome tests as aids to advancement

Hiranyakasipu was the avowed enemy of Hari. His son Prahlada was a devotee of Hari. Prahlada's son Virochana was a wicked person. Bali was the son of Virochana. Bali was the very reverse of his father. Prahlada and Bali were great devotees of the Lord. It is such devotees who have to face severe

ordeals. Those who are not devotees do not go through such tests. You may think that this is a welcome prospect. But it is only the one who is tested that secures promotion. The sooner a boy completes various examinations, the sooner he goes up in studies. The boy who does not sit for any examination stays put in the same class. It is those who get through tests, who rise to great heights. Hence, you must welcome tests as aids to advancement. Emperor Bali was prepared to make any sacrifice to attain God. He was a lover of his subjects. During his reign, the people experienced no hardships. Bali considered the welfare of his subjects as his own realm. Kerala was a land of prosperity, flowing with milk and honey. Even today Kerala is endowed with Nature's bounty. But unfortunately, forgetting the legacy of the ancient sages and rulers, people have gone astray in later times.

The remarkable devotion of Keralites

When Bali was about to leave the earth, he gave a pledge to the people, who were in deep distress, that once a year he would appear before them and bless them. This day of Bali's appearance is celebrated as Onam. This sacred day is observed as a festive occasion on which the people wear new clothes, prepare feasts and after offering the food to God, partake of it, remembering the great sacrifice of Emperor Bali. Onam means that which is new. It may refer to new clothes, new thoughts, or new actions. Old clothes and old ideas have to be cast off. Good thoughts have to be developed. This is the sacred festival observed every year by the people of Kerala. It is a supremely sacred day for them. When thousands of Keralites celebrate this festival here, far away from their hearths and homes, it should be noted that they are the only people from any region who are celebrating their traditional festival here in this manner. People from no other State in India do such a thing. It is their great good fortune that they observe this sacred day here in this manner. It is a fine example of devotion. What a supreme mark of devotion is this when they celebrate their festival here away from homes! If they had stayed in their homes, they would be preparing a variety of sweet dishes and varied eatables using coconuts and bananas. The fact that they have denied themselves all these and gladly subjected themselves to various inconveniences here, living in sheds, bears testimony to their deep devotion

to Swami. Hoping that the people of Kerala will ceaselessly develop their devotion and sanctify the entire State of Kerala by their exemplary life, I bless all of them and bring my discourse to a close.

You cannot sit back, and expect the Incarnation to bring Peace and Joy into you. The incarnation comes to warn, to guide, to awaken, to lay down the path, and shed the light of Love on it. But, man has to listen, learn and obey with hope and faith.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

28. Revelations about the Sai Avatar

Date: 28 September 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

At the tip of the tongue dwells the Goddess of Prosperity;
There dwell friends and kinsmen;
Bondage is wrought by the tip of the tongue;
Death waits verily at the tip of the tongue.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love!

All the wealth that man acquires is got through speech. Man's friendships and relations are established through speech. Man forges fetters through speech. In the last reckoning, even death overtakes man through speech. In human life, speech is extremely vital. When his speech is pure, man gets sanctified. In all circumstances, one should be on guard in the use of words. Purity in speech is ensured only by the company of the good.

"Can the mind concentrate in the contemplation of God without good qualities and good thoughts?
Can a house be built without brick and mortar?"
(Swami recited a Telugu poem).

Not men alone, but all living beings are enveloped by the six enemies (desire, anger, infatuation, greed, pride and envy). Of the six, the primary ones are *Kama* (desire) and *Krodha* (anger). Although Kama and Krodha figure in two different forms, Krodha (anger) is derived from Kama (desire). Even greed, infatuation, pride and envy are the outcome of desire. The six enemies are derivations of the first one, namely, Kama (desire). Desire arouses *Apeksha* (expectations). These expectations relate to the senses. When the

expectations are not realised, disappointment turns into anger. The anger gives rise to *Sammoha* (mental aberrations). These aberrations lead to the loss of memory (of what is right and wrong). With the loss of memory, the intellect gets destroyed. When the intellect is destroyed, everything is lost. Thus, Kama (sensual desire) is the root cause of all ruin, infamy and sorrow. Hence it is essential to control desires and lead a life of self-restraint.

Advent of Pathri, birth place of Sai Baba

Today I do not intend to speak on Navarathri or Sivarathri I propose today to reveal what has not been known to anyone hitherto.

In the former Nizam's dominions, there was a remote village called Pathri. In that village there were a couple named Gangabhavadya and Devagiriamma. They were grieving over the lack of children. In answer to their prayers, a son was born on **September 28, 1835**. Today is the anniversary of that day. That child was Sai Baba. As Gangabhavadya had developed a feeling of total detachment and renunciation, he decided to retire to a forest regardless of the child. Devagiriamma, who looked upon her husband as God, decided to follow the husband leaving the child.

Early years of the child

There was in the same village a Sufi fakir. As he was also childless, he took charge of this child and brought him up in his home. The boy stayed in the Fakir's home for four years (1835 to 1839). The Fakir passed away in the tide of time. The Fakir's wife, who had lavished great affection on the child, was grief-stricken. To add to her worries, the boy was behaving in a troublesome manner. In those days, Hindu-Muslim differences in that area were growing alarmingly. There was considerable bitterness between members of the two communities. What the boy used to do was to visit a Hindu temple and sing songs in praise of Allah. "Mein Allah hoo!" ("I am God"). "Allah Malik hai!"

("Allah is the Supreme Lord").

He used to declaim in this manner in the temple. The Hindus used to chastise the boy in various ways for his misbehaviour. Nor was that all. He would enter a mosque and declare: "Rama is God", "Siva is Allah." His behaviour in singing about Allah in a Hindu temple and about Rama and Siva in a mosque was a puzzle to the public. Members belonging to both the communities went to the Fakir's wife and complained about the boy's behaviour. Unable to deal with this situation the Fakir's wife handed over the boy to a high-souled, pious scholar named Venkusa, who was living near her house. The boy stayed in Venkusa's ashram for 12 years from 1839 to 1851. Venkusa was extremely fond of the boy. In every matter, he used to give priority to the young Baba's views. Seeing this, in course of time, members of the ashram developed envy towards the boy.

Arrival of Baba at Shirdi

One night in 1851, the boy left the ashram. He reached Shirdi, a very small village at the time. He stayed there for barely two months and then went about wandering from place to place. After strolling for many years, he reached a place called Dhoop-kheda. When he was residing there, the marriage of Chandu Patel's brother's son was celebrated there. Baba joined the marriage party and reached Shirdi again. That was in the year 1858. From that day, till 1918, he did not move out of Shirdi. He remained there for 60 years. While at Shirdi, Baba used to converse with those coming to him, give advice to them regarding their problems and offer courage and solace to them with regard to their troubles. In this manner, Baba's activities came to be known all over the country. At that time there was in the Maharashtra area, a Deputy Collector and Settlement Officer by name H.V. Sathe (Hari Vinayak Sathe). He was grief-stricken over the passing of his wife. Prof. G.G. Narke, a friend of Sathe, came to his house and advised Sathe that there was no purpose in grieving over his loss and that it was advisable for him to have a change of place to get over his sorrow. He suggested that it was good to have the darshan of some saint and persuaded him to come to Shirdi.

Sathe was quite an extraordinary person. On reaching Shirdi, he and Narke had darshan of Baba. On several occasions, looking at Sathe, Baba used to laugh, sing and make strange gestures. Doubts arose in Sathe's mind whether Baba was real sage or an eccentric person. No one mentioned anything about Sathe to Baba. Sathe and Narke merely went to see Baba and sat in his presence. Baba told Sathe: "Don't worry about anything. Bodies are like water bubbles. Don't develop any attachment to the body. Develop your attachment to the Dehi (In-dwelling Spirit). Worries are passing clouds. Have courage. Protect your child." The last remark had reference to the fact that Sathe's wife had died after giving birth to a child. Even Narke had not heard about the survival of this child. On hearing Baba's words Sathe realised that Baba was not a crazy person but one who was a *Trikala jnani* (who knew the past, the present and the future). Sathe, who had intended to stay for a short while just to have darshan of Baba, prolonged his stay by two more days.

Making frequent visits to Shirdi, Sathe was the first to realise that there were no proper amenities at Shirdi for those coming to Baba. The place where he provided residential accommodation for visitors is "Sathe Wada." Sathe was the first to set up apartments at Shirdi.

Building at Shirdi

While serving in this manner, Sathe went again to Shirdi after he began to feel whether there was any purpose in his continuing to earn income and accumulate wealth.

On seeing, Sathe, Baba smilingly said: "You appear to be losing interest in your job. You are wondering how to dispose of the wealth you have acquired. Why give it to anyone? Use it for a good cause. Build a 'Koti' in Shirdi."

Sathe told Baba: "Swami! I am not a millionaire. How can I build a mansion here?"

Baba replied: "Go on doing as much as you can. **Why fear when I am here?**" Baba encouraged Sathe in this manner.

In due course, Sathe's maternal uncle, Kelkar, settled down in Shirdi. Sathe used to send funds from Poona and his uncle used to carry on the constructions in Shirdi. In this way, Baba used Sathe as his instrument. He regarded Sathe as his right hand in regard to all matters. Because Baba was keeping Sathe close to him and relying on him for everything, the residents of Shirdi grew jealous towards him.

"Many are content to do nothing themselves,
but they cannot bear seeing others do things
and will carry tales against them."
(A Telugu poem).

Several persons used to come to Baba and tell stories against Sathe. What is the appropriate name for such tale-bearers? They should be called "enemies of beggars" (namely, barking dogs).

A judge for a judge

At Shirdi, Baba used to do two notable things. One was to receive money from whoever came to him. He used to ask for *Dakshina* (cash offering). He did not ask for large sums. It was two rupees or five rupees. He would receive the money and give it away immediately in their presence. He kept nothing with himself. One day a man by name Pradhan came to Baba. He had intended to offer twenty rupees to Baba. In those days, there were no currency notes. Everything was in silver coins; not like the alloy coins of today. In those days every rupee contained one full tola of silver. Pradhan thought that instead of offering so many silver coins, it would be better to offer one gold sovereign to Baba.

Baba turned the sovereign this way and that and remarked: "How is it I have not seen such a coin before?"

A person near Baba said: "It is a gold coin."

Baba then observed: "I don't want this. Give me the money in rupees." He asked how much the sovereign was worth. At that time it was worth fifteen rupees. Getting back the sovereign, Pradhan gave fifteen rupees to Baba. Immediately Baba remarked: "Pradhan! You have to give me five more rupees!"

Pradhan was a judge at the time. Pradhan as well as persons around him wondered why Baba was demanding five more rupees when a sovereign was worth-only fifteen rupees.

Noticing Pradhan's hesitation, Baba told him: "First hand over the five rupees and then think about it." Pradhan gave the five rupees.

Then Baba observed: "When you set out from your home, how much did you want to offer to Baba? You intended to give twenty rupees. You gave only fifteen. So I was entitled to ask for five more."

When Pradhan heard these words, he was stupefied. He admitted that Sai Baba was a good judge. In this manner, Baba was in the habit of collecting money from those who came to him and to give it away to the needy.

Sai - the Guru

One day, he summoned Kelkar and told him, "Today is Guru Poornima. Perform Guru Puja to me." No one there knew the meaning of Guru Puja. Kelkar asked Baba what Guru Puja meant.

Baba asked: "Who do you think is a guru ? It is not the pontiffs of Maths who are gurus. Nor are *sanyasins* (renunciants) gurus; God alone is the Guru (Preceptor)."

"Brahmanandam Paramasukhadam Kevalam Jnanmurthim Dwandwa-athitham"

(He is Supreme Bliss, the giver of Divine happiness, the embodiment of the Highest Advaitic Knowledge and one who transcends all dualities. He is Supreme Divine Preceptor).

"He is Brahma, He is Vishnu, He is Maheswara, He is the Supreme Absolute. Salutations to that Supreme Guru. The true guru is one who combines the three forms of the Trinity, the gods who preside over creation, protection and dissolution. Thus God alone is the real Guru" declared Baba.

On hearing this, Kelkar asked: "Should I worship Brahma, Vishnu or Rudra?"

Baba declared in a voice of assumed anger: "Eh Saitan! Here I am! Offer worship to Me!".

Thereby Baba made known that He was Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. All those present felt that Baba was the Divine incarnate.

Sathe leaves Shirdi

As the days passed, the residents of Shirdi developed hatred towards Sathe because he was collecting all the offerings to Baba in a hundi to use the money for building a Mandir. Just at that time, a silver chariot with silver horses which was in Sathe's keeping, was stolen by some thieves. Sathe was the principal trustee. The people of Shirdi suspected Sathe of complicity in the theft. One day one of the residents planned to strike Sathe with an axe on the way. Getting wind of this, his maternal uncle called Sathe and urged him to leave immediately as it was too dangerous, for him to stay there. He told Sathe that he could worship Baba wherever he might be. Reluctantly Sathe left Shirdi. Baba used to ask for Sathe ceaselessly. But Sathe was not there. Baba appeared to be in great distress. Sathe was near and dear to Baba. The devotees felt that Baba was sorely affected by the absence of Sathe.

About this time, the parents of Shyam came to Shirdi with the two-year old child. Shyam's father had just retired from service and decided to settle down in Shirdi. The boy's name was Mohan Shyam. The parents called him Mohan, while Baba called him Shyam. The boy was put to school at Shirdi and in due course he completed his studies and received training as a teacher. He was appointed as a teacher at Shirdi. The school adjoined Baba's room. During the day, Shyam would be teaching at school. There was a ventilator in the wall separating Baba's room and the classroom. Shyam used to watch Baba at nights through the ventilator. He used to notice Baba talking to himself, getting angry at times, or laughing to himself, or doing other curious things. Baba used to sleep on an eighteen-inch-wide plank suspended from the ceiling. Shyam was apprehensive that Baba might fall off from his lofty but narrow perch during sleep.

Baba's concern for Devotees

Once he mustered courage to ask Baba while massaging his feet: "Swami! You don't seem to sleep at all at nights. You are laughing to yourself or talking. What is the secret of all this?"

"You simpleton! Do you imagine you are the only person about whom I am concerned in this world? There are numerous persons who are praying to me. I am speaking to all of them," replied Baba. "When I turn my finger, I am turning their minds. When I laugh, I am amused at their follies. These are the things I am doing for my devotees, dear child."

Shyam prayed to Baba: "Swami! My classes don't take up much of my time. Let me stay with you during the rest of the time and serve you." At that time there was a woman called Laxmibai who used to cook the food for Baba. Shyam used to go to her and assist her in the preparation of jowar rotis. Baba had a great liking for brinjals. Shyam went to Laxmibai to learn how to prepare brinjal dishes. Shyam went on serving Baba in this way and he alone knew the joy he derived from such service.

Baba's way of disciplining devotees

Baba often used to fly into a temper. This was only an outward appearance. Sometimes he used to throw a stick at someone ten feet away.

Shyam once asked him: "Swami! You are hurling the stick at the man in such a rage. Supposing something happened to him and he died, will you not get a bad name?"

Baba replied sharply: "Saithan! You keep quiet. That fellow's life is in my hands. He will die only if I permit him. You better mind your business. Why are you bothered about others? That man will come to his senses only if he sees me in this manner. If I am indulgent they will try to ride the high horse."

Thus, in this way, Baba used to discipline people by threats and harsh words. "It is only with this aim in view I am displaying anger and not for any other purpose."

This secret was revealed by Baba only to Shyam and none else. Baba's life is really a saga of love and nothing else. Keeping Shyam near him and allowing him to serve him, Baba spent many years.

One day, Baba called Pradhan and asked him to construct a small tank. Pradhan was thus the first to be involved in the building of a Samadhi for Baba. It was the year 1918. Pradhan's wife, who was living in her native village, had a dream in which Baba appeared to have passed away. Pradhan was in Shirdi. On waking up, Pradhan's wife started crying over the passing of Baba in her dream. At that moment she heard a voice in the house declaring: **"Don't say that Baba has died. Say that Baba is in a state of Samadhi."**

Samadhi means equal-mindedness.

"Life and death are alike. Joy and sorrow, profit and loss are the same. Hence, there is no such thing as death for Baba" - this was what

the voice declared. When she was trying to find out wherefrom this voice came, she received a message from her husband conveying the news of the passing of Baba.

That occurred on Vijayadasami day (in 1918). September 28 (1835) was his date of birth. On Vijayadasami day, he gave up his body. Although this year Vijayadasami falls on September 29, in the year of Baba's Samadhi, the date was different.

Sai's advent:the mystery

On account of the passage of time and circumstances, no one knew the exact dates of Baba's birth and passing. In this context, the mystery relating to Baba's birth should be noted.

One devotee wrote a poem (Sanskrit) in which he offered his "salutations to the One born in Pathri, who lived in Dwarakamayi and who was the protector of devotees."

When Gangabhavadya and Devagiriamma were living in Pathri village, they were worshipers of Iswara and Parvathi. They had no offspring for a long time. They intensified their prayers. Gangabhavadya used to ply boats near the village for a living. One night, when it was raining heavily, Gangabhavadya left his house to take care of the boats, telling his wife that he would not be returning in the night. After the husband had left, having an early meal, Devagiriamma took her food and went to bed.

At 9 p.m. there was a knock at the door. Devagiriamma opened the door, expecting the likely return of her husband. A very old man entered the house. He pleaded: "It is very cold outside. Please permit me, mother, to stay inside." As a pious woman, she allowed him to stay in the inside verandah and went in after bolting the inner door.

A little while later, there was a knock on the inner door. She opened the door. The old man said: "I am feeling hungry; give me some food." Finding that

there was no food, the woman mixed some flour with curds and gave it to him. There was again another knock after some time.

When she opened the door, the old man said: "My legs are aching. Mother, will you massage them?" Devagiriamma went inside, sat in the prayer room and prayed: "Oh Mother! Why are you testing me like this? What should I do? Should I serve him or refuse?" Going out of the house by the back door she went in search of someone who could be engaged to render this service. No one was available.

Again there was a knock by the old man. At the same time a woman knocked at the back door. She said: "It appears you came to my house and sought some feminine help. I was away at the time. Please let me know what service I should render."

Feeling happy that Goddess Parvathi herself had sent the woman in response to her prayers, Devagiriamma sent the newcomer to the verandah for serving the old man and closed the door. The old man and the new woman were none other than Parameswara and Parvathi the divine couple.

Parameswara told Parvathi: "Fulfil the cherished desires of this lady." Parvathi told Easwara: "You are the Supreme. Please shower your grace on her Yourself." **Easwara said: "I came to test her. You came in answer to her prayers. Hence you must bless her."**

There was a knock on the door again. This time Devagiriamma promptly opened the door, because of the presence of another woman there. Parvathi and Parameswara appeared before her in their divine form. Unable to contain her joy, Devagiriamma fell at their feet.

Parvathi then blessed her: "I grant you a son to maintain the lineage and a daughter for Kanyakadana (a girl to be offered in marriage)." Then she fell at the feet of Easwara.

Easwara said: "I am immensely pleased with your devotion. I shall take birth as your third child."

When Devagiriamma got up, the Divine couple were not there. Feeling ecstatic over this experience, Devagiriamma was eagerly expecting the return of her husband in the morning to relate to him the whole story. The husband returned in the morning. Eagerly awaiting his arrival she related to him all that had happened the previous night.

The husband said: "Devagiri! What is all this fanciful tale! It is all a dream. Parvathi and Parameswara appearing before you and giving darshan! It is pure fantasy!"

Gangabhavadya dismissed the whole episode as incredible and fanciful. But, as the years passed, Devagiriamma became enceinte and a son was born. A year later a daughter was born. Gangabhavadya was convinced that the birth of the two children was the result of the blessing conferred by Parvathi and Parameswara.

He told his wife: "You had the good fortune (to be blessed by the Divine couple). I did not have that luck."

When Devagiriamma conceived again, Gangabhavadya began to feel an urge to give up hearth and home and go in search of the Divine couple. He announced to his wife that he was leaving for the forest to do penance. The devoted wife that she was, Devagiriamma decided to follow him, though she was in the ninth month of her pregnancy.

After proceeding some distance, she developed labour pains. She delivered a boy. Wrapping the babe in a piece of cloth, she left the child by the roadside and followed her husband. Because of these circumstances, no one knew who the parents of the child were. The Fakir who found the child brought him home and took care of him. Baba's life-story is known only from the time of

his arrival in Shirdi.

The difference between devotees and disciples

In 1917, Baba once called Abdul Baba, Nana Chandorkar, Mhalsapathi, Das Ganu and others and started asking each of them: "Do you know who you are?"

Each of them replied: "I am your *sishya* (disciple)."

Baba said: "Nonsense! Don't use that term any longer. I have no disciples in this world. I have countless devotees. You do not recognise the distinction between a disciple and a devotee. Anyone can be a devotee. But that is not the case with the disciple. A disciple is one who carries out implicitly the commands of the *guru* (the preceptor). The mark of the *sishya* is total devotion to the preceptor.

Only the man who says, "I have none in the world other than the preceptor is a disciple. How far have you respected my injunctions? How are you entitled to claim that you are my disciples? Only the one who follows me like my shadow can claim to be my disciple. The devotee is one who prays to the Lord wherever he may be. Hence, there is a big difference between a disciple and a devotee.

The disciple and the preceptor are like two bodies with one spirit. The disciple should have no sense of separateness from the preceptor. He should feel, 'I and you are one.' There are no such disciples to be found in the world. There are millions of devotees, but no disciples."

Baba and Shyam, the only disciple

On hearing this, Shyam was in deep pain. He felt within himself: "Apart from serving at your feet, I have no other concern." Baba then went into another room and called Shyam inside. "In this entire world, for me you are the only

disciple. All others are only devotees." At that moment, Shyam fell at the feet of Baba, and cried out, "You alone, you alone" (are my refuge) and breathed his last.

In all his life of over 82 years, Baba had never shed a tear in the presence of devotees. When Shyam passed away he shed three drops of tears. The devotees present there said: "Swami! Why do you feel so grieved? All are in your hands."

Baba replied: "Dear boys! I am not grieving at all. Almost all his sins had been wiped out already. By the three tear drops I shed, the remaining sins (of Shyam) have been washed away."

All that Baba said or did was for the good of the devotees alone. Towards the end, Abdul Baba came to Baba.

Baba told him: "I shall appear again and give you darshan." "When will that be?" asked Abdul. Baba told him: "It will be after eight years." "The first advent of Sai was in Maharashtra. The second advent will be in Madras." Baba said. It should be noted that when this form (Sathya Sai) made its advent, Andhra Pradesh was part of Madras Presidency.

Advent of Sathya Sai after Shirdi Sai

When he was asked, in what form the next advent would take place, Shirdi Baba told Abdul Baba alone: "**I will give darshan in the name of Sathya for upholding Truth.**" That is the present advent.

The two bodies are different, but the Divinity is one.

The first advent was for revealing Divinity.

The second advent is to awaken the Divinity (in human beings).

The next advent is for propagating Divinity.

The three Sais are Shirdi Sai, Sathya Sai and Prema Sai.

The reason for relating all this is that today happens to be the birthday of Shirdi Baba (September 28, 1835).

Baba attained Samadhi in 1918. Bodies are transient. These vestures are assumed only for the sake of devotees. Unless the Divine comes with a form, no one can develop faith in the Formless. The Divine in human form is the preparation for comprehending the Formless Absolute.

The truth about God cannot be understood by anyone. He is infinitely vast. He is minuter than the atom. No one can know what is the macrocosm and what is the microcosm. Because of this mystery, one devotee sang:

Can any one unravell your mystery, Oh Krishna!
You are vaster than the vastest; You are subtler than the atom.
All the countless beings in the world cannot grasp your baffling mystery
How can anyone know your Infinite Cosmic form, Oh Krishna!
Nor is that all.
Among the great thieves, you are the greatest,
How can anyone know you, oh Krishna!

The ordinary thieves take away wealth and riches. But this extraordinary Divine thief steals the hearts of people. Hence, when God is described as Chitta Chora (the stealer of hearts) or Bada Chitta Chora (the greatest stealer of hearts), the appellation is not derogatory but delightful. If you call anyone, "You thief!" he will get angry. But when you sing "Chitta chora Yasoda ke Bal" (Oh thief of hearts, Yasoda's darling!) everyone rejoices. The chitta chora confers delight on those whose hearts he steals.

But the Vitha Chora (the one who robs you of your wealth) causes you misery. The mundane thieves take away your wealth. But the Lord steals your hearts.

It is not easy, therefore, for anyone to understand the ways of the Lord. When one cannot understand the ways of the Divine, it is best to keep silent and at least refrain from indulging in grievous misinterpretation. Seek, therefore, to understand the ways of God and through devotion and worship strive to experience the Divine.

29. The day that wrought the great change

Date: 20 October 1990 / Location: Prashanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Avatar Day

THE NAME of Prashanthi Nilayam has spread to all parts of the globe. People from all countries are coming here. Prashanthi Nilayam has become a mini-world. What has been accomplished here in fifty years could not have been achieved in five hundred years. The Supreme Power of attracting so many from all parts of the world can only belong to the Divine. There is nothing greater or more magnificent than Jyothi (Light). No other object has the power of light. Light alone has the power to dispel darkness. Light has yet another power. Light (or flame) always moves upwards. Even if you keep a lamp in a pit, the light will only spread upwards. The two important characteristics of light are to dispel darkness and go upwards. However, if the light has to shine without intermission as Akhanda Jyothi it needs a proper basis. First of all, the light (lamp) needs a container. There must be a wick (to light the flame). There must be oil in the wick and in the container. These three are not enough to make the light burn. A match-stick is needed to light the lamp. Can you make a light burn merely with a container, a wick and oil? Can you make jewels if you have only gold and gems? Can you have a garland with a needle, thread and flowers alone? You need someone to make the garland out of them. You need a goldsmith to make the jewels from gold and gems. Similarly, there is need for some one to light the lamp, even when you have the other four materials. He is God. It is when you seek God-realisation that human nature is transformed into divinity.

Light the lamp of love

Embodiments of Divine Love. Regard your heart as the container (of the lamp). Your mind is the wick. Your devotion is the oil. Vairagya (detachment) is the match-stick. Love is the flame that shines when the lamp is lit. Without this light of Love, man is submerged in the darkness of ignorance. Hence, Love is fundamental for every being. That was why the gopikas appealed to Krishna to light the lamp of love in their hearts by playing on His divine flute. Today man should plant the seeds of love in his heart. Love is God. No

quarter should be given to attachments and hatreds. Men should cultivate purity and harmony in thought, word and deed. It was the 20th of October (1940) - a Monday. This is what I declared on that day: **Know I am verily Sai.**

Give up your attachments and attempts;
The old relationships are at an end.
No one, however eminent, can alter My resolve.

When I made this declaration, the families of Thammiraju, Hanumantha Rao, Bhojaraju and Seshmaraju, all themselves declared with one voice against my leaving (the home). This happened at Uravakonda. When the awareness of the human body and of the presence of Divine exists in one, a certain amount of dispassion and renunciation is required to manifest this state of mind.

Municipal Chairman's adoration

While I was in Uravakonda, the Municipal Chairman of Bellary, Ramaraju, came to see Swami, who was then familiarly called "Raju." Seeing Swami he told Seshamaraju: "We shall take this boy to Bellary and keep him with us during the holidays." He added: "Seshamaraju! You are regarding this lad as an ordinary boy. That is not so. The effulgence on his face and his purity have moved my heart. There is a Divine effulgence within him. Do not be deluded. You may also come with him and stay with us." From there, the Municipal Chairman took us to Hampi. Do not consider what I am going to say now as something boastful or fanciful or exaggerated. The entire party went into the Virupaksha temple. If I had said I would not come with them into the temple, others might feel angry or offended. I said I was having stomach ache and did not wish to go into the temple. All the members of the party including Thammiraju, went in. They were about 50 or 60 persons. Ramaraju was thinking only of God and nothing else. He entreated me repeatedly to come with him. I was a very small boy then. He held both my hands and pleaded,

"Please, please, come." But seeing my firm resolve, he did not press me further.

Raju as Virupaksha

Inside the temple, harathi was being offered to the deity, but Virupaksha was not there! Only Raju was in the sanctum! Seshamaraju got angry. He felt that having refused to enter the temple, Raju had somehow got in and stood in the sanctum. This, he felt, was gross sacrilege. He could not contain his anger. But Ramaraju did not think in that manner. He felt that "Raju is Virupaksha and Virupaksha is Raju." Seshamaraju came out of the temple and found me sitting under a tree. He was always very suspicious. He sent someone inside to find out whether Raju was there, while he himself stayed outside to keep a watch over Raju under the tree. Raju was inside the temple as well as under the tree! Seshamaraju felt very happy internally, but he did not speak to me about it, treating it as a unique experience for himself. Then they brought me to Bellary. While staying there for a few days, the Municipal Chairman introduced me to various officers, speaking highly about me. I was not addressed as "Swami" in those days, but only as "Raju." Some of the officers seemed to feel that the Chairman was making much of a small boy like me and even tried to make fun of it. Before bringing me to Bellary the Municipal Chairman got made for me a shirt and a pair of knickers. I am so small even now. You can imagine how much shorter I was then. In those days, that is, fifty years ago, it was fashionable for young boys to have a pin for the shirt collar. The collar pin was a status symbol and a mark of affluence. The Municipal Chairman was wondering what else to give me besides the clothes. He went to a goldsmith and got a gold collar pin made for me in one hour. Pinning it on my shirt, he said: "Raju! You should be remembering me whenever you wear this pin."

Baba's attainment of freedom from Maya

We returned to Uravakonda by bus. Two days later the school reopened. I was going to school. On the way, the collar pin fell from the shirt. (It could not be found). The loss of the collar pin freed me from attachment (to worldly

things). Then I sang a song:

October 20th was a Monday
Returning from Hampi Baba was going to school.
The collar pin was lost and could not be found.
That day was the day of transformation.
The loss of the pin was the cause of a big change.
The link with worldly ties have gone.
The pilgrimage to Hampi also served its purpose;
Freedom from Maya was attained.

That day I left the home. Attachment to worldly objects is a kind of Maya (illusion). When these objects are given up, there is freedom from Maya. The same day I went to the Excise Inspector Anjaneyulu's bungalow. He was one of those who on seeing Swami felt a kind of spiritual urge. His house was on the way to my house. He used to prepare some edibles and wait, together with his wife, for my arrival. They would send their children inside lest they should form some impressions about the parents. As soon as I entered the house, both of them would hold my feet. I used to tell them often: "Sir, you are an elder. You should not touch my feet." He would reply: "Raju, we may appear elders in terms of the body. But in terms of wisdom, we are very small. You are verily Krishna himself." They used to describe me like this. They would do it in great privacy, lest others should scoff at them.

Emergence of Raju as Sathya Sai

On that October 20th, I did not go to the school. In the school I used to lead the prayers everyday. There was a platform with a few steps. In the prayer there was a song which ran as follow.

Aharaha thava ahvana pracharita

shuni thava Udara Vani
Hindu Bauddha Sikha Jaina Parasika
Mussalmano Christani.

Even in those days there was the recognition of the oneness of all religions. Some of the teachers used to wonder how this boy was propagating the unity of all religions. As I did not go to school that day, there was a commotion in the school, with everyone asking, "Where is Raju?" No boy was present at prayer-time. All the boys rushed to Anjaneyulu's house. I did not see any of them. I was just sitting on a rock. The boys were discussing among themselves: "Some change has come over Raju. What has happened to him? Could something have occurred in his home to upset him after his return from Hampi." I declared then: "If you want to know who I am take a photograph of me". When the photo was taken, the picture of Shirdi Baba was in front of me. At that time no one knew who Sai Baba was. In the gathering here today, Anjanayya is present. He is now the Chairman of the Sathya Sai Organisation in Anantapur district. He knows about that photo. I told the boys to go to the school and start the prayer. Meanwhile, Seshamaraju sent a telegram to Puttaparthi regarding the events in Uravakonda. The parents came hurriedly to Uravakonda to take me away to Puttaparthi. At that time, there was no bus service even upto Bukkapatnam. Buses plied only upto Penukonda. From there, people had to go by bullock cart. All the boys declared that they also wanted to go with Raju.

Tragedy strikes two classmates of Baba

At that time, a tragic incident occurred. In the school, three students used to sit together in each desk. In the desk where Swami sat, he had on one side the Sheristadar's son and on the other the Revenue Inspector's son. Both of them were fairly well to do. By their continuous association with me in the class, their hearts had been transformed. The day I left the school, both of them suffered a grievous mental shock. They cried "Raju! Raju" in great anguish. When they saw me boarding the bus, the Sheristadar's son lost his

mind and fell into a well. "I cannot live without Raju" were his last words. The other boy was always wailing, "Raju! Raju!" and would not take any food or drink. This state of mental imbalance is Unmatha , a spiritual phenomenon. Many people think that this condition is related to the giving up of worldly objects. In view of the tragic end of these two boys, their classroom in the school was locked up. Even today there is the desk, which has been named "Sri Sathya Sai Baba Desk." There was a Headmaster named Lakshmipathi (in the Uravakonda school). He used to summon me to his office as soon as I came to the school. This kind of feeling does not come to everyone. Only those who have been blessed by their good deeds in previous lives have such feelings. As soon as I went into his office, he would close the door. He would ask me to sit in his chair. He would sit on the floor and start massaging my feet. Innocently, I would tell him often: "Sir, you should not do such a thing." Lakshmipathi used to say: "You don't know these things. I know them. There is a great sakthi (power) in you." In this manner, many things used to happen in Uravakonda in those days.

The remarkable change in Uravakonda

October 20 (1940) is the day that wrought a great transformation in Uravakonda. There was a remarkable change in all the students there. I shall give you a small example to illustrate what an amount of affection and love they had for me. The day after I left, another boy went up to the platform in the school for prayer. He started to pray, but broke down in tears. He remembered Swami and could not continue. When he started crying, everyone in the hall began to cry. The prayer turned into a lamentation. The headmaster said: "There is no need for a prayer. The cry itself is the prayer." From that day, the prayer room was locked up and was later converted into a sacred showroom.

The students of those days were full of purity. They were not prone to indulge in criticisms and speculations like students of today. Cleverness and intellectual abilities have increased among students today but good qualities have been on the decline. In those days, cleverness was less but goodness was greater.

Prashanthi Nilayam is now a mini-world

The lights that have been lit to celebrate a memorable event is a symbol of how the Andhra people have imbibed and are spreading the message of Sai. Embodiments of Divine Love! Do not think that this is said to flatter you. Consider it as a declaration of truth. What has been accomplished at Prashanthi Nilayam in the past fifty years could not have been achieved even in five hundred years (cheers). Although many avatars have done great things, no avatar has achieved the stupendous things done here in fifty years. All this has been accomplished by this single hand. A splendid university has been established here. A planetarium has been set up. In a small village like this, even an aerodrome is being constructed. The name of Prashanthi Nilayam has spread to all parts of the globe. The whole world exists in miniature in Prashanthi Nilayam. People from all countries are gathering here. Prashanthi Nilayam is now a mini-world. You are going to witness many more things by November 23. Will people from other countries come here even if they are invited? But no invitations or promotional literature have been sent to anyone. I am even advising many who wish to come not to do so. This supreme power of attracting so many from all parts of the world can only belong to the Divine (cheers). The fragrance emanating from a flower spreads all over. Does the flower invite the bee? No. But the bee rushes to the flower of its own accord to taste the nectarine honey in it. Does a bee ever go to a plastic flower? Where is Argentina? It is almost at one end of the globe. In Argentina bhajans are being held in every home (cheers). In Panama, some military officers campaigned against the government in power and called for a "Sathya Sai Government." These officers were arrested and kept in a mental asylum on the ground that they had gone crazy. All the military officers were able to convert the nurses and doctors in the hospital to Sai devotees. It is not easy to do this. Such changes can be effected only by a change of heart.

Devotion alone can protect the world

Embodiments of Love! If you have been able to carry these lamps, from house to house, it is not the result of something external. The light has come

from your hearts. Hence, more than lighting the lamps outside, develop the jyothis within you and purify your hearts. All Sathya Sai Organisations should be permeated with love. No room should be given to divisive forces. Differences of caste and creed should be totally eschewed. Character alone should be the hallmark of one's community. Love should become an article of faith. Morality determines the nature of a community.

The answer to the question, "To which community do you belong?" should be: "I belong to the community of the moral." If any one asks for your religion, declare: "Love is my religion." Develop devotion to God on this basis. Devotion alone protects the entire world and nothing else. No government, no bombs, no tanks can save the world. Devotees alone are the protectors of the world. Developing devotion, having the well-being of the world in view, participate in Nagarasankirtan (going round one's village or town performing bhajans).

There is a tale told of old that Wisdom and Wealth once quarrelled loud and long, about their relative importance. Wealth argued that without it, the body will be weak, the brain hazy and wisdom a will-o-the-wisp. Wisdom retorted that, without it man cannot even distinguish wealth from non-wealth or know how to earn it or use it. The Soul intervened and told them that they were both equally important, but, only when properly used. Wealth without wisdom becomes an instrument of exploitation and tyranny; wisdom without wealth becomes mere fantasy and a bundle of blueprint. Use makes them worthwhile; misuse makes them disastrous.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30. Service as duty

Date: 19 November 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: 5th World Conference

THE cosmos is permeated by the Divine. Hence it is the field of all actions. Karma or action means the Life Force. Human beings are instruments of this Life Force. The human body is made up of action. Consequently the scriptures described man as Karmaja, (born as a result of action). All actions performed by man with his limbs and organs are rendered possible by the Divine. Hence man should regard all actions as sacred. But whatever man does is motivated by ego, self-interest, and desire for the fruits thereof. To enjoy the fruits of the actions done with expectation of reward, man is reborn. The Gita says: "Karmanubandheeni Manushyaloke" (Karma is the bond in this world of human beings). Man is bound by Karma. When actions are performed as offerings to the Divine, they get sanctified. All actions that are natural to man should be converted by the spiritual aspirant into Karma Yoga. The distinction between Karma and Karma Yoga should be clearly understood. Actions performed selfishly with egoism and desire for reward are Karmas (that bind). Actions done unselfishly, without ego and any expectation of reward, become Karma Yoga. Each one can determine for himself whether he is a Karma Yogi or a Karma-Brashta (a wrong-doer) or a Karmadhikari (competent to perform karmas). Every man's life is filled with actions. But together with activities associated with self-interest, every man should also take part in service activities. Every man's primary aim should be to devote himself to selfless activities. Man has been endowed with the human body for rendering service to others. This is an ancient maxim. Through service to others, divinity can be experienced.

Joy and sorrow are inseparable companions

Society is composed of the affluent, the middle class and the poor. Social service means service to one's fellowmen. A wealthy man has been able to acquire riches only with the help of others. Realising this, he has a duty to extend help to others in need. Man derives his strength from three sources:

wealth, knowledge and the physique. The power derived from these sources should be used properly for right ends.

The term vithamu (wealth) is usually applied to material riches. But it applies equally to the wealth of knowledge and to physical strength. One having this triple strength should devote it for the well-being of society. Joy and sorrow are like the two pots carried by a man on a pole. They are inseparable companions. No one can tell what the future has in store for any person. A millionaire may become a pauper and vice versa. These are familiar phenomena. They occur in the course of nature. Whatever sacrifices or ceremonies one may perform, these vicissitudes cannot be avoided altogether. These changes in fortune are wrought by the whirligig of Time. Recognising this, one should ensure that one's actions are righteous and helpful to others.

Serve the Daridra Narayana

When feeding the poor, the rich people think that they are rendering service to Daridra Narayana. Who is Daridra Narayana ? People think that anyone who is without food, clothing or shelter is a Daridra Narayana. But in rendering service to the poor, people should feel that they are serving the Narayana (the Lord) who dwells in the hearts of the poor. To endow this form (of Daridra Narayana) to the formless Divine and serve men in this way is the means of sanctifying one's actions and redeeming one's life. God will dwell in the hearts of those who are filled with thoughts of consideration for the poor and who are eager to serve them.

Time is infinitely precious. Hence the performance of good deeds should not be put off to another day. Time waits for no one. Hence both the body and the time should be utilized for doing sacred actions.

There should be no feeling of condescension in rendering service. Regard yourself as a devoted servant ready to do any task. Service activities done in this spirit will lead to God realisation by extinguishing the ego.

There is no meaning in preaching spirituality to a starving man. Feed the hungry. Offer solace and encouragement to those in distress and despair. The educated should try to teach the illiterate and open the minds of the ignorant to wider vistas of knowledge. The educated persons may be doctors, lawyers or businessmen. Doctors should be ready to render free medical service to the poor. Lawyers should be helpful to those who are in need of legal aid but who cannot afford to pay for their services. Businessmen should be content to keep a reasonable income for their needs and utilize the surplus for charitable purposes. It is rare to find such persons. The wealthy should realise that money should be earned by righteous means and used for right purposes. True happiness can be got only from wealth acquired by fair means. Money got through exploitation of others will lead to suffering in one way or another.

Ingratitude is a grievous sin

If you desire a safe and peaceful future, you have to mould your actions properly in the present. In this, service has a great role. Whether you perform any kind of worship or not, when you render selfless service, you will be able to experience the bliss of Divine love. Service demonstrates the unity that underlies the apparent diversity. To realise your own inherent divinity, service to the people is the best kind of sadhana. What is so great about living for one's own sake? Only the man who lives for others can be said to live truly. Man is a creature of society and owes everything to society. Hence he should be grateful to it for what all he has received from it. Gratitude is a supreme virtue. Ingratitude is a grievous sin. It will deprive a man of his God-given sight. There is no means of atonement for the ungrateful person. If you wish to safeguard your future, you have to be grateful to those who have helped you in your difficulties and needs in the present. In the Sathya Sai Organization, seva (service) has pride of place. The Sai samithis were started only with service in view. Services should not be mechanical or enforced. It should be filled with love and rendered whole-heartedly. Whomsoever you may serve, regard it as service done to God.

It can be asserted as a fact that only in the Sathya Sai Organizations is service rendered without any feeling of egoism.

Penance of devotees at Prashanthi Nilayam

If today lakhs of people are gathered here and are putting up with various inconveniences and difficulties, it is indeed a great penance they are doing. This sense of oneness cannot be seen in any other organization. Only the Sathya Sai Organizations have such oneness. You see here people belonging to many countries, professing many faiths, speaking various languages, behaving like brothers and sisters and experiencing the bliss of being here. This is possible only for those belonging to the Sathya Sai Organizations. Embodiments of Divine Love/You must all take a pledge to develop this feeling of love and set an example to the world. It is not right to call yourselves sevaks without engaging yourselves in service and rest content with your own selfish concerns. Wherever you may be, render service with all your heart. Consider that in rendering service, you are serving yourselves and not others. That will confer on you Atma-trupti (self satisfaction). You must examine whether in doing service, you are deriving self-satisfaction or whether you are trying to show off. As long as there is ostentation in service, no real joy can be experienced from it. The ego will not go. And without the elimination of the ego, you cannot experience spiritual bliss. Embodiments of the Divine Atma! The world situation today is dreadful and frightening. Wherever you turn, fear confronts you. Whether you remain at home or go out into the street, whether you travel by train or walk on the road, fear haunts you. The world is enveloped in fear. If you want to banish this fear, you have to develop firm faith in God as the sole refuge. Then you are freed from fear. Shedding all fear, carry on your work with courage and determination, without any worry about the future, and plunge into service activities. If you act with this faith, you will be able to serve the nation well. It is not your intellectual ability that will serve to protect the country. If you adhere to Truth and Righteousness, they will protect both you and the country. Live up to the truth of your being. Act righteously. Sai Service Organizations must grow in numbers and cover the entire country. Only then the country will enter on an era of prosperity Consider yourselves as the children of one God. You are not strangers. You are not mere products of nature or of the physical elements. You are all sparks of the Divine. You must

have only Divine thoughts.

Uniqueness of Sai Seva Organisations

Creation was the result of the Will of the Divine. Hence everything in creation should manifest its Divine nature. If you keep this fact in mind, you will be filled only with sacred thoughts and feelings and there will be no room for any wrong ideas. Always remembering that you are a fragment of the Divine you have to engage yourselves in service. No Government or other service organization has this attitude. Only Sathya Sai Organizations can render service successfully in this spirit. Very soon you will experience the bliss and peace to be got from such service.

Whatever the difficulties or obstacles, you are bound to overcome them. These are incidental to any undertaking. Do not bother about what has happened in the past. Get immersed in the tasks of the present. Render service with a pure and selfless heart. The delight of the individual gladdens the Divine. Equally the Divine esteems you. Do everything with the Lord's name on your lips. Develop all that is good in you and share that goodness with one and all. Discourse to the Fifth World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations at the Hill View

Individuals are prepared to engage themselves in various activities for the sake of their own personal comfort and for the acquisition of wealth and position and for ensuring the good of their kith and kin. But few of them are prepared to make any effort or sacrifice for the general good of the society.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

31. The Devotee dear to the Lord

Date: 20 November 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: 5th World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organizations

Proclaim with raised hands that caste and credal divisions should go;

Speak out repeatedly that service to the weak is Divine;

Meditation on the Lord's name will lead man to the Lord's abode

And confer immortality on him. Declare that all men of devotion and faith are your kith and kin.

Those who teach this wisdom to the people are dearest to the Lord.

Getting rid of feelings of differences, if you live in love and harmony,

That alone will delight Sai. What more can I tell you, Oh good people, assembled here? Anapeksha Suchir-daksha Udasino gathavyathah Sarvarambha Parithyagi Yo madbhaktah sa me priyah "THAT devotee of mine, who expecting nothing, is pure, dexterous, unconcerned, free from distress and renounces all undertakings, is dear to Me." (Bhagavan began His discourse with this sloka from the twelfth canto of the Bhagavad Gita). The first quality figuring in this sloka is Anapeksha. This term means, "to be free from any kind of Apeksha (expectation or desire)." Can a man having a body, mind and intellect be free from desires at all? It is impossible. But such a state can be realised by an effort of will.

Preya and sreya margas

There are many in the world who seek sensuous pleasures from moment to moment. Most people crave for such pleasures. This method is described in the Gita as Preyo-Marga (the pleasure seeking path). As against this, there is another path, which confers the experience of Selfrealisation and which

transcends the senses. This is called Sreyo-Marga (the superior righteous path). This path is not easily intelligible to all. It is not also accessible to all. Consequently the general mass do not favour this path. In the world, there is on the one side the attraction of the Preyo-Marga and on the other, the Sreyo-Marga. However, those who seek the pleasures of the senses take to the Preyo-Marga. Only the Jnanis (the spiritually wise persons), who are indifferent to the fleeting mundane pleasures derived from the senses, and who are austere and pure-hearted, pursue the Sreyo- Marga.

There is another path, which transcends the path of preyas (pleasure) and sreyas (virtue). These two paths encompass all the possible desires of human beings. Anapeksha goes beyond both of them. Anapeksha is described as being free from desires. But this is not wholly correct. It is when a man gives up the feeling, in the performance of all actions, that "I am the doer" (the sense of ego), "I am the experiencer," (the sense of fulfilment of desire) that true Anapeksha emerges. This means that conceit of doership and the sense of enjoyment of desired things should be wholly renounced. This is the true state of Anapeksha (desirelessness). It is only when all actions are done as an offering to God that Anapeksha prevails. When such a feeling fills the heart of the devotee, the Divine confers beatitude on him. Such a devotee is dear to the Lord. If you want to earn the love of the Lord, you have to render service to anyone, anywhere, as an offering to the Lord.

Purity of heart is required for a good devotee

The second quality is Suchi (Purity). There should be both inner and outer purity. Bodily purity relates to the physical. It covers such cleansing acts as bathing, wearing clean clothes, eating pure food and the like. Even in studies, the books should be wholesome and elevating. But mere external cleanliness without internal purity is of no value. Everyone, from the scholar to the common man, is concerned only about external cleanliness and not about the purity of the heart within. However pure the ingredients may be, if the vessel in which they are cooked is not clean, the food will be spoiled. For a man, his heart is the vessel, and he must see that it is kept pure and untainted. For the purification of the heart, everyone must undertake selfless service.

Attachments and aversions, which pollute the mind, should be eschewed by concentrating on Seva. It is only when the heart is pure that selfless service can be performed. Hence both bodily and mental purity are essential for a good devotee. The third quality is Daksha. This means that everyone should regard his life as a form of penance. Everyone must have a Daksha (firm resolution) that as long as life lasts he will dedicate himself to the service of his fellowmen. Thereby he will realise his oneness with all mankind. Such a feeling of unity will lead to God-realisation. Service is the only way to get rid of selfishness and self-centredness. A devotee who has resolved upon such service is dear to the Lord.

Do not be swayed by fears or threats

The fourth quality is Udaseenah. This means indifference towards sorrow and joy, loss or gain, honour or dishonour. You must be concerned only to see whether your actions are pure and selfless according to your conscience. Nothing else matters, neither the praise nor the blame of other people. When your conscience tells you that what you are doing is good, you may go ahead regardless of the opinion of others, whether they are your kinsmen, friends or others. This is the true meaning of Udaseena (indifference). You should not be swayed by fears or threats. In this context, it is advisable for sevaks to keep away from politics. Sometimes, out of a desire for recognition or publicity, one may be tempted to cultivate men in power. This temptation corrupts your mind. By developing the Udaseenatha (spirit of indifference) in its best sense, you must seek to serve all with a feeling of love. "Indifference" should not assume the form of arrogance or ostentatious condescension. Adhere to what is right and turn away from what is bad. That is the highest Udaseenatha.

The past and the future are in the present

The next quality is Gathavyathah (free from worry). This means that there should be no worry regarding what is past. A man with worries can never accomplish anything. One should not worry about what is past or what is in the womb of the future. It is such worry that is the cause of all of man's troubles. There is no meaning in worrying about the unknown future. Keeping

the present in view, men should engage themselves in right actions. The past and the future are in the present. Devotees who do their duty in the present are dear to the Lord. The sixth quality is Sarvarambha Parithyagi (renunciation of all undertakings). This means that there should be no ostentation or showing off in any undertaking by a devotee. Unless ostentation is given up, egoism will not go. The ego must be eliminated for purifying the heart. No good deed can be done without purity in the heart. It is through sacred deeds that the heart is purified.

Ostentation is a demonic quality. It encourages egoism and megalomania. One should seek to acquire a good name through selfless service alone. It should be done with humility and sincerity. One who aspires to become a national leader must first know how to render service. He should not seek office or position. The Sai organizations have been set up for rendering service and not to establish official positions. Seva should be done out of a sense of duty.

Men are born to serve, not to dominate

Seva brings out all that is great in man. It broadens the heart and widens one's vision. It fills one with joy. It promotes unity. It proclaims the truth of the Spirit. It drives out all the evil qualities in a man. It must be regarded as a great spiritual discipline. You are born to serve, not to dominate. Everyone in the world is a servant and not a master. All relationships - husband and wife, mother and child, the employer and employee are based on mutual service. The world is progressing because of such mutual service. If the principle of service did not operate, the world would come to a halt.

Do you regard an "officer" as a superior? It is not so. Even he is a servant. It is only when man is filled with the spirit of service that his divine nature is revealed. He then experiences the peace that passeth understanding.

What is the reason for the lack of peace in the world today? It is because there is no harmony in thought, word and deed in the lives of the people. Peace must begin in the family, in the home. When there is understanding

and harmony in the family, peace will spread to the community and from there to the nation and the world. Hence unity is the primary need today. Unity confers joy and peace.

Transformation must begin with the individual. When the individual changes, the world will change. This transformation has to take place in the minds of men. Right thoughts will lead to right actions. That is why the scriptures have declared that the mind is the cause of man's bondage or liberation.

Hill View Stadium.

Temples are intended to instruct men in the art of removing the veil of attachment that lies over their heart. That is the reason why Thyagaraja cried in the temple at Tirupathi, "Remove the veil within me, the veil of pride and hate." The fog of Maya melted away before the rays of Grace and so, he could discern and describe the image of Divine Charm in the song: "Sivudano Madhavudano" and drink deep the sweetness of that Form. The churning of his heart by the Divine Formula produced the spark of Jnana, and it grew into the Flame of Realisation.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

32. Seva that sanctifies

Date: 21 November 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Fifth World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organizations

Oh Man! When you come out of the mother's womb You have no necklace of any kind round neck. Neither of pearls, nor of gold, nor a string of gems; But there is one garland round your neck with which the Creator has sent you. It is the heavy chain of your good and bad deeds carried from all your past lives. That unbroken chain is all that you bring into the world. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love ! Karma (one's deeds) is responsible for birth. Every man is a child of Karma. Born on account of Karma, Dharma (Righteousness) becomes one of the primary goals of human life. Dharma governs all worldly and other-worldly actions in life. Based on the rules of Dharma (conduct) pertaining to one's caste, vocation, or Asrama (stage in life), people are supposed to regulate their lives. This is regarded as Dharma. But this is not the correct meaning of the term. Dharma in its exalted meaning is that which applies to all people, in all countries at all times.

The eternal Dharma

Dharma is that which sustains mankind. True humanness consists in observing unity of thought, word and deed. All actions done with this triple unity are dharmic (righteous actions). All such actions will be non-violent. Words spoken with such triple purity will be truth. Dharma conceived in this way transcends the barriers of space, time and circumstance. Hence it is called Sanathana Dharma - the eternal verities. There are in the world various rules of conduct which are related to conditions governing time and space. Such rules are liable to change from time to time and country to country, according to changing situations. But if Sanathana Dharma is changed, humanity will cease to be human. Just as burning charcoal, if it loses its heat, becomes mere charcoal, and a piece of jaggery, if it loses its sweetness, becomes a lump of clay, likewise man remains truly human only as long as he adheres to the eternal Dharma (which is represented by purity in thought, word and deed - Trikarana Suddhi). Without this basic quality, man is only

human in form and not his true nature.

Human life is a precious jewel which is being bartered away for the flimsy tinsel of sensuous pleasures and this happens because of pollution of the mind. The mind is prone to afflictions from four sources. One is through bhrama (delusions) which make the mind see objects differently from what they really are. Because of this, man forgets his inherent divinity and gets immersed in the transient and the impermanent. Ignoring the In-dwelling Spirit, he gets attached to the perishable body. This delusion results in the state called Pramadam (perilous or critical condition). The entire personality is affected by the delusion. The result is the next stage, called Karanapatanam, the weakening of the sense organs. The mind by itself has no power of perception. It has to perceive everything through the indriyas (sense organs) such as the eyes, the ears, etc. The mind acts on the basis of the impressions received through the sense organs. When the senses are weakened and the impressions received through them are misleading and unreliable, the mind is also affected. The mind goes astray by association with wrong impressions. That is why in the spiritual field, the efficacy of association with good people is emphasized.

Envy is the most sinful vice

The fourth affliction to which the mind is prone is Vipralipsa (envy). This is an evil quality. The envious man cannot suffer others being prosperous or happy. He has a carping spirit. He always wishes ill for others. Envy converts a man into a veritable monster. This is a most sinful vice. It is because the mind is prone to these four kinds of afflictions that Vedanta recommends special disciplines for the mind to get rid of polluting influences and evil tendencies. How is the mind to be purified? Through service to society with dedication and identification with everyone. You have to cultivate this feeling of Ekatmabhava (oneness with all). By engaging yourselves in service, you develop this sense of oneness. In this context, the supreme importance of love should be recognised. Love is your true nature. But modern man, in his preoccupation with the world of external phenomena, is failing to discover his own true nature. Of what avail is all the knowledge about the physical world if

a man does not know what he really is? Love is the basis for this self-discovery. Love is the means and love is the proof.

Buddhi is superior to Medhas

Self-enquiry calls for sraddha (earnestness) and understanding of Rita (the principle of cosmic order governing the universe). Rita transcends the categories of time and space. It is the eternal verity represented by Trikaranna Suddhi (unity of thought, word and deed). The Buddhi (intelligence) is the instrument for making the enquiry into the Real. Buddhi is superior to intellectual talent. The ancients accorded a higher place to Buddhi because it confers the power of discrimination between right and wrong, between the permanent and the passing. Modern man attaches higher value to intellectual ability. The falsity of this view was demonstrated centuries ago in a debate between Adi Sankara and Mandana Misra. In that debate Sankara conclusively proved that Buddhi (the power of discrimination) was superior to medhas (intellectual ability.) Few are qualified to declare the distinction between Spirit and matter and to determine the nature of Divinity and the truth about the phenomenal world. The reason is that all people in the world suffer from delusions of different kinds. Consequently they suffer from various fears and hallucinations and have no peace of mind. The only way to get rid of these delusions and fears is to practise love and realise the divinity that is present in all beings. Once this spiritual unity of all beings is recognised, the relevance of this truth for every sphere of life - the physical, the social, the political, the economic, the ethical and the spiritual will become clear. The scientists, in their exploration of the nature of matter, have discovered the existence of various subatomic particles like electrons, protons and neutrons. The divine energy that is present in all these particles is one and the same. Once the divine energy is understood, there will be no need to pursue other explorations. If, for instance, you understood that sugar is the basic constituent of different kinds of sweets, there will be no need to examine each of them.

Help to the needy is the highest virtue

Multiplicity is a characteristic of Prakriti (Nature). The Cosmos is a projection of the Divine. It is called Jagat - that in which things arise and disappear, come and go. Nothing seems permanent. But the spiritually realised person will recognize the permanent that subsumes the changing entity. Such a realisation can come only when a person is pure in thought, word and deed. Purity must express itself in loving service. Help to the needy has been described as punya (the highest virtue). Harming others has been condemned as a sin. Sai devotees must engage themselves in acts of service, which will sanctify their lives. The exemplary man is the one who causes no pain to others, who feels no pain himself and who leads a life of service to others. Hoping that, with the name of God on your lips and with your hands engaged in service, you will dedicate your lives to help others and realise the bliss of the Spirit, I shower My benedictions on all of you!

Hill View Stadium.

Education sans wisdom, mere wisdom bereft of discrimination, action without discretion, erudition lacking sagacity, power not justified by credentials, statements not based on truth, music wanting in melody, adoration not sustained by devotion, a person devoid of common sense and character, a student not endowed with humility and a discourse that fails to inspire - these serve no useful purpose.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

33. Towards a value based education

Date: 22 November 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 9

STUDENTS! Embodiments of Love! Teachers and Patrons of Education!

Education lends beauty to man. Education is man's most precious wealth. It confers happiness and renown on man. It is the teacher of teachers. When a man travels abroad, education stands by him like a kinsman. Education is adored by rulers, not wealth. One without education is an animal.

Degrees alone do not signify education. Education that is confined to the physical sciences is a travesty of true education. Together with knowledge of the natural sciences, one has to acquire humility, discipline and a good character. Everyone should recognize this sacred character of education.

The student of today is concerned with acquiring wealth, strength and position, but not good qualities. Education is meant to enable one to acquire what are good qualities. Every student should take note of this. Education is not intended merely to stuff the brain with information. It has to transform the heart and make it pure. This sacred truth has been forgotten.

Educational institutions should be sacred

Formidable problems have cropped up in educational institutions today. Educational institutions, which should serve to promote wholesome and progressive tendencies among the citizens, are going in the wrong way. The discipline that should prevail in them has deteriorated. The sacred feelings that should inspire educational establishments have disappeared. Reverence and respect are not to be seen. Money has been elevated to the primary place. This means that in institutions in which Saraswathi, the Goddess of Knowledge, should reign supreme, Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, has been installed. Knowledge that should be acquired by the heart is being garnered by money.

This is a great threat to society. It is only when a student is filled with sacred thoughts that he will be able to serve society properly and make himself a better human being. The country will prosper only when those occupying the seats of power understand these problems properly. President Sri Venkataraman, in his Convocation address, explained in clear terms the implications of the five values of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Santhi*, *Prema* and *Ahimsa*. These five terms are like the five life-breaths for a man. Not only that. They are also the *Panchabhutas* (five basic elements). Without these values, humanness will be destroyed. All other accomplishments are worthless without these values. For the mansion of Sanathana Dharma, these values are the walls supporting the edifice.

Nine gem-like qualities to be cultivated

The student today has to cultivate in this Kali age nine gem-like qualities - the spirit of sacrifice, humility, the spirit of selfless service to society, friendliness, discipline, adherence to truth, love, nonviolence and faith in God. The boys and girls who have these qualities alone will be the nation's treasure of virtue and ensure its future.

Dear Students!

Without these sacred qualities, all education is valueless. Does literacy or degree constitute education? Without wisdom and virtue can one be termed an educated person? True education is that which fosters the sense of oneness, draws out one's divine qualities and promotes the blossoming of human personality. The eternal verities are being given the go-by. Man is getting alienated from Nature. Good practices are giving place to bad habits. Education is reaching its nadir.

Man should be prepared to make any amount of effort in the pursuit of knowledge. Education today is concerned with worldly comforts, but it should seek to promote, in addition to worldly knowledge, concern for spiritual development. Education has two important characteristics. One is exposition of facts relating to any subject. The other is the unfoldment of the individual's

personality. The first is concerned with matter. The second is with energy. Education is a combination of the two. It is a combination of worldly and spiritual knowledge. Education cannot be confined to stuffing the head. It has to melt the heart, refine it and turn it Godwards. It is not enough to make a man of the student. He has to be transformed into an ideal human being. He must be made compassionate. Every effort should be made to utilise education for the purpose of divinising man.

The four hallmarks of a true student

Man should stand out as a seeker of truth. The student should practise the truths he has learnt and use them for the good of the society. Citizens may be interested in students' problems, but students should not get involved in the citizens' politics. Students should aspire to promote the nation's well-being, its security and happiness. Selflessness, absence of egoism, unostentatiousness and true love should be the hallmarks of a true student. A student's life should radiate light all around. *Vidya* means light. It is to make this illumination available to the world that students should pursue education. Students should desire to enjoy the bliss derived from *Vidya* (education) and not the pleasures of *Vishaya* (worldly objects). Students should aim at being masters of their senses and not their servants. A man may be a great *Vedantin* (philosopher). He may explore many things. He may expound new theories. But he should really, try to find out what he has accomplished as a human being. Without the cultivation of human values, all explorations and speculations are of no use.

Today, the educational system, not only in India but in all countries, has taken the wrong turn. No single person is responsible for this situation. Parents have failed to bring up their children properly. The nation's leaders do not set them a good example. Even teachers have failed in their responsibilities. When we have exemplary parents, exemplary leaders and ideal teachers, students will be ideal students. Students, who are selfless, pure-hearted and innocent by nature, are being dragged into politics, their minds are getting fill with bitterness and hatred and their hearts are getting polluted. Students in no circumstance should get into politics. After completing your studies, if you

take up a job or start a business, you may take to politics. In entering politics you must do so to serve the nation and promote its welfare and integrity.

Quality and not quantity should be increased

Students today lack the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong. The authorities feel that education is progressing in the country. There are more educational institutions and more students seem to be receiving education. But no one seems to bother whether they are really getting educated at all. Mere increase in the number of educational institutions is not enough. We must look at the quality of education. Standards have to be raised. There are many reasons for deterioration in educational standards. Only when education is treated as an autonomous and independent undertaking can the problem of standards be properly dealt with. Educational policies are changed with every change in the Education Ministry at the Centre or in the States. Frequent changes in educational policy are responsible for the fall in educational standards. Changes in the Ministry or the personnel at the top should not affect the core of education. It is essential to separate education and place it under the control of experienced and dedicated educationists. Without this basic change, whatever may be done to increase educational institutions is a waste of money. What is the progress that has been achieved in education? Crores are being spent on education. What is the return for all this expenditure? There is a general decline in character and students have no respect for teachers; gratitude is at a discount. This is the "progress" that is witnessed today.

How can the nation progress? Everything depends on the young students of today. Education is not confined to school or college. It is a process that goes on all through one's life.

Students!

Develop pure thoughts and see that you do not cause any difficulties to your fellow-students. Strive to please your parents. Gratitude is the foremost quality in a student. Show your gratitude to your parents to whom you owe

everything in your life.

Students should serve the Motherland first

Students!

Human life is very precious and in it the days of youth are even more precious. Every student must cultivate humility and reverence. He must understand the state of the country. You must love the Motherland. Today there is a craze among students, whether they are engineers or doctors, to apply for jobs abroad as soon as they get their degrees. Serve your Motherland first. Earn honour and respect here. Take a pledge to serve your Motherland. Some people imagine that they can pursue their higher studies abroad. But what happens is that after going there, they forget even their parents. What is the use of such ungrateful persons going abroad? The students alone are not to blame for this. The Government is also responsible. The Government should realise that our students are being spoilt by being sent abroad and should restrict the number of passports issued to them. Are there not facilities for higher studies within India? Is there not enough science and technology here? The students claim that they are acquiring special knowledge. But all that they learn is pride and ostentation. Sri Rama declared: "The mother and the Motherland are greater than Heaven itself." You must love your mother, whether she is beautiful or otherwise.

Realise the greatness of Bharat

Students!

Realise the greatness of Bharat. There is no need to disparage other countries. Only be prepared to sacrifice everything for your Motherland. Students today have no patriotic feelings. They only love themselves (their bodies). *Deha* (the body) and *Desa* (the country) are intimately related to each other. Recognize the unity of the two. Realise at the outset the greatness of Bharatiya culture. It is an ideal to the world. It confers *Atma-anandam* (spiritual bliss). Without recognizing this, all your education is worth

nothing.

You are acquiring book knowledge, but are not putting into practice what you have learnt. It is most essential to practise unity in thought, word and deed - which is the mark of all great people. Recognising the all-embracing character of Bharatiya culture - which covers every aspect of life from the spiritual to the physical - you have to live up to its message. Develop the spirit of love in your hearts.

Students!

Wherever you may go, remember your Institute and behave in a manner befitting its alumni. That is the gratitude you can show to the Institute. We do not ask from you anything. Our only desire is that you should become ideal students. Only then Will your studies here be justified and you will be making your lives worthwhile. Eschew selfishness. Only the spirit of sacrifice can confer immortality.

Help ever, hurt never.

Stern discipline is needed at every stage

There is something wrong with our system of examinations and promotions. An examinee is "passed" if he gets 30 percent marks in a subject. This is improper. If a man is entrusted with a hundred tasks and if he fails in 70 of them, is he to be recognised as having performed well? A few mistakes may be excused, but if one commits 70 mistakes does he deserve to be passed? This is wrong. Even with regard to the 30 percent pass marks there appear to be various manipulations. All kinds of "grace marks" are given. Why, then, should the student study at all? It is because of such practices that educational institutions have lost all credibility. What can you make of students who "pass" in this manner? What kind of national leaders will they

be?

Hence, it is essential to reform the examination system and raise educational standards and performance. There should be no room for compromises and relaxations in the educational fields. Education is called *Sikshana*. This term means that there should be stern discipline at every stage. Students should be properly corrected and encouraged to study well. A teacher is one who teaches what is good and wholesome for the students. A real student is one who respects the teacher. In days of yore, the most pure and sacred relations existed between preceptors and pupils. Today, the talk is all about freedom. But freedom should be within limits.

The end of wisdom is freedom.
The end of culture is perfection.
The end of education is character.
The end of knowledge is Love.

Freedom today has degenerated into disrespect and irreverence with the result that students are getting conceited.

Dear students!

I wish that you should go out into the world as ideal students and serve the nation well. Securing degrees is not enough. You have to make your knowledge available to others. This is the purpose of education. Remember God, love the nation, and experience bliss. This should be your aim.

The President of India, Sri Venkataraman, addressed you today and spoke about the sages and saints of India. You must pay heed to the words of elders and try to live up to them to the extent you can. Eschew all differences of caste, creed and nationality and cultivate oneness of spirit. All are one be alike to everyone. Realise the divinity within you and recognize that it is in

one and all.

34. Restore the glory of Bharat

Date: 23 November 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 65

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! From the most ancient times Bharatiyas considered Truth as God, loved it, fostered it and protected it and thereby achieved divinity. Bharatiyas were devoted to Truth, wedded to Dharma (Righteousness) and esteemed morality in society as the foremost duty. Today because people have forgotten Truth and Righteousness they are unable to solve national problems or end communal differences. We have the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west and both merge in the Indian Ocean. Likewise, Bharat exemplifies the combination of worldly prosperity and spiritual progress. Bharat is the country, where the unity of the Jiva (the individual Spirit) and the Brahman (the Cosmic Spirit) was established.

When we refer to Bharat, the term is not related to any particular individual, country or circumstance. Although many different derivative meanings have been given to the term by different authorities, these are only their individual interpretations. According to some Puranas, the name Bharat was given to this country because it was ruled by a King called Jada Bharatha. Another explanation is that the name is derived from that Bharatha, son of Dushyanta and Sakuntala, who ruled over the country. Some others may explain that the name is attributed to India because Sri Rama's brother, Bharatha, enthroned the sacred sandals of Rama and administered the country.

However, when did the term "Bharatha" originate? That name must have existed before Jada Bharatha was given that name, and prior to the naming of Dushyanta's son and Rama's brother. It is obvious that the name Bharat existed from times immemorial.

"Bharat" denotes entire human family

The Goddess Saraswathi is described as Saraswathi, Bhagavathi and Bharathi. Saraswathi means the Vakdevata (Goddess of Speech). Hence every man

born with the gift of speech is a Bharata. The name is not associated with any particular individual or country. The term Bharat is applicable to the entire human family. "Bha" refers to the Principle represented by Divine Knowledge. "Self-knowledge" is "Bha." "Bharatas" are those who take delight in Selfknowledge. Hence everyone who shines by his own self luminous power is a Bharata. The word is also derived from a root which means that a Bharatiya is one who is skilled in warfare (Sangramam). What does Sangramam mean? It means conquest of the opposing forces confronting him by his divine spiritual power. "Balam Bharam Bhavathi Bibhartheh" are the words used in Nirukta. Balam refers to Brahmabalam (the Atmic strength), Thejobalam (the strength of inner light), Sastrabalam (the strength derived from knowledge of the scriptures). Bharata is one who has these triple kinds of strength. The Sruti (Veda) defines bala (strength) as yajna. It follows that Bharatiya is one who has acquired strength by the performance of yajnas (sacrifices). Hence Bharatiya is one who acquired divine strength by Atmabalam (the power of the Spirit). So, whoever one may be, whatever one's country, he has to acquire this strength of the Spirit.

Bharat is a land of plenty

Bharat (India) is a naturally well-endowed country. It is the primary source of all morality, spirituality and worldly wisdom. It is Annapoorna (a land of plenty). To regard such a sacred land as a poor country is a mental aberration. We are not a destitute nation. It is a richly endowed country. If this had not been a wealthy country, why did the Mughals, the Europeans and others invade this country? Though we have been well endowed, we have not been able to safeguard our riches. What is the reason? It is because the people have lacked unity. Freedom has been won, but unity has not been achieved. It is because there is no unity, Bharat is subject to all kinds of calamities. Ghazni Mohammed invaded the Punjab and took away from the country 700 maunds of gold as plunder. In Nagarakota there was a hall thirty yards by fifteen yards entirely built of gold. The entire hall was taken away by the invaders. In spite of being born in such a land of wealth, it is a pity that people do not take pride in their country. Wherever you turn, you see only swartham (rampant selfishness). Embodiments of Divine Love! Eschew

selfishness. Promote unity. Enjoy the bliss of harmony. It is high time you realised what a sacred country Bharat is. In this holy land, nothing is lacking. "What cannot be found in Bharat cannot be found elsewhere" is an ancient saying. In spite of these multifarious endowments, this country is being regarded as poor and backward. This is born of delusion. Only when we free ourselves from this delusion, we can experience Atmic bliss. We can experience Brahman only when we can get rid of bhrama (delusion). When everything is available within Bharat, why go abegging to other countries? Everything has originated from Bharat. Hence, having taken birth in Bharat, strive to promote the glory of Bharat. Every devotee should take a pledge to protect and promote the greatness of Bharat. Like an elephant that does not know its own strength, Bharatiyas are unaware of their power. Despite their myriad capacities, they are behaving as weaklings like an elephant before its mahout. You have to get rid of this weakness.

Be aware of the uniqueness of Bharat

Bharat has produced many great sages and saints who have taught profound truths. It is a land of heroes who fought for the freedom of the country. It has been the leader in the knowledge of various arts and sciences, in music and literature. It is most unfortunate that many born in this sacred land are unaware of its unique greatness. Love of the mother is a nectarine quality. What a pity that love of the Motherland should be absent! You must love the Motherland. Resolve to dedicate your lives to the service of the motherland. Unity is the primary requisite. People celebrate the birthdays of our great ones, but few care to follow their teachings. There is nothing great about celebrating birthdays. Every effort must be made to understand their teachings and act upto them. Develop the quality of love. Fill your entire life with love. This was the prayer which the gopikas addressed to Krishna in the former yuga. A life without love is utterly barren. Man is the embodiment of love. Love has to be directed towards what is true. Such love is man's life-breath.

Fill your hearts with the heritage of Bharat

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Esteeming love as the essence of divinity, you have to engage yourselves in loving service to society. You have to restore the glory of Bharat. Bharat has been in the past the preceptor for all nations. All other people are coming to acquire peace and enlightenment. In this situation, it is a great misfortune that Bharatiyas themselves are not conscious of their greatness. Bharatiya history reflects the achievements of Bharat in the realms of the physical, the mental, the spiritual and all other aspects of life. We have to fill our hearts with this heritage.

Today we are dedicating our lives to material and worldly comforts. Of what avail are all these appurtenances? We have to realise the Atmic principle which is the source of enduring bliss. All the knowledge that is acquired, all the positions one may get are of no use if there is no love in the heart. The acquisition of good qualities is more essential than the pursuit of knowledge.

The magnet of Divine love

Why is it that so many lakhs of people have gathered here today? There must be some compelling reason for it. You must be seeking something which you have not found in your native place. There would be no need for you to incur all this expenditure if you could find what you wanted in your own place. Here there is Divine Love. It is this powerful magnet of Divine Love which has been attracting all the iron filings in the form of human beings. Not a single invitation was sent to anyone. No one was asked to come. What has drawn all people here is the power of Divine Love, the bonds uniting hearts. At the root of all this is purity. Where there is purity, there love grows. When purity and love come together, there is Ananda (bliss). Whatever work we do, whatever sacrifices we perform, they are not of much use in the absence of love. In yoga practice, some types of breath control are adopted. The Kundalini yoga is also practised. All this is a form of business. In the breathing exercises, inhalation is described as Purakam, exhalation as Rechakam and holding the breath as Kumbhakam. These do not constitute the means to achieve yogic power. To breathe in all that is good is Purakam. To give up all that is bad is Rechakam. To retain in the heart what is good is Kumbhakam. Everyone is qualified to practise this kind of yoga. This divine type of yoga should be

practised by every human being. This is the primary goal of every Bharatiya. This Puttaparthi is a small hamlet. How has this village attained this eminent state? Each one can find the answer for himself. This should not be considered as a yoga or a great piece of good fortune or a lucky accident. It is due to the power of thought. Every sacred thought has the power to find fulfilment. This is why Vedanta declared: "Yadbhavam tadbhavati" (As one thinks, that he becomes). Hence, every man should develop good thoughts. Thereby he gets entitled to the right of fruits.

Adjusting to difficulties is a form of penance

Embodiments of Divine Love! Although in this Prashanthi Nilayam adequate facilities and conveniences are not available, and many of you who are used to various amenities have gathered here, you have submitted yourselves to a kind of yoga by which you have adjusted yourselves to all the inconveniences. You should regard this experience as sadhana (spiritual exercise). Enjoying all comforts cannot constitute sadhana. It is through difficulties that you experience happiness. Happiness cannot be realised without going through trouble. Such difficulties must be regarded as a form of penance. Easy life cannot become a penance. The fact that so many lakhs of people have gathered here, putting up with many difficulties and inconvenience, is striking testimony to their sense of unity. Human effort is needed for achieving anything. In the improvement of accommodation and various amenities at Prashanthi Nilayam over the past twenty years, what has been accomplished is the work of Joga Rao. As a member of the Central Trust for twenty years, he has laboured hard day and night ceaselessly to bring about these improvements in Prashanthi Nilayam. He is a Karma Yogi. He takes delight in work. Moreover, what he has been doing tirelessly night and day during the past twelve months is known only to Me and none else. He is not Col. Joga Rao. They call him Colonel Jogi, but he is indeed a Karma Yogi. For the past one month he has not had a moment's sleep. He is 82 years old. It is because even at this age he has laboured to provide as many amenities as possible, the devotees have been able to overcome their difficulties. To mark their appreciation of Joga Rao's services, the members of the Central Trust decided to honour him suitably. I do not regard Joga Rao as an outsider. But duty

demands that a certain thing should be done. In honouring Joga Rao the Central Trust is discharging a duty. (Bhagavan then put a kadiyams in gold round the wrists of Col. Joga Rao. The entire gathering cheered as Col. Joga Rao came to receive the kadiyams from the Divine hands. Bhagavan told Col. Joga Rao sotto voce that he should carry on the good work with the same energy).

There should be many more karma jivis and karma yogis like Joga Rao in Bharat in the coming years. Everyone should become a karma yogi. That Karma gets transformed into Dharma. That Karma will sanctify human life.

Bharat is not a poor country

It is the duty of everyone to cultivate faith in the Divine, get immersed in Karmayoga and divinise his life. No Bharatiya should forget the sacredness of Bharat. Bharat is not at all a poor country. It is because this fact is not realised that the country is riddled with strife and disorder. Failing to distinguish between what is transient and what is permanent, people are ruining their lives in the pursuit of fleeting pleasures. For the sake of trivial and momentary benefits, people are sacrificing what is of lasting value. At the time of attaining freedom, only 13 percent of the population was considered backward. This percentage has gone on increasing over the years and today it is 80 percent! In five or six years, it may become cent percent! This is not proper at all. Bharat is not made up of backward classes. For the sake of some petty concessions such classifications are being made. Foreign countries are regarding Bharat as a poverty-stricken country. Embodiments of Divine Love! Remember Bharat is a land of plenty. No country is so well endowed with resources as Bharat. Why, then, should we call ourselves a poor nation? Nor is that all. In the fields of education and medicine, we have to develop the spirit of sacrifice.

Make education available free for all

You all know how many students lost their lives (by self-immolation) a month ago. What. is the reason? It was a protest against the system of reservation

on a communal basis. We must seek to promote a system which will make education available freely to all. Education must be for the sake of learning. When that happens, these problems will not arise among students. Here we have today the President of India, the Chief Minister and the Governor of Andhra Pradesh and other eminent persons. In the sphere of education, if we do not create new classifications like 'backward' and 'forward' and establish a system of free education for all, without distinctions of rich or poor, the nation will make striking progress. We are wasting crores of rupees. If we ensure the right kind of future for our children, the nation will benefit immensely. Every spiritual organization should also provide free education. It is well known that the Tirupati Devasthanam has plenty of funds. Why should not the authorities there offer free education? How many crores are being wasted? It is because education is not free, not one of the students in the Devasthanam educational institutions cares to visit the temple. How can devotion grow? In the name of the Lord free education and medical relief should be provided.

The aim of 100-crore hospital project

With this object in view, we decided yesterday to establish a big hospital here. Many persons appealed to me to set up the hospital in an urban centre. There are many medical institutions run as a business in several cities. When any educational or medical institution is established, the sole aim is to make a business of it. There are few who are ready to set up such institutions to provide free facilities for the poor. Therefore, from the start we decided to set up a hundred-crore hospital near Prashanthi Nilayam itself. Even as higher education is free here, "Higher medicine" also will be free. People spend some lakhs to get heart surgery done in the U.S. What is the plight of the poor? Who looks after them? If they go to the cities, they will not get even coloured water (mixtures). Recognising this fact, we have launched this big hospital project. Whether it is heart bypass operation, or a kidney transplant, or a lung operation or brain surgery, everything will be done free. This has been decided upon from the very starting of the project. The hospital will be opened on November 22, 1991. No one can understand Sai Sankalpa (workings of the mind). Thought and action are simultaneous like the light and sound that come out when a gun is fired. Hence it is not easy for

everyone to understand Sai's resolve.

The Sathya Sai saga

Embodiments of Divine Love! Do not regard what I am going to say as an exaggeration. There is not a trace of self-interest in Me. Whatever I do is only for the sake of others. I do not regard you as others. All of you are My own people. Such an all-encompassing feeling cannot be found anywhere in the world. Have you seen anywhere else an organization which has grown so stupendously in fifty years?

In the case of earlier avatars, their fame grew only long after their passing. In the case of the present avatar, in His own life-time, a university, a big hospital, an aerodrome and many other things have been established for the benefit of the villagers and many more will follow in the years ahead. Many persons have doubts as to how all these are being accomplished. The advent (of this avatar) took place 64 years ago. All these years, this hand has not been stretched at any time to seek anything from anyone. I have not asked anyone. I will never ask anyone and there will never be an occasion for it. How then are these things happening? For any good work, there is no impediment in Bharat. When you want to do any good work wholeheartedly, money flows in torrents. The narrow-minded who undertake any work will never be satisfied. They cannot understand the actions of those who are large-hearted and broad-minded. Embodiments of Divine Love! I do not expect anything from you. Only, develop love within you. Regard all mankind with fraternal feelings. Recognize all as the children of God. Bear no ill-will or hatred towards anyone. Do not hurt anyone's feelings. Only such a large-hearted attitude will confer on you limitless bliss. If you are celebrating Swami's birthday, this is all that I desire from you. Have unity among yourselves. Strive to revive and promote the glory of Bharat.

"I am always filled with infinite joy"

As I was coming here, some people greeted Me with the words: "Happy birthday! Happy birthday!" I am always happy. I need no "Happy" greetings.

Convey your greetings of "Happy birthday" to those who are not happy. I am filled with infinite joy. I have never had any worry at any time or place. What is the reason? All things are transient like passing clouds. Why worry about them? We should not be elated or depressed by births or deaths. We came naked into the world. When we leave, we cannot leave our address with "our" kith and kin. How can they be "our kinsfolk?" All these are worldly phenomena. As long as we live, we should spend our lives in harmony and fellow-feeling. All our difficulties can be overcome by contemplation on God. Forgetting God and immersing yourself in worldly concerns, what do you achieve? Have firm faith in God. Don't give room for differences of caste, creed and nationality. All names and forms belong to the Divine. All that you see is a manifestation of the Cosmic Form of the Lord. With firm faith in the Divine, chanting the Lord's name, redeem your lives.

35. Share in Bhagavan's love

Date: 24 November 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: 5th World Conference

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Prema (Love) transcends the three gunas (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas). It is boundless. It flows continually like an eternal light. The sages called it Atma. This divine flame of love shines in every heart. Atma and Hridaya (heart) are synonymous with Divinity. For this love, there is no distinction of 'mine' and 'thine'. It is totally free from selfinterest. Love is like the mariner's compass, which always points to the north. At any time, any place or in any circumstance love points only towards God. Hence, everyone should try to understand how the Love principle works. Love can be compared only with love. Prema (love) and Anuraga (affection) are one and the same. But affection, when it is directed towards worldly objects, gets tainted. Because of this pollution, joy and sorrow ensue. Man becomes a prey to desires and disappointments. However when Love is directed towards God, it becomes pure, selfless, enduring and divine.

Love is sweeter than nectar

Nectar is described by the scriptures as extremely sweet. But nectar nowhere approaches the sweetness of love. As against love, nectar appears insipid. The uniqueness of such love is beyond the comprehension of ordinary people. Such love arises only when you churn the ocean of bliss. Hence, all our actions should be based on Love. But in this mundane world, love assumes external forms. When pure gold is given to the goldsmith for making a jewel, he mixes copper and other metals with it and thereby its value is reduced. Likewise, because pure love is mixed with worldly attachments, it gets tainted. But when such tainted love is directed towards seva (service) it gets purified.

Failing to understand pure love, man is leading a miserable existence. A man who is neck-deep in water would still be able to speak. But the man who is wholly submerged cannot speak. Likewise a man immersed in pure love

cannot find words for his experience. It is those who are above the surface that attempt to describe it. How, then, is this divinity to be described? There is a basic means for this. Some persons have a direct vision of the Divine. Some others inspite of all their sadhana are not able to get such an experience. What is the reason? There are different kinds of japamala (rosaries). One is a Rudraksha Japamala. Another is a string of lotus seeds. There are coral japamalas. No one can see the string which runs through all the different beads. Only in a rosary made of transparent sphatika (crystal) beads can the thread be seen. In the same way, in the hearts of all the persons Brahmasutra (the subtle thread of Divinity) is present. But only in a heart filled with pure love can Divinity be perceived. It is thus not easy to recognize the Divine. Kabir asked: "How is it possible to perceive you, Oh Krishna, when you are all-pervading and are present in the minutest particle and in the mightiest object in the cosmos?" Hence, everyone should have the conviction that wherever he may render service and whomsoever he may serve, he is rendering service to God because God is omnipresent. Such service alone is true sadhana.

Love and serve all to enjoy Divine bliss

Kabir declared: "Oh Rama! I am not qualified to perform sacrifices or penances. I can attempt to realise you only through love. Please enable me to attain you through love." Therefore, through love, you must seek to serve all and enjoy Divine bliss. When you embark on service in this spirit, the whole world becomes one single home. From the earliest times, Bharat has held forth this path of service. This is not intended for Bharatiyas alone. Once the Moghul emperor Babar wrote a letter to his son, Humayun, when he ascended the throne. "Bharat is a country noted for its adoration of God. It is a magnanimous nation which gave asylum to people of all faiths. Bharatiya culture is a wonderful one. It has been nourished and cherished by Bharatiyas from times immemorial. No other faith has such an all-encompassing outlook. It is your great fortune that you are becoming the ruler of such a nation. You must be grateful all your life to God for conferring such a blessing on you. You should not impose any restrictions on the religious practices of the Bharatiyas. Do not go against Bharatiya culture. Do your duty (as a ruler).

When you want to take any vital decision consult all the great scholars of Bharat. If you do not follow this path, you will come to ruin." Such was the warning of Babar. Babar wrote that Bharatiya culture was based on equal respect for all religions. He also said that service, sacrifice, Dharma and love are the vital limbs of this culture.

The Spirit of service should come first

In the sacred culture of Bharat, the spirit of service occupies a primary place. But, alas, because true sevaks have become rare in the country, the nation is a prey to all kinds of troubles. The nation needs more sevaks. People should realise that service is the passport to leadership. Hence, in the service organizations, no distinction of high or low should be permitted and all should be invited to take part in service. In fact, human birth is intended for service. Whatever other accomplishments one may have, they are not equal to the joy to be derived from rendering selfless service. Hanuman, who was powerful, courageous and great in so many ways, was content to describe himself as a servant of Rama when he was asked in Lanka who he was. You may realise from his example what a great thing it is to be a servant of God. The Lord of all the worlds, Sri Krishna, was willing to serve as the charioteer of Arjuna. The attitude of service has always been dear to the Lord. All Sai sevaks should at the outset cultivate the feeling that they are all sparks of the Divine. Only then will they be able to render service wholeheartedly. They should also realise that no purpose will be served by worshipping God without purity of heart. This Love has also to be practised in different forms of yoga and spiritual exercises like Pranayama and Hamsa Gayatri. Exercises like Pranayama are related to the body. All such physical exercises will not lead to realisation of the Divine. The exercises will have to be done with the mind. When the body and the mind are associated in sacred service, that becomes true yoga. Through seva, the mind gets purified. The body gets sanctified. Without pure mind, the body is utterly useless. The natural state of the mind is purity. It is polluted by contacts with the world. When it is purified through love, it regains its natural state.

Love witnessed in Prashanthi Nilayam

Acquire love through love. Only through love can unity in diversity be experienced. This kind of unity through love can be witnessed only in Prasanthi Nilayam and nowhere else. There are a myriad pairs of eyes here. There may be larger gatherings elsewhere, but the eyes of the crowds there are directed in different directions. But here the eyes of everyone, young and old, men, women and children, are all turned towards only one direction. Look at anyone's face. The eyes are turned only towards Swami. What is the reason? Only love. At this Conference, many inconveniences have been experienced. But all efforts at keeping the entire area clean and maintaining order and security have been made out of love. Many tasks have been performed successfully only through love. It is love that confers peace on the heart. When one's heart is filled with peace, the whole atmosphere is filled with peace. You have been witnesses to what happened yesterday. The entire sky was covered with dark clouds. At 7-30 a.m., a heavy downpour seemed imminent. But instead of a downpour, the clouds "airconditioned" the atmosphere and left. When you have good thoughts and feelings, nature responds in the same manner.

There is an example in the Ramayana. When Rama embarked on the search for Sita, the monkeys, the rocks and many other elements in Nature came to his help. As Sai is the very embodiment of Love, the entire Nature co-operated and helped. There was no hindrance to any of the activities. Nor was that all. All elements were indeed helpful. Even this morning, would it have been possible for so many to gather early in the morning but for the cool weather? In the carrying out of sacred tasks in the service of the Divine, the Vedic prayer has indicated the spirit in which they should be done. "Let us live in amity. Let us move together. In harmony and understanding let us live together. Let us promote unity and friendliness." If only we have unity, how much joy can we experience! Unity is strength. To develop unity, you must have the consciousness of spiritual oneness.

There is nothing good or bad in service

Today our Conference has come to a close. When you go forth from here, you

must carry with you wherever you go, the sacred ideas you have gathered here. Moreover, you must interest your friends and relations in these ideas and draw them into service activities. Do not entertain any fear or embarrassment regarding your participation in service activities. Be firmly convinced that what you are doing is something sacred. In service, there is nothing good or bad. Whatever requires to be done to serve anyone, at any time, in any form, you should do without hesitation. There are in the Sathya Sai Organization lakhs of such sevaks. And it is because of that we have been able to have this prodigious Conference. There are any number of preachers in the world. There are equally numerous scholars. But there are few who practise what they preach and make others do likewise. Here alone there is a power that simultaneously preaches and practises. Whatever I say, I practise. I speak only on what I am doing. The students present here know this well. Love, love, love. I love all and I ask all to love. My greatest wealth is love. People speak about My powers and My miracles, but My Love is My greatest miracle. All should share in this love. Only then there will be oneness. All of you should take a vow continually to develop the Seva Organizations. Let all join in the activities. Treat all as the children of one God. Whomsoever you may serve, consider you are serving God. Then you will experience the Divine. You are bound to have that experience soon. Never give up the organization. Regard it as the breath of your life. This is real penance. Having this firm resolve, become exemplary leaders. This is My sole desire. Swami's love will accompany you everywhere.

36. Love: Sacrifice: Unity

Date: 25 December 1990 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love!

There is a Creator for this marvellous and beautiful cosmos, consisting of moving and unmoving objects. He is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent. He has been worshipped as God by many names and in many forms by various people.

Adored by Muslims as Allah,
As Jehovah by Christians,
As the Lotus-eyed Lord by Vaishnavites,
As Sambhu by Saivites,
The One who confers health and wealth,
Revere Him as the one Supreme Omni-Self

Unity, fellow-feeling and devotion are essential for every human being. To promote these sacred qualities in mankind, some great souls sought to establish different religions. Religion is not a restrictive concept. Religion is intended to develop the human personality and indicate the basic guide-lines for right living. Religion brings out the humanness in man and enables him to live in harmony with his fellow-men. It provides the link between the individual and the Divine. It demonstrates the unity that underlies the diversity in the world.

Love, Sacrifice, Service and Righteousness are the four limbs of Religion. Religion brings out the divine and sublime feelings in man and makes him serve society. It evokes all that is great, blissful and good in men and demonstrates the unity of mankind.

It is supremely unfortunate that Religion, which has such high and sacred objectives, is construed and practised in a narrow way and propagated as a narrow creed.

Religion is like an undercurrent that sustains the whole of humanity. The founders of religions, with a view to spreading the subtle secrets of religious faith, laid down certain rules of conduct and conveyed their message to the people.

What the religions teach

Buddhism declared that Truth and Non-violence are the basic requisites, for getting rid of delusions and achieving purity in life.

Christianity proclaimed that all are children of God and should have fraternal feelings towards each other. Jesus declared: "All are one, be alike to everyone."

According to Islam, all are members of one family in spiritual terms. It regarded prayer as the best means of ensuring peace and security in society.

Emperor Manu declared:

"Thyajeth deham Kulasyarthe; Kulam janapadascharthe"

(One must be prepared to sacrifice his body for his community and his community for the sake of the nation).

Manu's Dharmasastra laid down that the welfare of society is most important. The Upanishads declared:

"Sahasrakshas-sahasrapad"

(The Divine has a myriad eyes and a myriad feet).

All eyes are God's; all feet are His; all hands are His. This was the message of the Upanishads. In this manner, the Upanishads emphasized the oneness of humanity. For man, it is the collective concept that is fundamental and not individualism. No one can live in this world all by himself. He has to cultivate the sense of community if he wishes to live in peace and happiness.

"Sahana vavathu; sahanau bhunakthu; sahaviryam karavavahai"

(Let us live together; let us struggle together; let us grow together in joy and harmony).

This was the teaching of the Vedas.

The greatness of unity and purity

It is evident that in this way all religions propagated unity for promoting the well-being of society. The welfare of the world is bound up with the well-being of society. Self-Realisation and Self-knowledge can be got only through social involvement. Unfortunately, society today is riddled with strife, chaos and conflict.

All religions preached the greatness of spiritual purity. All religions called upon people to adhere to the path of Truth. They also taught that good qualities are essential for man. Thus, when the essence of all religions is one and the same, when all the scriptures proclaim the same truth, when the goal of all human efforts is one, where is the basis for any differences? The paths are varied, but the destination is one and the same.

It is a sign of man's degradation that in spite of these truths, he indulges in

conflicts and agitations on account of religious differences. When there is a downpour, the water that comes down is pure. The rain falls on mountains, plains, rivers, the sea and so on. According to the region through which the rain water passes, its name and form undergo changes. Because of these variations, it should not be thought that the water itself is different. Based on the teachings of the founders of different faiths, having regard to the requirements of the time and circumstance of particular countries, and keeping in view the specific needs of the people concerned, certain rules and regulations were laid down. On this account, one faith should not be considered superior and another inferior. Man's primary duty is to bear in mind these sacred truths and practise them in his life.

Truth, beauty and goodness

Truth is a fundamental principle. All religions have declared that no one should break his plighted word. That man should honour his pledges, that he should regard his words as his lifebreath, that keeping his promises is the greatest treasure - this was the primary teaching of the great Law-giver, Emperor Manu (author of the Dharmasastra).

Plato was the foremost among the disciples of Socrates. Aristotle was a disciple of Plato. Alexander was a pupil of Aristotle. Plato commended a system of polity based on morality, righteousness, mutual forbearance as conducive to the well-being of society. He attached the greatest importance to Truth, Beauty and Goodness as the basic virtues. In the Vedas these three qualities have been described as Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram. Thus, though different words are used, their essential purport is the same. Spiritual discipline consists in recognizing the unity underlying the apparent diversity and realising divinity.

Love should not be confined to human beings

Bharatiya culture has always upheld the supremacy of faith in God. Bharatiya culture was based on the view that there is nothing in the world which is not permeated by the Divine. From a stone to a diamond, from a blade of grass to

a blooming lotus, from an ant to an elephant, everything was regarded as a manifestation of the Divine. Bharatiya culture upheld the view that love should not be confined to human beings, but should be extended to all beings and objects in creation. Ignoramuses who have not understood this great truth speak disparagingly of Bharatiyas as people who worship stones, trees, serpents and the like. In the eyes of Bharatiyas, every object is a creation of God.

"Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" (All this is Brahma),
"Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat" (The cosmos is permeated by Vishnu)

- these Vedantic declarations proclaim the same truth. You cannot find in any other country a universal, all-embracing sacred declaration of this kind. This contains the broad concept of social justice. You cannot see in any other country such a sacred view. Although all religions have preached this truth of oneness and *samathvam* (equality), selfish persons, for their own ends, have interpreted them in narrow terms and promoted strife and discord between different people.

One who is merely well-versed in the scriptures cannot be called a Pandita (a person with knowledge and wisdom). Even a master of the Vedas, sastras and puranas cannot be esteemed a Pandita. Scholarship alone does not make a man a pandita. Mastery of language does not confer this title.

"Pandithah samadarsinah"
(Pandits are those who see all with an equal eye),

says the Gita. Only the person who has this vision of equality can be esteemed a pandita. Hence, we should look upon all religions with Samadrishti (equal respect). No religion should be criticised or reviled. One

should imbibe the sweet essence in all religions.

The essence of all religions is the principle of Oneness, the principle of Love. When you cultivate this principle of love, there is no room for hatred.

Conflicts are caused due to selfishness

Today religion is regarded as the cause for all the conflict, violence and bitterness in the world. But, *matham* (religion) is not the cause. *Mathulu* (Selfish minds) are responsible for all the conflict. Are there not conflicts in countries with only one religion? People in Iran and Iraq profess the same Islamic faith. What is the reason for the conflict between them? What is the reason for conflicts between countries which profess Christianity? In Bharat, all are Bharatiyas. But why is there discord amongst them? When we examine this question deeply, we find that religions are not the real reason for these conflicts. Only selfish minds are the cause. Wearing the garb of religion, these selfish persons are inciting conflicts among the people.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

If you desire to secure genuine peace in the world, you should not have any antipathy towards religion. You must hold *neethi* (morality) as superior to your *jathi* (community). You must cherish good feelings as more important than religious beliefs. *Mamatha* (mutual regard), *samatha* (equalmindedness) and *kshamatha* (forbearance) are basic qualities necessary for every human being. Only the person with these three qualities can be regarded as a true man. It is essential that everyone should cultivate these three sacred qualities.

Try to live harmoniously

How did differences arise within each religion? After the passing of the founders of these religions, the followers violated the teachings of the founders and quarrelled among themselves on account of their selfish interests. With the passage of time, schisms developed in each religion and

separate sects were formed. This is the result of individual, selfish motives and not the fault of the original founders.

People must first of all get rid of self-interest and self-centredness. They must develop love, forbearance, and compassion. They must try to live harmoniously. Only then can we claim to be lovers of peace in the nation and of the well-being of the world. Service should be the guiding principle. There should be no room for any kind of differences in rendering service. When you wish to serve society, you must be prepared to sacrifice your individual and communal interests. Such sacrifice alone will sublimate one's life. The Veda has emphatically declared that immortality can be attained only through *thyaga* (sacrifice) and not by any other means.

Christmas in Prashanthi Nilayam

To propagate this message of equal mindedness, the army of Sai devotees must prepare themselves. Today, in Prashanthi Nilayam members belonging to a variety of faiths have come together. They speak different languages. They belong to diverse traditions. But all of them have a single belief, a single ideal - that is Love. The Christmas festival is celebrated in many countries with a lot of fanfare, merriment and riotous festivities. You should note one thing. Nowhere in the world is Christmas celebrated in the manner in which it is done in Prashanthi Nilayam. People belonging to different countries, different faiths and different cultures, coming together to adore God and celebrating this festival in such a holy atmosphere cannot be found anywhere else. This should spread to all countries. Christmas is celebrated in America, Germany, Italy and other countries. But in what manner? By sumptuous eating, drinking and dancing and wasting time. Here also you indulge in drink. But what is it you are drinking? You are drinking Pure Divine Love. It is this Love that you must offer to the world.

Don't entertain religious difference of any kind. Put into practice the message you receive here and share the bliss of your experience with others. Preaching to others is not enough. Everyone should develop devotion and dedication. Life without devotion is worthless. If one does not show his

gratitude to the Creator, of what avail is his life? Should you not show some gratitude to the Lord who has provided such infinite benefits through Nature and the elements? Gratitude should be the life-breath of a man. The founders of religions experienced these truths and propagated them as ideals for mankind. You must wholeheartedly live up to these teachings. Mere reading of the Bible or reciting the Quran, repeating the Bhagavad Gita or chanting the Granth Saheb is not meritorious. The basic teachings in each of these texts have to be put into practice in daily life.

Discharging your debt is a pious obligation

Socrates used to gather young men around him and expound to them how to enquire into what is transient and what is permanent. He told them that only those who have devotion and dedication are entitled to wield power. A ruler should adhere to truth and show his gratitude to God. Puffed up with ego, he should not forget the Almighty. Those who did not relish Socrates's teachings, brought charges against him. When he was sentenced to death, he chose to die by drinking the cup of hemlock from the hands of his disciples. Before his death, he told his disciples that no one should die leaving an undischarged debt behind him. He told a disciple that he owed a cock to a friend and asked him to discharge that obligation. Prophet Mohammed, likewise, told his disciples before his passing that the money he owed to a camel driver should be paid before his end came. The discharging of one's debts is regarded as a pious obligation for every Bharatiya. Harischandra sacrificed everything for the sake of honouring his plighted word.

It will be seen that all religions have emphasised the greatness of truth, sacrifice and unity. Learn to live in love and harmony with all the members of your society. This is the basic teaching of Christianity and Islam. Guru Nanak favoured community prayers in preference to individual prayer in isolation. When all people join in unison to pray to God, their prayers will melt the heart of God. In a large gathering there must be at least one who prays with a pure heart. That prayer will reach God. Hence, devotees should take part in community bhajans. They should participate in community service and involve themselves in the life of the community. This is the noblest path.

Cultivate love. Love is the form of the Divine and God can be realised only through love. Of all the myriad names given to God, the one which is most to be cherished is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Sat represents Truth. Chit represents Jnana (wisdom). Where Sat and Chit are present, Ananda (Bliss) is bound to be present. As God is Truth, He has to be realised through Truth. As God is Jnana, He has to be realised through Jnana Marga (the path of Knowledge). As He is Ananda (Bliss), He has to be realised through bliss. Follow the path of Love and achieve the goal of Unity. Banish all differences. This is the supreme message for you today.

Do not give room for religious differences

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Wherever you may be, in whatever country, do not give room for religious differences. Do not give up religion. Get rid of differences based on religion. Adhere to your faith and your traditions. When differences between religions are given up, love will develop in you. When love grows, you can have a direct vision of God. Without love, verbal prayers are of no avail. Realise that the love that is present in everyone is common to all. It is love that has brought you all together. It is the cord of love that has bound all of you. It is the unifier, the motivator and the bringer of joy to all. Therefore, develop love.

The Sun is teaching us that when one is oneself, there will be no exhaustion or elation, no disgust or pride. The task of Surya is not something imposed from outside and taken up under compulsion. That is why it is performed systematically and smoothly. He is also exhorting mankind to use the time that He creates and allots, fully and fruitfully; not merely for living comfortably and safely, but for living a moral and elevating life, worthy of the destiny that is man's. Now you can realise why the Gita was first taught by the Lord to the Sun. He is the great Karma yogi, the great Nishkama Karma Yogi.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba