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1. Cultivate forgiveness and love

Date: 01 January 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: New Year

Charity is the ornament for the hand, Truth is the adornment for the tongue,
The scriptures are the ornaments for the ears Of what avail are other
ornaments?

EMBODIMENTS of love! Brahman is full of love and, in fact, is the embodiment of love. Your love should merge with this love. It is the only one and there is no second. It is the non-dual state. The essential nature of love is sacrifice. Under any circumstance it does not give room for hatred. It is love that brings even a person far away closer and more intimate to you. It is love that drives away the feeling of separateness and promotes the feeling of oneness. Love also raises a person from the animal to the human. Prema (Love) is the Prana (Life Force) of man and the Prana itself is Prema. One without love is like a lifeless corpse. Love is shown only to persons who are alive. No one will love a corpse. Love and life are therefore inter-related and intimately connected.

Three angles of love constitute prapatthi

In this worldly life love is manifesting in several forms such as the love between mother and son, husband and wife, and between relatives. This love based on physical relationships arises out of selfish motives and self-interest. But the love of the Divine is devoid of any trace of self-interest. It is love for the sake of love alone. This is called Bhakthi (devotion). One characteristic of this love is to give and not to receive. Secondly, love knows no fear. Thirdly, it is only for love's sake and not for selfish motive. All these three angles of love jointly cannot Prapatthi (Surrender). When one revels in this attitude of Prapatthi, one experiences the bliss of the Divine. For this, the prime requisite is Kshama (forgiveness). Only a person who has this attitude of Kshama can be considered to be endowed with sacred love. This cannot be learned from

textbooks. Not can it be acquired from preceptors not from any one else. It is to be cultivated by oneself in times of difficulties, trials and tribulations that one is forced to meet. Only when we face problems and difficulties that cause grief and misery this quality of forbearance and forgiveness has the scope for taking root. When you are confronted with problems and difficulties you should not get upset, and become victims of depression which is a sign of weakness. In such a situation, you should bring tolerance and an attitude of forgiveness into play and should not get agitated giving rise to anger, hatred and revengeful attitude. You are embodiments of strength and not weakness. Therefore, in times of despair, you should be filled with the feeling of forbearance and be ready to forgive and forget. This quality of Kshama (forgiveness) is the greatest power for a human being. If one loses this quality, he becomes demonic.

Kshama is Sathyam, Truth Kshama is Dharma, Virtue Kshama is Ahimsa, Non-Violence Kshama is Yajna, Sacrifice Kshama is Santhosha, Happiness Kshama is Dhaya, Compassion Kshama is everything in the world.

Human beings should shine with human quality

The moment one is giving up this great quality, the evil qualities of anger, hatred and jealousy creep in, making him lose his human nature itself, driving him to indulge in wicked deeds of demonic nature and even to descend to animal nature. Human beings should shine with human quality Today we find jealousy and hatred dancing like devils all over the world. People with jealousy and hatred are pursuing the wicked path and bringing ruin on themselves. The best example for this is the Kauravas in Mahabharata. The brothers Dhuryodhana and Dushshasana were the embodiments of the twin evils of hatred and jealousy. Krishna told Dharmaja, the eldest of the Pandavas, that the Kauravas who were surcharged with these evil qualities could never improve and imbibe human qualities. Karna who was embodiment of ego joined their company with Shakuni as the evil adviser adding fuel to the fire. Though Dhuryodhana and Dushshasana were born in a notable royal broils they discarded the human qualities due to jealousy and hatred and brought ruin to the family and the clan. Krishna added that

jealousy is a dangerous canker that eats at the root of the tree of life, while hatred is pest that attacks the trunk of the tree. Thus the tree of life is completely destroyed by both these pests. The Kauravas were victims of these two pests and sought their own ruin.

Without harmony in sense organs life will limp

One may raise the question as to how to get over these dangerous pests of jealousy and hatred. This is possible when you make all the sense organs function in unison. If you look at the functions of the sense organs you may notice that even if one organ stops functioning in harmony; life will be limping. When mind conceives a thought, all the organs are co-ordinating to get the thought executed. If senses do not follow thoughts, life will become miserable. When there is forbearance, all organs co-ordinate harmoniously and work in unison. Once the organs of the body like eyes, ears, limbs became jealous of the tongue, saying that they make all efforts for securing food, but the tongue enjoys this. They struck work and never sent any food. Tongue is the one that tastes the food and passes only palatable items of food inside which is converted by the internal organs into energy giving blood. The tongue does not retain it. But for this vital part played by the tongue, the other organs would not be able to function at all. When the other organs became jealous of the tongue and stopped sending food with a view to harm it, they spelt their own ruin by such action, as they could not function when there was no food and consequently no supply of energy for these organs to function. Similarly jealousy on the part of a person ultimately results in his own ruin.

Jealousy spells self-destruction

Students must have studied the drama of Shakespeare in which a character was always filled with jealousy and finally met with his own end as his own jealousy made him very weak and forlorn. Bhasmasura got a boon from Lord Shiva after doing severe penance that the person on whose head he keeps his hand will be reduced to ashes. Finally, he himself brought his end by keeping his hand on his own head. Buddha was once confronted by a woman who was

full of jealousy against Buddha because of his great popularity. When Buddha came towards her she expressed her wish to attack him with a knife and kill him, but Buddha smilingly told her "I love you too demoness." This surprised the demoness who thought nobody would love her and changed her heart instantly; she became a dove and surrendered at His Feet. Anger begets anger and jealousy begets jealousy. The only way to conquer this is the sense of unity and love. Happiness and sorrow have to be experienced in the worldly life as they are inevitable like the sunset and sunrise. You think new year will give better experiences. It is not correct. It is the mind that is responsible for pleasure and pain. If your mind is good you will find anything good. You are embodiments of the Divine which is nothing but bliss. While being so, is it not a folly on your part to say that you are suffering from pain and grieve over this? When Bhakthas pray to Bhagavan sincerely making all their actions as offering to God, they will certainly receive appropriate grace from the Divine. There are nine types of devotion. Shraavanam (listening to the glory of the Lord), Keerthanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (remembering), Padhasevanam (adoration), Vandhanam (saluting), Archanam (worshipping), Dhasyam (obedient service), Sneham (friendship) and Atmanivedanam (Self-surrender). In whichever way you offer worship, God responds in the same way. Man conveniently forgets what he gets. Without God's Grace living itself will be impossible for mankind. Even the troubles you may experience are the gifts of the Divine. When you surrender all your actions, you will surely receive His Grace. This is the purport of the Geetha Shloka "Sarvadarman Parithyajya Mamekam Sharanam Vraja."

Take whatever is given by God as good for you

Some people want to have uninterrupted happiness. When you eat at 10 a.m. you do not go on eating every hour thereafter without break. You have to give a break for the food to be digested. So also when you experience pleasure it has to be digested before you meet with another bout of such experience, just as you have to do some exercise for helping the food to digest, you have to go through the exercise of confrontation of pain after experiencing pleasure. Therefore, you must take whatever is given by God as good for you. The mother gets the pleasure of seeing her baby after going through severe

pain. If you sit in an airconditioned room throughout the 24 hours of a day you cannot feel the pleasure of it. Only when you come in after being away in the hot sun, you will enjoy the coolness of the airconditioned room. After the Mahabharatha war was over, Krishna asked Kunthi the mother of Pandavas what she wanted. She requested that she should be blessed with troubles always as only then she would be constantly remembering God as they did when they were in the forest for 12 years. She said she was not thinking of God when she was enjoying the palace life as a queen earlier.

Joy and sorrow go together

You enjoy the sweetness of chanting the Lord's name only when you are in distress. The life is a mixture of sorrow and joy just as day and night. If there is night one cannot take the well deserved rest after the day's hard toil. There is sweet juice inside the orange fruit. But it is covered by the bitter outer rind. It is the bitter rind that protects the juice inside. So we should put up with the bitter difficulties in order to enjoy real pleasure. Man is embodiment of the quality of Kshama. There is nothing in this world that you cannot achieve with this quality. We are now bidding farewell to the year '93 and welcoming '94. There is an intimate relationship between the two. We give send-off to one while we welcome the other one. In the same way we should bid farewell to bad qualities and welcome good divine qualities. You may offer all your bad qualities to God. There is nothing wrong in this. It is only God who can take them and bestow His grace on you to foster good qualities. For example, suppose you have a soiled, torn and mutilated hundred rupee currency note, no one will accept it. But, if the number is intact, the Reserve Bank will accept it and give a good note of same value in return. Similarly God only will accept the bad qualities provided they are offered with sincere devotion and repentance and shower His Grace on you. Basing on this principle the worshippers chant the manthra "Papoham, Prapakarmaham Papatmaham" etc., surrendering the sins committed by one to the Lord and praying for His pardon and Grace. Even the Christians follow this principle of surrendering to God saying, "I confess my sin and pray for redemption." Thus people offer all the bad qualities to God and receive good from Him.

True significance of Upavasa and Upasana

We have Upavasa (living in proximity) and Upasana (sitting near God), in our customs. People generally believe that Upavasa means only curtailing usual food and taking some tiffin like Chapathi, Idlis etc. This is not correct. When you live near God, you will never feel hungry just as you get away from heat and enjoy the coolness when you sit near an airconditioner. When you sit near God, your bad qualities are kept off and good thoughts and divine qualities will come to you. This is the significance of Upasana. People interpret it with distorted meanings. The year 1993 was really an eventful one with lot of dreadful happenings all over the world and naturally the people are afraid what would happen in 1994, and whether it would be a better year. It is not the particular year that is of consequence. Cultivate good thoughts, speak good words and do good deeds with the broad view that everyone in the world should be happy. Give up your evil thoughts, and evil qualities as they are the cause for all sufferings in the world. The new year has set in at the right moment, for today it is Savithi (fourth day of the lunar fortnight). It may cause people some suffering akin to the suffering of child under the stepmother. But in the wider perspective, moonshine is on the increase indicating the blossoming of the mind in a better way since moon is ruling the mind. Based on the thithi (auspicious day), we may expect this year to be better than the past year. There may be fire accidents in larger number, and certain conflicts may be there in the world. But we can hope that gradually human quality will be coming up and it will be a matter for delight, when there is transformation of mind to think that all are children of God. Such an attitude has to be developed to believe in the brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God. The bodies may be different but the soul is one. It cannot be fragmented.

Keep God as your guide and saviour

One moon is reflected in hundreds of thousands of pots. "Ekoham Bahusyam" and "Ekam Eva adhvithyeeyam" (There is only one Brahman which is reflected in the millions and billions of beings). There is no second. You place one before zero, the zero gets value. World is zero, Sun is Zero, Moon is Zero.

Actually they are all round-shaped like zero only. All these get value because of the one God behind them. God is the only Hero and all else are Zeroes. Keeping God as your guide and saviour, whatever work you may do will yield sure success. God is your only true friend. All other friends may be with you as long as you have wealth, but the moment you lose everything, the friends will desert you. God is only friend who will be ever with you. He is always with you, in you and beside you. Therefore, the only way for prosperity is to develop friendship with the Lord. Being a human, you should make others happy. This is love. Your heart is full of love. You should share it with others. When you have some edible dish, you have to eat it and serve to others. Otherwise, it will get spoiled. You must share your love with at least five persons per day. You should practise, experience and share with others this Divine Love.

On this New Year day, you should make resolve that you will start every day with love, spend the day with love, fill the day with love, and end the day with love. There should be no difference of caste, creed, colour, religion or nationality. Love knows no distinction of any kind. You must wish everyone to be happy. Fill the heart with love. The country will prosper and the world will prosper and everyone will be happy.

All religions teach one basic discipline; the removal from the mind of the blemish of egoism, of running after little joys. Every religion teaches man to fill his being with the glory of God and evict the pettiness of conceit.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. Spiritual significance of festivals

Date: 14 January 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi, Sports Meet

Like the oil latent in the thil seed, Like ghee latent in milk, Like the fragrance latent in a flower, Like the juice latent in a fruit, Like the fire latent in a faggot, The Divine is immanent in every human being. Just as the power of sight is present in the eye, The power of hearing in the ear, The sense of taste in the tongue, Divinity is present in a subtle form as Chaithanya. Remaining invisible in the visible phenomenal world, The consciousness that shines in the cosmos is the form of the Atma which sustains everything, Like the thread in a garland of gems. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Man engages himself in many exercises in his life. No single achievement satisfies man or society. Man constantly strives to accomplish more things. Today men seem to revel in dissatisfaction. Youth today do not appear to be seriously concerned about how to face a rapidly changing world. The preparedness to sacrifice everything for achieving a noble objective is hardly present among the young.

Success in life consists in recognizing the truth of one's being. But youth today do not make any effort to find the Truth that is the Eternal Reality. They are prepared to go through any amount of trouble to acquire knowledge that is related to the physical and the transient. They do not make the slightest effort to comprehend the Divine that is all-pervading, that will confer enduring bliss and make one's life meaningful and worthwhile. Festivals in Bharath have been designed to promote awareness of this truth. Their inner significance as well as their scientific basis have to be understood.

Four important transits of the Sun in a year

Every month the Sun moves into a new house in the Zodiac. This movement is called Sankramana. In a year the Sun transits twelve houses of the Zodiac. Of these movements four are important. Makara Sankramana is the first one. It relates to the entry of the Sun into Makara (Capricorn) from Dhanus (Sagittarius). The second one is Thula Sankramana the entry of the Sun into

the zodiacal sign Thula (Libra). The third is Mesha Sankramana - moving into the sign Mesha (Aries). The fourth one is Shashi Sankramana - entry into the Moon sign (Cancer). Of the four, the most important and sacred is Makara Sankramana. This marks the apparent movement of the Sun from the south to the north. The northward movement of the Sun is considered highly significant, both spiritually and scientifically. It has immense spiritual meaning. The inner meaning of the Sun's northward journey has to be properly understood. The north is represented by Himachala. Hima means snow. It is pure, untainted and extremely cool. All these endow it with the quality of Prasanthi (perfect peace). Achala means that which is steady and unshakeable. Himachala does not refer to the physical Himalayan region. It represents that which is cool, peaceful and steady. From today the Sun is said to move towards such a state. The Sun symbolises the vision of man. The northward movement of the Sun is a call to human beings to turn their vision towards that which is cool, peaceful and unchanging. This means that men should direct their vision inwards. This is the lesson taught by the Sun.

Uttharayana is an occasion to develop inward vision

Man's vision should not be confined solely to the external objects and worldly things which are transient and perishable. Man has been given this vision so that he may see the pure, sacred Divine consciousness abiding in his heart. The northward motion of the Sun - Uttharayana - is the appropriate occasion for developing this inward vision. This is the royal road for the spiritual aspirant to realise the Supreme. It is not enough, therefore, merely to recognise the northward movement of the Sun in this period. Every effort should be made to direct the vision inwards towards the pure, sacred Indwelling Self. This is the period for cherishing sacred thoughts and performing holy deeds. The sages and seers of ancient times used to wait for the arrival of the Uttharayana to embark on their sacred tasks. The great warrior, Bhishma, lay on a bed of arrows for 56 days on the battlefield, awaiting the arrival of Uttharayana as the right time for giving up the ghost. The scriptures have declared that those who pass on during the Uttharayana have no rebirth. This does not mean that one should hang himself in Uttharayana in the hope of securing freedom from rebirth! The right way to

give up one's life is to fill one's mind with holy thoughts and let the end come in the natural course. Sage Valmeeki wished to distribute the composition of hundred crore verses on the Ramayana to the denizens of the three worlds in equal measure. After this was done, only two letters remained, which were offered to people in all the worlds for recitation. The two letters spell the names of Rama, Krishna, Hari, Eesha and Sayee.

Man should abide by the laws of the Creator

This illustrates how Bharatheeyas attempted to sanctify every holy festival by dedicating themselves to the chanting of God's name and to other spiritual activities. Youths today should realise that festivals in Bharath are not intended for feasting and pompous celebration but for concentration on devotional activities. For mankind, the Sun is the most important entity in creation. When the Sun himself is proceeding northwards, why should not humanity direct its vision Godward? Men today are a prey to many troubles because their vision is diverted towards ungodly objects. Man should abide by the laws of the Creator. Otherwise humanity is doomed. Religious festivals are observed all over the world for the purpose of raising humanity to a 'higher level of consciousness and conduct.

Pushyamasa brings with it a season of joy

From this day, the Sun wears a peaceful and pleasing aspect. The nights get longer and the days become shorter. The day marks the beginning of the harvest season. As the crops are brought home, the granaries are full and joy reigns everywhere. A cool breeze blows all the time. Farmers sing with full-throated joy from their fields in the moonlight. The cold dew drops on the fields shine like garlands of gems. The chrysanthemums are in full bloom. This month, known as Pushyamasa (according to the Hindhu almanac) is noted for the peacefulness, prosperity and joy which it brings with it. Hence it is regarded with special distinction. Unless men give up their bad thoughts and actions, the month, however great in itself, will be of no avail. The observance of Uttharayana should be marked by spiritual transformation of the people and not by lavish feasting and revelry. In connection with Sankranthi, many

auspicious functions are arranged. Newly wedded bridegrooms are invited to the brides houses. Sacred bulls are taken from house to house by traditional performers who relate the Ramayana story with the bulls playing their own role in it. In this way, with songs, plays and discourses, they celebrate the festival. The songs and plays had a sacred role in the celebrations. Unfortunately today music and sports have been commercialized. There is a price for every game, whether it is cricket or football or any other game. The sacred character of the games and dramas of the past has been tainted by the money nexus. It is clear that originally sports were promoted in the interests of health and strength. People took part in games for the improvement of their physique and to provide entertainment to the public. There was a time when a musician, if invited to sing songs at a wedding in his locality, would readily oblige. But today the musician will ask, "How much will you give me for my performance?" Singers have become sinners. Their music does not confer joy on the listeners because they sing, not out of the fullness of their heart, but for the sake of money and name. This was not the case in olden days. The performers with the sacred Gangi bulls used to gather in the centre of the village and provide entertainment as the members of one large family. Little children used to join in the fun, singing songs to gather all the children to watch the performance of the bulls.

Sports should form an integral part of studies

This month witnessed the annual sports meet of our students. I don't like to comment about students elsewhere, but I do wish to say something about the accomplishments of our students. Indeed, the students participated in the sports and games with great enthusiasm. Sports form an integral part of the scheme of studies in our institutions, along with various academic subjects like Physics and Chemistry. That being the case, why does not everyone take part in them? Not only should there be participation, but there should also be an awareness of the philosophy and principles governing the sports and games. The aim in sports should not be victory by any means, fair or foul. Whoever may win, others should greet it with fraternal feelings. The rules of the game should be strictly observed. Prizes do not matter. What is important is the sense of selfsatisfaction derived from playing the game well.

Students enthusiasm in preparing for activities

Looking forward to the sports meet, the students have been enthusiastically practising for nearly a month. In other universities, sports activities are supported by grants from the U.G.C. or other agencies. In the Sathya Sai Institute, no request is made to any outside agency for funds to pay the teachers salaries or to meet medical or other expenses. Education is provided free of fees, from kindergarten to Post-graduate studies. No fees are collected for sports, library, or other amenities. Not did the Central Trust or the College offer any funds for the sports programme. We do not desire to proclaim to the world the spirit of sacrifice and dedication of our students. We only express our own satisfaction with the performance of our students. In the preparations for the sports and cultural meet, all the expenses have been met by teachers and students out of their voluntary contributions. No one knows, not even the Registrar or the Vice-Chancellor, how this is done. It is rare to find students of such an exemplary nature, who cooperate with each other in a spirit of brotherhood. In all the three campuses - Brindavan, Ananthapur and Prasanthi Nilayam - the dresses and other materials required for their programmes were got from their own resources.

Kudos to primary school children

Special mention should be made about what the Primary School did. If we make an earnest and truthful enquiry into what is happening all over the world, we will find that where women are in charge of schools, everything is done well. The children are well taught. The teachers concentrate on their duties, without diversions of any kind. Consequently, whatever they do is pleasing to the eyes, the ears and the heart. Look at the way the teachers look after little children in the primary school. You all know what trouble it is to look after a single child in the home. You can well imagine what an ordeal it is to look after eleven hundred young children. There are a large number of children between the ages of four and five. What discipline they displayed in their performances in sports! Their eating, dressing and other activities are regulated from a tender age. The world outside does not know what is being

done here. Even many in Prasanthi Nilayam do not know the facts. The teachers, the Warden and the Principal are engaged in teaching work all during the day They work all through the night, preparing the dresses for the sports events. All the dresses worn by the children were stitched at night by the teachers. My heart melts when I look at these teachers. Their eyes are swollen owing to sleepless work. When you see the children perform in their multicoloured dresses, the scene looks like a glorious garden blooming with flowers of all kinds. When the children come out in formation for their mass drill, you cannot see who is directing them. Every movement of theirs is regulated by themselves in perfect co-ordination and harmony Imagine what it costs to make these dresses. They are made from expensive material and each dress differs from another. All these are made by the teachers themselves. The children feel that Svami has given them free education and they must show their gratitude to Svami at least once a year by such activities, whatever sacrifice they may call for.

Decline of discipline as students go to high schools

This disciplined training which the children receive in the primary school sustains them till they go to the Higher Secondary School. There, the temperature (the degree of enthusiasm among them) goes down a little. What is the reason? The encouragement and inspiration they receive get reduced. But, even in the Secondary School the teachers work day and night. Thereby, they maintain the standards built up in the primary school. But by the time the students reach the Institute (University) level, the "temperature falls below normal." The discipline deteriorates. The reason is the failure of the Institute authorities to take sustained interest in the students. The teachers are mainly concerned with carrying out their teaching duties; and are not concerned about the welfare of the students as a whole. They do not try to preserve what had been built up earlier.

Nevertheless, most students who have come from the primary school adhere to the discipline they have learnt and by and large, continue to observe it. It is association with students who have come from outside which erodes their discipline and spoils them. It is the duty of every Institute teacher to see that

the discipline inculcated in the primary school is maintained in the Institute. Look at the manner in which pay-scales are being laid down by the University Grants Commission and the manner in which dearness allowance is being fixed. This is contributing to the rise in prices. Employees in general should consider whether they are doing work commensurate with the emoluments they are receiving. There is more emphasis on rights than on responsibilities. If people in general discharge their duties properly, the country would make remarkable progress.

Students devotion to Svami

From this new year people should develop a broad outlook and consider the interests of others as much as of their own. In our Institute the situation is very good. Our teachers and students mingle with each other in friendly spirit and the teachers coach the lagging students outside their class hours. Whether you believe it or not, there is no University in India which maintains such discipline and educational standards as our Institute. We do not publicize our performance. For instance, in the last All-India Xth standard examinations, our students got high ranks at the national level.

The student who came first in the country received an award from the Centre. Svami asked him to go to Delhi to receive the award from the President. But the boy said: "I did not study for getting the President's or the Prime Minister's award. I studied to earn the approbation of Svami. Svami's satisfaction is enough for me. That is the biggest award." Such is the high-minded attitude of our students.

The children's hearts are pure, unsullied and sacred. If these qualities are praised, it is not for proclaiming them to the public, but to infuse enthusiasm in the students and encourage them to do better. When some students came to Svami and exclaimed: "I have secured 'O' grade," Svami told them, "The 'O' grade has been given for your studies, not to you. It is only when you put into practice what you have studied that the 'O' grade or degree will belong to you." Many persons attach the degrees to their names. The degree will be really theirs, and not to the studies they made, when they act upto that

knowledge represented by the degrees. One is a hero in learning and a zero in practice. What is required is the application of the knowledge acquired in daily life. Only then the degrees really become yours.

Knowledge and service should go together

What service are you able to render to the rural population by your knowledge? You are concerned more about your careers and the earnings which may be got from your degrees. This should not be the main concern of students to-day. You must consider how far your knowledge is of benefit to society. You must ensure the peace and security of society. That should be the principal aim of the students. Students! You have done well in your studies as well as in sports. What Svami wants from you is that you should conduct yourselves when you go out into the outside world in the same spirit of discipline and devotion, which you display here. You must realise that it is only in our Institute that the students have the opportunity to have continuous contact with the Chancellor Himself from day to day. You must make good use of it and hold yourselves forth as models for the world.

Spiritual practice is as important as education

Students should realise that spiritual practice is as important as secular education. You should realise how much you owe to God for all the benefits you enjoy in life which are really gifts from God, including the air you breathe and the water you drink. Should you not be grateful to God for all this? Without gratitude, life is meaningless. Be loving even towards those who harm you. Control your anger and other evil tendencies. I conclude My discourse with an advice to the Principals and Wardens of all the four campuses to coordinate their sports programmes in the coming years to avoid duplication of the same items. I call upon all teachers and the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar to involve themselves in sports activities and encourage the students in every way.

As regards the Sathya Sai Super-Speciality Hospital, there is no hospital like it anywhere in the world, giving totally free treatment. Not are there doctors

rendering free and dedicated service as in our hospital. Svami is spending crores on the hospital. The money is spent with scrupulous care. Not a naya paisa is wasted. Many devotees, seeing the good work that is being done, are sending voluntary donations according to their capacity. All this money is being spent by the Sathya Sai Trust with unexcelled concern for economy and integrity. Unscrupulous and envious traducers are levelling charges of misuse of the funds by the Trust. This is a grievous sin. Svami examines every bill, minutely before making payment. The doctors for their part are looking after the patients in a spirit of dedication and team work. This spirit of unity should prevail in all our Sai institutions and organizations. The character of their work reflects on Svami's name.

The human body, so filled with skills, so capable of great adventures, is a gift from God to each of you, It has to be used as a raft on which you can cross this never calm sea of change that lies between birth and death, bondage and liberation. Pursue nobler ends; have grander ideals; sensory pleasures are trinkets, trivialities.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3. Food, the heart and the mind

Date: **21 January 1994** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **International Cardiovascular Conference**

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Atma! It is essential to observe the principle of moderation in food habits, work and sleep. The Buddha, preached the same principle of moderation to his disciples. "Be always moderate, never indulge in excess," proclaimed the Buddha. In fact, moderation is the royal road to happiness.

The modern man, who flouts the principle of moderation in every aspect of life, endangers his health and well-being. The food consumed by man should be proper, pure and wholesome. But nowadays people eat whatever they get and wherever they get it, and thereby spoil their health. Food plays a major role in the preservation of health. Care should be taken to see that the food consumed does not have much fat content, for the fats consumed in large quantity are detrimental not only to one's physical health but also to one's mental health. Meat and alcoholic drinks take a heavy toll on man's health, causing many a disease in him.

The efficacy of cardiac surgery

This international symposium has for its theme "The Heart and its Ailments." Also on the agenda are discussion about the preventive aspects of diseases as well as the treatment and cure of heart diseases. Questions are raised about the efficacy of Cardiac Surgery and its related effects. The heart is a special organ in the human system. It is pulsating ceaselessly unlike the other organs. Heart surgery is a highly complex operation, as the surgery has to be performed without arresting the heartbeat. At the same time the functioning of the lungs has also to be kept up. Medical men of genius invented the heart-lung machine in 1956 to carry on the activities of the heart as well as the lung during cardiac operations. The machine takes upon itself the function of the heart and the lung ensuring purification of the blood and keeping up circulation of the blood. The details of the functioning of this heart-lung

machine are well known to the doctors. The tube which is fitted connecting the heart and the machine should be airtight and should be fixed with great care, for any lapse in the fitting of the tube may cause air bubbles which will endanger the patient's life. Unfailing power supply is most crucial for the success of the operation as any interruption in power supply will stall the operation. Therefore we have to depend on generators for ensuring uninterrupted power supply during the course of the operation.

Prevention is better than cure

Questions are posed whether heart surgery ensures a permanent cure. Cardiac surgery is helpful in so far as it enables the patient to carry on his daily activities and lead a normal life. But, it is wrong to conclude that surgery is the only way of curing heart diseases. Some of the diseases can be cured even by medicine. In my opinion, it is the primary responsibility of every individual to prevent becoming a victim of heart disease by regulating his food and other habits. Prevention is better than cure. There will be little room for cardiac ailments if one's food habits are properly controlled and regulated.

Research has revealed that non-vegetarian and alcoholic addicts are more prone to heart ailments than vegetarians. If the vegetarian food that is consumed should be a balanced and wholesome, it should contain liberal doses of vitamin C and vitamin E, which are available in vegetables like carrots. The presence of these vitamins prevents heart ailments in a large measure. Every effort should be made to keep the human body healthy. Health is wealth. Wealth cannot be enjoyed by a person with poor health. Health is more important because it gives physical and mental strength to a person.

Birds and beasts do not suffer from cardiac and digestive ailments to which man is prone. The cause can be traced to the natural food which the animals consume, unlike human beings who consume all sorts of fried and cooked items of food being slaves to the palate. Modern man consumes many artificial foodstuffs and a variety of alcoholic drinks, which are injurious to health. Birds and beasts lead natural lives, while the artificial life styles of

man today takes a heavy toll of his health. When man observes moderation in diet he can be saved from most diseases. In the entire range of God's creation man alone is endowed with the faculty of discrimination. It is this faculty which sets him apart from animals. Man should exercise his discretion and discrimination in regard to food habits.

How to bring about mental transformation?

The progress of the universe is bound up with the progress of man. Any amount of development in the areas of scientific, economic and social spheres will not be of much use without mental transformation. How can we bring about this transformation? It is by restraining passions and emotions. Since mental tension is most detrimental to man's health, man should learn the art of controlling his passions and emotions, which cause stresses and strains. It is also essential to keep our mind serene and peaceful while eating food. We should not indulge in discussion of topics which will cause agitation and excitement and disturb our mental peace while we are taking food. Mental tension is responsible for ill health. We should also avoid viewing TV, video, etc., while eating food, as they may cause mental disturbances. Today there is pollution in everything such as the air we breathe, the water we drink, the sounds that are jarring to the ears and the food we consume. Because of this all round pollution, man's health is affected. Apart from this, man's mind is also polluted making him susceptible to diseases. Man should make an earnest endeavour to lead a serene and pure life. He should realise the truth that troubles and turmoils are temporary, like passing clouds. There is no scope for agitations to arise if one realises this truth. One who realises this truth will not allow his mind to be swayed by the passions of anger, cruelty, etc. Passions yield only temporary satisfaction, but cause serious emotional disturbances. Hence, it is imperative on the part of man not to yield to any unbecoming passions while taking food. The observance of the three P's, namely, purity, patience, and perseverance, vouchsafes permanent happiness and good health free from diseases.

The three root causes of cardiac ailments

It is not only unbridled passion which damages the health of man. Living on ill-gotten money also causes ill-health to some extent. Living on earnings got by unjust means causes many unknown diseases to take root in us. It is said; As is the food, so is the mind; As is the mind, so are the thoughts; As are the thoughts, so is the conduct; As is the conduct, so is the health. Man today is a victim of worry. What is the cause of this worry? Lack of contentment is the cause. The rich man is not contented is spire of the accumulation of wealth. Worry causes hurry and both together bring about ill-health. So, Worry, Hurry and Curry (fatty foods) are the root causes of cardiac ailments.

The consumption of large quantities of fat is the cause of cardiovascular diseases. Doctors advise against the consumption of fatty food stuffs which cause increase in weight resulting in susceptibility to cardiac diseases. The presence of toxins also inflicts equal damage. So one should eat in moderate quantity the right type of food and avoid intoxicating drinks to safeguard his health. The intake of food should be gradually reduced after crossing 50 years. Some people consume food indiscriminately unmindful of the caloric content of the food taken. For example, people eat pappads (thin circular flour preparations) fried in oil which have high calorie content. People also consume ghee which is also a high calorie food. A single pappad has 100-150 calories of energy. A single spoon of ghee has 100 calories of energy. Even when the quantity of food intake is reduced, reductions in the calorie content is not ensured. There are some doctors who advise their patients against smoking and addiction to alcohol, but they themselves smoke and drink! This gap between precept and practice raises doubts in the minds of patients about the value of the medical advice given by them. Such doctors, who do not observe harmony in speech and practice, mislead the patients.

Triple qualities that a doctor should reflect

Embodiments of Love! You have high degrees such as MD, FRCS, MRCP, etc., as a result of your sincere striving. But it is a mistake to think that these degrees are yours. In fact these degrees have been conferred on you for your study, skill, memory power and knowledge. These degrees will truly belong to you on the day you apply this knowledge in practice. Unfortunately, in this

modern age all activities and professions are tainted by a commercial outlook and greed for earning money. Even the sacred profession of a doctor has degenerated into a business. A doctor should reflect the triple qualities of sacrifice, love and compassion in treating his patients. But some doctors do not have these virtues at all! They misuse their divine and sacred knowledge for the sake of money. Money is important, but we must exercise discretion in this regard. You can charge the correct fees from the wealthy, but be kind and considerate while dealing with the poor. Try to give free treatment to the poor. You should not treat a millionaire and a pauper alike! It is said, "Vaidhyo Narayano Harihi" (The doctor is equal to God). As the Lord has love and compassion, doctors too should have these divine virtues of the Lord. A doctor devoid of these virtues is not a doctor at all! Doctors should win the hearts of the patients by talking to them with compassion and concern. Diseases are half cured when the doctors talk to the patients with love and consideration. The sick and the diseased respond favourably to your treatment once you start talking to them with love and with a smiling face. But, if you wear a grim expression, the patient loses heart. Doctors should administer the injection of courage and encouragement as calcium administered to the weak. It is essential that doctors should have the sterling virtues of love and compassion. Compassion is more important than money.

Svami's example to lead a healthy life

How to lead a healthy life? Let Me tell you about My own health. I am sixty eight years old, and believe it or not, My weight since my 14th year of age has been constant at 108 pounds only. It never went up to 109 pounds not came down to 107. You can lead a healthy life once you achieve this kind of balance and moderation. I never eat even a little bit excess. I observe the principle of moderation whether I am invited for food by a millionaire or a pauper. Even though I am sixty eight years, My body is in perfect trim! I do not suffer from aches and My heart is as sound as a rock. There is none who can work like Me and exert himself as much as I do! The secret of My sound health is My regulated food habits. This is how one has to achieve the unity and harmony of food, head and God.

Spirit of sacrifice of some doctors

The foremost quality of a doctor is the spirit of sacrifice. We have organized this Symposium to explore ways and means of rendering help to the sick and the diseased. We have in India some doctors who lead lives of sacrifice like Dr. Venugopal, Dr. Bhan and Dr. Sampath from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. These doctors, who are committed to the cause of service, come to our hospital without even charging the travelling expenses. Their sacrifice contributes to the sanctity, of this Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. There is an atmosphere of infective joy and good cheer which pervades our hospital. Everybody is in smiles - the patients, their relatives the nurses, the doctors, everyone! They are all like flowers in full bloom. It is not the same with most other hospitals.

The essential mark of a hospital is its cleanliness. Clean toilets are an index of the cleanliness of a hospital. Our hospital is as clean as a mirror, as it is kept always clean by the team of dedicated seva dhal volunteers who relentlessly work hard with a spirit of service and sacrifice. It is not the service of one, but the service of many which has contributed to the rapid development of our hospital! A single flower cannot make a garland. All the people - the patients, doctors, workers - work in a spirit of harmony and unity. It is this sense of unity which contributes to purity and this purity of heart secures divinity. This hospital is a direct proof of the presence of purity, unity and divinity It is our fond. hope that such purity, unity and divinity should prevail in other hospitals as well! Unity is most essential in all fields of activity-moral, scientific and spiritual. Purity. vanishes in the absence of unity. Divinity will be absent when there is no purity and unity. Humanity will be healthier if doctors resolve to offer two days of free treatment every week.

You can work wonders with purity of heart

Some doctors wonder how we are able to give free treatment, free operations and free meals to our patients. To be frank, there should not be any room for wonder in tiffs regard. You can work wonders with purity of heart. Any work which is started with purity of heart is bound to succeed. Money flows if your

work is suffused with love and sacrifice. People will provide munificent funds to support any noble endeavour. The land of Bharath has been a Punya Bhuumi (Land of sanctity), Thyaga Bhuumi (Land of Sacrifice), Yoga Bhuumi (Land of spiritual austerities), and Karma Bhuumi (Land of righteous action). In fact, there is no dearth of money in India. Doctors should first and foremost have faith in spirituality. Faith in spirituality alone can bring about transformation of humanity. Spirituality is not the celebration of festivals, not even performance of rituals. True spirituality calls for earnest endeavour to eradicate all animal qualities. Today humanity has descended to such a degrading level that men see evil in good, without trying to see good in evil. Doctors who are eminent experts in their fields have come to participate in the symposium here. Sincere efforts should be made to put your great talents and skill to good use. The climes and countries from which you have come may be different. But all of you have one thing in common noble feelings. These noble feelings are God's gift to man and come by Divine grace. Treat the patients as your own kith and kin. The help which you extend in good faith to your patients will be rewarded in course of time. It is My wish and blessing that you will have useful discussions and come out with ways and means of helping mankind to be free from heart ailments.

Discourse at the inaugural session of the Second International Symposium on Cardio-vascular Diseases

Foster love, live in love, spread love - that is the spiritual exercise which will yield the maximum benefit.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4. Bhagavaan's valedictory address

Date: **23 January 1994** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Valedictory function of the Second International Symposium Cardiovascular Diseases**

EMINENT DOCTORS! Though axed and maimed by man, trees selflessly serve him by providing him fruits and shade. Rivers carry water to quench man's thirst and to cleanse his body. The cow also selflessly serves man by providing milk. Man should in the first place realize the truth that he has been endowed with the human body not for seeking his selfish ends but for serving others. The wealth one possesses, the scientific skill one acquires, and the medical knowledge one obtains, are all secured from society. Since man has gained his wealth, knowledge and expertise from society, he has to discharge his debt to society by doing some good in return to it.

The ideal of gratitude has been handed down the ages as a heritage in India. A man without this supreme virtue of gratitude is worse than a cruel animal. Having received his wealth, education and skills from society, if he does not serve the cause of society, his health, education and skills are a sheer waste. It is only by serving society that these acquire splendour and significance. The relationship that should exist between wealth and deeds can be likened to the relationship between rain water and the ocean. Water from the sea, vaporized by the sun, forms clouds in the sky which in turn come down as rain on earth. The rain water flows as streams which in due course form mighty rivers and merge in the ocean. Similarly, actions should spring up as clouds from the ocean of righteousness and confer the rain drops of love. The drops of love gather into rivers and merge in the ocean, which is the source.

Inventions of new machines in the field of surgery

Tremendous advances have been made in the field of medicine and surgery. The invention of the heart-lung machine marked a notable break-through in the field of surgery. The heart-lung machine is like a mother. It performs the functions of the heart and the lung without being aware of it. It does not know in the least that it is pumping, purifying and circulating blood. Like the

mother, it is innocent and pure. The mother is unaware that she is sustaining the baby in her womb by nourishing it with substance from her own body. It is a wonder how the different organs of the body discharge their different functions. The heart performs its functions with utmost regularity and rhythm. It pumps the blood at the right time in the right direction. The lungs and digestive system in the body perform their functions perfectly. In this marvellous creation of God, the functioning of the body is the most wondrous. Doctors are aware of this wonderful mystery called the body. Endowed with this knowledge of the human system, doctors perform their services. They should have the awareness that the service which they render to others is nothing but service done unto themselves.

Team-work of the organs in the body

Doctors today have access to the latest techniques and most sophisticated instruments, unknown to their ancestors. At one time, by-pass surgery was breathtaking, but now it has become a familiar exercise. Doctors will come out with techniques far better than by-pass surgery in the years to come. The valves in the human heart perform most intricate and complex activities. All the organs in the body perform their functions with the finest coordination, displaying most astonishing unity, harmony and adjustment. The body and the mind work in perfect unison in the human system. Man should first understand the impact of the mind and the body on human life. The mind exercises supreme influence not only on the health of the body but on the universe too. Man is not merely a human being, he is the embodiment of Divinity. All acts of service done to others are to be treated as service rendered to God.

Every physician should try to trace the cause of diseases. Doctors should make earnest efforts to educate the people in health and hygiene and impress on patients how food habits and lifestyles affect life and cause diseases. No treatment ensures permanent cure. All treatments enable people to prolong their lives. But realizing the impermanence of life, every person should strive to sanctify his life. All techniques like by-pass surgery are only artificial means of extending the life span of man. They bear testimony

to the doctor's skills. It must be remembered that the heart is the creation of God while art is the creation of man. There is, however, close connection between God's creation and man's

It is activity that confers authority

It is the duty of the doctors to use their knowledge in the service of mankind. Take for example, Dr. Bhan. As he has been conducting operations sincerely in our hospital, he has improved his surgical skill and has become a senior doctor. Acquisition of skill and perfection in one's work delights one's self. Education gains significance only when it is rested on the touch-stone of practice.

One must continuously work. It is activity that confers authority. A doctor gains happiness in proportion to the work he puts in. The genuine doctor is one who delights in work. For example, Dr. Venugopal performs ten to twelve operations even without taking coffee. When I ask him to take coffee or take rest he says, "No, Svami. This work is a source of happiness to me." It is his dedication to work and continuous application which have made him a master of his job. It is the application of his knowledge that lends joy to him. Our hospital is an infant of two years. Within a short span of time it has become one of the best hospitals. It owes its magnificent success to the coordinated efforts of doctors, nurses, technicians and volunteers. The group from Hyderabad led by Dr. Somaraju also does tremendous work. The team from Delhi does invaluable work. Unity is strength. The doctors in our hospital perform their work with all love and sincerity. They work without any publicity. The other day Dr. Somaraju performed an intricate operation by making use of balloon technique. Our doctors are making an earnest effort to cure heart ailments without resorting to operation. One single flower cannot make a garland. Many flowers are needed to make a garland. It requires a thread also. All these doctors are like the fragrant flowers and Bhagavan is the invisible thread which binds them together into a beautiful garland. Since all the doctors and staff work together, this hospital has earned great name and fame. The love of doctors and love of Svami have contributed to its tremendous success.

Faith in God is essential for all actions

Without faith in God, we cannot perform any action. It is Divinity which pervades everywhere and works nonstop. All these doctors have been working as instruments. It is the infectious joy of doctors and patients which makes the hospital unique. Dr. Rajiv Mahajan, though not a doctor, exerts himself for the sake of the hospital. He comes three days in a month to check the requirements of the hospital. It is his love which prompts him to do all this for the hospital. Though we ourselves sometimes do not bother about the hospital, he himself comes and does the needful.

This hospital owes its progress to the sacrifice and service of many. But the most important of all is the will of God. Dr. Neelam Desai said, "The wings with you and the bodies with us." All these doctors work with the feeling that they are instruments in the hands of the Divine. Many of you, while glorifying this hospital say "Your Hospital." This hospital belongs to all of us. It is "Our Hospital!" You are always welcome to this Hospital!

What exactly is your duty? Let Me summarise it for you. First, tend your parents with love, reverence and gratitude. Second, speak the truth and act virtuously. Third, whenever you have a few moments to spare, repeat the Name of the Lord, with the Form in your mind. Fourth, never indulge in talking ill of others or try to discover faults in others. And, finally, do not cause pain to others, in any form.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5. Disease and Divinity

Date: 29 January 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: National Symposium on Flourosis

You can reset a tree to make it grow straight, You can straighten even a granite stone. But you cannot easily set right The mind and rid of its vagaries. IT IS the mind that makes a man. The mind is a conglomeration of thoughts. Thoughts are reflected in actions. The consequences of actions are being experienced as pleasure and pain by man. Therefore, man should have noble thoughts, which will spur him to good and noble activity.

Each one should enquire for whose sake he or she is living. When any one poses this question to oneself, the answer is: "I am living for myself and not for others." He justifies his answer by saying: "I am eating to appease my own hunger. I am taking medicine to cure my illness. It cannot be cured by anyone else taking the medicine." When two persons are sleeping in the same cot, they do not get the same dreams but have different dreams. Basing on these facts man feels that he is living for himself. Later on, when he grows up he seeks a job on the ground that he has a family to look after and support. The same person, who once said he was living for himself, later on pleads that he is living for his family. When invited by a friend to accompany him to Bangalore for an interesting sports event, he says that he has to attend his office and cannot rake leave and hence he is unable to accompany him. He thus cites his duty as a reason for his inability to enjoy the sports. But when his wife or child is sick and in a hospital he rakes leave even on loss of pay and goes to attend on them. The same person, when he is hungry and just sirs for taking his dinner, leaves the meal served on the table and rushes our when he hears that his son or daughter is involved in an accident. Even hunger is forgotten. The person, who was proclaiming that he was living for himself only, now starts caring for his wife and children.

Man's own welfare is bound with that of society

When the village is in the grip of an epidemic like cholera or plague, the same

person comes forward to do his best to combat the spread of the disease, because this may affect his own family too as they are part and parcel of the village. Thus man is born in society and grows in society. It is the bounden duty of every one to feel that his own welfare is bound up with the welfare of all others in society. Today we are faced with the menace of fluorosis. If you enquire into this, we come to know that the problem of fluorests is not only prevalent in India but in many other countries of the world such as Indonesia, Germany, China, USA, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Libya. Because of their affluence people in countries like U.S.A, are able to take steps to overcome the evil effects of this disease to a great extent.

The ill-effects of polluted drinking water

Many diseases are caused by drinking water that is polluted. If there is only one milligram of fluoride in a litre of water, it is safe. The presence of more than one mg in a litre may cause sickness. If there is 4 or 5 mg of fluoride in a litre, it affects the teeth and is positively injurious to health. In several States in India such as Himachal Pradesh, Utthar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan this disease is widely prevalent. In Andhra Pradesh, it is rampant in Shrikakulm, Guntur, Medhak, Nalgonda and Mahboobnagar districts. Recently it has been found to be prevalent in Kudapa, Kurnuul, Ananthapur and other places. It is found on investigation that the fluoride content in water varies from 15 mg to 10.5 mg in these areas. The fluoride that is contained in underground water sources varies from 1 mg to 300 mg per litre. In many areas they have established Aluminum factories. Fluoride is made use of to a large extent in these factories. This mixes with air and the polluted air affects the people. It enters the stronger portions of the body such as bones and teeth. A portion of this fluoride is excreted through urine. The ignorant are not aware of the serious damage caused by this fluoride to their health. Fluorosis causes pain in the joints and affects the bones at the back, etc. The affected persons stiffer from severe pain in joints. Some germs such as bacteria also enter the system and cause a lot of damage to the human body. Viruses also cause diseases. Polluted food also accounts for the spread of these disease carrying germs. Meat, fish, black and red salt, black coffee and tea also cause spread of fluorosis and aggravate it further. To the extent possible you should

change your food habits. Chewing betel leaves also causes tooth decay. Certain drugs sold in the market also aggravate this disease.

Ways and means to combat fluorosis

There are some types of antidotes that can be consumed with food to prevent fluorosis. You should take sour things like lime, orange and tamarind in greater quantity. You can also take more of tomatoes, potatoes and vegetables with Vitamin C. You should also take more of carrots to build the bones. Intake of such food items in a liberal measure will help to combat the incidence of fluorosis. Besides these, consuming of green leaves which contain a lot of calcium will also help in keeping off fluorosis. Food is the main factor in maintaining good health or causing diseases.

In these days, though there is plenty of milk, curd and other dairy products available with the villagers in their houses, they are in the habit of selling these products and buying some useless and harmful things that affect their health adversely. Consuming of curd will help one to a great extent to combat the onset of this disease. Modern youth take black tea and coffee (without milk though milk is available) thereby inviting the disease. Some take black and brownish salt which contains more fluoride. They should avoid this and take only white purified salt. It is only by propagating such practical preventive steps that Government can play its role in checking the spread of this disease.

Thought of Divine essential to combat disease

Apart from the exercise of such care in the food consumed there should be also Dhaiva chinthana (contemplation of the Divine). Because people don't drink of God they are subjected to a lot of misery. Without divine thought, man is harbouring two bad qualities. One is he hides many defects and evil qualities within himself. The other is he magnifies even minor faults in others. Because of such evil qualities among human beings diseases are also on the increase. Only when human effort is there, with God's grace, good results will be attained. The Sanskrith saying declares "Dharmartha Kama Mokshanam

Arogyam Muulam Uthamam" (For the attainment of the four Purusharthas, good health is essential). Even though one may have all the wealth in the world, if his health is impaired, he is miserable. Good health is the most important acquisition one should aspire for. Whether a villager or an urban dweller, good health is very essential for anyone leading a meaningful life. To enjoy good health, one should have water, food and air free from pollution. Now all these three are polluted. Apart from these, man's mind is also polluted. To purify the mind, one should nurture noble and sacred thoughts of service to others. One who does not hurt anybody and has feelings of love and compassion to fellow beings is the greatest of men. That is why sage Vyasa gave the essence of the Eighteen Puranas he composed in the aphorism; "Help ever, hurt never." You should make every effort to avoid harming others in any circumstance. You are only hurting yourself when you hurt others. You should not use harsh words. When you develop human values, you can be free from diseases and even enjoy good health with God's Grace.

To enjoy good health you need control in living

Once a poet gave the reason for the-lack of Dharma in this country in the form of a song. Because there are people who have bad thought, hear bad things through their ears, see bad things with their eyes, spread scandals through their tongue, there is no Dharma (righteousness) and no peace. Human beings are embodiments of Divinity. They should live up to their Divine nature and not descend to the level of animals. We should see that by our action no harm is caused to society. The incidence of fluorosis is a threat to public health and affects society in general. But, there are easy methods to combat this menace by taking preventive steps. In our Institute, Venkateshvara Rao has done detailed studies in this field and has found out methods of conducting numerous experiments to control this disease. This can be controlled to a great extent by using sour things such as tamarind, lime, oranges, etc., in larger quantities in food. The villagers should consume lot of greens which contain a good amount of iron. The Government has embarked upon measures to control the spread of this disease. The people, for their part, should co-operate with the government. Then the results will be

good. My opinion is that it is not good enough to provide for treatment for this disease. It is prevalent even in the affluent countries like U.S.A. With all their money power they are not able to eradicate the disease. So you should realise that God's grace is very essential. Along with medicine you need discipline and control in living. Pure engineers, officers, scientists have all gathered here. They must educate the people to avoid meat eating, which causes fluorosis. Water and other substances coming from underground have a lot of fluoride content. In some places there is as much as 8 to 10 mg of fluoride in one litre of water.

Divine vibrations in Prasanthi Nilayam

Whether you believe it or not, in Prasanthi Nilayam, which is situated in Ananthapur District, there is no trace of fluorosis. Here, there is a lot of Divine vibrations as all good and sacred things are being done. People of different religions and Nationalities are assembling here in thousands. But all are engaged in divine activities and constant remembrance of God. Here there is not more than 1 or 1.5 mg of fluoride in a litre of water. The Collector of Ananthapur district is making a lot of effort to combat this disease. It is necessary to combine divine activities along with the other steps to combat this disease. Discourse at the inauguration of the National Symposium on methods to combat Fluorosis, held

You love the God in all beings and the God in all beings responds with Love.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. Start propagation in primary school

Date: 30 January 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: National Symposium on Fluorosis

Engaging oneself in arduous penance, Undertaking pilgrimages to sacred shrines, Dipping in holy waters, mastering the scriptures, Meditating on the Lord, and going in raptures, All these can seldom help a human To cross the ocean of life mundane. Service to mankind is the only course of action Which will help one to achieve liberation. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Atma! It is the duty of Everyone born as a human being to engage himself in service to mankind, which is the only sure way to cross the ocean of worldly life and attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Be the master of your body and mind

The human body is a prey to 386 types of diseases. These are caused by three main factors that are related to physical health. They are Vatha (Wind), Piththa (Bile) and Sleshma (Phlegm). Wind is the cause of 80 diseases, while 84 diseases arise from bile disorders and 222 from phlegm. For the disease of fluorosis, which is the subject of this symposium, bile and phlegm are the causes. While there are curative medicines for several diseases, there are some diseases which are incurable.

In this world, there are several types of people- those who are affluent, those who are virtuous, men of mighty strength and valour, persons of high literary attainments, eminent scientists. But persons engaging themselves in spiritual pursuits are very rare to come across. Such noble persons, who dwell in the realm of the spirit instead of the sphere of mundane affairs, will not be affected by any diseases of the body or the mind. They will be leading a noble and pure life. The body is a physical entity while the mind is subtle. There is another which is invisible and eludes the grasp of the ordinary individual. That is the Atma. The attempt to comprehend the unknown and invisible Atma is called Atmanveshana. When one makes efforts to realise the sweetness of the Atma he is said to taste it - Atmapreethi. When he experiences the bliss of

the Atma he is said to be an Atma Jnani (a Realised Soul). The body, the mind, the intellect and the senses are only your instruments. Then, the question arises, "Who are you?" The answer is: "You are the master who makes use of these instruments." When you refer to "My mind, my body, my senses," do you enquire "Who am I?" Though you may go on saying, "This is my body; my mind, etc.," which implies that you are different from these, yet you identify yourself with the body and become a slave of the senses instead of being their master. You are the Atma, the Supreme Master. You have the potential to realise this through the discriminating power of the intellect. Once you recognise this truth, you will also understand human nature, which is a combination of values like Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence and you will then rid your animal qualities. Then you will also realise the cause of diseases and the method of curing them.

Adharam and aharam are essential for life

The disease of fluorosis is caused by contamination in food, air and water. Earth, fire and ether are the elements constituting the essential basis for human life. Water and air constitute the Prana Shakthi (Life-Force). While ether, earth and fire are the muula (basis), water and air are essential for Prana (life). Water and air provide the food for the sustenance of life. While the three elements earth, fire and ether form the Adharam (support), the other two - water and air form the Aharam (food). You get water and air from the Bhuumi (earth). It is the nature of Brahman and is all powerful. The astronauts who travel in space-ships to explore space have to carry water and air with them from the earth for their survival. They have to take things from the earth while they travel to the moon to bring a few samples from the moon. Billions of dollars are spent on these exercises.

What we should attempt really is to explore the means of cultivation of human values and realising the divinity within everyone. The sun shines with intense heat and wonderful effulgence. By the help of the sun's light, the moon shines. It cannot shine by itself, as it has no effulgence of its own. The relationship between the Buddhi (intellect) and the mind is also similar to this. The mind is made up of thoughts and fancies. It is dangerous to act as a slave

of the mind. By following the mind, one becomes a Pashu (an animal). By following the Buddhi, one becomes a Pashupathi, the Lord of all living beings.

Pay the greatest attention to the health of children

You have discussed in great detail the incidence of fluorosis and the application of technology to combat this evil disease as a natural outcome of food and other habits. The main constituents of the body should be in proper balance. Any imbalance will affect the health and curtail the life span. The longevity of a person depends on regulation of food and other habits. Affluent and educated people are able to have recourse to advanced methods of treatment for curing diseases. What about the poor and illiterate villagers? They suffer a lot owing to fluorosis which affects the movement of the joints and weakens the bones. In some cases, hands and legs are bent out of shape and the victims can hardly do their daily work. A large percentage of people in Bharath are unable to work efficiently because of various physical disabilities. The greatest attention should be paid to the health of the young who have many years of life before them. We have to start investigation in the primary schools where children are susceptible to attacks by diseases such as fluorosis. You have to devise methods simple enough to be followed by them. One simple method is to mix lime and sand in water in a Proper proportion and stir it up slowly taking 15 minutes for the process. Allow it to settle down for 5 to 6 hours. You will see the sand deposit at the bottom. If this is done before bed-time, the water will be clear by the next morning. The water thus purified can be used with good effect. You can make use of alum also for this purpose. It is very difficult to get pure alum today. Everything is adulterated: milk, oil and other edible products. If you can teach the primary school children now about cultivation of honesty and good habits, the future of the country and the world will be better as these children are going to be the leaders, pleaders and teachers of the Regarding the treatment of fluorosis, you should think of long-term solution also along with temporary remedial measures. Yellow and black spots on the skins are signs of a person suffering from fluorosis. Doctors should concentrate on fluorosis-affected children as they may grow weak because of the disease.

Ensure effective implementation of decisions taken

This disease is prevalent in all countries, but in certain districts of some States of Bharath it is rampant. The decisions you have taken at this Conference should not be confined to the paper on which they are recorded. You should implement them and achieve results. What is needed is the will to work with a spirit of dedication in order to relieve the distress of the suffering masses. The participants who spoke earlier, expressed their gratitude for the hospitality and good food and comfortable accommodation provided for them here. We do have our share in looking after the welfare of society. We can be happy only when society is happy. You should go from village to village and take concrete steps to eradicate this disease of fluorosis, offer simple methods of treatment to those already affected and teach the villagers the preventive precautionary measures like regulation of diet and drinking only boiled water etc. Our Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of A.P are extending enthusiastic support for this programme. You should also act with full initiative and interest so that you can achieve the desired results. Having taken up a job you should not slacken your effort in completing it, facing any obstacles you may come across boldly.

Work done for the welfare of the world is thapas (true penance), while work done for selfish purpose is thamas (useless). Bharath is a Punyabhumi (sacred land). It is a Yogabhumi (Land of sense control) and Karmabhumi (Land of action). The present generation of people want **to** make it a Bhogabhumi (Land of worldly pleasures). That is why people suffer from diseases.

Secret of Svami's youthful radiance

Students here expressed their wonder as to how Svami, though 68 years old, looks young and is energetic. Really the reason for this is the imbibing of the three P's by Me, namely, purity, patience, and perseverance. If you follow these three tenets you will not be afflicted by any disease.

I am keeping Myself active day in and day out for the sake of the welfare of

the world and no disease has affected this body at any time during the past 68 years. My teeth are quite healthy and strong even at this age. I can masticate anything. My eye sight is very sharp. People get short sight or long sight even at the age of forty and wear glasses. I take no medicine as no disease affects Me. Even while I take on the diseases of others. I pretend as though I take the pill offered by doctors to satisfy them. But actually I throw it away and sip only water. I eat the barest minimum to sustain the body. I take just one small oil-free dry chapathi. I have never taken sweets even from my childhood. Doctors say you need vitamins and proteins for maintaining bodily health. I am always in Anandha (bliss) and that is the vitamin and protein for Me. Happiness lies in union with God. When you think of God you are bound to be happy.

Chant prayers even while taking medicine

You must tell people to think of God and chant prayers even while they take' medicine for the disease. This must be taught mainly to school children so that they may grow up as good enlightened children.

There was a professor in Kashi who used to do prayer and worship at the altar in his house. An atheist friend of his who visited him remarked that he was wasting so much time in prayer. The professor replied that the prayer to God will never go waste. He added: "I waste only one hour per day, even if according to you God does not exist. But if God exists, you are wasting your whole life-time." You have to educate the children to consume lime and tamarind in larger measure, explaining the reason for this, in order to prevent the affliction by the disease of fluorosis. Teach them by songs in popular tunes so that it will have an effective appeal. Even atheists who deny God will be moved by music as human beings. When you pray to God too, it is more effective if you express the prayer in musical tunes as this will touch and move the heart. God loves music. He is termed as Ganapriya and Ganalola (one who loves music and revels in music). Inspire the children to sing Bhajans. They will attain happiness and satisfaction.

Living becomes a glorious experience only when it is sweetened by Tolerance and Love. Willingness to compromise with others ways of living and cooperation in common tasks, make living happy and fruitful. Certain modes of behaviour have been laid down and proved beneficial by centuries of practice. These have to be observed with modifications to suit the conditions of today.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Imbibe Bhaarith's ideals

Date: 03 February 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Do not be conceited because of your studies, What is great about your learning? The hall-mark of education is humility, Realising that what is yet to be learnt is limitless. Shed your ignorance and pride, O witless one! Learn to be humble in pursuing knowledge. STUDENTS! TEACHERS! Today men have invented many types of machinery by their experiments and researches. Science has been pursued with relentless energy. But, being unable to experience peace or happiness, they have become strangers to both. Despite his acquiring the sacred human birth, man is immersed in the pursuit of transient worldly pleasures, forgetting his Divine destiny. Concentrating on scientific investigations, inventing all kinds of mechanical gadgets, man is content to lead a proud but purposeless life. To understand the basic purpose of life, you do not have the right type of education now. Mere worldly knowledge will not promote the cultivation of spiritual and moral values. This secular knowledge does not serve to reach you the secret of human life. If one wishes to bring down a tree he must attack the roots and not the branches. For man to attain his real destination and secure enduring peace and joy secular education is of no avail.

Greatness of Bharatheeya culture

Bharatheeyas in ancient times lived a life of morality and integrity and enjoyed peace and happiness. Students today, disregarding morality and their obligations to society, go astray and ruin their lives. Bharatheeyas have forgotten the essentials of their culture, based on morality and integrity. They cast away their great scriptural texts as trash. Western nations took these, learnt the profound truths contained in them and developed their technical and military skills and sought to give them back to Bharatheeyas. The weapons developed in Germany were based on the texts of the Atharvana Veda. Bharatheeyas today are cultivating a passion for exotic things, ignoring what is good in their own heritage. Students should strive to understand what is great in their own Bharatheeya culture and heritage. Ignoring their own

cultural greatness, Bharatheeyas are going abroad to earn money as an end in itself. No doubt money is necessary, but, is it necessary to go abroad for this purpose? This cannot be the true aim of education. Students should recognise the truth of the saying, "The mother and the Motherland are greater than heaven itself." One who does not believe in this cannot be called a truly educated person. Making use of the education acquired by you, you should serve your country in such a way that it stands out as an example to the world. What perversity is it to neglect one's own house and try to beautify your neighbour's house? Students today are losing their love for the Motherland. The man who cannot proclaim that "This is my native land, this is my mother tongue," is a living corpse. He is no human being at all. People are giving up love for the Motherland and fostering greed for money.

Selfless unity is the message of the Vedas

From ancient times, Bharath has held forth to the world great ideals. Spreading the message of spirituality to many countries, Bharath proclaimed the message-Lokas samasthas Sukhino Bhavanthu (May all people be happy). Bharath never permitted the concept of selfishness to prevail. Selfless unity was the message proclaimed in the Vedas: "Let us live together; let us grow together. Let us share our knowledge with others, let us live in harmony and friendliness." Today in Bharath there is no spirit of harmony. In ancient India, students, together with secular knowledge, sought spiritual knowledge, regardless of the sacrifices involved, and led purposeful lives. They conducted many investigations to comprehend the mysteries of creation and the secret of human existence. All experiments today are based on yantras (mechanical devices). But in the olden days, they conducted the enquires with the help of mantras. The truths which they discovered, they proclaimed to the world in strident terms.

"Less speech, more happiness"

It is the duty of Bharatheeyas today to learn something about the great spiritual heritage of Bharath. The ancients practised economy in speech. Students today tend to be loquacious. Excessive speech harms the mind.

"Less speech, more happiness." The ancients practised three kinds of silent penance to control speech. The first was Vakmounam (silence of the tongue, the second one was Mario-mounam (silence of the mind) and the third was Maha-mounam (Supreme Silence). Vak mounam (Silence in speech) meant confining one's speech to the limit and the needs of the occasion. By this discipline, excessive talk was avoided. As a result, the power of their speech was conserved and enhanced. Discipline in speech also resulted in truthfulness. Truth speaking served to purify their thoughts. By this means they acquired Siddhi (Realisation of truth) and Jnanasiddhi (acquisition of the highest' wisdom). Therefore purity in speech is vital. It has to be achieved by restraint in speech. Then, there is Mario mounam (Silence of the mind). The mind is a bundle of thoughts and fancies. These thoughts have to be reduced gradually. When thoughts are reduced, the mind naturally comes under control, like a clock that is unwound. When the activity of the mind is reduced, the power of the Atma manifests itself. As a consequence Buddhi (intellect) becomes more active than the senses. When control of speech and control of the mind have been achieved, the state of Maha-mounam (Supreme Silence) is easily realised. Students should strive to reach the third stage by the disciplines of the first two stages.

I have often told you, "Talk less and study more." What is meant by "study?" Study or education is the process of divinising one's Self. This calls for the cultivation of values in education. This "Education (is) for life." "Life (is) for love." "Love for man." "Man is for Service." "Service for Society." "Society for nation." "Nation for world." "World for peace." Education is for life and not merely for earning a living. This life is for love. Love is God. Live in love. This love should be for all mankind. Today this love is absent. What passes for love is something artificial. Love should emanate from the heart.

Man exists for service

What is the purpose of being a man? It is not for leading an animal existence. Man exists for service. Every man has to return to society by way of service what he has received from it. That service should be rendered selflessly in a spirit of sacrifice. Service is thereby converted to spirituality.

Service is to society Society exists for the nation. The nation is a limb of the world. The world should strive for peace. That is the meaning of the benediction Om Shanthi! Shanthi! Shanthi! Why is this Shanthi (Peace) uttered only three times and not more times or less times? This refers to peace in three aspects. Adhibhouthika (physical), Adhyathmika (mental) and Adhidhaivika (spiritual). Peace relating to the body, the mind and the Self are invoked by this benediction. Such profound meanings are implicit in the pronouncements of Bharath's sages.

All these are designed to remind us of God and make us seek God-realisation. People imagine that God is an entity far beyond human conception and grasp. That is not true. Divinity is nearer than anything else in the world. If you consider It remote, It will appear distant, but if you regard It as near It will be near. As long as man is conscious of the body, he cannot comprehend a formless Divinity. Hence, he must adore the Divine in human form. If, for instance, a buffalo or a fish thinks of God they can conceive of God only as a huge buffalo or a gigantic, fish. Man also conceives the form of God only in terms of his own human form and attributes. As long as man is attached to the body, he cannot realise God. Only when he sheds his attachment, can he experience the Divine.

Man must worship God in human form

As long as he thinks of his body and has human form, man cannot think of something which transcends form and body That is the reason why God incarnates in human form. To man He must appear as human. Only then relationships can be established between the Divine and human beings. If God comes in any other form, man cannot fix his thoughts on Him. Hence, you have to conceive of God in human form and worship Him. Shri Rama, who was the embodiment of Dharma, incarnated in human form. Because the Avathars (Divine advents) come in human form, human beings could have intimate relationships with them and adore them. The Vedas declared that the Vedaham etham Purusham Mahantham Adithyavarnam thamasah parasthath (The Supreme Divine, with the effulgence of the sun, dwells beyond darkness). God is beyond Thamas (darkness). He is not outside. He is

within you. You are He. While He is himself the Divine, man seeks the Divine in a forest or through meditation. What folly is this? The Vedas deride man for failing to see God even while seeing Him. "Pashyannapi na pashyanthi muudho" (The fool fails to see even while he is seeing). When God comes in human form, moves freely amongst you, talks with you, jokes with you, eats with you and drinks with you, even then you fail to recognise God. You pursue your own types of devotion. This is not correct. You must worship the living Divinity, not the lifeless. Honour every human being who is in human form. See the Divine in every man.

Develop control of senses first

The cosmos is Vishnu svarupam (a manifestation of the Divine). God is with you, in you, and around you. He is not elsewhere. Develop this firm conviction. It is a piece of self-deception to imagine that God is somewhere away from you. At the outset, you have to develop control of your senses. This control in the form of mounam (silence) influences your speech. Jayadheva went into rapture over the power of the tongue to chant sweetly the name of the Lord. Sweetness in speech makes all the differences between one man and another. The supreme greatness of the Lord's name has been commended in the present Age of Kali (Discord). It is an abuse of the tongue to make it recite anything other than God's name.

Students should realise the supremacy of Atma-Vidhya (the culture of the Self). It is the key to all knowledge. What is the use of all the secular knowledge which is concerned with acquiring a mess of potage?

The great scientist, Einstein, regretted in his last years that his scientific findings had led to the production of the atom bomb. Sir Isac Newton ended his life in a hospital with a mental affliction. True knowledge must secure mental peace and enduring joy For this contemplation of God is essential.

Academic education has its uses. But it is not the summom-bonum of life. Adore the light of the Divine within you. Each student is like a petromax light. This light has to be kept burning by pumping kerosene from time to time. The

soot has to be cleaned by a pin now and then. It needs kerosene. Only when all the three are present, the light will burn brightly. Your Shraddha (earnest devotion) is the kerosene. Your love is the pin. Your spirit of sacrifice is the pump. In addition, a wick is needed. That wick is the Lord's name. With the aid of the three accessories, when you chant the Lord's name, your devotion will shine effulgently. This effulgence is the light of the Divine within you. You proceed from peacelessness to Paramjyothi (the light divine in the heart) through peace and an illumined mind. The heart of everyone is the seat of the Lord. In this way students should cultivate the discriminating faculty through education, cherish humility and foster faith in the Divine. This is the royal road to realisation of oneness with the Divine.

in the sports and athletic events held for Secondary School students.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8. Sathya and Dharma : bases of life

Date: 10 March 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

Truth is God.

Truth is the source of wealth and prosperity.

It is, again, Truth that sustains virtue in the world.

WHERE there is Truth, there dwells Lakshmi, the goddess of Prosperity. Truth is changeless and eternal. It is vital to man's life. If, in the midst of misery and suffering in the world, there is goodness, it is because of Truth. In ancient times, Kings ruled over their kingdom on the basis of Truth. They were ready to sacrifice everything, even their lives, for upholding Truth. Harishchandra stands as the supreme example. He sacrificed his wife, son and the entire kingdom for the sake of truth. He even offered to perform the low task of a caretaker in a crematorium. Because of lack of Truth, there is no peace and security in the world.

Truth always protects a nation. Today we are not adhering to this Truth. Man is dallying with untruth forsaking the path of virtue. He is ruining his life immersed in falsehood and unrighteous actions. Man has lost respect for Truth today. Love is a forgotten value. People deem righteousness as an irrelevance in the modern context. Everything that man does today, all his plans and projects are self-centered. Even spirituality is practised to gain social recognition, more ostentatious than genuine. All human activities are based on attachment and hatred. Selfishness and jealousy dominate the modern man. Human values have lost their hold and hence there is no peace and security.

Truth is the foundation to build man's character

There can be no peace when mankind forgets *Adhara* (the base) and

concentrates on the *adheya* (superstructure). Man is swayed by the delusion that life is meant only to enjoy; eat, drink, and sleep. With this view, he acquires wealth and increases his possessions. He makes no attempt to understand the purpose for which he is born in this world. Though he attempts to pursue right action, he fails because of his greed, ambition, lust and other temptations. Truth is the foundation on which the character of man is built. When Truth is not respected, the mansion of life collapses like a building that has a weak foundation. Man does not realise this and pursues a life of sensuous pleasures, ignoring Truth which is the Life Force that sustains his entire being.

This is due to the delusion caused by *Maya*. Maya is a strange phenomenon that envelops man in spite of all his precautions. It is like a shadow that chases one wherever he may be. The shadow's size depends very much upon the direction of the light. When one moves towards the light and comes under it, the shadow disappears and there is no Maya - only Truth remains.

All worldly knowledge and physical prowess are of no avail if there is no spiritual strength. This is illustrated by the lives of Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha in the Bhagavatham, of Karna and the Kauravas in the Mahabharatha and of Ravana in the Ramayana. It is doubtless essential to acquire skills of various kinds. But the purpose for which they are to be used should also be understood. They have to be used for the realisation of the four main goals of human life, described compendiously as the *Purusharthas*. The four goals are: *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (desire) and *Moksha* (liberation).

Understand the true meaning of Purusha

First of all, the term Purusha has to be properly understood. In-common parlance, it is applied to a male person. But Purusha refers to the Jeeva, the Atma, Prana and the Brahman. It is the *Chaithanya* (awareness or consciousness) in every being, as distinct from *Prakrithi*, which represents the body (and the phenomenal universe). Prakrithi represents the feminine principle, while consciousness represents the male aspect. Purusha, however,

applies to both man and woman.

Among the Purusharthas, Dharma comes first. Dharma is commonly understood as referring to activities like going on pilgrimages, offering charity and performing good acts. But these activities serve only to provide mental satisfaction. They do not lead to the Divine. Dharma is the very embodiment of Divinity. All efforts to achieve oneness with the Divine can alone be termed Dharma.

Artha is ordinarily understood as referring to wealth. But what is the wealth that one should really seek? It is the wealth of Jnana, the wealth of *Brahma Jnana* (Divine Wisdom). Pursuit of this knowledge is the real quest for wealth, not the pursuit of money and possessions. It is Jnana Aishvarya that one must seek. Only that knowledge will lead man to the goal of human life.

Kama is not mere fulfillment of worldly desires, which are transient and momentary. The desire should be for Moksha, which means liberation from attachment to all worldly objects and cultivating attachment to the Divine.

Attachment to the worldly objects is moha. The renunciation of these attachments, which is Kshaya, leads to *Moha-Kshaya* or *Moksha*.

The speciality of Shivarathri

It is in order to rid oneself of evil tendencies that sacred days like Shivarathri are observed. Nights follow days and days succeed nights. This is an everyday occurrence. What is the speciality of Shivarathri? As the night precedes the New Moon day, it will be pitch dark everywhere outside, the heart will be filled with bright effulgence on this sacred night. Light represents *mangalam* (auspiciousness). That is why the day is observed as Shivarathri. When Hanuman set the entire city ablaze, the darkness of the night gave place to brilliant light. But at the same time the heart of Ravana was full of darkness. The significance of Shivarathri is that though the entire world is dark outside, if one keeps his heart filled with divine thoughts, he will be filled with effulgence. Every year in the month of Magha, the fourteenth day of the

dark fortnight at midnight, when worldly objects concentrate on the Divine, they experience Divine feelings. This is associated with the Shivalingam that transforms the minds of the people.

The proper way of observing Shivarathri

The significance of keeping awake on this night is that it should be spent in the awareness of the Divine. It is necessary to keep awake the whole night with the name of the Divine on one's tongue without stop. But people tend to give more importance to the aspect of merely keeping awake throughout the night in some form or another. They spend the night in witnessing cinema shows or indulging in other unholy activities such as playing cards. This is not the proper way of observing Shivarathri. It is also customary to observe *upavasa* (fasting) by giving up their usual food. The proper way to spend the night is by constant remembrance of *Atmathathva* (the Inner-Self) by chanting the Lord's Name. To proceed on one's life's journey successfully is like driving a car safely. This requires right understanding of how to handle the switch, the steering wheel, the gears and the brakes. One should also follow the Vedhic Maxim;

"Sathyam Vadha, Dharmam Chara."

It is an injunction to man to speak the Truth and practise right conduct.

This will help him to be true to his conscience.

Those who practise Dharma and speak the Truth always in course of time become Divine. They merge in the Divine like the river merging with the ocean. Truth and Righteousness are at the root of human existence. No one should think it is difficult to adhere to truth. In fact it is easier to speak the truth while it needs a lot of cleverness to tell an untruth and sustain it.

Dharma, Karma and Marma

Dharma (Righteousness) is the root of human life. Its importance is not realised just as people looking at the fruit of a tree do not recognise the roots from which the tree and its fruits derive their sustenance. The tree has grown because of the water supplied at its root. People want to enjoy the fruits of life without watering the roots of Dharma which nourish the tree of life. The Bhagavath Geetha speaks about *atma-phala-thyaga* (renouncing the fruits of one's action). *Karma* is the tree and the fruit you see in the tree is the result of your karma. What is it based upon? That is the *marma* (the secret). It is the unseen Dharma that is the secret. It is the unseen root of the tree. The meaning of this marma is that we should follow Dharma which determines the nature of the fruit borne by the tree. To use another analogy, the mansion of life may be said to have four walls. These are dharma, karma, marma and janma (birth). Brahma is based on these four walls. The *Brahmathathva* (the Brahman principle) is within you. There is no need to search for it outside. All that is needed is to make an enquiry about the Self within.

How the Divine works

Take for instance, your body How many realise the miraculous working of innumerable organs within the body? Everyone must understand how organs like the heart function and see that no excessive strain is placed upon them. The heart and the lungs are discharging their functions ceaselessly and regularly with rhythmic precision. All the limbs are doing their functions in an orderly way; apparently up to the Geetha dictum, "Karmanyeva adhikarasthe" (You are entitled only to perform your duty). They are carrying out their respective duties without any concern for their rewards. This is, indeed, the lesson to be learnt from the ways of Nature. It has been well said - Nature is the best teacher. Look at the way the heart functions; the impure blood comes through one channel, it is purified and is pumped to all parts of the body through another channel. This is the process by which the body is kept hale and healthy. This is how the Divine works. Whatever doctors may say, the wonderful activities going on within the body ceaselessly and automatically are manifestations of the power of the Divine.

Students today do not realise the inner meaning of some of the rituals practised by the ancients and preserved even today. They have been prescribed for specific purposes and are full of meaning. They are intended to achieve physical, mental and spiritual purity. In this context I would like to relate an incident. The grandson of an old gentleman watched the latter sipping a few drops of water from the palm after uttering a manthra. The lad, who was dipping his pen from time to time in an ink bottle to do his homework, asked his grandfather why he was drinking the water in small droplets instead of drinking it all in one gulp. The grandfather asked him why he was dipping his pen into the ink bottle frequently instead of pouring the ink on the paper! Just as the pen has to be dipped for writing a few words at a time the water has to be taken with the words of the manthra each time. The lad learnt a good lesson from the example of his action.

You must have full faith in God and should not let anyone disturb it. If an atheist asks you why you believe in God you should firmly tell him that it is none of his business to question the devotee's belief which is purely a personal matter between him and his God. No one has a right to question another man's belief.

Have firm faith in God

God's ways may not be easy to comprehend. But whatever God does is only out of His boundless love to help the devotees. Some do not understand this and attribute partiality to God. This is due to ignorance. True devotees should not give room for such doubts and undermine their faith in God. They should always try to strive to seek the One Divine in the many. Scientists employ all kinds of *yant ras* (instruments) and declare that they have not found God anywhere. But the saints, seeing God with the inner vision, see Him everywhere. They use the power of manthra to see God; they see God through the lens of Love.

When some people ask you, "Can you show God?" you should reply: "You are God; that is why you are able to talk and act." There is nothing in the world other than God! To know divinity you should know the sacredness within you.

Keeping salt in your mouth, you can't taste anything that is sweet. Only when you cast off the salt and wash your mouth can you experience the taste of the sweet. Worldly desires are like salt. Discard them. Then you can realise Divinity. You must shed the evil qualities of jealousy, hatred and anger and divest yourself of the ego. If you rectify your defects and cleanse your heart, you can realise Sathya and Dharma as the basis of your life. This is the Life Principle and with this you can lead a purposeful life. Making use of your intelligence as whip and the mind as the yoke, you can drive the chariot of life, with the senses as horses, to the right destination.

Adhere to your Dharma

You must understand your Dharma without which you cannot act in the right manner. You are the master with the intellect and mind as instruments. The mind is compared to the moon and the intellect to the sun. When the sky is clouded in the rainy season, the moon is hidden from our view by dark clouds. Similarly, our minds may be clouded by bad thoughts. But when the discriminating intellect represented by the sun comes into play, you have the effulgence that dispels the darkness. Man is unlike animals whose vertebral column is horizontal. Man can stand erect on his two legs. Animals have instincts but no mind or intellect. Man has the power to discriminate between good and bad.

Embodiments of Love!

Purify your minds. Shed jealousy and hatred. Chanting God's name will confer bliss on you. You are unable to understand the inner feelings of joy that the chanting of the Divine name will yield. You should identify yourself with the Divine vibrations which are like electric waves creating boundless energy.

"Be human"

The word "human" is full of significance:

'H' stands for "high human values."

'U' stands for "understanding of human sanctity."

'M' stands for being "mindful of one's duty."

'A' stands for "anandham."

'N' stands for the "name of God."

So you should go on chanting the name of God repeatedly throughout this precious night.

Try and prevent the five sins that the body commits: Killing, Adultery, Theft, Drinking intoxicants, and the Eating of flesh. It is great help for the highest life, if these are kept, as far away as possible.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. God realisation by sense-control

Date: 11 March 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

EMBODIMENTS of love! Wherever the mind wanders, there the three worlds can be experienced. Where the mind is absent, there is total void. The Bharatheeya festivals have been designed to control the tendencies of the mind. It is easy to correct the mind. A tree can be made to grow straight, A stone can be shorn of its roughness, But can one straighten the mind? Everyone should understand the rationale of every sacred festival. Today is the holy day of Shivarathri. Based on the science of numerology, every letter of the alphabet has a specific numerical value. "Si" bears the value 4. "Va" has the value of 5, "Ra", a value of 2. When the values of the three are combined, you have a total of 11. This eleven represents the eleven Rudhras (negative or destructive principles).

Role of Rudhras in man's life

What are the functions of these Rudhras? The Rudhras, in association with the Buddhi (the intellect), enter the minds of people and cause them various types of difficulties and worries. Of these difficulties, three types are predominant in the world. They are Adhibhouthika, Adhyathmika and Adhidhaivika. Adhibhouthika refers to difficulties caused by the five elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) and the five sheaths (relating to food, life, mind, awareness and bliss). These sufferings are caused by human beings, animals, insects or other creatures. Adhyathmika refers to sufferings caused by Vatha (wind), Pittha (bile), and Kapha (phlegm). Adhidhaivika refers to the calamities caused to man by floods and drought, storms and earthquakes and similar natural disasters. Of all the sufferings endured by human beings, those coming under these three categories are most prominent. All other calamities are encompassed by these three. For all these sufferings the eleven Rudhras are the cause. The whole world is permeated by the Rudhras. Only Adhidhaivika has an element of security. Whatever emanates from Rudhra is fraught with fear. The name itself testifies to the dangerous power implicit in it. Rudhram means that which induces fear. The eleven Rudhras

are dreadful in form. These dreadful entities enter the minds of human beings and subject them to all kinds of afflictions.

Rudhras and sense-control

The Mahashivarathri festival has been designed to subdue these eleven Rudhras. This means that by the control of the senses the Rudhras can be controlled. Indhriya nigraha (control of the senses) is not that easy. Even if evil impulses coming from external sources are controlled, those arising from within cannot be easily controlled. But if, at least on one night out of 365 days in a year, the senses are brought under control, then peace may be experienced and the quest for liberation may be initiated. When the entire night is dedicated to the chanting of the Lord's name, one's mind, speech and senses all get centred on God. This is itself a form of sense control. At least on one day in a year all our thoughts and words should be centred on God. When this is done, people can realise the Supreme as described in the terms, Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram. Socrates' disciple, Plato, used the terms, Truth, Goodness and Beauty to describe this state of Self-Realisation. In the experience of oneness with the Divine, there is Shanthi (peace) Chith (Awareness) and Anandha (Bliss). The Lord is experienced as Sath-Chith-Anandha. What is Sath? Sath is Being, that which is eternally present. This means that even when an object is not there, its qualities are present. In Vedantik parlance, these qualities are described as Asthi, Bhatthi and Priyam (principles of Existence, Cognisability and Utility). Asthi means existence (the quality of permanence). This may be likened, say, to sugar. In whatever manner sugar may be used, by dissolving it in water or mixing it with flour, its quality of sweetness remains. It is Sath in the sense that it has the unchanging quality of sweetness. Chith is awareness (or consciousness). Chith is like water. When Sath (as sugar) is combined with Chith (as water) you have neither sugar nor water, but syrup. The combination of Sath and Chith results in Anandha (Bliss). When the unchanging, eternal Divinity unites with the changing and inert Prakrithi (Nature), you have Anandha. The significance of Mahashivarathri is that it is an auspicious occasion when Sath-Chith-Anandha can be experienced.

While the Rudhras are inflicting sufferings on mankind in various ways, by the control of the senses, if humans turn their minds towards God and devote themselves to Godly pursuits, they will find their path to Moksha (liberation). Moksha means getting rid of Moha (the delusions relating to the physical).

In this manner every one has to understand the true significance of sacred festivals like Shivarathri.

Importance of Shivarathri

Among these festival days, Mahashivarathri is of exceptional importance. Today God is in close proximity to man. At midnight (on Shivarathri), Divine vibrations are close to every human heart. At such a time, when people are engaged in holy tasks, they get suffused with the Divine vibrations.

People should realise that there is nothing closer to them than the Divine. Even one's mother may occasionally be remote from the child, but the Divine is never far from anyone at any time. This means that everyone is Divine. But each one must strive to recognise this indwelling Divinity that is the eternal Reality. Most people waste their lives in the observance of external rituals and forms of worship. Together with external observances, people should also try to achieve internal purity. How long should one waste his life in external forms? All knowledge and skills are of superficial value and effect no internal change.

The seed and the fruit

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Time is passing. You are forgetting your obligations. Your life has been given to you to fulfill your duties. Do your duty. For years you have been listening to Svami's teachings. You are meeting many noble persons. You are performing various kinds of Sadhana (spiritual exercises). What is the bliss you have derived from all these? When you put this question, there is no answer. Are you going forward at least in any one aspect of spirituality? Are you able to concentrate your mind on a single sacred act? What is it you have accomplished? What are you seeking? What is

the inner significance of the fruits you seek? There is no meaning in your quest. You seek the fruits of good actions, but you indulge in bad acts. If one seeks the fruits of good deeds, he must do good deeds. Bad actions can only yield bad results. There is a Sanskrit saying, "Man desires the fruits of meritorious deeds, but performs no meritorious acts. Man wants to avoid the fruits of sin, but indulges in sinful deeds." What kind of results can one have if from dawn to dusk he engages himself in untruthful, unrighteous and evil actions? To the extent possible, one should try to practise at least a few sacred teachings. Otherwise, one will be overtaken by death with the passing of time and the wastage of the body. All your achievements amount to nothing. It is your primary duty to practise one or two of the sacred teachings. You have been in the Ashram for many years. You have listened to many discourses. But you have derived little benefit from all this. You must ponder over this seriously. Then only you will reap the benefit of participation in sacred festivals.

Strive to eradicate the evil tendencies in you

On this sacred occasion, you must strive to eradicate the evil tendencies in you. When your conscience tells you that something is wrong, you should refrain from doing it. You betray your true humanness when you fail to act upto the dictates of your conscience. When one's words are in accord with one's thoughts, they become truth. When the spoken word is translated into action, it becomes Dharma (right action). The basis for both Truth and Right Action is the Antharatma (Conscience), the Indwelling Spirit. The thoughts that emanate from the Indwelling Spirit should find expression in speech. If the inner feelings are different from what is spoken, can the words be treated as truth or untruth? Clearly, it is untruth. When one's action is not in accordance with his words, it is Adharma (unrighteous action). Truth and Righteousness are expressions of the promptings from the depths of one's Conscience. Today people are prone to disregard the voice of conscience. I have had frequent occasions to refer to the lessons to be learnt from the great epics. In the Mahabharatha, we have the heroic figure of Bheeshma. He was a great sage, a Jnani (man of supreme wisdom) and a person of unshakable determination. He stood foremost in honouring his plighted word.

Such a person knew quite well that what he was allowing the Kauravas to do was manifestly wrong. He knew that the Kauravas were indulging in evil deeds. He was aware that they were following unrighteous and untruthful ways. Nevertheless he was too weak to correct them or prevent them from pursuing their evil courses. Not was that all. He accepted the role of Commander-in-Chief of the Kaurava armies. This was a blemish in his character. He was unable to act upto the dictates of his Antharvani (conscience). Therein lay his weakness. Compare Bheeshma's failure with the conduct of Vibheeshana. He was of demonic lineage and lived and moved among Rakshasas. He was aware that what his elder brother (Ravana) had done (by kidnapping Seetha) was wrong. Knowing this, he warned Ravana in various ways. He repeatedly told Ravana: "This is wrong. You should not do this. It is not good for you." Vibheeshana felt that it was his duty to warn Ravana (against his evil ways). Ultimately, failing to convince Ravana, he chose to give up his brother and seek asylum with Rama.

A comparison of Bheeshma and Vibheeshana

When we compare the attitudes of the two, we find that Vibheeshana is greater than Bheeshma. Despite his knowing the wicked ways of the Kauravas, Bheeshma was unable to intervene. Vibheeshana, on the contrary, chided Ravana. He turned away from the wicked and found refuge in God. Thus, in the practice of sacred actions, Vibheeshana emerges as a greater figure than Bheeshma. This is the lesson taught by the epics. Are you giving any thought to such sacred lessons? You read books, but do not care to practise their teachings. You listen to discourses but do not live up to them. You have to put into practice the teachings which you learn. What, then, is the meaning of spirituality? It is not the reading of scriptures or the performance of rituals. It is to live up to truth one has learnt. Unfortunately today, because of the influence of Kali, this does not happen.

Control of senses is a form of sacrifice

At least on this auspicious day; people should concentrate their minds on God with purity and devotion. The control of the senses is itself a form of Thyaga

(sacrifice) which leads to Immortality. Sacrifice of wealth or possessions is no sacrifice at all. It is the sacrifice of the senses (the desires caused by them) which is the highest sacrifice. The Vedas refer to the sacrifice of Thanu, Mana, Dhana. Thanu refers to the body. Mana refers to the mind. What is Dhana? It is the wealth of the senses with which man is endowed. It is the senses that have to be sacrificed, not the body, which is made up of the five elements and contains all kinds of refuse. It is the attachment to the body that has to be given up. The hold of the senses has to be reduced. What is the value of all the pleasures you profess to enjoy? If you cannot sacrifice these trivial and transient pleasures, how can you experience the Bliss of the Eternal? If people cannot give up petty addictions to coffee or betel leaves, how can they acquire control over the senses? This can be done only by spiritual Sadhana. In Svami's view, giving up is easier than holding on to things. It is easier to give up a handkerchief than to hold it in the hand. Examine the sacrifices you are making in everyday life. You breathe in and breathe out. The exhalation is essential for purifying the lungs. Part of the food consumed is discharged, as excreta. Without this elimination, the stomach will be upset. These examples show that giving up is as necessary as acquisition. Our well-being is related to thyaga (sacrifice). It should be recognized that festivals are intended to promote the spirit of sacrifice and not for indulgence in revelry, which leads to illness. Sacrifice promotes Toga (communion with God). God looks for your devotion and for your abilities. He looks into your Chittha (mind) rather than at your Vittha (wealth). He judges you by your virtues and not by your caste. He is concerned about what you think than about the religion you profess. He is intent on attracting your heart and not your wealth. But, today, people imagine that God can be propitiated by the offer of money. This is due to the devotee's ignorance.

God cannot be secured by "force"

However, money has a useful role to play in the service of worthy causes. God has no part to play in this. People try to influence the Divine by some kind of force. God cannot be secured by "force." He is amenable only to the "Inner source." Many good deeds are being done all over the world. People should participate in such good activities, render help to others and regard them as

spiritual exercises. As I am always in a state of bliss, I make no distinction between a happy and auspicious event and one that is unhappy or inauspicious. These distinctions are made by persons attached to the body-mind complex.

A donation from New York

Last night I received a communication from New York to the following effect: "The welfare activities carried on by Svami, the service programmes launched by Svami, the uniqueness of the Hospital established by Svami, have been hailed by people all over the world. Bharatheeyas have not fully appreciated their value. In appreciation of the unique services rendered by Svami, without any kind of publicity or propaganda, we wish to make our humble contribution to this cause and our offering, as the first instalment, this token remittance." The donors, who wished to remain anonymous, have sent Rs. 100 crores. Out of this amount, Rs. 50 crores are to be kept in fixed deposit, from the interest on which the recurring expenses of the Super-Speciality Hospital will be met. Rs. 25 crores are offered to the Institute of Higher Learning for the promotion of human values in education. The balance of Rs. 25 crores has been offered to the Sathya Sai Central Trust for whatever incidental expenses it may have to meet in carrying on its activities.

This amount has been described as the first instalment. The donors have declared that they consider it as their good fortune to have been allowed to make this donation. This is true sacrifice. Many who make petty gifts advertise their donation in loud terms. The New York donors desired to remain anonymous. "Name is not important. Service alone matters. And even here, what Bhagavan is doing is sacred service." This is their declaration. We do not ask for even a naya paisa from any one. What is the reason? You see here the response to our selfless service. Hence, engage yourselves in selfless service. The reward for it will come of its own accord. Do not have any doubts on this score. Whatever you undertake to do, do it with all your heart and to your full satisfaction. That satisfaction will give you all the reward and recompense. It will confer all strength. This is the quality you have to cultivate. Acquire this true wealth. Without goodness, all other riches are of

no avail.

Lead a life of firm, unwavering faith

Embodiments of Love! Many sacred events like this are happening all over the world. The glory of Sathya Sai has spread to every part of the world. Unfortunately, Bharatheeyas alone appear to live under the shadow of a lamp, as it were. The entire world is enjoying the light going out from here. For this, the faith of the people outside is mainly responsible. Here, the faith comes and goes. Faith here swings like a pendulum. This is not good. You should have a steady mind. Every one should develop this kind of faith. Only when there is faith, love will sprout. Where there is confidence, there is love. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is truth. Where there is truth, there is bliss. Where there is bliss, there is God. Hence, if there is no confidence, how can there be love? When you see some miracle, devotion arises. But, the next moment, there is a change. This is not the right kind of faith. Faith should be unaffected by tips and downs. It should not be like passing clouds. Today many lack steadiness. People should have a rock-like faith that remains unshaken, whatever may happen. Take the example of Harishchandhra. His adherence to truth remained firm, despite all the troubles to which he was subjected, including the loss of his kingdom, his wife and son. He was reduced to the position of a watchman in a burning-ghat. But he remained steadfast. It is in this spirit that you should enter on any task. Harishchandhra did not worry about the sacrifices he had to make for the sake of truth. Accept whatever the Lord gives as a benediction. Esteem it as a gracious gift from God. Because of his firm faith, Harishchandhra ultimately got back his wife, son and kingdom. Therefore, you should have a faith that is unwavering and unshakable. Lead a life of firm faith. The holy night of Mahashivarathri is intended to serve as a sacred occasion for turning the mind firmly towards God. You are surrounded by Rudhras and all your happiness and sorrow are earned by them. When you bring them under your control, your life becomes secure. You will be successful in every endeavour.

Do your duty: realise God

Men are wasting their precious lives in the pursuit of fleeting and petty pleasures. Make the best use of the opportunity you have now got. That is true devotion. You alone are responsible for your condition because of the way your mind works. Do your duty, recognise the truth of your being, and you will be able to experience your divinity. You have to purify your heart to experience the Divine. You may have desires, aspirations and yearning for happiness. But there is nothing equal to the bliss of experiencing the Divine and you will secure this bliss, wherever God may be.

Life one long series of worries from birth to death. But all worries can be overcome by the love of God. Cultivate this love at least from now onwards. Turn your minds towards God. Limit your worldly desires. Why waste all your life in the endless pursuit of wealth?

Svami's Sankalpa

The communication which I received yesterday made Me ask why so much money had been sent. Svami decided that it should be spent on projects of permanent value. Svami's will is adamant. No one can alter it. Svami's glory, fame and sacredness have not been achieved by publicity. They are the results of Svami's actions. I have no concern with publicity. Action alone counts. What is achieved by publicity, will disappear through publicity. Sai will not be affected by propaganda. The world may be affected one way or the other by propaganda. Sai will not be affected at all. Conduct is most important. All Sai institutions must conduct themselves properly. Propaganda by practice is what matters. At least in future, set an example to others by your actions and give a lead to the people. This is what I desire, nothing else.

The nation has to be improved. Render service to the country. Whatever you may do, consider it as service to Sai. Cultivate this spirit of sacrifice. When you are here, you display your spirit of sacrifice. But after you leave, you develop desires. This is not good. You must exemplify, the same spirit wherever you may be. Wherever you may go, you must have the spirit of service. You must redeem your life through selfless seva.

True sadhana is to seek God within you

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! The whole of last night you were all immersed in the blissful vibrations in Prasanthi Nilayam caused by the chanting of the Lord's name. You must see that the Nilayam in each of you is always filled with these divine vibrations. What is this Nilayam? It is your body, which enshrines the Atma. There are the divine vibrations always in you. They constitute your Life-Force. The body is inert by itself. It is the divine vibrations that animate it. Both the body and the Vital Force derive their power from the energy radiating from the Atma (the Indwelling Spirit). You are thus a composite of the body (material substance), the Life Force (vibrations) and the Atma (Radiations). Seek God within you. This is true sadhana.

You are indeed full of love. Why don't you share it with others? Love will grow the more it is shared. The heart is like a perennial spring. The more you draw from it, the more it will flow with love.

10. Foster love: eschew hatred

Date: 11 April 1994 / Location: Kodaikanal / Occasion: Ugadi

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Though three ornaments of a permanent nature are available for man in the shape of charity for the hand, hearing God's glory for the ears and speaking the truth for the tongue, man is engaging himself in the pursuit of all transient and useless worldly things. He should strive to achieve that by getting which everything else is achieved. The first step is to understand the link that connects any two individuals. It is nothing but love. It is on the basis of love that the entire society is closely knit. What is a country? It is not the land but the society that makes a country or a nation. When the nation is prosperous and progresses with healthy growth, the needs of the individuals are also fulfilled. The individual is dependent on society . He is born, brought up and sustained by society. Therefore, it is the duty of every individual to render selfless service for promoting the common well are of society. All are the children of Mother Earth and should follow the selfless activity of the earth, which rotates on its own axis and goes round the sun at 66,000 miles per hour. By this constant morion we get day and night and variations in the seasons without which we cannot have food crops which sustain mankind.

Character is more valuable than knowledge

As children of the earth, people should learn the lesson of thyaga (selfless activity) from Mother Earth. Without sacrifice it is difficult to sustain life itself. Some say knowledge is valuable. But, character is more valuable than knowledge. One may be a learned scholar, one may hold high positions of authority, one may be very wealthy or be an eminent scientist, but if one has no character all the other acquisitions are of no use at all. Sacrifice, love, compassion, and forbearance are the sterling human qualities that should be fostered, shedding jealousy, hatred, ego and anger, which are animal qualities. What is the use of being born as a man and leading a life of birds and beasts? Man should maintain equanimity in pleasure and pain, loss or gain. Without pain you cannot enjoy pleasure. Sorrow is verily the royal road

to joy. Sufferings are the stepping stones that lead man towards virtuous conduct. One should neither be elated by pleasure nor dejected by pain. You must understand the wonderful human life created by God. God created everything in the world and entrusted man with the responsibility to look after them. God allowed man to use things in the world as he wished, but on one condition. He has to suffer the consequences of his actions, good or bad.

It is a folly to expect good results from bad deeds

So, you have to do good deeds if you want to experience good results. Doing bad deeds man wants to enjoy good and beneficial results. It is a folly to expect good results from bad deeds. Nature is like a mirror, which reflects only the object before it. In every human being, good and bad are co-existing. One should strive only to do good deeds which alone will lead one to liberation or Moksha. Moksha is not an object that can be acquired from outside. It is a way of life itself. When you follow your inherent nature and cultivate good feelings you can attain liberation from worldly bondage. This year is called 'Bhava.' You should foster good Bhava (attitudes and feelings) in this year. Your guna (character) depends on the food you consume. You should not be carried away by the vagaries of the mind. Such a great and powerful warrior as Arjuna told Krishna that the mind is wavering in nature and difficult to control. "It can be controlled by practise and detachment," said Krishna. The leaves in a tree move when the wind blows. Just as the wind causes the leaves to move, the company one keeps influences a man's mind. You should flee from evil company. Though inherently the heart is good, by evil company it gets polluted with such bad qualities as anger, jealousy and hatred. You should use your body, mind and intellect for the benefit of society at large and not for selfish purposes. The mind is like a mad monkey, while the body is like a water bubble which may burst at any moment. Therefore, you must follow only the Conscience. You cannot realise your Divinity as long as your mind is filled with evil thoughts. Disregarding all bad qualities and bad thoughts, you should develop good thoughts based on unsullied love. Start the day with love, fill the day with love and end the day with love. This is the way to God. The primary requisite for cultivating love is to get rid of doubts and disbelief and develop confidence.

Man has to go back to his source, that is God

Where there is confidence there is love; where there is love, there is peace; where there is peace, there is bliss; where there is bliss, there is God. It is only because you are confident that she is your mother, you have her. If you doubt this, there is no scope for such love. Confidence is the basis for love and steadiness of mind. But, what we find everywhere today is mental restlessness. Most of you have come here from far off places, seeking mental peace. After coming here, you indulge in mixing with evil people, which makes you lose even the li.trio peace you had. You should question yourselves as to the purpose for which you have come here. If you want to lead a meaningful life, you must know wherefrom you have come and the destination or goal which you want to reach. Right from the time of birth you are asking the question, Koham (Who am I?). One's entire life is spent without getting an answer for this question. When you say "This is my mind, my body," you are different from your mind, body and senses. You are the master. The body, mind and senses are just instruments. The answer to the question Koham comes from within as you are breathing 21,600 times every day. As you inhale, you make the Sound So and when you exhale, you utter the sound Ham. Together, Soham means, "He is me." This is the great truth proclaimed by the Vedas: "Thath thvam asi" (You are that).

You may study the process of water from the ocean going up as vapour through the sun's energy, forming clouds which come down as rain. The rain water is conveyed by rivers back to the ocean after undergoing several changes in the process. The intellect is the Sun. Truth is the cloud, drops of love are the rains. These flow in the river of Bliss which merges in the ocean of God. Just as water from the ocean comes back to the ocean after going through different stages of transformation, man has to go back to his source, that is God.

The eternal truth proclaimed by Upanishaths

If a piece of charcoal is kept apart from fire, it cannot burn. Both must be

brought close together and you must use a fan to make the charcoal catch fire. Love is the fan which will make you glow with divine effulgence. This is the truth proclaimed by the Upanishaths, which say: "You are God." You think you are only the body: The body is inert without the soul which is the Life Force.

You need not go anywhere searching for God. Divinity is within you. Just as there are many limbs in the body which are activated by one heart inside, the same God is the Life-force for all beings. The entire Universe is a reflection of the Supreme Being. Your Bhava (attitude) is the cause of your suffering or happiness. With whatever feeling you see an object, the same is reflected back. Dhrishti (vision) determines your view of Shrishti (Creation). When you see the world through coloured glasses, you will see everything in the colour of the glasses you are wearing. Whatever happens, you should take it as a gift of God. Love is God. Live in Love. This is the proper way of worshipping God. All forms of worship and penance are only for control of mind. They will not give you the realisation of God. God is within you, around you, beside you. He is the only true friend. You develop friendship with worldly people, who may desert you when you are bereft of your wealth, power or status. God alone will be with you always.

Desire is an unnecessary burden in life's journey

As the Geetha declares, "Adhveshta Sarva bhuathanam" (the devotee dear to the Lord is one who does not hate any being). You should not harbour hatred towards any one but keep away from bad company. You should not cultivate relationship with evil persons as this will spoil the purity of your mind. The mind is the cause of bondage or liberation. You turn it toward God and cultivate detachment. If you turn towards the world you develop attachment. Desire is an unnecessary burden in your life's journey. You must reduce your desires to a minimum, as it may not be possible to give up desire totally. If you analyse the difference between God and man you will find that life plus desire is man and life minus desire is God. Confine your desires to primary necessities for sustaining life such as food, clothing and shelter. When you have excessive desire you become restless. Whatever the nature of your

work, if you dedicate it as an offering to God, you will have no worry at all. This is real sadhana.

Even when you are engaged in your daily chores, you can convert them into worship of God. While you are sweeping the floor, you can deem it as clearing your heart of all impurities. All work should be done with a pure heart filled with devotion, just as cooking must be done in a clean vessel. Whatever good you may do without a genuine feeling of love is of no use. It is love in a pure heart that transforms work into worship.

Get rid of animal qualities of jealousy and hatred?

I would advise all, and especially the overseas devotees who have come here from far off countries, to subject themselves to a process of self-enquiry. Is it right to call yourself a man? It is only a half-truth. You should be able to assert: "I am a man. I am not an animal." You will have to get rid of the animal qualities of ego, jealousy and hatred and develop human qualities of love, truth, sacrifice and happiness. Consider pain and pleasure as passing clouds. Happiness can be attained only by union with God. Worldly pleasure is transient. By nourishing good feelings in the heart you can transform yourself from bad to good. This is called Samskara. It is akin to converting paddy into rice to make the grain fit for preparing food.

There may be many paths for the same goal. You get confused because many preachers say many different things. You must choose one path, one road. God is one and he can be realised by love. Fill your hearts with love and distribute the love to others considering that all are sparks of the Divine.

You must feel the Divine within you and develop divine qualities. Then only you can shine as a true human being. You should cultivate harmony in thought, word and deed which is the hallmark of a human being. Prema (Love) is the only weapon by which you can attain Godliness and make your life purposeful. God is like gold, the possession of which will enable you to make any jewel you want. Through unblemished love alone you can achieve the grace of God and enjoy blissful peace.

Surrender to God who knows how to shape you

People coming to Me frequently tell Me: "I want bliss," "I want peace," "I want liberation." When you want a jewel to be made out of the gold that you hand over to a goldsmith, he will have to melt it in a crucible, hammer it, cut it and weld the pieces to make the required ornament. By these processes only it can be made into a beautiful chain. Similarly, you must hand over your mind to God and allow God to do what is necessary. But, now-a-days, the devotees are laying down conditions to God while seeking His Grace! You must surrender to God and submit to His Will. God knows how to shape you. If you want to send a book by parcel, you have to pack it properly. In order to make use of the book you have to remove the packing. God has given you peace with a packing. When you remove the packing of 'I' and 'want', you get peace. You have to shed your ego and desire in order to enjoy peace which is inherent in you. When a sculptor wants to make a wooden statue of Krishna, he chisels the wood to get the shape of the statue. So also you have to shed your evil thoughts and feelings and surrender to God unconditionally without any reservation whatsoever. To overcome the bad influences of the *tanu*, *mana* and *dhana* (body, mind and wealth) the scriptures prescribe cultivation of *sathsanga*. What is *sathsanga*? It is generally believed that it refers to the company of good people. But this is not correct. *Sath* means Truth, which is *Atma* or God. So *sathsanga* means the company of God and not of people. Divinity will manifest within you if you follow any one of the nine types of devotion. In a nutshell, the precepts to be followed are; See no evil: see only good. Hear no evil: hear only good. Speak no evil: speak only good. Think no evil: think only good. Do no evil: do only good. This is the way to God.

Do not lend your ears to evil talk

If any one starts talking ill of others, go away from that place without lending your ears to such evil talk. In the Ramayana, Kaikeyi was influenced by the words of her servant Manthara who instigated her to stop the crowning of Rama and arrange for his banishment as she had some grouse against Rama. Because Kaikeyi lent her ears to the evil counsel of Manthara, she

manoeuvred to send Rama to the forest. Thus both these women earned a bad name for themselves for all time. Among men, you have the example of Dhuryodhana in the Mahabharatha who always bore ill-will towards the Pandavas and nourished always bad thoughts leading to evil designs. Similarly, Keechaka looked at Dhraupadhi with evil eyes and was killed by Bheema. Ravana did evil deeds. Manthara committed the sin of speaking ill of Rama, Kaikeyi lent her ears to evil talk, Keechaka committed the sin of casting evil looks on Dhraupadhi, Dhuryodhana nurtured bad feelings and Ravana indulged in bad deeds. These are examples to prove how the acts of speaking evil, listening to evil words, thinking evil and doing evil deeds cause one's downfall. Spiritual sadhana consists in speaking good, thinking good, seeing good, hearing good and doing good. Excessive talking must also be avoided as it is waste of energy. When one gets weak due to wastage of energy, he is prone to get angry and develop hatred. You must, therefore, use the God-given energy for good purposes. Energy is a divine gift. By curtailing unnecessary, talk and keeping silent, you can conserve energy. "Talk less and work more" is the golden rule to be adopted.

Keep close connection with God alone

Many foreigners come here and involve themselves in unnecessary relationships with people. Some person says "I have come alone," when he first meets Me. After some time he brings a lady with him and says, "She is my wife." Why should you cultivate such attachments and relationships when you have come here for spiritual pursuits? All these relationships are temporal. You must cut off these connections and establish connection only with the permanent and eternal entity; the Supreme Lord. God is omnipresent. He was there before your birth and He will continue to be there after your death too. Therefore you should make efforts to keep close connection with God alone. Do your duty with a feeling of dedication, leaving the results in the hands of the Divine. Then you can always be happy. Your behaviour and character are very important and these should be reflected in your adherence to discipline and good manners. To-day, the nation is in turmoil due to lack of discipline. You should follow the maxim: "Help ever-Hurt never." People don't understand My ideal of perfection, which consists of

purity, patience and perseverance. Patience means being in a state of Shanthi (Peace). I am always happy and peaceful. Even when some people wish me "Happy birthday" I tell them that I am always happy and the wishes should be addressed to those who are not happy. Another feature of patience is not being elated by praise or depressed by calumny. I am not affected by pleasure or pain. It is the perfect state of Samadhi (Sama + dhi), which means equanimity in pleasure and pain.

Perseverance is most essential

Perseverance is most essential for the accomplishment of objective. By perseverance Nara can become Narayana, that is man can become Divine. People lacking this quality cannot achieve anything. Their efforts are like trying to retain water in a pot with several holes. If you direct all your actions towards God, you will become one with God. This should be done on the basis of Prema (love).

A man living without love is as good as dead. You are having love towards your father, mother, wife, children and others. There is nothing wrong in this. But you must see God in every one of them. This is the essence of the well-known prayer to God: Thvameva mathacha Pitha thvameva Thvameva bandhuscha Sakha thvameva Thvameva Vidhya dhraavinam thvameva Thvameva Sarvam mama dheva dheva. This prayer addressed to the Supreme Being means- "You are the father, mother, friend, and relative. You are knowledge and wealth. You are everything. Oh my Lord!" We should see God in every being. The whole Universe is a manifestation 'of Brahman. As a human being, you have come from Narayana. You are divine but you are not realising it. When you do namaskaram with folded hands in obeisance, it means that you are offering your five Karmendhriyas (organs of action) and five Jnanendhriyas (organs or perception) to the Divine.

Offering namaskaram itself emphasises unity. If you have unity and purity, divinity will blossom there. But you have only enmity and community now. You have to practise speaking sweetly and softly and avoid unnecessary connections .and relationships with all and sundry. The easiest Sadhana is to

reflect on God with love that is expanding and embracing one and all. It is the only way to realise the Divine.

Whatever I do it is for you, not for Me. For what is it that can be called Mine?
Only you.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. Time is God : make best use of it

Date: 14 April 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Tamil New Year, Baisakhi, Vishu

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Nature is the best teacher for mankind to learn, the noble and sacred lesson of selfless sacrifice. Look at the trees which yield fruits for the enjoyment of others, without any trace of selfishness. The rivers flow for the benefit of others, providing water for quenching their thirst and helping them in many ways. Cows give delicious milk to the people without even a trace of selfishness. Similarly, a good person is one who strives ceaselessly to render help to his fellow beings. Ugadhi or New Year day is a festival that teaches lessons in selfless service. It is not intended for feasting. It is sacred day when wholesome wisdom should dawn and enlightenment should blossom in the hearts of people. There are four yugas (aeons), namely, Kritha Yuga, Thretha Yuga, Dhvapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. The Kritha Yuga commenced in the month of Vaishakha. Thretha Yuga in the month of Karthika, Dhvapara Yuga in the month of Margashirsha and Kali Yuga in the month of Chaithra. As the present Kali age started in the month of Chaithra, the first day of the Chaithra month is called Yugadhi. The aeons are only measurement of time. Time is God. God is called Kala-svaruupa (the very embodiment of Time). Hence, we must respect Time and spend it in useful pursuits. Wasting of time is ungodly

Every created thing is born of Time

This world is termed as Jagam. Ja means taking janmam (birth) and gam stands for going. Jagam means that the world is a place where beings are born and die. In this changing world, God is the changeless entity. God is all-pervasive and can be experienced anywhere. He is worshipped as Kala kalaya namah, Kala svaruupaya namah and so on. Without Time, there is no world. Without the world there is no creation, without creation there is nothing. Every created thing is born of Time. This New Year Day proclaims the truth that God is the Master of Time. Unfortunately, man fails to understand the power of God. He wastes three quarters of his time in unworthy earthly

pursuits. Spiritual pursuit is the right way of making use of time. It calls for numbing good feelings and doing good deeds without selfish motive, extending love and compassion towards - all beings. This is real sadhana. Sa means Atma and dhana means wealth. By utilising your time in spiritual pursuits, you can enjoy spiritual wealth. But, man wastes all his time in unholy thoughts and evil deeds without understanding the divinity within him. One should understand the value of time, each moment of which vanishes faster than lighting. If you want to sanctify your hard-earned human birth have to cultivate divine thoughts.

Behave in a manner befitting your status

This is the age of Kali, which is often described as Kalaha Yuga (the age of discord), in which there will be misunderstanding and quarrels between husband and wife, father and son, preceptor and disciple. Giving up the quarrelsome attitude, people must cultivate love and compassion and shine as embodiments of love which they really are. The heart is termed as Hridhaya, in which dhaya (compassion) is in-built. Only when one has dhaya towards others, can he be deemed fit to be called a human being.

We find today people indulging in creel deeds, devoid of even a trace of compassion, and behaving worse than birds and beasts. Even trees and rivers help mankind selflessly. But humans are not behaving in a manner befitting their status as superior beings. They do not have the attitude of helping one another.' Trees are helpful even when they become dead and dry, serving as firewood. Trees are the best example of Thyaga bhava (the attitude of Sacrifice). They are the greatest teachers of the quality of sacrifice. But, human beings, who get all the benefit from trees, are not having the same spirit of sacrifice. They are attached to their bodies and spend their energy and time to provide comforts for the body How long will the body last? It is a bundle of diseases, a repository of filth and foul excreta. It cannot help one to cross the ocean of samsara (worldly life). It is subject to changes such as childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood, old age and finally death. One does not know when, where and how death will occur. M;m neglects svadharma (his rightful duty) and relies on this transient body, behaving like a beast. He

does not make any effort to realise that in the changing body there is the changeless and eternal Atma (Spirit). This Divinity is the same, in all beings and changeless through all the stages of life.

Man is in quest of happiness that eludes him

Everyone wants to achieve happiness and makes all sorts of efforts for this purpose without knowing where to find it. He thinks he can get happiness when he gets a job to earn his livelihood and pursues his studies only with this end in view. After he gets a job, he is still not happy. He wants to get married. He marries and sets up a family. Even then there is no happiness. He wants progeny. He gets a child. Still he is not happy. He wants promotion so that he can earn more to maintain his family: He gets it. Even then he is not happy. And he goes on like that in quest of happiness that eludes him. Happiness is not there in all these attainments or possessions. It is only in the heart within. He is himself the embodiment of happiness. Yet, without realising this, he goes on seeking happiness elsewhere. "Nithyanandham paramasukhadham." Permanent bliss is only within and once you realise that you are the blissful Atma and not the transient body, you will always be happy. Some people raise the question, "Where is God?" God cannot be seen outside. You must direct your vision inside. Then you will realise that the entire world is a reflection of the Atma within you. "Purnamadhah Puurnamidham Puurnath Puurnamudhachyathe Puurnasya Puurnamadhaya Puurnameva avashishyathe." 'That' (Brahman) is Whole. 'This' (creation) is also Whole. From 'that' Whole 'this' Whole has emerged. Even though 'this' Whole has come out of 'that' Whole, yet 'that' Whole remains WHOLE only.

What does this mean? From whatever source a thing is born, it retains the quality of the source in full. For example, this tumbler is made of silver. It retains the quality of silver fully. This mike set is made of stainless steel and it retains the quality of stainless steel in full. A pot is made of clay and it retains the quality of clay. Similarly, man has come out of God and, therefore, he has the divine quality in him. God is Paripuurna Svaruupa (Total personality). You should engage yourself in wholesome divine pursuits and fulfill the purpose of this valuable human life. You should thus reflect your divinity in the human

form.

The lesson taught by Ugadhi

Ugadhi teaches man the lesson that he should perfect himself as an embodiment of divinity. You should not waste time, because a moment gone, will not come back. You are only looking after the needs of the body; eager to make it last longer. But you forget that Time is God. There is nothing that can supercede this. So the Sadhana you should do is to utilise your time in doing good deeds for the benefit of the society at large and not to satisfy your self-interest. Don't waste your energy in unnecessary talk or gossip. God has endowed man with all the organs of perception and action, not for selfish activities, but to do godly deeds and help others. In the Purusha Shuktha it is declared that "Brahmanasya Mukhamaseeth" (Brahmana came out of the face of Cosmic. Purusha). The reason for this is that all the organs of perception which help man to acquire knowledge, namely, ears, nose and tongue are in the face. Brahmana does not mean one that is born in the Brahmana community. It refers to one who has knowledge of Brahman - - "Brahmajnani Brahmanah."

True meaning of real sadhana

Since the organs of perception are in the face, Brahmana is described as "The face of the Supreme Lord." Through these organs you can see, hear and speak. You must see no evil but see only good. You must hear no evil, but hear only good. You must speak no evil, but speak only good. You must do no evil, but do only good. This is real sadhana. You need not do japa, dhyana and thapas. Your monkey mind wanders elsewhere when you sit in meditation. Then it becomes only a waste of precious time. Do your duty as dedication to the Divine. You can thereby transform work into worship. For sadhana, the nine-fold path of devotion has been prescribed for humanity: Shravanam (hearing God's glory), Keerthanam (singing His Glory), Vishnunamasmaranam (remembering the Lord's name constantly), Padhasevanam (serving the Lotus Feet of the Lord), Archanam (offering worship), Vandhanam (prostrating}, Dhasyam (doing service as a servant to the Lord), Sneham (worshipping as a

friend), Atma-nivedanam (total Self-surrender). You must listen to the glory of God being chanted, and do service to humanity, chanting His name and singing His glory. You should have the attitude that all are embodiments of God, that the whole Universe is a manifestation of God. In Vandhanam you should dedicate all the ten organs of perception and action as an offering to God. This is symbolised by bringing both your palms together and offering namaskaram. All the ten fingers represent the ten Indhriyas (sense organs). Namaskaram also implies that "nothing is mine." The limbs are intended for service to others only. Dhasyam means that you should render service to humanity considering the persons whom you serve as masters.

Sneham means friendship. It is not the type of friendship that you generally cultivate by saying "hello." You must keep the heart hollow so that it will be filled only by Divine thoughts. All human relationships are based on the body, while the relationship with God is from heart to heart. It alone is permanent and unchanging.

The entire creation came from the One

Spirituality means seeking to realise the oneness of all beings. There is only One. All came out of this One only. The entire creation itself came from the One. This truth is proclaimed in all religions. For instance, the name of Yesu (Jesus) itself spells out this truth. Ye means one, su means good. There is only one good. In the term Allah, A stands for Atma, la for layam. Invoking Allah signifies merging in the Atma which is the One God. Names and forms are momentary and transient. Atma (Divine Self) is permanent and changeless. In Vedantha it is called Sath-Chith-Anandha. Sath is changeless while Chith is subject to change. To give an example, sugar is changeless and retains its sweetness in whichever way it may be used, while water is subject to change. If the two are Combined, you get syrup, which is comparable to Anandha. Thus the combination of the changeless and changing entitles gives happiness or Anandha. (Bhagavan sang a Meera Bhajan and explained how Meera in this song, directs her mind towards Krishna and appeals to him to enter her heart and experience-her pure love). It is only by fostering love you can win the grace of God. The Prema Rasa (sweet juice of love) will be

drained away if you have holes in your heart (spiritual heart) in the form of bad feelings and evil thoughts. If you plug these holes by curbing the evil qualities, the juice of love will be retained to some extent.

Service to the Lord brings lasting happiness

You should avoid following the body or the mind and follow only the Conscience. The purpose of life is to help others and not to indulge in sensuous pleasures. From dawn to dusk, you are engaged in acts for the sake of maintaining your bodily comforts. What have you achieved by this? Only mental unrest and physical weariness or illness. Your aim must be to achieve Divinity. Thyagaraja questions his own mind in a song whether wealth or service to the Lord will give sukham (comfort) and comes to the conclusion that service to the Lord brings lasting happiness. Service involves thyaga (sacrifice). You should sacrifice that which you consider very dear to you. Sacrifice brings about real communion with the Divine while carnal pleasure results only in disease. Control of the mind alone will lead to union with the Divine. This day is celebrated as Yugadhi as Kali Yuga started on the first day of Chaithra. It represents both Sukham and Shubham (comfort and auspiciousness). Power or wealth cannot confer both. You must use the time well for the benefit of all. As you think, talk and act, so will be the results. Think of God and do good deeds by way of service to society, chanting the name of God. Embodiments of Love! Love is God. Start the day with love. Fill the day with love and end the day with love. Live in love. There is no need to fear. It is only a mental creation. Foster love. Then only Divinity can be realised.

When the sun rises, all the buds of lotus in the lake will not open out in full bloom. Only those which are full grown can blossom; so the rest have to bide their time and grow.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



12. Shri Raama : the ideal for humanity

Date: 20 April 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Rama Navami

Sweeter than sugarcane juice, Sweeter than honey,

Sweeter than nectar itself is the name of Rama.

As you chant the name you taste the nectarine

Sweetness in abundance. EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Self! The sage Valmeeki, who was pure, holy and utterly selfless, wrote the Ramayana in hundred crores of stanzas for the redemption of mankind. But the Dhevas and Rishis, realising the supreme greatness of the Ramayana, sought from Valmeeki a share in his great work. Responding to their appeal, Valmeeki distributed the shlokas (verses) among the denizens of the three worlds. After the distribution of the slokas in equal shares among the three one shloka of 32 syllables remained. After distributing in equal measure 30 of them, two syllables remained. These two syllables were the letters RAA-MA, which he gave to the dwellers of the three worlds. The same two syllables are found in the names of Krishna, Hari, Jesus, Allah and Sayee. Thus Valmeeki offered to the residents of all the three worlds the two-syllable name of the Lord equally.

Rama, the supreme exemplar of many roles in life

Rama is closest to mankind. Wherever they may be, to whatever land or clime they may belong, people everywhere have to understand the Rama principle. Rama was an ideal son. Every family requires an ideal son. On the eve of the coronation he chose to go to the forest as an exile in accordance with the command of his royal father. In carrying out the injunctions of the father, Rama stands out as the supreme exemplar. Rama, moreover, was an ideal brother. He exemplified harmony and love among brothers. He treated his brothers as his own life-breath and showered his love equally on all of them. Thus Rama is an example of fraternal love for every family. Rama was an ideal husband. Rama's adherence to the principle of monogamy has to be

properly understood. Valmeeki understood it very well. One word, one arrow, one wife was the rule for Rama. What is the reason? In the body there are many organs. But all of them are animated, nourished and sustained by the heart alone. In the same manner the wife, for the husband is only one and the husband for the wife is only one. To demonstrate to the world this ideal of monogamy, Rama set the example.

Rama was an ideal friend and ideal enemy

Rama was an ideal friend. There cannot be a greater friend than Rama. There are in the world fair-weather friends who display their friendship when one is wealthy or wielding power. But if wealth and position are gone, not a single friend will show his face. Rama, however, was not such a friend. He was loving, considerate and affectionate equally in weal and woe, in times of joy or sorrow. Guha was an ordinary boatman. Rama hailed him as his fourth brother and showered his love on Guha. Rama treated in the same friendly spirit everyone who came to him for any help or to find an asylum. He thus stood out to the world as an ideal friend. Rama was not only an ideal friend; he was also an ideal enemy. In the world, it is common to see **men** resorting to all kinds of deceitful devices to foil their enemies. But Rama never stooped to such unworthy practices. Rama adhered to the noble heroic path **even** in dealing with his enemies.

For example, when Rama was engaged in battle with Ravana, Ravana could not stand up to the arrows of Rama. All the weapons of Ravana were destroyed. Rama noticed that Ravana was tired and weaponless. In such a situation it was not proper to kill the enemy. There is no heroism, in killing a weak or powerless man. The enemy should be destroyed when he is strong and powerful. Recognizing the plight of Ravana, Rama laid down his arms and told Ravana, "O, Ravana! you are tired and without weapons. You are not in a fit condition to carry on the fight. Go home, take rest and return to battle tomorrow. We shall resume the fight tomorrow." By displaying this kind of magnanimity towards his enemy; Rama demonstrated that he was an ideal enemy.

Rama was, first of all, an ideal son. In any country, anywhere in the world, every family needs an ideal son. Hence Rama's story does not have a message for the Bharatheeyas alone. It has a lesson for all countries and for all mankind. The significance of Rama's example of an ideal brother should be realised. Today brothers fight among themselves, go right upto the Supreme Court and even lose their lives in their bitter quarrels. Out of love for petty, money and possessions, today people are prepared to sacrifice all fraternal feelings. Rama's way was different. He regarded his brothers as part of his own being and would not cause the slightest pain to them. Thereby he took his brothers to the supreme state. Today brothers take their litigation to the Supreme Court! This is not right at all.

Rama, the ideal husband

Rama was an ideal husband. When Seetha was abducted, Rama felt the loss as if he had lost half his body. He looked upon his wife as ardhangi, one half of himself. When Rama appeared grief-stricken over the absence of Seetha he wanted to merely show to the world what the loss of a wife means. He never thought of a second wife. Rama felt, "it is my duty to protect my wife." Every husband in the world should have a similar conviction. Today in the world, friends turn into enemies overnight. This is not right at all. Friendship should be enduring and last for all time. Normally it lasts as long as one has wealth and strength. But God's friendship is not like that. God is always with you, in you, behind you, around you. This is the kind of friendship that every man should experience.

Let love rule the world

Hanuman was a servant. He exemplified the ideal of a servant. Rama embraced Hanuman and said- "Dear friend, Hanuman! You in your physical form belong to a different species. You are a monkey and I am a man. But the love principle is one and the same in both of us." Caste and creed may vary. But the love principle is one. In all beings, in all countries, in all individuals love animates every one. Today the reign of this love principle has to be established all over the world. God is the Indweller in the heart. The heart is

full of love. That love must be shared with others. It is only when the love is shared that the old saying about equal-mindedness in joy and sorrow, in gain and loss, will be realised. Here is an illustration of this truth- Many people in Ayodhya knew that Rama was leaving for the forest. One aged and poor Brahmana exclaimed: "I hear Rama is going to the forest for fourteen years. I do not know whether I will live so long." Feeling thus, the old Brahmana, Thrijata by name, came all the way on foot to have a last glimpse of Rama. Eyes are given to man not to look at the world but to see God. Hence, the power of sight should be dedicated to God. With that aim, the old man, after enduring many hardships, came to Rama. What was Rama doing at that moment? The one who was to be crowned at one moment was getting ready to go on exile to the forest that very moment. Will any human being be able to bear such a reversal of fortune with equal-mindedness? Will he be able to look upon both in the same manner? Anyone other than Rama would be plunged in grief. But Rama (before leaving for the forest) was engaged in giving away to the poor all his jewels and possessions. What should have been a moment of distress was turned by Rama into an occasion for joy in distributing all to the people. Nothing is lasting in human life. No one can tell when life will come to an end, where, in what circumstances. Life may end in childhood, adolescence, middle age or old age. Death is certain. Hence man must learn to give up attachment to possessions.

Rama and the old Brahmana

Rama was giving away all his things. When the old Brahmana approached him, he was distributing his cows and furniture. When Thrijata saw this he exclaimed: "What an embodiment of sacrifice is the Lord! He is truly immortal, because of his acting up to the Vedhic dictum that immortality can be achieved only through sacrifice and not through good deeds, progeny or wealth. He is the embodiment of bliss. He is the very form of Dharma." Looking at Rama, he exclaimed- "Rama! You are indeed the embodiment of Dharma!" Dharma (Righteousness) is the life-breath of everybody. For this Dharma, sacrifice is one element. For Dharma and Thyaga (sacrifice), Prema (Love) is the basis. Hence Dharma, Thyaga and Prema are essential for every human being. They are the three forces which activate the body, the mind

and the Atma (Divine Self). Seeing the aged Brahmana Rama beckoned to him to come near him. He asked him: "O noble Brahmana! What for have you come?" The old man replied- "Svami! I am advanced in years. I learnt that you are going to the forest for fourteen years. I do not know whether I may live that long. I wish to gaze your splendrous face for once, experience your love for at least a brief moment, touch your sacred feet, and redeem my life." Rama asked him: "Have you no other desire?" "I do not have any other desire. I have difficulty in living. But I am reconciled to what I deserve according to my Karma. I am not concerned about it. I am only keen to have a vision of you, to speak to you and touch you."

Three problems that haunt a man

Then Rama asked him what the benefit was from these three. "Dharshanam papa nashanam" (vision of the Lord destroys all sins). "Sparshanam karma vimochanam" (touching the feet of the Lord frees one from the bondage of Karma). "Sambhashanam sankata nashanam " (conversing with the Lord dispels all distress). The old man said: "Svami! Man is haunted by three problems - sin, consequences of his deeds and sorrow. To get rid of these things, I need a vision of you, contact with your feet and conversation with you." Rama was supremely pleased with the Brahmana's words. He drew him close to himself, embraced him and asked him: "Does this give you joy?" Shedding copious tears, the old man said- "I do not know what is heaven. I have no idea what is Kailash or Vaikuntha. But in your embrace I have experienced all these. This is my heaven. Give me. some alms. I. shall return to. my place." Rama said- "Child! When you have offered me your love, I must offer my love to you in return. That is the way of love - give and take. As I have received your love, you must accept something from me".

The old man carried a stick in his hand. Rama said "Child! Through my touch, you have received considerable strength. Your old age has disappeared. Cast your stick as far as your strength will permit. All the wealth and the cows in the area covered by your throw will be yours. Rama's touch had endowed the old Brahmana with immense strength. He felt that he should act upto Rama's command. "My life will be meaningless otherwise," he thought, "Although I

have no desire, I shall obey Rama's command." With this feeling, he hurled the stick with all his might. Thanks to the power of Rama, the stick traversed the banks of the Sarayu and returned to where Rama stood. Several mansions, buildings and cattle were within the area which came to the Brahmana as Rama's gift.

Rama's supreme quality is sacrifice

The Brahmana said to Rama: "O Lord! When I came solely to have a vision of you, why are you Burdening me with so many possessions?" Rama replied, "O noble Brahmana! This is the fruit of your good deeds in your previous life, this is not the reward earned in the present life. Imagine how many came to see me from afar while I was preparing to leave for the forest? It is your wish which stirred my love. But for the laws relating to the governance of a kingdom, I would have given this entire kingdom to you. My love for you is my greatest gift." So saying, Rama gave the land to the Brahmana. Then the Brahmana said: "This is a supreme example to all the people. Even at the moment when He was leaving for the forest and the whole of Ayodhya was plunged in grief, Rama displayed His love by giving away all His. possessions. His supreme quality is sacrifice !"

Rama's entire life was filled with ideals of every kind

Thus, the Rama principle teaches us the supremacy of the qualities of charity and sacrifice. The Rama principle does not embody just one or two great qualities. Rama's entire life was filled with ideals of every kind.

To convey the great lessons of Rama's life-story to mankind, the divine incarnates from time to time and from age to age. When does the Lord incarnate? The answer is given in the Geetha: "To protect the good, to punish the wicked and establish Dharma, the Lord incarnates from aeon to aeon." When the pure, the saintly, the Godly and the good are oppressed, the Lord incarnates to protect them and to punish the wicked. To relieve their suffering and to confer bliss on humanity, the Lord makes his descent on earth. When wickedness grows and the forces of evil rear their heads, the Lord comes

down to put them down and establish righteousness among mankind. Today falsehood, injustice and wickedness are rampant in the world. Humanness has been reduced to dust. Behind the human form, there are no human qualities. Human values have been given the go-by. Love does not prevail between man and man. If love is lost, what remains? Love is life. A man without love is a living corpse. Therefore cultivate love. Share it. Live in love. This is the need of the Kali age. There is another episode in the Ramayana, which indicates what love the people of Ayodhya and Mithila bore to Rama and Seetha. The people of Ayodhya set out in their thousands to witness the wedding of Rama and Seetha in Mithila. The whole of Mithila was rejoicing over the auspicious occasion. Women were summoning all women and children to witness the sacred wedding. They were telling the other ladies: "Sisters! What a unique opportunity to witness the glorious wedding of Rama and Seetha!"

Symbolic meaning of wedding of Rama and Seetha

The wedding of Rama and Seetha is not a wedding of one young man and one young woman. This wedding is a union of Prakrithi (Cosmos) with the Purusha (Supreme Lord). An old lady sang a song calling upon all women to join the company of people going for the wedding. She described the decorations in Mithila, the divine beauty of Rama and Seetha, the splendid scene in the palace and depicted the memorable scenes they would witness at the wedding. (Svami sang the song in his own mellifluous voice with such verve and charm that the entire wedding scene seemed to appear in all its splendour before the gathering). A similar appeal went forth from the men's side to all men, describing the wedding as an occasion that would eradicate all the beholders of their sins. "Come, all ye, for the glorious wedding of Kaushalya's son" was the refrain of the song.

The whole world seemed to rejoice at the wedding of Rama and Seetha, because it had its cosmic significance. It represented the union of Prakrithi (Seetha) with Purusha, the Super Absolute. Every being in the cosmos, whatever may be the gender, in external form, is essentially feminine. Prakrithi (Nature) is feminine. She represents one half of the Lord - Ardhangi. The Paramatma (the Supreme Overself) is the Purusha (the Supreme

Godhead). Together, Prakrithi and Purusha represent the concept of, Ardha nareeshvara - the Divine conceived as half-male and half female. This union of male and female is found in every human being. Every one should understand this aspect of the Ramayana story. Ramayana should not be considered as-a sacred epic for Bharatheeyas alone. The term Rama means "One who delights the heart" "Ramayathi ithi Ramah." Whomsoever you may worship it is the one Divine who delights the heart. There is only one God and one Goal.

God is one

When you consider mankind as one species, God is only one, by whatever name you may describe Him, as Allah, Jesus, Rama, Krishna or Buddha. The Bharatheeyas hold to the belief that God is one, though the wise may call him, by different names. All religious scriptures and godly men have in all ages worshipped God as one. Therefore, no one should have feelings of differences or even entertain ill-will towards others, Cultivate the feeling of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Man. Bear no ill-will towards anyone. Help ever; hurt never. Rama showered his love on everyone. Love is the most important factor in life. Love is God. Live in love.

13. Sacred role of mothers

Date: 06 May 1994 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love!

All that you see, hear, think and do are due to the power of *Brahman* (the Absolute). The feeling that you are the doer and the possessor is the source of all troubles. It is only when man realises that everything is permeated by the Divine that he will be able to experience the Divine bliss. The phenomenal world enables man to participate in mundane activities related to the physical, the social and the natural. But human life should not be confined to these alone. The sensory life is based on the inner life. Life and the world are like two sides. The world is external and life is internal. The phenomenal universe is based on the inner subtle entity.

The phenomenal cosmos is a vast, boundless mansion. But every mansion has to stand on an appropriate foundation. Without a strong foundation, the mansion will collapse. For the vast physical, gross and mighty mansion of the world, the subtle, infinite and powerful mind is the foundation. Consequently, man can be powerful only to the extent his mind is powerful. Society benefits equally from the powers of man's mind. Not is that all. The entire human race benefits thereby. There is thus the interdependence of man, society and humanity for their security.

Without the mind, one ceases to be a man

When the mind is good, man can divinise himself. Only the one endowed with a mind can be called a man. Without the mind, one ceases to be a man. It is only when the subtle, invisible, inner base of the mind is in a proper condition that a being that has donned the human form can attain his true state.

In the world to-day various changes are taking place. There is no shortage of wealth and property. Nor is there any dearth of amenities for comfortable living. There is no lack of facilities for entertainment or recreation.

Nevertheless, modern man is oppressed by frustration, depression and disappointment. What is the reason? It is the failure to use the divine power of the mind properly that accounts for the frustration and the lack of peace of man to-day. The differences between man and man are growing continuously. These differences lead to disastrous conflicts.

Hence, the first requisite is to strive for the proper use of the powers of the mind. The mind of man today is that of an intoxicated person because his mind is giving free rein to the senses. The world today is filled with two kinds of intoxication. One is intoxication arising from wealth. The other is the intoxication of power. These two are not different from each other. They are like the two parts of a seed. Through wealth one secures positions of power and power is used to acquire wealth. Man's life today is based on these two—power and pelf. Man's conceit grows beyond bounds even when he has only one of these two. The state of those who have both needs no description. Forgetting humanness, cherishing animal qualities, man develops a demonic nature. Man today makes no efforts to realise the greatness and power of the mind. Instead, he is submerged in worldly activities and wastes his life.

Education should serve to refine man's nature

Man's heart, which ought to be filled with compassion that is natural to it, is today full of cruelty and bitterness. Education, which should serve to refine man's nature and make him a hero, is failing in its purpose because in his conduct man is a zero. An education which does not develop humanness is an utter waste. The educational system should ensure that along with knowledge right conduct is also developed. Ravana and Duryodhana achieved unrivalled eminence in scholarship. But it was of no avail because of their polluted minds. They ceased to be human.

True education should produce a blossoming of human qualities. It should not be merely for earning a living, but should result in a ripening of the heart, filling it with love.

What happiness can one achieve if all his education makes him concerned Only about filling his stomach and makes him forget the Supreme Lord? The goal of human life should be, to strive for that which will give enduring happiness and not transient pleasures. The yearning for this sacred goal should be developed while one is still, young and has a pure, untainted, innocent mind. Of what use is all your book knowledge if you have not learnt to lift your hands in prayer to God? You salute persons of no account for selfish reasons.

What is in a name given to the physical body?

People should cultivate faith in the Divine. It is the duty of parents to imbue their children with faith in God from childhood. Here is a story to illustrate this need: Rithudhvaja and Madhalasa were a pious couple with intense faith in God. Madhalasa was a woman of noble character. She excelled everyone in virtue, wisdom and sacrifice. She was the embodiment of holiness. The couple had a son, to whom the father wanted to give a name that would be in accordance with his Kshatriya lineage. After considerable cogitation, he gave the boy the name Vikranth. Madhalasa burst into laughter when she heard the name. She was unhappy over the excessive interest taken by the king in naming the child. She felt that some name should be given for the physical body for worldly purposes. But to show excessive interest in it was meaningless.

Later a second son was born, who was named Subahu (which meant one with fine arms). Madhalasa again laughed at the naming of the child. The king felt insulted by Madhalasa's behaviour. Sometime later a third son was born. Rithudhvaja told Madhalasa: "You don't like the names given by me for our sons. You better name the third son yourself." A name has to be given to anyone in the world as a mark of identity. In keeping with this need, Madhalasa named the son, Alarka. The king was angry on hearing the name. He burst forth: "Is this the name that should be given to the scion of a royal family, a warrior's son and belonging to a line of courageous Kshatriyas? What

a shame! I will not call him by this name."

No names are given for the Atma

Alarka means a mad dog. The king asked: Is my son to be called a mad dog? Madhalasa approached the king and said: "A person who does not know his real nature, who has no awareness of his divinity and who does not know his oneness with the Divine is worse than a mad dog. What value should be attached to the names of persons who have not recognised their true nature? What significance can names have for foolish persons who are not aware of the oneness of the universe and who do not contemplate on divinity? The body is human in form. But they are not mere men at all. They are the embodiments of the Atma, the Formless and Attributeless Self. They are pure and unsullied. It is sheer ignorance to give names to the Atma."

In view of this belief, Madhalasa started teaching her children from an early age their essential spiritual nature and their inherent divinity. Today, the mothers are responsible for the good or bad behaviour of their children. It is a matter for shame for any mother to say "My son will not heed my words." If the mother had brought up the son on right lines from the beginning, he would not behave like this. The snake-gourd has to be made to grow straight by tying a stone to it from its tender stage. Likewise, the stone of discipline and devotion should be attached to a boy from his infancy. Mothers experience the disobedience of their children because of their failure to inculcate discipline in the early years.

Madhalasa began teaching her sons from their childhood in this manner: "Child, you are not a son not am I a mother. Both of us are manifestations of Sath-Chith-Ananda. We are like the waves on an ocean, not different from each other. All have arisen from the ocean of Sath-Chith-Ananda. It is folly to think otherwise." Placing the children in the cradle of Omkara on the cushion of Thathvam Asi, Madhalasa named the child, Eruca (Awareness, Atma, Prajna or Brahman) and called upon all the Devas to swing the cradle.

To be a true human being respect your parents

In this manner, the mothers of ancient times taught the truth about their divinity to the children and made them aware of their true nature. Thus, the sacred stories of Bharath were taught to the children, who learnt to respect their parents and ciders. If one does not respect his parents and revere his preceptor, can he be termed a human being? To be a true human being one has to respect his parents and kith and kin in childhood, revere the teacher in boyhood, please elders in his manhood, and worship sages in old age. Ignoring these duties, youth today are running wild.

They should realise the preciousness of human life as Tulasidas described it. At the outset, mothers should teach the children the immense value of human life. Alas! They themselves do not know its value. How are they going to teach others? Hence, the parents themselves should learn the value of human life. They should have faith in the divinity of human life. Today, because fear of sin and love for God have become rare, morality in society is absent. Even when people seem to offer *Namaskar* (salutation with folded hands), it does not stem from the heart and is only an artificial gesture. How long can such artificial expressions sustain a man?

What is needed is a pure mind, filled with sublime thoughts. It should be selfless. When the mind is selfish, the man becomes selfish. A man with a polluted mind displays vicious looks. His speech and actions are impure. If the heart is pure, everything else will be pure.

Atma is like a flame in the body

The Atma is like a flame in the body. When it is covered by the ten senses, its light filters through holes, as it were. And when it is covered, in addition, with the blanket of *Abhimana* (attachment to worldly objects), the effulgence of the *Atma* (Divine Self) is not visible. When attachment is given up and the body consciousness goes, the Self is revealed in all its brightness.

King Vikramaditya once encountered a Brahmana who had been repeating manthras and performing yagas for years to get a vision of God. Vikramaditya

prayed with all his heart for one brief moment and had the vision of God. The Lord told Vikramaditya that God does not respond to mere mechanical repetition of mantras or performance of rituals. "I respond to the call of a sincere devotee even when he says Madhava only once with a pure heart." The rituals done by people without feelings from the heart are dry and lifeless. They are like the mirage in a desert where you see water but it cannot quench your thirst. **Even while singing Bhajans, you should utter the names from the depth of the heart, not concentrating on *Raga* and *Thala* (Tune and Beat).**

A young student, who had spoken earlier, referred to Shirdi Sai taking two rupees from devotees. The two rupees represented faith and devotion. When both join, it can grow into a big tree and yield the fruit of Divine Grace. Today is observed as Children's Day all over the world. Parents should not hesitate to correct the children when they go wrong. Here is an episode from the Ramayana which illustrates how a devotee who seeks nothing but the love of God is rewarded by the Lord in ample measure.

How Rama rewarded His devotee

Rama was giving away all his possessions before leaving for the forest. An aged Brahmana, who was staggering on his feet, came to Rama seeking His dharshan. When Rama asked him what he wanted, he replied that he didn't want anything and he came only to have a look at Rama as he was not sure he would live till Rama returned from the forest after 14 years. Rama was so much moved by the pure heart of the Brahmana that he insisted that the old man should receive some gift from him. Submitting to Rama's will, the Brahmana agreed to receive the gift. Rama then asked the Brahmana to throw a stick as far as he could. All the land covered by the place where the stick landed would be his.

The old Brahmana said: "Though I have no desire I have to obey the command of my king." He threw the stick chanting the name of Rama. It covered a large area, which Rama gifted to the Brahmana. The Brahmana, whose name was Thrijata, said: "Oh Rama, why should I have this land? My

gathi (fate), *sthithi* (position), *mathi* (mind) and *sampathi* (wealth) are all yours only. That is why I came to see you."

Rama said, "Such persons as you are the pride of our society."

Today, in the Kali Yuga, it is extremely rare to find such persons. Selfishness and greed are rampant everywhere. Parents have a duty to shape their children as ideal sons of the nation. Students who have acquired proximity with Sai should develop more and more spiritual wisdom. Get rid of negative thoughts first. Then try to develop good thoughts. You are living in Swami's Ashram. How far are you following the code of conduct relating to Ashram life? There is no use in keeping only the body in the Ashram, and letting the mind roam elsewhere. You should have only *Daiva Chinthana* (thoughts of God) in your heart.

Service without idea of self is the very first step in the spiritual progress of man.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14. See the One in the many

Date: 13 May 1994 / Location: Brindavan

STUDENTS! You should know at the outset the aim and significance of education. Education is for elevation from the mundane level to the divine. Generally, you repeat the prayer: "Thvameva mathacha pitha thvameva thvameva bandhuscha sakha thvameva." This prayer smacks of dualism. Why should you go on establishing such different relationships with God? The right way is to say "I am you; You are me." This is true spiritually. That is why the Vedas proclaim "Thath thvam Asi, Ayam Atma Brahma, Aham Brahmasmi." "I am the Atma and Brahman" is the essence of Vedhic teaching. This is the easiest path to realisation. You should consider the Divine as One only which is manifest in many forms. All the forms are creations of the mind.

Arjuna asks Krishna in the Geetha- "Chanchalam-hi-manah Krishna! Pramadhi Balavadhrudahm Thasyaham Nigraham Manye Vayoriva Sudhushkaram" (The mind verily is restless, oh Krishna! It is turbulent, strong and obstinate. I deem it as hard to control as the wind). If you go on cultivating relationships of various types, the mind is set wavering endlessly: To set it at rest will be extremely difficult. This is not the right type of devotion.

Developing vision of unity is not difficult

Narasimhan (in his speech earlier) said that it is difficult to comprehend the oneness in the many. In My (Svami's) opinion, there is nothing easier than this. Japa, Puuja, Yajna and ritualistic worship are more difficult. You consider it hard to see unity in the diversity in the world because you do not have the proper vision. Supposing you want to pick up your kerchief, you can do so easily if you open your eyes and look for it. If you are blind, it will be difficult to pick it up. Similarly, a person in ignorance will be in frustration and confusion. The easiest path is to feel "I am you, You are I," so that there is no other object. You are the "Seen" Everything that you see is the seen. When the vision is concentrated on the Atma within, both are one. When you get the feeling "I am you" there is no scope for any worry. This is the easiest royal

path to comprehend the Reality. Without understanding this, people waste their lives in the process of meditation and other futile pursuits. You are going on adding to your objects of attachment from the moment you are born in the world. First, you have mother and father, then brothers, sisters, relatives and friends. After marriage, another set of relatives and friends are added through your spouse. Thus attachment goes on multiplying.

On the other hand, if you go on detaching yourself from various relationships one after another, your attachments get reduced and you develop detachment or Vairagya leading to liberation. Attachment and detachment relate to external objects. Divinity is in closest proximity to you, but it takes time to understand divinity.

Three teachers in everyone's life

There are three teachers for everyone. The first are the 'Parents.' They sacrifice their lives to give comfort to their children. Parents teach their children in a practical way by taking good care of them. The second teacher is the 'Preceptor' who guides the student in exercising his discrimination and taking the right path towards realising the divinity within him. The third teacher is your own 'Conscience.' This is divine and always helps one to take the correct decision. When anyone tries to commit a sinful act or speak an untruth, the Conscience revolts and warns him that he is not right. In the Ramayana, we have the example of Rama who went to the forest in obedience to the command of his father. This caused sadness to the people of Ayodhya. Even great sages like Vashishttha were in grief. Rama was the embodiment of righteousness and the repository of all good qualities. Though he was still young, his administrative skill was unparalleled. Bharatha and Shathrughna, on arrival at Ayodhya, learnt about Rama's departure to the forest and felt so shocked and grieved that they did not wish to stay even for a moment in Ayodhya and decided to go to the forest to request Rama to return to Ayodhya and take up the rulership of the kingdom as he alone was the right one to rule. All the people of Ayodhya followed them. Even Vashishttha accompanied them to reinforce their efforts to bring Rama back to Ayodhya. All of them entreated Rama to return to Ayodhya and take over

the reins of administration of the kingdom.

Sage Jabali, who was a Jnani, argued like an atheist. He said that one has several fathers and mothers during one's various births in previous lives and such relationships are only temporary like passing clouds. "In your case," the sage said, "your father is already dead and gone. There is no point in your adhering to the command of a person who is no more. By your not agreeing to rule the kingdom, you are causing a lot of distress to the people who may be led astray. You should not ignore the wishes of the living multitude in trying to honour the words of a dead person. So I entreat you to accede to the requests of the people and return to Ayodhya to rake over the reins of the ruler."

Rama always honoured the plighted word

Rama replied calmly; "Oh Sage! I thought you are a very learned savant and scholar wellversed in the scriptures. It is not becoming of you to argue in this manner. I consider it rather unbecoming on your part to ask me to ignore the command of my father because he has passed away I have promised to carry out his command. I have given my word and I am still alive. How can I go back on my word? It is better to give up the body than to go back on one's word. One should be ever grateful to one's parents, whether they are alive or dead. An ungrateful son should be considered blind and worthless. Many pray to the Sun as Himagnaya namah. When the sun rises, the snow melts away. (Hima means snow). He is also worshipped as Thamognaya namhah, that is, one who is the destroyer of Thamas (darkness). Darkness cannot coexist with light. He is also called Krithagnagnaya namah. He is the destroyer of a person who has no gratitude. It is the Sun that gives light to the eyes to see. The sun renders blind those who are ungrateful. I shall be the worst sinner. All people will follow me and become sinners. Do you want me to set such a bad example? It is ridiculous to think that I will go back on my word." On hearing these words of high wisdom uttered by Rama, Jabali prostrated before him and begged his pardon. He said, "Oh Rama! I am not against Truth! There is nothing that is not known to you. I had made use of this argument only to support the people of Ayodhya, who love you and want to return to Ayodhya

to rifle over them."

Rama explains to rishis the essence of Divinity

Rama always set a fine example for the people to follow. He sent Seetha to the forest on hearing an ordinary citizen talking disparagingly about Seetha being taken back by Rama even after she had been in the custody of his enemy, Ravana, for some months. Rama did this out of respect for popular opinion. Rama has established such an ideal for society to follow at all times. That is why He is hailed as Purushotthama (the noblest of all Purushas). In justifying his action in following the command of his father he explained to the Rishis elaborately the essence of divinity. In the Geetha Krishna says: Kavim puranam Anushasitharam Anotaneeyan samanumaredhyah Sarvasya dhatharam Achinthyaruupam Adhithyavarnam Thamasah parasthath. (The Being who is wise, ancient, the ruler, smaller than the smallest, the sustainer of all, inconceivable form, resplendent like the sun and beyond the darkness of ignorance). There is no Kavi (poet) other than the Lord. All that is in verse form is not poetry. "Thrikala vakyam kavi" (The Poet is one who has a vision of the past, the present and the future). Man knows only the past and the present. How can one know the future? How is the Divine Poet able to see the future too? Because God is Omniscient and beyond time and space. He is not affected by the passage of time. He is changeless and permanent.

No one has the ability to punish the mind

Purana is ordinarily construed as meaning very old. But here it refers to the Consciousness which is pervading the whole body (city or pura of nine gates). It pervades everything. Anushasitharam (One who enforces the law). When a criminal is punished by a court after being found guilty, he is kept in prison. It is only the body that gets punished. But the real culprit is the mind. No one has got any right or ability to punish the mind which really causes the convict to commit the crime. The mind can travel anywhere even when a person is in prison. The Government or Police have no control over the mind. It is only the supreme power of the Divine that can have control over the mind. The effulgence of the Lord is equal to that of one crore of Suns. The Lord's face is

beaming with the brilliance of the Sun. On being struck by the radiant effulgence in Rama's face, Shabari became ecstatic and described it as that of the blemishless full moon. The faces of present-day men look like a jungle with dense growth of beards and sideburns. Brilliance is absent. Rama's face was spotless because his heart was pure and was filled with feelings of sacrifice. He never did anything for himself. Whatever he did was only for Lokasamrakshana (the welfare of the world). Ramo Vighrahan Dharmah (Rama was the embodiment of Dharma). If one follows Dharma, he is protected by the same Dharana. Rama sacrificed all his comforts and enjoyments of royal life and endured the privations of forest life. Rama is to be taken as the ideal for the students. They should respect and obey their parents' words. The Guru, teacher, comes only after the parents.

Total renunciation leads to Self-Realisation

It is only when you reach the highest level of Sarvasangaparithyagi (one who had renounced all worldly attachments) that one can attain Self-Realisation. Prahladha had realised Puurnathvam (complete identity with the Para Brahmam, Supreme Power). He was bereft of all earthly attachments.

Saint Thyagaraja sang "Cheemalo Brahmalo" (the same Hari is in an ant and in Brahmam). When you acquire this Abhedha bhavam (non-duality), you reach the highest stage. But when an ant crawls over your body,, you don't hesitate to kill the ant. You worship the figure of a snake in the belief that God is in it, but when a live snake comes before you, you hasten to kill it. This is indicative of the way of the world. As long as you are leading the ordinary householder's life, you have to practise morality, respecting parents, loving friends and serving society.

Keep away from the ten-fold sins - the three physical, the four verbal and the three mental. Physical tendencies are: injury to life, adulterous desire and theft. The verbal sins are: false alarm, cruel speech, jealous talk and lies. The mental attitudes are: greed, envy and the denial of God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

15. The power of faith

Date: **May 1994** / Location: **Brindavan**

COMPLETE faith is most essential if you want to experience Divinity. There should not be even an iota of doubt. One living without faith in the Divine is like a lifeless corpse. I would relate a story to illustrate the power of faith. A young boy used to go from his village to school which was in a nearby town. He had to cross a forest en route to the town. Generally he used to return home well before sunset. One day; it so happened that he had to leave the school late in the evening and darkness set in. The boy was afraid to walk through the forest in darkness and told his mother that he was afraid to walk in the night without company. His mother said: "Why are you afraid? Whenever you are in need of company, shout aloud calling your brother. He will help you." The boy asked her: "Who is my brother?" The mother replied: "He is none other than Lord Krishna. God is mother, father, teacher, brother, relative, friend and all. Whenever you are in trouble don't hesitate to call on him for help." The boy had full faith in his mother's words. In these days, even if God himself tells, nobody believes. That is why Jesus declared: "If I were to be a child everyday for a while, with full faith in my mother, how happy I would be!"

God is searching for a real devotee

Another day the boy was returning home from school late at night in the darkness. He shouted: "Anna Krishna" (Brother Krishna). After a few moments Krishna appeared before the boy in the form of a lad and told him- "Why do you fear when I am here? I shall escort you home." He accompanied the boy to the village outskirts and disappeared. The boy told his mother how the brother helped him true to her words. The mother said: "He helps not only you, but everyone who seeks his help." From that time onwards, the boy used to call the brother whenever he needed his help and Krishna never failed to respond. Gradually he picked up courage.. When you have full faith, God will surely help you and make you fearless. People who have faith in God will never be let down. But those who have no faith suffer. You need not search

for God. It is God who is searching for a real devotee. The mind's speed is unparalleled. It is only because of lack of control of mind one gets into bad temper, which causes loss of discrimination and spells ultimate ruin. It is imperative that one should control the temper and avoid getting angry.

One who yields to anger is bound to suffer

Let me cite an incident from the life of Babu Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India. Rajendra Prasad had a very good servant by name Rathna who was exceptionally faithful and served him for a long time to the satisfaction of his master. One day he was asked to clean his room. Rajendra Prasad had kept a pen given to him by Mahatma Gandhi, in one of his books. When the servant was cleaning the table the book fell down and the nib broke. He became nervous but told his master the truth begging his pardon for his mistake. On hearing this, Rajendra Prasad shouted at him in rage and asked him to get out and not to show his face again as the pen was a highly valuable gift from Mahatma which he had broken. Then the servant pleaded that he could not survive without him and sought his forgiveness. But Rajendra Prasad was in no mood to listen to him and went out bidding his servant to get out of his sight.

During the night, Rajendra Prasad could not sleep as the memory of his having driven away his servant was haunting him. When he got up next morning he missed his usual morning coffee which Rathna would usually serve him. He reflected over his behaviour and felt sorry for having sent out such a faithful servant for no big fault. He realised that it was his own mistake to have kept the pen carelessly in a book instead of keeping it in a safe place. He sent word to Rathna and took him back seeking his pardon saying: "Rathna you are a good boy. It was my mistake to have kept the pen in the book. So you must excuse me for my rash action." He asked him to continue to serve him till the end of his life. Anger comes from temper inside and one who yields to this bout of temper is bound to suffer. You should control anger and avoid talking or acting while in an angry mood. Another instance of how anger gets the better of even a very good person can be cited from the Mahabharatha.

Krishna seeks the help of sage Dhuurvasa

Ashvathama prayed to Kali to help him to keep his vow of killing the Pandavas before sunset next day and got a sword from her. Dhraupadhi heard about this and said- "The Pandavas are the five life-principles and I am the sixth. How can I live after they are gone?" So saying, she prayed to Krishna as He was always their saviour whenever they were in trouble. Krishna appeared before her and asked her why she had called Him. She explained how Ashvathama had obtained a sword from Kali with Her blessings for his killing the Pandavas before sunset next day Krishna said: "The word of Mother Goddess has to be fulfilled. At the same time the Pandavas have to be protected as they are my devotees. I shall have to devise a master plan." He summoned sage Dhuurvasa. Though God can act on His own, sometimes He uses others as instrument. Dhuurvasa was glad to have dharshan of Lord Krishna and asked Krishna as to why he was called.

When Krishna said his help was needed, he remarked that everyone needed God's help and it was strange that God was seeking his help. Dhuurvasa said: "Lord, I shall surely follow your command." Krishna disclosed His Master Plan. He asked Dhuurvasa to prepare a pit large enough to hide the Pandavas therein. He said: "You should spread some branches of tree to cover the pit and sit on the top of the pit. Ashvathama will come to you. You may tell the truth, but change only the tone." Ashvathama came in the afternoon and prayed to Dhuurvasa in all humility to disclose the whereabouts of the Pandavas, as he was a Thrikalajnani (one who knows the past, the present and the future). Dhuurvasa said in an angry tone: "The Pandavas are under my feet." As everyone knew the effects of Dhuurvasa's rage, Ashvathama did not dare to proceed further and incur the sage's dreaded wrath. He slipped away from the place. By that time the sun had set and the Pandavas were saved.

God's signs of pretending to get angry are only for the good of others and to protect humanity. God has to act in different ways in different situations. God has no anger in Himself. When He takes human form He has to act as a

human.

some stories.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16. Share your love

Date: 05 June 1994 / Location: Brindavan

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! Human life is noble, sacred and precious. The way to realise this truth is to feel that you are a part of the Divine. Only human beings are endowed with the faculty to experience this truth. It is, therefore, the duty of every human being to strive for the realisation of this truth.

The human body is constituted by the Pancha Bhuuthas (five elements), Pancha Koshas (five sheaths) - Annamaya (food), Pranamaya (Life-force), Manomaya (mental), Vijnanamaya (intelligence) and Anandhamaya (the sheath of Bliss). While other living beings have only the first three sheaths, the human species alone has all the five. Man is encompassed by attachment to worldly desires, which produce delusions of various kinds related to the three gunas (Sathva, Rajas and Thamas). To attain liberation man has to rid himself of these desires. The mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation. It is only by controlling the mind that man can achieve liberation.

Everyone is proud about the body, the mind and the intellect, forgetting the indwelling Atma, which is the basis for all of them. The Atma has no birth or death. It is the root of a tree, which sustains the branches, the leaves, flowers and fruits. It is the basis on which the superstructure of life rests.

The meaning of true renunciation

The Vedas have declared that man can attain immortality by thyaga (renunciation) and not by any other means, actions, wealth or progeny. What is it that has to be renounced? One has to renounce one's bad qualities. Men today are only human in form, but are filled with beastly qualities. To manifest their inherent divine nature, men have to cultivate love of God and fear of sin and adhere to sanghaneethi (social morality). When people have fear of sin and love of God, they will not indulge in immoral acts. Thereby morality in society will be automatically ensured. It is meaningless to be born

as a human being and lead an animal existence. God can be known only by experience and not by experiments. Sadhana is needed for this purpose. Men who are engaged in exploring space do not make the slightest effort to explore the Divine within them. Of what use are experiments aimed at exploring space, while there is no genuine cultivation of human qualities and the practice of such basic virtues as showing reverence for the mother, the father and the preceptor? Everyone should act upto the motto- "Help ever-hurt never." Every educated person should engage himself or herself in selfless service to society, with humility and a pure heart. All academic distinctions or even observance of spiritual practices are of little use if there is no love in the heart. The heart is called Hridhaya. It is made up of the two words, Hri and Dhaya (compassion). The Lord is described as Hridhayavasi (the Indweller in the heart). Love and Compassion are inherent in every person. Each has to share his love with others. Failure to share one's love is gross ingratitude to society, to which one owes everything. One should give one's love freely to others and receive love in return. This is the deep significance of human life.

Man's life is meaningful only because he can use it to see God. The goal of life is the final merging in the sea, God. You should not fill life with the world; that will make it a vanity fair, an insanity fair.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

17. Purity in thought leads to Divinity

Date: 26 June 1994 / Location: Brindavan

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! For the development human personality, the development of the mind and the refinement of the heart are essential. All actions of man originate in the mind. The mind functions through thoughts. Hence, thoughts are the root cause of man's actions. Humanness is the outcome of thoughts. When the thoughts are pure, the mind is also pure. With a purified mind, man's conduct becomes pure. Thus, for the purity or impurity of one's actions, thoughts are primarily responsible. It is easy for man to stand but it is difficult for him to run. But, in the case of the mind, staying still is difficult, but running is easy. This is the difference between man and his mind. The mind runs about swiftly. This is based on the power of the thoughts. When a stone is cast in a well, a series of ripples start from the point where the stone fell. From there, the ripples go upto the edge of the well and cover the entire well. In the same manner, when the stone of thought is cast on the lake of the mind, the ripples started by it fill all the senses and limbs in the body. When the thought is a pure and sacred one, the ripples emanating in the mind fill all the senses and limbs in the body; from head to toe, with pure reactions. This pure thought, entering the eye, purifies the vision. The same thought entering the ear, makes it listen to sacred sounds. Entering the mouth, this pure thought brings about purity in speech. Permeating the hands, the sacred thought induces them to engage themselves in sacred acts. The sacred ripples from the mind entering the feet, induce them to go on pilgrimages. If the thoughts are impure, they travel in ripples to the senses and induce to indulge in unholy acts.

Hence, the well-known saying "The mind is made up of thoughts and aberrations." It follows that people should not give room for bad thoughts, bad associations or bad relationships.

Good company redeems one's entire life

All that is good or bad in man is based upon his good or bad behaviour. This

conduct is traced to the mind, which itself is dependent on thoughts. Therefore, to have good thoughts you must cultivate good company. Good thoughts appear small in the beginning like one's shadow at noon. But as the day advances, the shadow lengthens. Likewise, the influence of the good thoughts also grows as time passes. In due course it acquires a magnificent form. It attains a highly sacred place. It confers divine bliss and redeems one's entire life.

Thus, sathsanga (company of the good) is supremely important. Good company, by promoting good thoughts, leads to the highest achievements in life. Bad company, on the contrary, is like the shadow caused by the morning sun. At dawn, the shadow produced by the sun is long. As the morning progresses, the shadow gets shorter and shorter. Ultimately, it gets limited to one's feet. This is how the effects of bad company operate. At the beginning the gains seem to be large. But as time goes on, the gains vanish. Human values get destroyed.

Why Sathsanga is important

The power of thoughts is immense. Thoughts survive unchanged the death of a man. Therefore, everyone should foster noble thoughts. Bad thoughts should not be allowed to enter the mind. Bad company should be avoided as much as possible. The reason is: For Yogis meditation is important. For those who wish to sacrifice, wealth is important. For devotees, singing (poem) is important. For the sick, medicine is essential. The company of the sick will make you sick. The company of Yogis will make you a Yogi. Through yoga, you realise the Divine. Through yoga you control the mind. Hence, the importance of Sathsanga. What is Sath-sanga (the company of the good)? Does it refer to the company of persons performing bhajans or to a group of devotees? Or does it refer to association with persons engaged in social service activities? No. Sath refers to that which is everlasting. What is it that is permanent? It is Divinity. Sath-sangam means cultivating the company of the Divine. Where is the Divine? It is within each body. The body consists of Angas (limbs). These limbs are associated with Jangam (the Life-Force). The Life-Force exercises the power of discrimination to determine what is right

and what is wrong. Today, this discriminating faculty is not used properly, with the result man becomes a victim of the evil forces of Sangam (lust, anger, greed, pride, etc).

Sath-Sanga really means the company of Sath (good). In another sense, good company means the company of good thoughts, good feelings. So company does not refer to individuals. For friendship or enmity, one's thoughts are the root cause. Who is an enemy? Who is a friend? One's thoughts are one's friends or enemies. Hence it is said- "The mind is the cause of mankind's bondage or liberation."

Samadhi is a state of union with Sath

What does Samadhi mean? Is it a state of trance? No. Is it a state of emotional utterance? No. Is it absorption in one's self?. No. When people refer to a man in trance or in unconscious state as one experiencing Samadhi, they are thoroughly mistaken. It may be a case of hysteria or of epilepsy. It may be the result of some strong emotion, or one caused by excitement. The true meaning of Samadhi is: it is a state of union with Sath. Sama (equal) + Dhi (mind), equal mindedness is Samadhi. The proper term is Samadhi, not Samadhi. To treat alike pleasure and pain, heat and cold, darkness and light is true Samadhi. This is the quality of Sath. It has no pleasure or pain. It is all-pervading. (Bhagavan recited a poem in which the Gopikas describe Krishna as the Unknowable Infinite Divine, who is inscrutable and whose ways are baffling). The question is often asked: "Where is God?" And the usual answer is that "He is in Vaikuntha or in Svarga (Heaven), or in Kailasha." Not at all. The Lord has nothing to do in these places. The Lord is in Naraka (Hell). As the denizens of Hell are perpetually suffering and calling out to God, the Lord remains there. It is among those who seek peace that the Lord dwells. A hospital is needed to tend the sick. Where there is no ailment there is no need for a hospital. Likewise, the Divine doctor goes to those who are in pain and distress. "Vaidhyo Narayano Harih" (Narayana or Hari is the doctor). Therefore, where there is humanity there is the Divine.

Descent of the Divine in human form

The Divine descends to the earth in human form, declare the scriptures, to allay the sufferings of those who are sick of body or of mind. Man today seeks to have a vision of the supra-human transcendental Being. This is sheer folly, because as long as one has the feeling that he is a human being he can aspire to see God only in human form and is not entitled to see His transcendental form. When one transcends the sense of his humanness, he acquires the privilege to envision the Transcendental Divinity. That is the reason why Rama and Krishna came as Avatars in human form. To claim that when you close your eyes and meditate you see an effulgent light is only a delusion. There are innumerable things that are not visible to your naked eyes and which are beyond your ken. How do you expect to see them or know them? You know only the human form. So, at the outset, try to understand humanness. You must understand the Life Principle that animates the human. From the Life-Principle you should seek to enquire into the nature of the Divine.

Atma is present in all

Dheha + Atma is Dhehatma (body + Spirit). Jeeva + Atma is Jeevatma (Life + Spirit). Parama + Atma is Paramatma (the Supreme + Self). Although Dheha (the body), Jeeva (the individual) and Param (the Supreme) are different terms, Atma (Spirit) is common and is equally present in all the three. The Atma is all-pervading. That is termed Sath (Being). It may be likened to sugar which retains its sweetness in whatever way it may be used. Chith (Awareness) is subject to change and movement. Even if it is carried to a high level, it tends to come down. When you mix sugar in water, you have neither sugar nor water, but only syrup. When Sath, which represents the Divine and Chith, which represents the Life Principle come together, you have Anandha (Bliss). This is Sath-Chith-Anandha, It is like an ocean in which a myriad creatures come into existence and disappear like waves. Their names and forms vary but essentially they are the same as the ocean. They are all living beings which have emerged from Sath-Chith-Anandha.

When I begin my discourse with the words Divyatma svaruupulara

(Embodiments of Divine Atma), I intend to convey that the same Divine Spirit is in every one of you. Just as the ocean, the wave and the foam contain the same water, the Spirit that is present in the body; in the individual being and in the Supreme is one and the same. To experience this spiritual oneness, your way of life should be holy. This can be accomplished only by entertaining sacred thoughts which lead to good conduct.

Deem yourself as Divine

The Divine can be experienced by human beings only as manifested in the human form. Rama and Krishna are worshipped in the forms painted by Ravi Varma. If the Kodhanda (Rama's bow) and the flute (in the hands of the Krishna figure) are taken away, only the simple human figures remain. The human being is referred to as Nara. Ra means that which is perishable. Na means Not. Nara refers therefore to that which is imperishable in man, the Atma (Spirit), Narayana, a manifestation of the Divine Spirit. Consequently, sorrow should be alien to him. He should shed no fear.

Deem yourself as Divine. Live with this firm conviction. The divinity in every being should be revered. You have to recognise unity in diversity. "Beings are many, but breath is one." This may be experienced by everyone in the process of inhaling and exhaling. (Svami demonstrated how with every breath, everyone repeats the manthra, So-Ham - " He am I" or "I am God"). Do not give room to any bad thoughts. The body is a temple of the Divine and no evil thoughts should be allowed to enter it. Man should strive to reach the sublime, regardless of difficulties, and troubles.

Embodiments of the Divine! Develop good thoughts and feelings of sacrifice. Cherish divine spiritual thoughts. Cultivate friendliness. To hail God as father and mother and not to have fraternal feelings towards one and all is treason to God. You should cultivate unity as the children of God and live in harmony in the company of the good and the godly. Share the nectar of love that is in you with one and all. Do not bear ill-will towards anyone. Speak sweetly to everyone. Chant the Lord's name which will help you to cross the ocean of mundane existence.

"My country is India. My religion is the religion of India. My ideals and traditions have been born in India." You must develop such thoughts in your mind. You must develop great respect and attachment to the culture that has flourished in this country from time immemorial. You will have to dedicate your life for the future of this country.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18. Cherish the sweetness of sacrifice

Date: 03 July 1994 / Location: Brindavan

The cosmos is governed by the Divine; The Divine is controlled by Truth; That Truth is subject to noble beings; The noble are Divinity itself EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! The entire Cosmos, consisting of animate and inanimate objects, is dependent on God. The Divine is governed 'by Truth, That Truth is governed by Uthamadheenam (noble beings). The noblest being is Divine. Every human being is inherently noble. It is this nobility that constitutes his divinity. The Divine manifests Himself in human form. There is no need to search for the Divine as a distinct entity somewhere else. Man must strive to realise the Divinity within him. From the earliest times, the sages looked upon human life as madhuram (sweet). This sweet life is associated with Madhava, the Divine and not anything else. We must see that this Sweetness is properly cherished. Only when this sweetness is safeguarded will man be true to his human nature. Without this sweetness, man ceases to be human. To experience this sweetness the spirit of sacrifice is essential. This nectarine sweetness is the outcome of thyaga (sacrifice). As the Vedas declare: "Not by deeds, or progeny, or wealth is immortality gained. It is realised only through sacrifice." Whatever good deeds one may do, whatever wealth one may acquire, without sacrifice the Divine cannot be experienced.

Bliss-filled sweetness pervades man from head to foot

It is out of the feeling of sacrifice that the nectarine sweetness arises in man. That sweetness is Divinity itself. Krishna is extolled as "Madhuradhipathe! madhuram! madhuram!" (Lord of Madhura, who is all sweetness). When the Lord is described as the "Master of Madhura," what is this sweetness? The heart is sweet, the feeling is sweetness. The love (one feels) is sweet. The action (of the devotee) is sweet. The anandha (bliss) is sweet. The Atma is sweet. This blissfilled sweetness pervades man from head to foot. Unfortunately, man today makes no effort to recognise the sweetness that is in him. All his thoughts, feelings and desires are directed towards the external world. Not even a small fraction of it is turned towards the heart within.

Bharatheeya culture contains illustrations of this sweetness. There is nothing in the world sweeter than the love of a mother for the child. For the well-being of the child the mother is ready to sacrifice her all, including her life. Such nectarine sweetness is manifest only in the mother who is the embodiment of the Divine. Hence, the Upanishathic injunction: "Mathru dhevo bhava!" (Esteem the mother as God). Likewise, the heart of the father who fosters the child, and develops his personality, is also sweet. The Upanishath, therefore, enjoins everyone to treat the father as God. Mother and father are equal to God.

Therefore, at the outset, one has to honour one's parents. The mother is the visible manifestation of God. If ignoring the divinity of the mother, who is visible and adorable, one seeks to worship what is invisible, it must be regarded as a sign of ignorance. God is subtle form. He is invisible and is infinite and immeasurable. The mother is a visible and tangible proof of Divinity. When a child is born, the first person it beholds is the mother. The mother bears patiently many travails for the sake of the child. It is sweet to love such a mother. You may have love for God. But if you have no love for the mother who is physically present before you, how can you love the invisible Divine?

One's foremost obligation is to revere one's parents

People tend to worship stones, but do not revere living beings. Worship of inanimate idols has been in vogue from ancient times. But people are forgetting to revere their living parents. One's first and foremost obligation is to revere one's parents who are in flesh and blood, who are verily your life itself.

In the Ramayana, there is the following illustration-Before leaving for the forest, Shri Rama approached his father, Dhasharatha, and said: "I am not sorry I have to go to the forest. Not does it pain me that you have given this command to me. I am to uphold your plighted word. Of what use is a son who does not uphold the word of his father? I derive the greatest sweetness from carrying out my father's word of honour." It follows from this that children

should respect and carry out the words of parents. That alone testifies to the true quality of a son.

Life acquires sweetness when parents are revered

Love is the primary source of sweetness for man. There is nothing greater in this world than love. Life acquires sweetness when one reveres one's father and mother. Here is another example from the Ramayana.

Immediately after Rama broke Shiva's bow, Emperor Janaka declared that he would offer Seetha in marriage to Rama. Janaka brought Seetha to the assembly hall. Rama, however, without any hesitation, but in sweet firm words, declared that he would not agree to the wedding without the approval of his parents. Rama said that he owed his body to his parents and that he would abide by their wishes. He declared that till his parents arrived (in Mithila) he would not even set his eyes on Seetha. " I will consent to the marriage only after their approval." In this manner, Rama rejoiced in setting an example to the world of ideal conduct for all to follow at all times. Sage Vishvamithra also waited for the arrival of Rama's parents. In another episode in Ramayana, sage Vashishttha accompanied Bharatha to meet Rama in the forest. Intervening in the argument between Bharatha and Rama (over the issue of Rama's return to Ayodhya to take over the kingdom), Vashishttha said: "It is your right and duty to rule over the kingdom. You are the eldest son of Dhasharatha. You are endowed with all the talents. You are well versed in the scriptures relating to Dharma (the code of Right Conduct). You have won the affections of the people. You are committed to the well-being of the people." Vashishttha appealed in this manner to Rama to assume the reins of rulership. Speaking sweetly, eschewing harshness of any kind, Rama replied; "Guruji! Without honouring the plighted word of the father, if I disobey the command of my deceased father, I will be rendering my life worthless. My primary duty is to carry out my father's injunctions. I may even transgress the command of the preceptor, but I will not go against the command of my father." Thus, carrying out the commands of his father, Rama spent fourteen years in exile and demonstrated to the world the joy and fulfilment to be derived from such an exemplary life.

Qualities that constitute sweetness in man

Human life should be sweetened by honouring one's pledged word. Sweetness in life consists in setting an example in righteous living to those around one. There is sweetness in doing a good turn to one who has done you a good turn. Gratitude is sweet. These qualities constitute the madhuryam (sweetness) in man. You should be grateful all your life to one who has helped you. You are the big man that you are today because of all the love and care bestowed on you in your early years by your parents. Therefore, to experience the love of your parents you should show your gratitude to them. This is a debt you owe to them.

Alas! in this Kali age children show no regard for the parents. This is the disastrous sign of modern rimes. In any circumstance you have to show respect and love your parents. You owe everything to them, from your flesh and blood, to the food you consume and the garments you wear. To remember with gratitude the parents who are no more is an act of sacrifice. It is a pity that people today are not aware of the supreme greatness of sacrifice. There is sacrifice in every aspect of life. The joy to be derived from sacrifice is incalculable. One has to learn the supreme value of sacrifice from one's own parents who sacrifice so much for the sake of their children. It is your duty to keep your parents happy as long as they live.

The four types of human beings

People today become scholars and acquire great wealth. But all that they achieve as a result is conceit - the arrogance of study and riches. People cherish the sweetness of wealth and not the sweetness of love. Love alone constitutes true wealth. There are no riches above love. Through love you must develop the spirit of sacrifice. Fill everyone of your actions with love. Human life should be filled with love and sweetness, which are shared with others. Otherwise, it ceases to be human.

There are four types of human beings: the Divine in the human, the demonic

human, the human man and the animal man. The four qualities of the divine, the demonic, the human and the animal are present in human beings in varying degrees. "Brahmaratho Dhaivah" (The man who is installed in human is divine). This implies that the man who is wedded to truth, who performs righteous actions, who renders help to others, who thinks about the well-being of others, who indulges in acts of charity and beneficence, is filled with Divine qualities. He is immersed in the knowledge of the Brahman. "Sathyadharmaparo marthyah" (He is a human being who adheres to Truth and Righteousness). A true human being should uphold truth and right conduct. If truth and righteousness are safeguarded, the nation will be safe and secure. It is not the army or bombs that will protect the nation. Only Truth and Righteousness will protect the nation. "Madhya pana ratho dushtah" (The demonic human being revels in intoxicating drinks). Eating meat and drinking liquor are demonic vices. Those indulging in drink lose all sense of propriety, have no compassion or love and become demons.

A selfish man manifests his animal nature

"Jnanena shuunyah pashubhis samanah" (One who lacks wisdom is equal to an animal). Jnana is the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong, the permanent and the transient. Animality in man is indicated by the absence of this jnana. A real human being has to have this power of discrimination. He should know what to say, when and to whom, and he should know how to behave towards elders, towards friends and different kinds of people. A person who is ignorant in these matters is only an animal. Jnana, in its deeper sense, means Atma-Jnana (knowledge of the Self). This is absent in modern man. One who is selfish and self-centred is manifesting his animal nature. Only when self-interest is coupled with concern for others can one be truly human. Without manners one cannot be a man. Without good behaviour one is not a boy. Without discipline one cannot be a devotee. A previous speaker had said that the hand-kerchief lent beauty to Bhagavan Baba. This is absurd. The true nature of beauty was described by the poet Mallamma in Kannada. She said that to a pond the lotus lends beauty. The moon imparts beauty to the sky. For a devotee, the vibhuuthi on his forehead confers beauty. Without virtue, life ceases to be beautiful. Virtue implies

conduct which evokes the approbation of others. It must be exemplary and confer delight on others. It should not cause harm to others or appear ludicrous. It should bring a good name.

Let your speech be always sweet

People should ponder over what is their aim in life, whither they are going and what they should achieve before embarking on any activity. In this context, the Ramayana furnishes a lesson for all. Dhasharatha, without any concern for the future, granted two unconditional boons to Kaikeyi in return for the help which she rendered to him. Ours of thoughtless love for her, he gave two boons saying that she could have what she wanted, whenever she might choose to ask. She chose the time and the boons she wanted. She asked for the exile of Rama and the crowning of Bharatha. The lesson to be learnt from this is that when you give your word, you must be aware of all its implications. Promises made thoughtlessly lead to grievous situations. One has to stand by one's word.

Truth endows one's life with sweetness. Loving words sweeten life. Let your speech be always sweet, whatever be the circumstances. Just as sugarcane has to go through crushing and other processes before you can get candy from it, the body has to go through certain ordeals to manifest its sweet nature. These are termed: Samskara - the good thoughts, good feelings and good actions which bring about refinement. Love is essential for their refinement. Hence, love is the means to realise the nectarine sweetness of life.

No one who has trodden spiritual path, and engaged himself in the spiritual process has escaped calumny and cruelty. Mohammed, who sought to establish the primacy of the One Formless Absolute, had a large share of persecution, defamation, and privation; Jesus, who attempted to rebuild mankind on the basis of Love, was crucified by little men who feared that their tiny towers of hate and greed will be toppled by his teaching.

Harishchandhra, who had resolved never to waver from Truth, was submitted to ordeal after ordeal each more terrifying than the previous one.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. Role of teachers, parents and Governments

Date: 19 July 1994 / Location: Brindavan

EMBODIMENTS of Divine love! Teachers! Students! Educationists! Despite all the knowledge one may have acquired, if one has no concern for the welfare of the world, all that knowledge is worthless. Without good qualities, all knowledge is useless. Without refinement in daily actions, vast scholarship will not confer renown. Conformity to rules, without morality, will not enhance one's worth. Will anyone respect you in the world if you display the arrogance of power, overstepping the limits? Going astray from Dharma, if you preach Dharma to others, Will you be deemed human at all? If you have not cherished fear of sin and not entertained the Love of God in your thoughts, what have you achieved so far? Leading a truly human life, be human at least from now onwards. Embodiments of love! What we need today is not a new system of education. Not do we need a new social system. Such changes will not serve to solve the problems we face. We need today men and women who are pure in mind and heart. In a society lacking in purity of mind and integrity of character, noble-minded human beings will be few. Without spirituality there will be neither purity, not morality not integrity. Where there are no men and women of noble character, the state will not flourish.

Bharath is like a multi-petalled rose

No country in the world has so many races, creeds and languages as the sacred land of Bharath. Bharath shines forth as a multi-racial garden with its many races and creeds and languages and cultures. The different creeds and cultures are like so many flowers in a garden. The varied manners and cultures contribute to the many faceted brilliance of the nation. The magnificence of this diversity is beyond description. Bharath is like a multi-petalled lotus. Bharath is the home of people who cherished Love as the way of the Spirit and Truth as the breath of their life. Unfortunately, lost in the pursuit of worldly, physical and material objects, the people have forgotten their basic divinity as human beings. It is in this context that the educational system has to be examined. Teachers have to consider the fundamental

features of this system. From early times, the ancient system of education developed a broad outlook and promoted virtues and morals which served to foster noble ideals in society. What are the changes we witness today in the educational set-up? Who is responsible in this sacred land of Bharath for moulding the young children of today into ideal citizens of tomorrow? It is only when this question is properly examined that we will find the right solution for our problems, Is the responsibility that of the parents? Or is it that of the teachers who enrich the intellects of the students? Or that of the national leaders who profess to strive for the progress of the nation? Or is it that of the administrators who are in charge of educational institutions? Or is it that of the writers who are producing the literature for the students and the public? The question may be asked whether all of them are discharging their respective duties properly Let them examine their hearts and furnish the answer. Only then we shall find the solutions to our educational problems.

Who is responsible for the indiscipline?

Among students discipline has almost totally declined. What is the means to restore this discipline on right lines? Is any one trying to find out the cause of indiscipline or the means to remedy the situation? Without seeking to find out who is responsible for this indiscipline, it is wrong to blame the students. They are not to blame. The truth is: The students are not being taught the greatness of the culture and ideals of Bharath through suitable books and writings. Are we teaching to our students the exemplary lives of those who struggled for freedom and gave even their lives for the sake of the country? Are we imparting to our students inspiration from the lives of great leaders like Bala Gangadhara Thilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandhra Pal and Nethaji Subhash Bose who asserted the nation's right to freedom? Are we teaching to our students the message of great men who proclaimed the supremacy of morality and character?

Students should be taught to develop good qualities

We do not impart to our students the lessons of our great epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha. Are we teaching to our students the story

of Shri Rama, who sacrificed his all to fulfill the promises of his father? Are they told about the sacrifice of Dharmaja who went into exile and lived on roots and leaves to uphold Dharma? Do they learn about the devotion of Shravanakumar, who did not spare himself in the service of his parents? Are the students taught anything about Ekalavya, who was prepared to offer anything desired by the preceptor as the debt he owed to him? Are we teaching our students the story of Prahladha, who rejoiced in chanting the Lord's name and demonstrated the infinite power of the Divine in coming to the rescue of the devotee? Are we imparting to them the great message of the Bhagavath Geetha, which is relevant not only to Bharath but to the entire world.? Are they receiving the message of the Buddha, who proclaimed the truth that there is no greater virtue than refraining from harming others?

Are they taught the significance of the compassion of Jesus? Are they told about the message of Prophet Mohammed? Are they taught the hymns of Nanak which glorify the unity of all faiths? Do they learn about courage and sacrifices made by great heroines like Jhansi Lakshmibai, Padhmini and others?

It is because such examples of noble conducts are not being taught to our students that their sense of patriotism is on the wane. Love of the country is turning into indifference. We have to develop in the students deep love for the country. Students should be taught how to use in a worthy and ideal manner their talents and abilities. Students today, without developing good qualities, are wasting their lives by bad association and giving free rein to their energies. Character alone is enduring. Students are going astray because their virtues are not cultivated.

All are to blame and not one single agency

Who are responsible for this? In the home, the parents are responsible, in schools and colleges, the teachers, and outside, the Governments which have failed to provide a proper system of education and the administrators who have not recognized their obligation to train young people on right lines. The responsibility thus rests on all of them and not on any one single agency. In

the homes, the parents should teach the children to cultivate good qualities and noble ideals. Bookish knowledge alone is not enough. It is superficial and not practical. Students need also general knowledge and common sense. The teachers, for their part, should impart to the students knowledge and skills which will enable them to lead ideal lives. Students today are getting involved in all kinds of petty agitational movements. Morality and discipline are not to be found. Educational institutions are growing in numbers but the quality of education is declining. The reason is that proper text-books are not made available to the children. Morality and character are confined to books. The hearts are filled with foul things. The hands are used for selfish purposes. This is the progress made in education today. One repays with harm the good done to him. One betrays the man that feeds him. Students mock at teachers. This is our progress.

Students should cultivate human values. The teachings of great and noble souls should be taught to them. Education should not be to get degrees to earn a living, but should be a preparation for the good life. Education should be for elevation. Teachers should teach students discipline, observance of humility and respect, and instill in them the spirit of service to society and the sense of fellowship.

There is only one religion, the religion of Love

Differences of caste and creed should be eradicated from the minds of students. They should feel the sense of human unity, with faith in God. All religions teach essentially the same truths. Hence no religion should be despised. Because of the Government's policies, a wrong attitude has been developed towards religion. The concept of a Secular State is bandied about. Secularism really means that you should have equal respect for all religions and beliefs. No one can be asked to renounce his faith in the name of secularism. There is only one caste, the caste of Humanity. There is only one religion, the religion of Love. There is only one language, the language of the Heart. Imagine how our students would be able to serve the nation in the future if these basic truths were taught to them. Hence, at the outset, teachers should set the example. Parents should exemplify ideals. The

Government should be exemplary in its actions. It is because teachers, parents and rulers have failed to set the right example that today our educational system is in shambles. Teachers should combine practice with precept, like the physical instructor who demonstrates the exercises the students should perform. In the hermitages of the ancient preceptors, this was how the Gurus taught their disciples.

The six qualities that emanate from the mind

The distinction between the body and the mind should be understood, in this context. The body can stand still easily; but cannot run so easily. In the case of the mind, to keep it still is difficult, but it can be always fleeting. From the body arise the six enemies of man: lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and envy. Man today is a victim of these enemies. But from the mind, many good qualities can emanate. Good qualities, good feelings, adherence to truth, devotion, discipline and discharge of duty are the six qualities that emanate from the mind. These are the traits that uphold humanness. Man is called Manuja, the one who has come from Manu, the primal author of the Dharmashashtra (the Code of Conduct for all mankind). These are the qualities that have to be cultivated and practised today. They are the property of man along with his mind. A good mind is a god-mind. The degeneration in education is indicated by the change in addressing a student as "good boy" in olden days, to "Bye-bye" at present. Teachers! Inspire your students by your example. Give no room for anger, jealousy or hatred within you: Teach the children the three P's: Purity, Patience, Perseverance. Armed with these three qualities, they can protect the nation better than any army or atom bombs. When Truth and Righteousness are protected, the nation will be secure. Truth is God. This is true for all countries, everywhere, without regard to nationality or creed. Both Truth and Righteousness transcend barriers of space and time.

Students have 1 taught the path of spirituality. They have to acquire faith, which generates love. Self-confidence is the basis and Self-Realisation is the roof. That is the ultimate destiny of man - the full realisation of his human potential by practising human values.

Unity of head, food and God is vital for all

When all concerned- from students to educational authorities - function in this spirit, they can achieve all that they want. Teachers should not be content with merely teaching the children. They should contact the parents and ascertain how the children are behaving at home. Most Bal Vikas Gurus are working in rural areas. It is not enough to relate stories and reach songs and bhajans to the students. They should tell them about health, and food. For instance, in areas where fluorosis is rampant, they should teach the children how to treat the contaminated water before drinking. The teachers should reach them how to purify their heads and food to realise God. The unity of head, food and God will make them ideal citizens of Bharath. Unity is vital for all, wherever they are and whatever their country, religion or sex. Love should be the unifying force. Utilise the three days of the Conference for exploring all problems relating to your work in small groups and come to practical decisions. Teachers! Promote the sense of human unity among all people, without regard to race, religion or caste. Make Bharath the leader of the nations. The entire existence of Bharath is based upon spirituality. If spirituality goes, Bharath will cease to exist. If Bharath goes, the whole world will go. Faith in God is the life-breath of Bharath. With this faith, Bharath can face any challenge, imbibe the children with confidence and courage. Unify them through Love and Love alone.

Listen to all such things as will draw you towards the principle of Godhead; then, think it over in silence, make it over in silence, make it part of your consciousness. This process of Manana makes you a man; that is the test of man - Mananahood!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20. Spiritual orientation to education

Date: 21 July 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

TEACHERS! Embodiments of Love! Educationists! students! You see light from a bulb. You enjoy the breeze from a fan. You experience the cool air from an air-conditioner and warmth from a heater. But what makes them all work is one and the same electric current. Likewise, what you hear, what you see and think all appear to be externally different sensory experiences, but it is the intellect that enables the impressions received through the senses to be experienced.

Right education leads to refinement of conduct. With refinement of behaviour, one's life gets sublimated. Good intellect alone can lead to happiness which is the source of peace. Proper education brings about association with good people. The company of the good is peace itself. Good education redeems one's life and ensures liberation as a consequence. When one receives education that is based on truth and eternal values, He will be able to achieve liberation without having to go through the process of submergence in Samsara. Therefore, come forward to get the benefit of such education.

Humility is an attitude of mind free from egoism

"Vidhya dhadhathi Vinayam" (Education confers humility). Humility does not mean mere bending of the head. Only an attitude of mind free from egoism, ostentation and attachment can be called humility. Today neither teachers not parents are able to teach such humility to the children because they themselves have not cultivated that attitude. The water you can draw from a tap depends on the nature of the water in the tank. Today teachers and parents have not filled their minds with sacred divine feelings. How can they be expected to infuse the children with such feelings?

Here is a piece of burning charcoal. If you take proper care of it, it will keep burning. But if you neglect it, it will soon get covered up with ashes. In the heart of every human being, there is Jnana-Agni (fire of wisdom). That fire

signifies a pure heart. Today we are not able to see that fire because the heart is enveloped by the ash of worldly desires. When the ash is blown away, the fire will be visible. Men tend to forget the noble and ideal sentiments in their hearts because they are covered by worldly material and sensual desires. Shri Krishna declared: "Adhyatma-Vidhya Vidhyanam" (Among various kinds of knowledge, I am Knowledge of the Spirit). Bharath has given birth to countless noble souls who possessed such spiritual knowledge. People today have forgotten the message of such noble beings. Today, the noble, sublime and inspiring teachings of these high-souled sages should be imparted to our boys and girls. A sculptor converts a block of stone into a beautiful idol. Language expresses the feeling in appropriate speech. Character takes a man on the righteous path. It is the teacher who moulds the children into exemplary human beings.

The real teacher teaches others how to live

The ignorant and the blind declare that a man, who cannot earn a living otherwise, becomes a teacher. On the contrary, the teacher is really the one who teaches others how to live. Those good men and women who Teach children how to act righteously in the future ahead of them, And promote the spirit of equality and affection, Are alone real teachers. Today we treat teachers as mere employees and slight them. Teachers, in her, are the people who indicate the royal road for human life. Teachers illumine the nation by promoting great ideals. They are responsible for the blossoming of ideals in the young. They awaken in children the Prajna (integrated awareness) which is subtle and hard to recognise. They draw out the latent potentialities in the students. If they are encouraged to make the effort, students can accomplish anything.

Teachers are beacon-lights in idealism. It is only when the light, of the teacher shines effulgently that the light among students can-shine. The light from a teacher can light several lamps.

Recognise the importance of spiritual education

Teachers! You have to strive ceaselessly to impart to your students your sacred thoughts, your exemplary conduct and your ideals. Teachers are like guide-posts. It is only when you play this role well that you will have done your duty by the boys and girls to divinise their lives. Although secular education may appear necessary for mundane existence, the importance of a spiritual basis for it should be recognised. However, the responsibility for imparting a spiritual orientation to education rests not only on teachers, but also on the parents as well as the authorities. In this context, students have to cultivate three qualities. "Sarvaloka hithe rathah" (One must cherish the well-being of everyone in the world). "Sarva Jnana rathah" (One must be interested in all knowledge). "Sarva sadhguna rathah" (One must foster all good qualities). Without good qualities, without seeking the welfare of the country and without good thoughts centred on God, how can one be a true human being? It is only when the individual is good that society will progress. When the society improves the nation will progress. The welfare of the individual, society and the nation is based on the observance of human values.

From ancient times the sacred land of Bharath has been standing forth as a leader among nations by its spiritual wealth, ensuring their peace and security. It proclaimed the great message: "Let all the people of all the worlds be happy." Students should be taught to use properly, all the talents and qualities given by God to them. Without-good qualities life is worthless. By their bad qualities students today misuse their knowledge. They should cultivate humility which can confer many benefits. They should learn the lessons which Nature provides by way of selfless service. Every element in nature - the earth, water, the sun - demonstrate the selfless service it is rendering to man. Man, who is a child of Nature, has become a stranger to compassion and other natural qualities. By filling a prey to all kinds of desires, man has strayed away from the right path. He has not only to acquire knowledge, but wisdom. He has to combine good qualities with good practices. Book knowledge has to be translated into good deeds.

Demonstrate your unity and divinity

Teachers! You have the responsibility for reshaping the future. There is a big difference between the conference you have held here and conferences elsewhere. At other conferences, the tendency is to regard them as occasions for picnics and sight-seeing. You, who have come here at great expense, from long distances, should demonstrate your unity and divinity. Do not entertain any differences of race, religion and community. Foster the Caste of Humanity, the Religion of Love and the Language of the Heart. Teach your students that it is the same Atma (Spirit) that dwells in all beings. You must emulate the example of the ancient rishis who were the preceptors in the Gurukulam. You must ensure by your conduct the esteem and respect of your students, who are highly intelligent. To mould the students into good citizens is a spiritual sadhana. A bad teacher will spoil the lives of many generations of students.

Dedication shown by the Gurus

In fact, our teachers are very good persons. They undergo considerable trouble in rendering service. Many ladies, who have to attend to their daily chores at home, are carrying on their educational work out of their devotion to Svami. They are treating it as a spiritual exercise. No other institution in the world can claim to perform the kind of selfless and dedicated service which the members of our Samithis, our Seva Dhal and Bala Vikas teachers are rendering. Whatever their difficulties, they are coming here at their own expense and bearing their food expenses. The Sathya Sai Trusts do not provide any funds, for them, nor do they seek any aid from the Trusts.

Whatever trouble you may face, you must learn to feel happy in any circumstance. If you are stung by a scorpion, you must console yourself that you were not bitten by a snake, and when you are bitten by a snake, you must console yourself that it has not proved fatal. Even if you are not able to own a vehicle, be happy that you have got your legs intact to enable you to walk. Even if you are not a millionaire, be happy that you have enough resources to feed yourself and your family. This is the way to experience joy even while in adverse circumstances. Ceiling on desires is a must for leading a peaceful and meaningful life. You must curb the desire to seek more and

more wealth and turn your effort to realise the Reality within. In pursuing this effort, you must avoid waste of food, money, time, energy and knowledge as all these are Forms of God. Unnecessary talk should be avoided as this results in waste of energy and reduction of memory power.

Teach children to talk softly and sweetly

Besides observing the ceiling on desire, students should also practise the discipline of seeing no evil, hearing no evil, thinking no evil and doing no evil. Only when children are taught these good disciplines in the formative stage, they will grow as good persons. By leading a life without discipline, students will practically be like cars without brakes which will spell danger to the occupants. Sense-control is an essential requisite for students who are in the vulnerable stage of succumbing to the temptations of sensual pleasures. You must teach them how to talk softly and sweetly while adhering to truth. Some mothers complain that their children don't listen to their advice and retort-"Don't talk. I know." For this situation, the mothers alone are to be blamed because this is the result of their having allowed indulgence to their children in the earlier stages. From childhood, good things should be taught to them. When they send their wards to school, their responsibility does not cease. They should take care to ensure that not only they study properly, but develop good behaviour, respect for parents and teachers, speaking the truth and avoiding unrighteous actions. Discourse to the Valedictory Session of the National Bal Vikas Conference in Sai Ramesh Hall

21. Experience the fullness of love

Date: 22 July 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Does life consist in working for a living, eating and sleeping, wasting one's time in meaningless gossip? Was previous human birth given by God for this purpose? No.

At least from now on lead a truly human life and achieve fulfilment. At the tip of the tongue dwells the Goddess of Prosperity. At the tip of the tongue remain friends and kinsfolk. Bondage resides at the tip of the tongue. Death lies in wait at the tip of the tongue. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Through the power of Vak (speech) one can acquire a kingdom or great wealth. Friends and relations can be got through speech. Through speech one gets bound and loses his freedom. Even death is brought about by speech. Speech is the life-force of human beings. Speech is the backbone of life. It is all powerful, Jayadheva addressed-his tongue as follows-"Oh tongue! You know all about the sweetness of speech! You enjoy truth and goodness; chant the sweet and sacred names of the Lord. Govindha! Damodhara! Madhava! Don't indulge in reviling any one. Speak, sweetly and softly."

The reasons for declining discipline

"Anudvegakaram Vakyam Sathyam Prithihithamcha yath" (Let your speech be truthful, pleading and good and free from resentment) says Krishna in the Geetha. Unfortunately, because such sacred and sweet speech has become scarce, society is riddled with bitterness and discord. The permissiveness of a crazy civilization has destroyed discipline and morality and turned society into an inferno. Society today is divided in a myriad ways and there is no peace. On account of differences of caste and creed, linguistic and parochial loyalties and desires of various kinds, violent conflicts have turned the social scene into a graveyard. Human life is vitiated by selfishness and the pursuit of ephemeral pleasures, forgetting what is eternal and true. Selfishness is rampant. Even affection for parents and children is tainted with selfishness. Man today has become a plaything in the hands of selfishness. On the one

side, man has achieved astonishing progress in science and technology, especially in the fields of electronics, synthetics, atomic power and exploration of space. On the other side we witness political and economic crises, caste and communal conflicts and students agitation. Today, moral values are steadily declining among men. In the moral, ethical and spiritual spheres, men's attitudes are deteriorating alarmingly. Even well-versed scholars and eminent public figures are caught up in the coil of bitter controversies because of narrow-minded thinking. Unity among the people is being shattered by the ideological and sectarian differences among persons who are well educated and intellectually eminent. Intellectuals who promote discord are on the increase, but there are few who promote unity in diversity. At the root of all these tendencies is the fact that mankind has still not got out of the animal stage. Men have to realise that essentially they are divine in origin. The individual selves have come from the ocean of Sath-Chith-Anandha, like waves from the ocean. It is only when this truth is realised that men can experience true bliss.

The need for men and women with sacred ideals

To transform the world from its present state, there is no need for a new social system or a new religion or creed. What is essential is a body of men and women with sacred ideals. When there are such godly souls the country will enjoy divine dispensation. But such godly persons can survive only in a society in which there is purity of mind and good character. For these two to blossom, the basis is morality. But morality cannot flourish without spirituality. Hence the mansion of the good society has to be built on the foundation of spirituality, with the pillars of purity and character, and with morality as the roof. The reputation and gloat of Bharath have been founded on spirituality from ancient times. Bharath achieved this name and fame because of noble men, women of great virtue and exemplary children. Their ideals still shine today. Harishchandra, Nala and others are still remembered for their adherence to truth. Heroic women like Savithri, who by her devotion and determination brought back to life her dear husband from the hand of Death, and Seetha, who faced all ordeals in Lanka as a captive, ensured the welfare and prosperity of the country by their exemplary character.

Today morality and character are at a discount. Money alone counts. But money and all that it can give will not confer peace. Peace can be got only when man manifests his inner divinity. The Divine is the Indweller in every being. Hence no one should have ill-will towards anybody. Man, however is dominated today by selfishness. His thoughts, his looks, his words and actions are all tainted by selfishness. He is a slave of his senses. In short, humanness is in ruins.

Manifest the compassion that resides in the heart

The first requisite is sense-control. Man is today enveloped in evil qualities like jealousy and hatred. Man has to manifest compassion, which resides in the heart. Once Saint Thyagaraja, for a moment, developed doubts about Rama's prowess and later realised that Rama could not have commanded the allegiance and devotion of men like Lakshmana and Bharathha if he was not all-powerful. From this one episode, you have to understand that if Sai did not have unique power, would He be able to attract persons from America, England and other countries? If there is no power in Sai how do you imagine devotees from any countries to come to Him? Are they such innocents? Or are they witless persons? Not at all. They are all persons of great intelligence. Intelligence alone is not enough. They have to be filled with divine feelings.

It should be realised that the divinity in human beings cannot be measured in terms of worldly goods. It has to be measured in terms of Love. Mankind has to understand this Love Principle. When there is Love, there will be no hatred. Without hatred, there will be no threat to peace in society. To ensure peace, society has to promote Love. This means that the mind has to be filled with loving thoughts.

The significance of Gurupurnima

The moon is the presiding deity for the mind. Today, it is Purnima (Full Moon day). What does Purnima signify? It means the completion of the full circle by returning to the starting point. One half of the circle is represented by worldly life. It is like the letter "C". This is equated with science, which is

incomplete knowledge. The full circle represented by the moon represents the state of the mind when it is filled with Love. Gurupurnima is observed today. Guru means Big. Guru has also another meaning: Gu means darkness and Ru means dispelling. Guru metres one who dispels darkness (the preceptor who dispels the darkness of ignorance). Gurupurnima is the day on which one celebrates the dispersal of the darkness of ignorance from the mind. Hence, people should fill their minds with the all-embracing Love Principle. To experience the fullness of Love, you have to fill your hearts completely with Love. That will be the result of total devotion.

But today devotion is not total. The benefit also is partial. Part-time devotees cannot expect total reward. The Lord confers full grace on those whose hearts are totally filled with devotion. Spiritual aspirants may follow any one of the nine paths of devotion and realise the Divine. Among these, the attitude of friendship towards God is one to be cherished because God is the only true and enduring friend for everyone.

The destiny of the world is based on Bharath

In the process of achieving oneness with the Divine, the first stage is for everyone to consider himself as a messenger of God. Every Indian should propagate Baba's message of spirituality. All of you should take note of this supreme fact: If spirituality goes in Bharath, Bharath will be mined. When Bharath goes, the whole world will go. The destiny of the world is based on Bharath.

It is because spirituality was being forgotten that Bharath became a prey to all kinds of ills. Love has virtually disappeared. Humanness has decayed. Humanness can exist only when the minds are holy. Man is called Manuja, which means one who is descended from Manu, who gave to mankind the Dharmashashtra (the Code of Righteous conduct). The courts today do not follow the code of Manu. Justice has become a creature of time, circumstances and money. Dharma transcends the limitations of space, time and circumstances. Today we have forgotten Manu.

We have also forgotten Kautilya. He was the author of Arthashastra (the laws of economics and statecraft). Our economy today is in utter disorder. Kautilya's teachings have to be relearned. Failing to uphold the ideals of great men like Harishchandra, who sacrificed everything for truth, the people today are becoming slaves of the senses.

Children should be taught to respect all religions

Teachers! Teach your young pupils the ideals of Bharath's great sages, heroes and heroines, who upheld the highest virtues and set an example to the world. They should be taught to behave as ideal sons like Shravanakumar. One good son can redeem a whole family. Ekalavya exemplifies supreme devotion to the Guru. Prahlada should be held out as supreme example of total faith in God. Teachers should instill such devotion to God in the young. In the name of secularism, governments should not interfere with the practise of their respective religions by the citizens. No one should criticize the creed of others. The divinity that is adored by all religions is one and the same, though different names may be used. In the name of religion, violent conflicts are encouraged. Children should be taught to respect all religions. Teachers should also make the children realise the true purpose of education. Education should be a preparation for righteous living and not for earning money. Good qualities are more valuable than money. Sathyabhama was made to realise that the name of the Lord and a thulasi leaf offered to Him were more valuable than all her jewels when weighed in the balance against Krishna.

Teachers should practise the precepts which they teach to the children. If they teach the children not to quarrel or not to smoke, they should also refrain from such conduct. Teachers! You have put up with many inconveniences and difficulties during the past three days out of your devotion to Svami. You regarded this as spiritual exercise. The body is intended to serve as an instrument for realising righteousness. There is no gain without pain. Sacrifice is the means for attaining immortality. Love and sacrifice are like two eyes for man. Whatever sacrifice you make, treat it as an offering to God. Then work will be transformed into worship. All that Svami

wants from you is only your Love.

The character of the children must be made strong and pure. Give them all the confidence and courage they need to become good, honest, and self-reliant children. It is not enough if they learn something by which they can make a living. The manner of living is more important than the standard of living.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22. Devotion is pure love for God

Date: 21 August 1994 / Location: Brindavan

What harm can Kali do to one Whose heart is compassionate, Whose speech is adorned by Truth, And whose limbs are used to serve others? EMBODIMENTS of love! Any human being who has compassion for others, who adheres to Truth and who dedicates his body to the good of others will experience no serious trouble. The primary reason is one's devotion to God. Bhakthi (Devotion) is not something which man can acquire by himself. It is indeed the inherent principle animating man. Devotion manifests itself as love. This love is the supreme treasure of man. It is this treasure which enables man to live in this world. But few persons recognise this truth.

Time moves like a whirlwind. The allotted span of life for the body is melting away every moment like a block of ice. However, even before recognizing what is his duty, man departs from this world. What is the aim of human life? What is a man's duty? It is to discover this truth that God has endowed man with a body. "Paropakara artham idham shareeram" (This body is given for rendering help to others) We live in society, depending on it for our needs. But, forgetting what they owe to society, people lead selfish, self-centred lives. Service to society is the primary, Karma (duty). Concern for the welfare of all is Bhakthi (devotion). "Let all people be happy." Awareness of this feeling is Jnana (true knowledge).

Devotion is a fragment of the Divine

Without recognizing the duty to serve society, without concern for the welfare of society, how can the all-encompassing desire for the happiness of all, which is devotion, arise in anyone? These three are intimately related like flower, render fruit and ripe fruit. The ripe fruit of devotion confers the wisdom which eliminates differences. Devotion is a fragment of the Divine. Without devotion, awareness of the Divine cannot be experienced. Equally, devotion without consciousness of the Divine can only breed Ahamkara (egoism). Different people experience the bliss derived from devotion in

different ways. One devotee begins with repeatedly reciting the word, Dhasoham, dhasoham (I am His servant), expresses his devotion as a servant of the lord. In course of time, by frequent repetition of this word and reminding himself of the Lord, he reaches the stage where the 'da' drops away and only 'soham' remains. He begins to realise that he and the Lord are one. Starting as the servant of the Lord, he realises his identity with the Lord. Another devotee, starting with a consciousness of the material body, contemplating on the Self, merges in the higher Consciousness. How is he able to experience this subtle consciousness to the physical body? Without this earthly body, the Chinmaya (subtle Self) cannot be experienced. How did the transformation take place? How did the realisation come that the Divine and the individuals self are not different, but are inextricably linked to each other? This is because the Divine and the jeeva (the individual self) are united like substance and shadow. That is why Vedantha declares "Eeshvaras sarva bhuuthanam" (Lord dwells in all living beings).

Krishna described Arjuna as friend and devotee

Recognition of this truth is the essential mark of devotion. Bhakthi is derived from the combination of the verb "Bhaj" with the indeclinable "thi": Bhakthi means seva (service). It also means friendship coupled with fear. Without fear friendship cannot be firm. In the Geetha, Krishna refers to Arjuna as friend and kinsman. "Besides being a friend, you are also my servant," said Krishna. Thereby, Krishna regarded Arjuna as a devotee. When one is a devotee he is reverential and submissive. If one is treated solely as a friend and not a devotee, he is likely to behave as he pleases. To maintain the balance between the two, Krishna described Arjuna as friend and devotee.

In this relationship, there is equality and oneness. For this to be achieved, one has to get rid of Dhehabhranthi (the identification with the body). The ancient sages observed rigorous penances to get rid of Dhehabhranthi and in due course experienced Atmabhranthi (identity with the Self).

Dheha-prema and dhaiva-prema

In this context, the twofold nature of Prema (love) has to be understood. One is Dheha-Prema (love associated with the body). The other is Dhaiva-Prema (Divine love). Dheha-prema relates to experiences associated with the physical, the sensory and the natural. It is the identification with the body that accounts for all sufferings and miseries. It is portentous and produces inauspicious results.

Divine love on the contrary, is sacred and leads to auspicious and enduring well-being. Grief and trouble are alien to divine love. Divine love sustains itself and is lasting. Bodily love depends on others and is evanescent.

Every man should seek to acquire this divine love. The body, however, is an impediment in the way. The entire world is caught up in the vast net of Anuraga (attachment). This attachment is an amazing Maya (delusory) phenomenon. There is no connection between the body composed of the Panchabhuthas (five basic elements) and the transcendental Atma (Self). But the delusory power of Maya in the form of attachment brings about a link between the two. If this were not the case, what is the relationship between one person and another? Who is a wife and who is a husband? Who is a mother and who is a son? All these relationships have been brought about by Anuraga (attachment born of desire) and not by love. There is no attachment between mother and son before the child is born. But after birth, Vathsalyam (maternal affection) arises. This affection is based on bodily relationship and is by its nature temporary.

Attachment to the body is a kind of disease

Divine Love exists before birth, after birth and continues forever. No effort is made by men to understand this true and enduring love. Attachment to the body is a kind of disease which has to be treated by three kinds of remedies. One is observing dietary restrictions while taking the medicine. If diet regulations are not observed, the medicine alone will not cure the disease. Diet control without the medicine will be equally ineffective. Both diet control and medicine are equally necessary for curing the disease. With regard to the disease of attachment to the body, one has to abide by divine injunctions and

practise love for the Divine to get rid of the ailment. Observing the Divine injunctions without love for God will not be efficacious. Equally, devotion without observance of the Lord's commands will be useless. Love is the medicine and God's injunctions are the diet restrictions. It is by the presence of both, that Divinity in man can be made to manifest itself.

For all the troubles, chaos and discord present in the world today, the root cause is attachment to the body which breeds selfishness and self-centredness. Concern for the body is necessary upto a point. But excessive attachment to the demands of the body is harmful, because the body is essentially fragile and liable to break up any moment at any place. The body, of course, needs to be protected and allowed rest and recreation. But all these should be only for the purpose of enabling it to discharge one's duty. "Discharge of duty is Yoga," says the Geetha. What is this duty? It is assumed that duty relates to one's professional or occupational responsibilities, as lawyer, doctor, etc. This is not duty at all because these actions are performed for selfish reasons, to earn money. The Sanskrit word Karthavyam means that you are not free to act as you please and you have to respect the rights of others on the same basis as you expect others to respect your rights. The terms duty or right should not be misused.

True devotion knows no differences

Equally, in respect of the term Bhakthi, devotion is equated with performing puujas, observing rituals, going on pilgrimages, etc. But these are not the true insignia of devotion. The true mark of devotion is pure love of God. Without this pure love, bhajans, worship and the like are artificial exercises and are valueless. They may appear to be devotional acts, but they do not contain the essential sweetness of devotion. They resemble plastic flowers and fruits. A life without love is like a barren wasteland. True devotion knows no differences. It sees unity in diversity. Today, devotion is marked by various differences. Though God is one, He is worshipped in many forms. Can this be called devotion? No. The one God is broken into fragments. On the other hand, man has to unite the fragments and see the One. The Upanishaths proclaimed the unity suffusing the multiplicity as the Athmik Principle. Today

you have a myriad individuals, but the Spirit that dwells in all of them is one and the same.

"Ekovasee Sarvabhuutha antharatma" (The Indwelling Spirit is one in all beings). God is one but is called by different names. It is out of self-interest that God is worshipped under different names and forms by different people. What has to be recognized today when people talk about devotion is the oneness of the Divine. The love of God should be developed. Love for all other worldly things is bound to change. Only love for the Divine can be unchanging. The Bhagavatham proclaims the glory of Divine love. Bhagavatham is described as a sacred book on Bhagavan (Divine). Another interpretation is that the Bhagavatham deals with the greatness of devotees of the Lord. Yet another explanation is that the Bhagavatham describes the intimate relationship between God and devotees. It is this relationship that should be developed by all devotees. People feel distressed when some one among their kinsfolk is ill. If such is the affection they bear towards relations who are associated with them for brief periods, how much more love should one have towards the eternal Lord?

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

One should regard love for God as the greatest treasure one can have. When you love God, you will have love towards all because the Divine is in everyone. Therefore bear in mind: Love all; serve all. The best way to serve God is to love all and serve all. Your devotion will get diluted if you entertain differences between people. Devotion to Rama or Krishna becomes meaningless if you do not practise their teachings. The worship of the Lord should be accompanied by leading a Godly life. Only the bliss can be experienced. Today people carry on routine reading of scriptural texts like the Geetha or the Bible. This serves no purpose unless they lead pure and sacred lives. They should fill their hearts with love of God and share that love with others. There can be no greater demonic quality than hatred towards God.

The Divine is both protector and destroyer. For Prahladha, who was a staunch devotee, the Lord was a protector. To Hiranyakashipu (Prahladha's father),

who hated God, the Divine became the destroyer.

God showers His grace according to one's deserts. He is the embodiment of Love. One's bad qualities prevent one from realising the grace of God. The fault lies with the individuals and not with God.

Hrishiksha sevanam Bhakthiruchyathe (Service to the Lord is called devotion). If you fill your heart with love of God, you will secure all powers. Therefore, live in love. Redeem your lives through love. Let love become your life-breath and the sole goal of your life.

Develop Prema (Love) towards the Lord, the Parama-Prema (Highest Love) of which He is the embodiment. Never give room for doubts and hesitations, for questions, to test the Lord's Prema.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

23. The glory of Krishna Avathaar

Date: 28 August 1994 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

EMBODIMENTS of love! It was the middle of the Dhvapara Yuga. Unable to bear the atrocities committed on good people by demonic rulers, the Goddess of Earth prayed to the Lord in many ways. Offering solace to the grief-stricken Goddess, the Lord said; "Dhevi! You may return to the earth. I shall do what needs to be done. You will be relieved of your Burden." Encouraging her in this way the Lord sent Mother Earth back to the world. Thereafter, the Lord summoned all the Dhevas (denizens of the celestial world) and directed them to take birth as Yadhavas. The originator of the Yadhava clan is Yayathi. His eldest son was known as Yadhu. The descendants of Yadhu came to be known in course of time as Yadhavas. Among the yadhavas, there was a chief known as Ahuka, who was a righteous person, wedded to truth. The characters figuring in the Krishna legend belong to Ahuka's lineage. Ahuka had two sons Dhevaka and Ugrasena. Kamsa was the son of Ugrasena. Dhevaki was the daughter of Dhevaka. Kamsa had no sister of his own. He had great affection for his cousin Dhevaki, whom he treated as his own uterine sister.

The warning to Kamsa from the ethereal voice

In the Yadhava clan, there was one Vasudheva, the son of Shura. Vasudheva was one of the satraps in the Yadhava kingdom. He was known as one who stood by his plighted word. Ugrasena and Kamsa, after a great deal of search, picked upon Vasudheva as a suitable bridegroom for Dhevaki. Vasudheva already had a wife by the name Rohini. In those times, there were no restrictions regarding polygamy. Because he had no child through Rohini, Vasudheva agreed to marry Dhevaki. After the marriage, Kamsa got ready his chariot to take Vasudheva and Dhevaki to their home. Kamsa drove the chariot himself with a heavy heart, overwhelmed by the prospect of separation from his beloved cousin. Dhevaki was as dear to Kamsa as his life-breath. At the time of her leaving her paternal home, Dhevaki was presented with many precious gifts by Ugrasena, besides a retinue of elephants, horses and guardsmen. While the chariot was proceeding in a grand manner, all of a

sudden a loud voice was heard from the sky: "You fool! You do not know what is in store for you. The one who will slay you for all your misdeeds will be born as the eighth child of your sister." After saying this, the ethereal spirit vanished.

The moment Kamsa heard these words, he flew into a rage. He jumped down from the chariot, seized Dhevaki by the hair, unsheathed his sword to cut off her head. Vasudheva, who was the very embodiment of peace, truth and righteousness, held Kamsa's hands and asked him why he was worried so much over the prospect of death. "Death is inevitable, whether today or in time to come. Whatever you may do to protect yourself, death will come in its own time even if you hide yourself in a forest. All beings that are born are destined to die. Kamsa! The ethereal voice declared that death will come to you from the hands of the eighth child (of Dhevaki) and not immediately. There are many years ahead before the eighth child. It is not proper that you should lose your temper. Release the girl whom you had loved as your sister. I shall hand over to you every child that is born to her." When Vasudheva gave his pledge, Kamsa realised the truth of his words and released Dhevaki from his hold. Kamsa returned to his palace without getting back into the chariot.

Sage Naradha's advice to Kamsa

Vasudheva and Dhevaki reached their home with heavy hearts. As days passed by and Kamsa was immersed in worry about the prospect of death, Sage Naradha came to him one day. After talking about world affairs in general, before leaving, Naradha told Kamsa-"You are verily a fool. You are not aware of your real plight. The ethereal voice said that (Dhevaki's) eighth child will be your slayer. But you cannot know from which of her children death will come to you. You cannot take a chance with any of them." From that moment Kamsa's distress and fear increased. He commanded Vasudheva to hand over to him every child. He killed six of the newborn children as they were handed over to him. When Dhevaki was enceinte for the seventh time, Sriman Narayana made all arrangements to carry out His promise to Mother Earth. To promote the welfare of the world, to establish Dharma among

mankind, to uphold truth and to instill devotion to God in humanity, the Divine process had to be set in motion. The Dhevas took birth as Yadhavas. Vishnu summoned His allpervading Yoga Shakthi (The Cosmic Energy), and said "Go forth immediately and enter the womb of Yasodha." Summoning Adhishesha (the Divine Serpent) the Lord directed him to go to Gokulam and enter the womb of Rohini (Vasudheva's elder wife). "I shall be entering the womb of Dhevaki."

Krishna's birth in prison

In Dhevaki's seventh pregnancy, the Lord had the foetus transferred to Rohini's womb and Kamsa was informed that Dhevaki had an abortion. Krishna made His advent in her eighth pregnancy Apprehending danger from Kamsa, Vasudheva arranged to send Rohini to Nandha's home. Rohini was a sister of Yasodha. Expecting mortal danger to himself from the eighth child of Dhevaki, Kamsa kept Vasudheva and Dhevaki in a heavily guarded prison. He kept the key of the' prison lock with himself. Dhevaki gave birth to a son on an Ashtami (eighth day after the New Moon) in the asterism Rohini. The Child that was born was the Lord Himself with all His effulgence and all the insignia of Vishnu. On the child's chest was the Srivathsa mole. The Kausthubha ornament shone brilliantly. Dhevaki and Vasudheva folded their hands in adoration, blinded by the effulgence of the Divine Child. They felt that their lives had been redeemed by the birth of the Lord, whom they saw with their own eyes. Approaching the baby and caressing his palms and feet, they prayed to the Lord: "Thanks to our good fortune, you have taken birth as our son. But we are not in a position to protect you. You must use your divine potency to get away from this prison by any means.

The ways of the Divine are marvellous and mysterious

Vasudheva sat beside the child and started praying. Immediately a basket appeared before him. Placing the Divine child in the basket he looked at the prison door. He saw that it was open. The ways of the Divine are marvellous and mysterious, felt Vasudheva. He stepped out of the prison. He found all the guards sound asleep. As he came out, there was a heavy downpour. The

Yamuna was in spate. He prayed to Narayana to see that there was no impediment in the way of his mission to protect the Divine child. The Yamuna gave him passage. He reached Nandha's house.

The same day Yasodha had given birth to a child. Yasodha was unconscious. The child was none other than Mayadhevi. When she was born, both Nandha and Yasodha were in a state of trance. Leaving the infant Krishna by the side of Yasodha, Vasudheva returned to Mathura with the other child. When Vasudheva left Nandha's house, the child left beside Yasodha uttered a cry. Yasodha and Nandha did not know whether the newborn was a boy or girl. On hearing the child's cry, Yasodha looked at it and found that it was a boy. Vasudheva took the female child back to his prison. There the child started crying. On hearing the cry, all the guards woke up. They rounded the prison gates closed. They informed Kamsa about the birth of the child. Kamsa, who had been anxiously waiting for the news, rushed to the prison. Seizing the new-born child from Dhevaki's hands, he flung it up in the air to slay it with his sword. The child, Mayadhevi, spoke from above, "You fool! The boy who is going to slay you is already born. He is growing up in a certain place. You cannot escape your destined end." Saying this, Mayadhevi vanished.

Kamsa's nightmare about his killer

From that moment, Kamsa was engaged in finding out the whereabouts of the child that was to be his slayer. He released Vasudheva and Dhevaki from prison. Once, Vasudheva and Nandha, as satraps in Kamsa's kingdom, came to Mathura to pay their annual tribute to him. While they were returning, Vasudheva and Nandha were lamenting over their plight. Vasudheva observed that in Repalle (Nandha's place) some inauspicious events seemed to be impending. "In Gokulam also some untoward events are likely to happen. Nandha, do not stay in Mathura for long. Leave the place immediately:" On hearing this warning, Nandha immediately returned to Repalle. In Repalle, demoniac elements were all the time moving about actively. The first of them was Puuthana. She lost her life while giving suck to Krishna. This Puuthana in a previous life was Rathnavali, the daughter of Emperor Bali. The Lord as Vamana appeared as an extremely handsome

young lad at the sacrifice being performed by Bali. Rathnavali was charmed by the beauty of Vamana and felt how much she would have enjoyed rearing him if he had been her son. As she was having these thoughts, she found that Vamana had placed his foot on Bali's head (after he had measured two footsteps).

Enraged at this sight, she was filled with desire to kill him. Because she desired at first to fondle Vamana as a child and later to kill him, she was born as Puuthana and came to Krishna to feed him and kill him. In the end, she lost her life. The Lord has His own ways of fulfilling the desires of people. Hence, it is essential to have good thoughts and good desires.

Child Krishna proves that He is Divine

When Krishna was three years old he saw an old lady carrying a basket of fruits from the jungle. Krishna told her he would like to have some fruits. The old woman said he could get them only if he paid the price Krishna innocently asked the meaning of the word price. The woman said that something should be given in return for the fruit. Krishna went in and brought a palmful of rice. The woman placed the rice in her basket and gave Krishna some fruits. She was charmed by the beauty of the child. As she was returning to her cottage, she felt that the basket was getting heavier. When she placed it down in her hut, she was amazed to find that all the rice grains had turned into precious gems! She thought the child must be divine. Otherwise how could the rice turn into gems? Considering herself supremely lucky, she invited her neighbours to see the miracle.

Krishna was pleading with Yasodha that he should be allowed to go to the forest with other cowherd boys. Thinking that if he was put to sleep he would forget his desire to go to the forest, Yasodha gave him milk. Krishna was no ordinary child. While drinking the milk, he pretended as if he was sleepy. He made a pretence of yawning to indicate his drowsiness. In that wide open mouth of Krishna, Yasodha saw all kinds of things - all the worlds in motion and many deities. She could not make out what it meant. "Is it a dream or Vishnu's Maya (illustrious power)? Or is it some fantasy of mine? Or is it real?"

Am I Yasodha? Have I gone somewhere?" These thoughts racked her mind. "My son is an infant. How can all the worlds appear in his tiny mouth? It must be my imagination." Such doubts arise in the minds of those who are caught up in the delusions of the body complex.

How child Krishna fought with the demons

Yielding to his entreaties Yasodha allowed Krishna to go to the forest with the cowherd boys. Almost every day Krishna encountered some ogre or ogress and slayed them. His playmates used to describe to their elders these exploits of Krishna, how he fought with the demons and finished them off.

Yasodha, however, used to say: "God is taking care of my child. Otherwise how could he overcome these encounters?" The cowherd boys observed: "When he himself is God, why does he need anybody's protection, oh mother!" Yasodha felt that the boys were naive in their judgment. "Will God come to one's rescue so easily? It is only because of my prayers, my child is protected." With this belief, Yasodha used to perform various rites, when Krishna returned from the forest, to express her gratitude to Providence for saving him from the evil eye and other dangers.

There was great rejoicing among the Dhevas (celestial beings) when they heard about the slaying of many demons on earth by Lord Narayana in His incarnation as Krishna. On hearing these stories, Brahma wanted to verify the truth about Krishna's prowess and the miracles attributed to him.

Brahma verifies Krishna's prowess

That same night Krishna gave a directive to his maids. "Today do not rake the cows for grazing. Let us rake the calves. Come with the calves together with your respective musical instruments. We must spend the day with music." Most of them came with flutes on which they could play well, holding a stick in one hand and a flute in the other. Only two boys brought two mud-pots to be used as drums. Playing on the mud-pot is known today as Ghatavadhyam. This art is as ancient as the Dhvapara Yuga. The cowherd boys gathered on

the bank of the Yamuna with calves. Some of them played on their flutes, some drummed their mud-pots while Krishna danced to the music. When Krishna stopped dancing, others started dancing. After sometime, Dama, one of the two intimate friends of Krishna (the other being Subala), told Krishna that he was feeling hungry and would like to have some palm-fruits from palm trees a little far away. Balarama, who was close by, said he would fetch the fruits. Balarama went near the trees and shook them. All the fruits dropped brown. At the time of the naming ceremony of the child Balarama, the sage Garga referred to the strength of the baby and said that the name Balarama would be appropriate for him. At that time, a huge donkey appeared there. All were frightened. The donkey was getting bigger and bigger. Balarama seized the donkey by the forelegs and dashed it to the ground. It died on the spot. The cowherd boys hailed Balarama as a hero and danced in joy. Biding his time, Brahma created at that moment a huge cave. He took into the cave all the calves, while the cowherd boys were immersed in merriment. Missing the calves, the boys started searching for them, shouting "Krishna! Krishna!" Krishna knew what was 'afoot and directed his mates to search for the calves in the cave nearby. They all went into the cave. Immediately the mouth of the cave closed in. The boys and the calves were caught inside. They were there for a whole year.

Brahma realises the inscrutable ways of the Lord

Krishna wanted to teach Brahma a lesson. He took the form of all the calves and all the Gopalas imprisoned in the cave. In the evening Krishna and Balarama took the calves and the boys back to their homes. This went on day after day for a whole year. The elders assumed that the calves and the boys were their own. Brahma wondered what was happening? Had Krishna managed to free the boys and the calves from the cave? When he went into the cave he found all of them inside. He was amazed to find that the same boys and calves were inside as well as outside. He then realised the inscrutable way of the Lord. "How can anyone know you, oh Krishna You are subtler than the atom and vaster than the vast in creation. You dwell in all the myriad species in all the world, how can anyone know you?" He prayed to Krishna to forgive him and released the calves and the boys from the cave.

This episode reveals that the Supreme Lord can assume countless forms. He can assume the form of the entire cosmos. That is why the Upanishath declared- "The entire cosmos is dwelt in by God." All are forms of the Divine. How is this possible? By the power of the Will of God. If a man, while asleep, experiences all kinds of things in the dream, including his own movements, while in fact he is motionless on his bed, what is it that is beyond the power of the Supreme Lord? Seeing the Divine in-human form people can have doubts whether the incarnation can have such miraculous powers when he has the same body as themselves. They do not perceive the oneness of the Atma. It is difficult to recognise the Divine in the human form.

Krishna's leelas were intended to reveal His Divinity

Not recognizing His Divinity many people reviled Krishna calling him a philanderer and a thief. These accusations do not detract from His greatness. They are born of delusion. Men make the same mistake about themselves, forgetting their inherent divinity and identifying themselves with their bodies. Krishna appeared in human form to teach mankind to transcend their body consciousness.

Krishna's leelas (sportive miracles) were intended in one way or another to reveal His divinity. Once Balarama teased Krishna by declaring: "You are not Yasodha's son. You may ask why I say so. This is because Nandha and Yasodha are of fair complexion and your are dark. You are not their child. You must have been born somewhere else." What Balarama said was true and Krishna knew it. But assuming an air of innocence, Krishna went to Yasodha and complained "Mother! Balarama is saying that I am not your son. Tell me the truth." Yasodha replied: "Krishna! What does Balarama know? He is an innocent boy. You are very cute. You are highly intelligent. Don't pay any heed to his words. You are truly my son. The colour given by God is permanent. Colour as such is not important. Many people paint themselves in different ways to conceal their identity. All these are momentary. The colour given by God cannot be changed by anyone. God likes the dark complexion. You have got the colour of the Divine."

Gopikas' spiritual love for Krishna

The Gopikas used to describe Krishna in many ways. Their love for Krishna was entirely spiritual. Their feelings were absolutely pure. While Pareekshith was listening to Shuka's narration of Krishna's leelas, many doubts occurred to him. Shuka resolved all the doubts. "Pareekshith! You are viewing things from a worldly point of view and missing the truth. No one can determine the form of the Divine. He can assume any form at any time. But, when he has to demonstrate the nature of Divinity to mankind, He has to come in human form. But man, because of his polluted mind is unable to recognise the Divine in human form." Even Yasodha, despite many occasions in which Krishna demonstrated His divinity, continued to regard him as a human child and frequently thanked the Lord for saving her child from many dangers. But Krishna tried to change her view by the words He used on different occasions. Once when Yasodha asked Krishna whether it was true, as alleged by Balarama, that he was in the habit of eating mud, Krishna replied: "Mother, am I a child, or a naughty boy or madcap to eat mud? People are mad about me. I am here to cure the world of its madness." From these words Yasodha began to realise that Krishna was no ordinary Child but a manifestation of the Divine.

The ways of the Avathar

There are many subtle truths relating to an incarnation which cannot be easily understood. Merely to describe the various sports and exploits of Krishna as a child is only a pastime. God's ways are infinite and inscrutable. No one can determine or dictate to God how He should act. He can transform anything in a moment. It must be clearly understood that Krishna was such a manifestation of the Divine. The name Krishna has to be properly understood. "Krish" + "Na" = Krishna. This means that He is one who cultivates (Krish) the heart. "Karsh" + "Na" is another derivation, which indicates that Krishna is one who attracts - Karshathi-ithi-Krishnah. Krishna attracts people not only by the matchless beauty of His form. He attracts people by his music, his dance, his sports and his words. Krishna, by His winsome ways, could turn the anger of the Gopis towards him because of his pranks, into an enjoyable joke.

Not was that all. Krishna, in fulfilling the pledge He had given to Mother Earth, rid the world of many wicked rulers and sought to establish the reign of Righteousness for the protection of the good.

The Divine incarnates from age to age for the purpose of protecting the virtuous, punishing the wicked and establishing Dharma. Krishna is said to have destroyed many wicked persons. But this is not quite correct. It is their own wickedness which destroyed these evil persons. Today if the Divine wants to punish the wicked and protect the righteous, there will not be even one wholly righteous person. All will qualify for punishment. It is not a question of destroying the wicked. The task today is to transform Adharma (unrighteousness) into Dharma (righteousness). How is this to be done? Through love alone.

Men's thoughts determine their destiny

Krishna also changed the hearts of many people through love. It may be asked: "Is it not Krishna who killed Kamsa?" Not at all. This is the text-book version. In truth, it was Kamsa's own heated bhrama (delusion) which killed him. He was always haunted by the fear of Krishna. His death was a result and a reaction of that fear. Men's thoughts determine their destiny. Hence, men should cultivate good thoughts and eschew all bad feelings.

God has no dislike for anyone. He envies no one. He has no ill-will towards anyone. Not does He have favourites. The grace one gets is the result of one's own feelings. "Bhavatheetham Thriguna rahitham" (The Divine is beyond feelings and attributes). He is "Ekam Sathyam Vimalam Achalam" (the One, Truth, Pure, Immovable). He is "Sarvadhee Sakshibhuutham" (Eternal Witness in all minds). When devotees complain now-a-days why they are being punished by the Lord in various ways, they do not realise that it is not God who is punishing them. Their own fears and fancies are the cause of their troubles. He alone is a true devotee who recognises that his sufferings are the consequence of his own bad thoughts and actions. One such devotee was Kunthidhevi, sister of Vasudheva (and mother of the Pandavas). She was Krishna's maternal aunt.

Kunthi's strange prayer to Krishna

Krishna was leaving Hasthinapura for Dhvaraka. He was bidding farewell to all his kinsfolk and taking leave of Dharmaja and others. Everyone silently accepted his decision. The chariot was ready for Krishna's departure. But the Divine can change his mind at any moment. After taking leave of all others he went to Kunthi. Kunthi told him- "Krishna! All the troubles we experienced were due to our delusions. If Dharmaja had not been lured by the game of dice, would we have been subject to exile in the forest and all the troubles we went through? Hence my children were the root cause of all our troubles. You are always our protector. During all our troubles I always remembered you. In the world people remember God only in times of trouble and not when they are happy. Therefore, Krishna, as long as I have a body, give me always difficulties. However, having had you with us all these years, we are deeply distressed to see you part from us. I have no power to change your mind. I only pray do not forget this aunt of yours." After that, Krishna went to Utthara (Abhimanyu's wife). Hearing that Krishna was leaving for Dhvaraka, Utthara ran towards Krishna and fell at his feet. "Lord! Since Abhimanyu's death, I have been trying hard to bear the pain that is gnawing at my bosom. There is a fire burning in my womb. I cannot divine the reason. You should not leave at all for Dhvaraka now. You must stay. You have been the protector of my forebears for many generations. You were the saviour of the Pandavas. The child in my womb is the only hope of the Pandava clan. If anything untoward happens to that child, the Pandava dynasty will be extinguished. Therefore, you must not leave." So saying, Utthara firmly clung to Krishna's feet. Krishna was immediately moved by Utthara's deep devotion. The journey to Dhvaraka was given up. Krishna made a promise to Utthara. "I will not leave for Dhvaraka till your child is born," assured Krishna. At that moment, Dharmaja and his brothers, Dhraupadhi and Subhadhra praised Utthara's devotion to the Lord. Though young in years, Utthara was pre-eminent in her devotion. This was because when she was enceinte, Krishna entered her womb to protect the foetus from the Brahmashtra (a terrible missile) of Ashvathama. She had a vision in a dream of Krishna entering her womb. From that moment she was ceaselessly chanting the name of Krishna and seeing Krishna in

every person and every object. Because of this, when the child was born, Krishna named him Pareekshith as he rested everyone till he recognized Krishna.

Divine madness of Gopikas has a lesson for all

It is clear that the leelas (miracles) of God are inexplicable and infinite. It is ludicrous to seek the whereabouts of the Divine, who is omnipresent. Utthara was one who recognised the omnipresence of God. Recognising her supreme devotion Krishna was prepared to change His plans. People should realise that God responds only to deep and genuine devotion. Verbal supplications will not suffice. The devotee must acquire the yearning that will melt the heart of God. Even butter which is so soft melts only when heat is applied. Likewise, the warmth of Bhakthi (love of the Lord) has to be applied to the butter of the human heart to make it melt. It was their intense devotion which made Krishna dwell in the hearts of Gopikas. They became God-intoxicate. Once when Krishna disappeared from their midst they started searching for him everywhere, among the trees and the bushes of Brindavan, oblivious to everything else. Their appeals to the creepers to tell them whether their Krishna was hiding amongst them night seem hysterical. But it would be a good thing if such hysterical love of God filled people's hearts today. The world will be a calmer and better place.

Craze for God removes the craze for wealth

Some people talk caustically to Sai devotees saying: "You have gone crazy over Sai Baba." This craziness is sublime madness. There are all kinds of lunatics in the mental hospital, many of whom pose difficult problems for the doctors. If some God-mad devotee sits in a corner chanting God's name, what a relief he would be to doctors! If you develop this kind of sublime madness, you will be supremely fortunate indeed! Everyone should be crazy about God. Only then they will get rid of the mad craving for wealth and the things of the world. The craze for money is the cause of all the ills in the world. With the result that the desire for God declines. Because of the craze for riches, all other evil qualities like pride, greed, envy and hatred have grown among

mankind. Wealth is, indeed, needed, but it is the wealth of Divine Grace and the treasure of Divine Love. That alone is lasting. All other things are transient. Once Yasodha appealingly asked Krishna why he was going to the Gopika's houses to steal their butter when there was so much butter in their own house. The Child Krishna replied: "Mother, I am not stealing butter but the hearts of the Gopis." (Svami sang a beautiful song relating to this episode). "Their hearts are pure and full of devotion," said Krishna. "Their butter is filled with the devotion with which they churn the buttermilk. Their bangles keep time as they sing Krishna's name while churning. The butter that is got contains the essence of the Vedas." Krishna asked Yasodha whether this kind of churning was taking place in her house.

Krishna Avathar is hailed as Puurna Avathar

In this manner, every word of Krishna was replete with spiritual significance. The Krishna Avathar is hailed as Puurna Avathar, compared to all previous Avathars. Vyasa could obtain peace of mind only when, on the advice of Sage Naradha, he began to write about the glorious incarnations of the Lord (described in the Bhagavatham). All his earlier writings, including the codification of the Vedas and the writing of the puranas, could not confer peace on him.

Embodiments of Love! No amount of scholarship will give you peace, unless you are filled with the love of God.

24. Let Truth prevail

Date: 04 September 1994 / Location: Brindavan

God creates the entire Universe from Truth. Finally everything merges in Truth. This pure and unsullied Truth Alone pervades everywhere. EMBODIMENTS of love! Without Truth, the world cannot exist. The entire world rests on Truth. Everyone has to seek this Truth. It is because man has forgotten this Truth that there is no peace and security in the world.

Truth is the eternal witness and it cannot be hidden by any one not can it be altered. It is independent and cannot be affected by time and space. In ancient times, the people flourished as they followed truth unflinchingly. They were prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of truth. Harishchandra sacrificed everything - his kingdom and family too, to uphold Truth. He is still revered as Sathya Harishchandra. God and Truth are not distinct. God is the very form of Truth. It is the duty of humans to keep Truth as the ideal and adhere to it at any cost. Truth is the abode of God. It is the basis of all knowledge and wisdom.

The Vedas are based on Truth. All real enjoyment of happiness, wealth and comforts is based on Truth. But, for the sake of transient worldly pleasures, sacred Divine Truth is forgotten. The ancients used to shun untruth as a poisonous snake. In the modern age, people are drawn to falsehood and not Truth. They make no effort to realise that they are themselves embodiments of Truth.

Integral relationship between man and God

Just as the eyes, ears and other limbs are parts of the body, every individual is a part of society. Society is a limb of humanity. Humanity is a limb of Nature and Nature is a limb of God. Man has to realise the integral relationship between himself and God. Sin is not something outside man. Man's actions determine whether they are good or bad. They are based on thoughts arising in the mind. Through sublime thoughts one can reach the

highest state of Sakshatkara (direct perception of God). For attaining this state of Realisation, one need not undertake penance in a forest. It has to be realised within oneself. The body, the mind and the intellect are only instruments. Man is their master. When the mind is infested with bad thoughts, one indulges in bad deeds. When one follows Truth, he can become Divine. One cannot visualize Truth or God until he achieves harmony in thought, word and deed.

Goal of human life is progress from human to Divine

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! As long as you disregard truth, you cannot have even a trace of Bliss. Time is fleeting. You have to start enquiring into the purpose of this human life now itself. It is not for leading an animal existence. The goal of human life is progress from the human to the Divine.

Today while Science is making rapid strides, morally man is going down. Selfishness and selfinterest dominate everyone of man's activities. It is only by sacrifice that man can manifest his humanness and rise to divine heights. The unlimited proliferation of desires is the root cause of man's misery and ruination. If you follow two main principles, you can reach the goal of human life. "Sarva jeeva namaskaram Keshavam Prathi gachathi." The reverence shown to all beings reaches God. "Sarva jeeva thiraskaram Kesahvam Prathigachathi." Similarly, insult to any beings amounts to insult to God. If you hate anyone, it means you are hating God. You must understand the Omnipresence of the Lord.

In the Bhagavath Geetha, Krishna declares that sacrificing the fruits of your actions is the best and easiest way of realising God. There is no Thyaga (sacrifice) these days. People are interested only in Bhoga (worldly pleasure) which leads to Roga (disease). Sacrifice is the means of attaining liberation. You should, therefore, serve society, help the poor and needy in distress, and thus manifest the human quality of compassion. By doing seva to people, you are doing seva to God. Even Adhi Shankara, who was supreme exponent of Jnana Marga (the path of spiritual wisdom), in his later days came to realise that the Bhakthi Marga (path of devotion) is the best path for mankind to

realise God.

Seek to be good man and become a Godman

Instead of talking about a hundred precepts, you should practise at least one of them. Persons who are drawing high salaries are agitating for more and more, but they should undertake some self-examination as to whether they are doing enough work to justify the salary they draw. You must understand that it is the people's money that you are enjoying. You should have your conscience as your witness and judge in deciding whether you are doing right or wrong. God is watching all your actions. You must do things to satisfy God from whom you have come and to whom you have to return.

People tend to make even the worship of God as a business proposition now-a-days. Even spirituality is commercialized. Seek to be a good man. You can then become a Godman. Never become a bad man. This can be achieved only by chanting the name of God constantly.

Love God, though tribulation may be your lot. Love Him, though you are refused and rebuked; for it is only in the crucible of travail that the metal is purified and cleared of dross.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

25. Spiritual significance of Ganesha worship

Date: 09 September 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of love! Charity is the ornament for hands. Truth is the ornament for speech. Hearing the scriptures is the ornament for ears. Where is the need for other ornaments? There is no greater experience than the feeling that one is Atma - Aham Ethath. "Aham ("I") is defined as Atma, the Self. The word Ethath means all these. It covers all the objects in the Universe which are physical and subtle and also the Sun, Moon, stars and planets. It signifies that you are not the physical body "You say body" which implies that you are not the body. What is this body constituted of? It is a combination of Pancha bhuthas (five elements), Pancha Pranas (five vital airs), and the Pancha Koshas (five sheaths). The entire universe is the body of the Supreme Lord. It consists of all the moving and static things. In Vedantik parlance, it is deemed to be Jnana (superior wisdom) when you say "I am not the body." One should be extremely fortunate to realise this. Whatever you see in the external world is Dhrishya (that which is seen). The Sun, Moon, stars, the five elements which are constituents of the universe are all Dhrishya. You are seeing your body too as you see other things. So the body is also Dhrishya, that which is seen by you. Who is then the seer? The seer is Dhrashta. The body is the object and you are the seer. Without a seer there is no question of anything being seen. Some people talk about Shuunya (emptiness or nothingness). Unless this has been seen, how can they talk about Shuunya?

The great message of Ganapathi

Knowledge of the seer and the seen is the great message of Ganapathi, whose advent we are celebrating today. "Ga" means Buddhi (intelligence). 'Na' means Vijnana (wisdom). 'Pathi' means master. So, Ganapathi is the master of all knowledge, intelligence and wisdom. There is also another significant meaning for the word, that He is the Leader of all the Ganas who are celestial. He is also called Vinayaka, which term means that he is one who has no master above Him. He is the Supreme master. He is beyond the mindless stare. One who has stilled the mind cannot have any master.

Without understanding this truth, we think of the physical form of Vinayaka with the elephant head and human body. Whenever people want to commence any undertaking or start learning music or the fine arts or any branch of knowledge, they first offer worship to Vinayaka. He is also called Lambodhara, which means Guardian of Wealth - Lakshmi Svaruupa. Here Lakshmi represents all wealth and prosperity and not only Dhanam (money) for which there is a separate deity called Dhanalakshmi, one of the eight Lakshmis. Here wealth means Sukha and Anandha (pleasure and bliss). What is the use of having all other things when one has no pleasure or bliss?

Ganapathi endows us with supreme intelligence

Ganapathi is one who gives us spiritual potency and endows us with supreme intelligence. These two are termed as Siddhi and Buddhi respectively. Siddhi and Buddhi are described as his two consorts. As He is the Adhipathi (master) of Siddhi and Buddhi, he is regarded as their husband in mundane terms. Vinayaka has no desire and hence there is no need for Him to have wife and children. He is worshipped by people in this country since very ancient times. There is historic evidence that the worship of Vinayaka has been in vogue even in other countries such as Thailand, Japan, Germany and U.K. Adoration of Vinayaka as Prathama Vandhana (First deity to be saluted) has been mentioned in the Vedas. Ganapathi Thathva finds a place in the Vedas and Upanishaths. Reference to Him is made in the Gayathri also. He is one who instills purity in body, and fearlessness in the mind. It is said- "Thanno Dhanthih Prachodayath," giving importance to his tusk. Some people, out of ignorance, comment upon the big animal form of this Primal Deity and question how one with such a huge form can ride on a small Muushika (mouse) which is depicted as His vehicle. Muushika is symbolic of the darkness of ignorance, while Ganesha signifies the effulgence of Wisdom that dispels the darkness of ignorance.

Significance of steam-cooked offering

Even the offering that is made to Ganesha has great significance because it is prepared with gram flour and jaggery or pepper and enclosed in an outer

covering made from flour paste and then cooked in steam without using oil. This is supposed to be a healthy and delicious food item according to the Ayurvedic system. Modern doctors also recognise the importance of such steam-cooked idlis (rice cakes) which they recommend as post-operative diet for patients as it is easily digestible, Jaggery too has the property of controlling gas formation and this food item gives relief from eye troubles and prevents gastric disorders. In the ancient traditional mode of observing these festivals, great emphasis was laid on good health as the pre-requisite for spiritual pursuits with a healthy mind. For achieving the four goals of human life - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (Righteousness, Wealth, Desire and Liberation) - one should have basically a healthy body. If you want to earn wealth by righteous means and cherish desires which lead to liberation, you should have sound health. Vinayaka is also called Vighneshvara as He removes all obstacles coming in the way of devotees who pray to Him sincerely. He is worshipped by students with books so that all that is contained in the books may get into their heads. Now-a-days people are only after Dhanam (money). Whatever scholarship one may attain, whatever power and position one may enjoy, one cannot be happy without the peace of mind that is got by pure devotion. One may have immense physical strength, one may pursue the path of meditation and penance, one may acquire profound knowledge, but all these attainments will be of no avail unless one acquires knowledge of the eternal - Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham Brahma.

Symbolic significance of elephant head

The symbolic significance of Ganesha's elephant head has to be properly understood. The elephant has profound intelligence. For example, yesterday Sai Geetha, (Bhagavan's elephant) came running when it heard the sound of Svami's car approaching. Though many cars were following Svami's car, Sai Geetha could unmistakably identify Svami's car from an uncanny recognition of the sound of the car. That is why it is termed Gaja Thelivi (elephant intelligence). One having a sharp brain is described as having the intelligence of an elephant. It has Medha Shakthi.

Moreover, the elephant has large ears and it can hear even minute sounds.

Shravanam (hearing The glory of the Lord) is the first step in spiritual sadhana for which ears should be sharp. After hearing one has to ruminate over this and put it into practice which are termed as Shravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana. The elephant takes the Dhuushana and Bhuushana (praise and blame) equally. When it hears something bad, it moves its body this way and that way and shakes off the unwanted things while it retains goods things quietly. Only Vinayaka reaches the lessons that are essential for mankind. You should not stop with installing the idol and doing puuja for a few days. You should make efforts to become a Nayaka or Master over yourself. You have the nine-fold path of devotion. Shravanam (hearing), Keerthanam (singing His glory), Vishnor namasmarnam (thinking of and chanting the name), Padha Sevanam (serving at His feet), Vandhanam (obeisance), archanam (worship), Dhasyam (serving Him as a servant serves the Master), Sakhyam (befriending God), Atma nivedanam (surrendering body, mind and soul). The elephant signifies combining of the first and the last, that is Shravanam and Atma nivedanam, so that all the other paths in between are covered fully.

When a man is born he does not have round his neck any necklace of pearls or gems or any possessions. But he is endowed by Brahma with the garland of the effects of his past actions, good or bad, which hangs invisibly around his neck. If you do good you will enjoy good results and if you are bad you will not escape suffering the consequences thereof.

The lessons of sacrifice that Vinayaka taught

The teaching of Vinayaka is one of sacrifice. You may not heed the contents of the Puranas, but you should not miss the vital principles which they convey to mankind. When Vinayaka was writing the Mahabharatha to the dictation of Sage Vyasa, the latter laid down the condition that Vinayaka should go on writing non-stop whatever Vyasa said. But Vinayaka also stipulated a condition that Vyasa should never stop his dictation but should go on without a break. While he was writing, Vinayaka's pen broke and he did not hesitate to break one of his tusks to use it as a pen. That is why he is called Ekadhantha or one with a single tusk. This is a shining example of the spirit of

sacrifice that Vinayaka exhibited for the welfare of humanity. That is why the Vedas proclaim that it is only by sacrifice one can attain immortality

Bhakthi is greater than Jnana

Prema and Thyaga (Love and sacrifice) constitute Bhakthi (devotion to God). There is nothing superior to this. Atma Jnana (knowledge of the Self) is essential. This was the main teaching of Adhi Shankara throughout his life, as he was preaching and following the Vedhic dictum- "Ekatma Sarvabhutha-Antharatma"; "Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadhanthi" (The one Atma is present in all beings. The one Truth is described in many ways by the wise). He was also preaching that Jnana was nothing but Adhvaitha Dharshana (vision of Non-duality). But, during his last days, Shankara realised that Bhakthi was greater than Jnana. In his famous Bhaja Govindham, Adhi Shankara emphasises that only the path of devotion will help you to get over the cycle of birth and death.

There is no path superior to that of Bhakthi. Bhakthi does not mean doing puuja, bhajans, going on pilgrimage to holy shrines etc. Bhakthi means diverting the pure and unsullied mind towards God. People do not know the real meaning of Prema. The love you have for other beings is only temporal. God is the only one that is eternal. Love of God is Bhakthi. All other love may be termed as Anuraga, which results in bondage, while love of God leads to liberation. One may raise a question whether it is possible for everyone to realise the goal through the love of God. One may not achieve this instantaneously, but can do so, progressing step by step. By Bhajans and other forms of worship one may advance towards the goal of final emancipation. There is no meaning in saying that one is searching for God. It is God who is searching for a true devotee. This is as true today as it was in the past. God is neglected by people when He is easily attained. What is easily obtained at home is not relished so much as what you get outside, though it is not wholesome.

Significance of offering your hair to God

In olden days, people going on pilgrimage to Thirupathi used to climb the hills step by step chanting the name Govindha, Govindha, as they climbed each step. Thus the pilgrimage was performed with sincere devotion and Namasmarana. But, these days people go by buses and cars, gossiping all the while, and indulging in unholy pursuits. The tonsure ceremony in which one shaves his head completely and offers his hair to the Lord of Thirupathi signifies your giving up your Thamo Guna (ignorance and lethargy) which is symbolised by the hair on the head. The hair is black. Giving up the hair indicates giving up Thamo Guna. You have to assimilate Sathva Guna.

All acts of worship have a spiritual significance. Now-a-days, people do not understand their inner significance, but give up not only their hair but also waste a lot of money and return home without being any the wiser for the trip. You may install idols and worship them. But do not forget the inner significance of all worship. All external activities are necessary only to help you to get into the spirit of non-duality and experience unity in diversity. Love and sacrifice are very important. Where there is pure, unsullied, selfless, sacred and sublime love there is no fear at all. Giving and not getting is the underlying principle of spiritual sadhana. Your heart is full of love, but you are using it only for selfish purposes instead of diverting it towards God. God is in the heart and not in the head. The heart is Prema mayam (full of love). On these festival days, you should remember that God is one, and all religions uphold the same principle of "One God, who is omnipresent." You should not have contempt for any religion, as each is a pathway to God. Fostering love towards your fellow-beings, receive the noble love of the Divine. This is the goal of life.

We are developing in each department of life, but it is a pity that we are not developing the unique qualities of human beings. Develop the Athmik awareness, the consciousness of the Divine and the acquisition of Divine attributes. Expand love and understanding.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

26. Onam: the message of sacrifice

Date: 16 September 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Trees yield fruits for the benefit of mankind without any selfish motive. Rivers carry water for helping others. Cows yield milk for the good of others without any trace of selfishness. The human body is given for the purpose of helping others. EMBODIMENTS of love! The entire cosmos is a stage for the play of the Divine. There should be no feeling of hatred among human beings because both in the individual and the society the Divine Consciousness is present. This Divine Consciousness which is termed as Chaithanya is not without purpose. The primary purpose of human birth is to manifest the Divinity within. When man is filled with ego, he indulges in wicked thoughts and actions, while he will do good deeds when he is conscious of the Divinity within. Human life is made up of virtue and vice, hatred and love. The root cause for all troubles is Raga and Dhvesha (attachment and hatred). This has plunged humanity in misery since time immemorial.

Man should learn to balance his feelings

Good and bad always: co-exist. Without pain one cannot have the enjoyment of pleasure. Without darkness one cannot feel the value of light. Man should learn to enjoy the dualities of good and bad, pain and pleasure, in moderation. Food consumed in excess causes indigestion. If it is inadequate it results in starvation. Man can even have ego in a limited measure. If he balances his feelings he can have peace and happiness. Kashyapa and his two wives, Dhithi and Adhithi, were the parents of Asuras (demons) and Dhevas (demigods). Indhra, the king of Dhevas went to war with the king of the Asuras, as it was common practice in those days for one king to invade, the kingdom of another to acquire additional territory. Mahabali vanquished Indhra in the war and proceeded to annexe the territory of Indhra and occupied his capital Amaravathi. Kashyapa had gone to the Himalayas to do penance. Lamenting over the defeat of her son, Indhra, Adhithi was in great grief. When she was wailing, Kashyapa came to her. Instantly; he was able to recognise the cause of her grief by divine insight, which he had acquired as a

result of his penance. He consoled his wife Adhithi saying that nothing happens in the world without God's will and people should go on doing their duties. He asked her to pray to Lord Narayana and taught her a Vrata (ritual) to be followed strictly, known as Payovrata (milk ritual). It has to be observed from the twelfth day of the bright half of Kartheeka (Shuklapaksha Dhavadhasi). She observed the matha as pre-scribed. A devotee's sincere prayer will never go waste. Since she carded our the vratha with a pious heart, Narayana appeared before her and informed her that He would Himself take birth in her womb and help Indhra. Adhithi was very happy and true to the word of the Lord, she gave birth to a son of uncommon effulgence on the twelfth day of the bright half of the month of Bhadrapadha. That child was Vamana muurthi. Even as a child He demonstrated His Divine power by doing marvellous deeds.

Vamana approaches emperor Bali

Mahabali was performing an Ashvamedha Yajna (horse sacrifice). He had previously performed a hundred such yajnas. He declared that he would give anything that anyone sought from him during this yajna. Vamana came to the Yagashala. As He was approaching them, the sages assembled there perceived the extraordinary effulgent form of the young lad. Mahabali went forth to receive the Brahmana boy with all traditional honours and gave him an eminent seat befitting the status of a holy person. Bali told him: "Master, it is my good fortune that you have chosen to honour me with your presence. Whatever you desire, I am here ready to fulfill the same." Vamana smiled and said: "You need not give me anything very great. It is enough if you give me that extent of land covered by three foot-steps of mine." On hearing him, Bali's preceptor, Shukracharya, who could have vision of the future, told Bali that the one who had come to seek a gift from Bali was not an ordinary Brahmana boy but Lord Narayana Himself who had assumed this form. He advised Bali not to promise the lad anything. But Bali was a king who would never go back on his word and told his Guru that he would never break his promise. He was determined to give Vamana whatever he wanted since breaking one's word was a sin and he had to keep his pledge. Shukracharya insisted that he should not fulfill the demand of Vamana as He had come to

deprive Bali of all his possessions. He said Vamana was not really in need of anything as everything was in his hands. Bali, however, determined to honour the word given to Vamana, begged pardon of his Guru for disregarding his advice. Earlier, while Bali was embarking on the war with Indhra, he had prostrated at the feet of his preceptor, Shukracharya, and on his advice he performed the Vishvajith Yajna from which he secured very powerful weapons. It was only because of Shukracharya's help that he was able to conquer Indhra. On this occasion, Bali was not prepared to heed the advice of the same preceptor. Shukracharya cursed Bali, saying: "As you have not heeded your Guru's words you will be reduced to ashes." Bali was firm and replied- "I am prepared to face any consequence, but will not go back on my word." So saying, he told Vamana to measure the three feet of land as desired by him. All attempts of Shukracharya to dissuade Bali from offering the land desired by Vamana proved futile. Bali told his Guru: "Prana (life) and Mana (honour) are the two eyes of a person. Even if life goes, honour should be protected. Granting that the person that has come now is the Lord Himself, I should be the most fortunate one as the Lord who gives everything to mankind, is seeking something from me." Bali was an example of supreme sacrifice. He sacrificed all his possessions and himself too to God. Bali said: "The hand of the Lord, which gives Abhaya (graceful benediction) to all has been stretched to take something from me. The Lord's hand is below while my hand is above. This must be the fruit of my penance in several births. I am prepared for anything." This was the spirit of Bali. Bali was also a very good ruler, who was much concerned about the welfare of his subjects. He was the son of Virochana and grandson of Prahladha. They were both devotees of Narayana. Is there any one who has perished having believed in God? There might be people who have perished without belief in God.

Only by sacrifice one can attain immortality

Prahladha was happy and appreciated the good fortune of his grandson Bali when Narayana himself sought a gift from him. He blessed Bali that he had kept up the noble tradition and name of the family. It is only by sacrifice that one can attain immortality and not by any other means. Shukracharya's anger was growing because of his selfish motive that he should continue to

be the preceptor of the Asuras, He did not want Bali, to give the gift sought by Vamana as he was sure that the last vestige of power of the Asuras would be destroyed by Vamana. Earlier when a fierce battle was raging between Indhra and Bali, Indhra used his Vajrayudha (thunderbolt) against Bali. The latter hinted. There was one Asura, Namuuchi by name. The Vajrayudha could not be effective against him. An ethereal voice said, "Namuuchi is very powerful. As he has Brahma's boon, nothing will affect him. Only a weapon that is neither wet nor dry will be effective." Indhra looked at the ocean and recognized that the foam was neither wet nor dry. He applied the foam to his weapon and attacked Namuuchi. Namuuchi fell down.

Ekagratha is mightier than any weapon

Indhra is hailed as the chief of the gods. In the Purushasuktha, it is said that out of the face of the cosmic Purusha emerged Indhra. Indhra is one who is the Lord of the senses. In man, the mind is the master of the senses. No one can estimate the power of the mind. Brahmashtra and Vajrayudha are not more powerful than Ekagratha (concentration) which is mightier than any weapon. For this, sense control is essential. There is always a battle raging in the body between vice and virtue and only the one that has Ekagratha can come out victorious. Bali is the symbol of Thyaga (sacrifice). He controlled everything by his spirit of sacrifice. The Gayathri mantra begins with the utterance: "Bhur-Bhuvas-Svaha." These represent the three worlds which are in the body itself. Bhur represents Prakrithi (Earth), which is the physical body. Mind is Bhuvarka. Prajnana (spiritual awareness) is Suvarloka. Body represents materialisation as it is made up of the five physical elements. The mind is Vibration and Prajnana is Radiation. If you enquire into their inner significance, all the three are in your body itself. The battle between Bali and Indhra represents the mind battling to control the senses. When the mind is controlled one attains Divinity. This is the spiritual state. Bali performed many sacrifices to attain this state. Bali means tax. You pay taxes to the Government for electricity, water, drainage, etc. What tax did Bali pay? He gave all his possessions, body, mind and soul, to the Lord. The Lord's first foot covered this world and the second foot covered the other world. How huge the Lord's feet would have been to cover the whole world? How can such a

huge foot be kept on Bali's head for the third step of land? The inner significance of this action is that Lord entered Bali's body, mind and soul. Once the ego or body consciousness is surrendered, there is no bar to one's realisation. It is the body consciousness that stands in the way and makes you forget God. Vamana opened Bali's eyes to help him realise Divine. The imprisoned man had to be freed. Bali offered his body, mind and soul, to the Lord.

Bali performed supreme surrender to the Lord

Kerala is a sacred land where Bali performed this action of supreme surrender to the Lord. He had good relationship with this people and they loved him in turn, and had faith in him. That is why Kerala is still fertile and prosperous. The Lord goes about freely in this land. Bali sought a boon from the Lord that he should visit Kerala every year, on this day of Shravana asterism in the month of Shravan. This day is celebrated as Onam by Keralites. They have been following this faithfully, since ancient times. This day is considered most important for the people of Kerala. They prepare many dishes and eat together on this holy day. We should appreciate the spirit of sacrifice of the devotees from Kerala who sacrifice the comforts of their homes and the company of their near and dear ones and make a pilgrimage to this place, to celebrate this festival in the immediate presence and company of Svami. They do not mind the inconveniences and lack of comforts here. They reflect the spirit of sacrifice demonstrated by Mahabali even to-day. It is My blessing that you should enjoy this and should never give up your love of God. God's love is permanent while all other love among human beings is only transient and temporary. Because this faith is imprinted strongly in the minds of Keralites you are making your trip to this place leaving your own native place with your unstinted devotion to Svami. It is My wish that other States should emulate your example. People may brand Kerala as dominated by Communist doctrine but I am sure the people of Kerala are filled with pure devotion to God, whatever may be their political afflictions. I bless you all to cherish this pure love and devotion always.

Adoration of God has to be through one name and one form; but, that should not limit your loyalty to that particular form only.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

27. Divine potencies in man

Date: 09 October 1994 / Location: Brindavan

Oh man! if the Divine Lord is not visible to you,
Just as the stars cannot be seen in daylight,
Because you are blinded by ignorance,
Do not deny His existence.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine love!

From the most ancient times, men have been engaged in the search for God. The questions, "Who is God?" and "What is the means to realise God?", are not of today. They have been there from the earliest times and have agitated mankind ceaselessly. A few yogis, who comprehended the nature of the Divine and who felt that the purpose of human existence is to seek the Divine, undertook various spiritual exercises to discover how to achieve this objective. The purpose of human life is to realise the Divine. It is, in this context, that human birth becomes the rarest among all living beings. The ancient sages, recognizing this truth, pursued different kinds of penances to experience the Divine. Some of them, feeling that the task was beyond their powers, gave up the quest in the middle. Some others, recognizing that this was the sole purpose of human life persevered in their efforts with determination.

When man sets his heart upon achieving anything, there is nothing impossible for him. But, immersed in worldly pleasures, man becomes a prey to weakness and forgets his Divine nature. Few care to enquire into the real value of these mundane pleasures or their ephemeral nature. What is the difference between man and birds and beasts? Can eating, drinking, sleeping and ultimately dying, be the be-all and end-all of human life? All these are common to animals and human beings. What, then, is the difference?

Although man is endowed with intelligence, discrimination and wisdom, without endeavouring to know the truth, man regards physical phenomena as the only reality, the Divine as remote from him, and forgets the main goal of life.

Ancient sages experienced the effulgent Divine

The ancient sages, however, regarded realisation of the Divine as their main goal and practised various austerities. There after, they went out into the world and proclaimed:

"Vedham etham Purusham mahantham"

(Oh man! We have experienced the effulgent, all-pervading Supreme Divine).

Where did they experience Him? They declared: "We have found Him beyond the darkness, beyond the mind and the senses, in our hearts." Man is a combination of the body, the mind and the *Atma* (Spirit). He is thus the embodiment of these three. But, forgetting the mind and the Atma, when man identifies himself solely with the body, he reduces himself to an animal. When he forgets the Atma and the body and identifies himself with the mind alone, he becomes a Dhanava (demon). When one forgets the body and the mind and adheres only to the Atma, he gets divinised.

Bhakthi and Prema are synonymous

The body is the instrument of action. The mind is the instrument of cognition. The Atma is steady and unwavering. Corresponding to these three, are *Karma*, *Upasana* and *Bhakthi* (action, ritual worship and devotion). What is the difference between Bhakthi and Upasana? In both of them, *Prema* (love of God) is inherent. Bhakthi and Prema are synonymous. Contemplating on God, forgetting the world, living in a state of *Ananda* is *Prapatthi* (total surrender to

God).

Bharatheeyas have been celebrating the Navarathri festival from ancient times as a mode of worship of Devi, the Divine, as Mother. They worship Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvathi during these nine days. Who are these three? They are three forms which have fascinated man. Their esoteric significance is represented by three: *sakthis* (potencies). They are: Karma, Upasana and Jnana. These potencies have been given other names.

The concept of Prapatthi (total surrender) is related to Self-Realisation (Oneness with the Divine). God, in fact, dwells in every human being as the Atma. The body is the sacred abode of the Atma. Hence the scriptures declare - "The body is the temple of God in which the individual Spirit dwells as the Ancient One." Just as the diamond is found in clay and not in a rock, the Spirit (as consciousness) resides in the earthly body. The body is of the earth, earthy. The Atma is consciousness. Humanness is the coming together of the mundane and the spiritual consciousness. It is a combination of good and evil. It is a mixture of the transient and the eternal.

Hence, for what is shubha or ashubha (auspicious or inauspicious), for Sathya or Asathya (truth or falsehood), for Kshaya and Akshaya (perishable or imperishable) the prefix "a" accounts for the difference. For instance, Asathya (untruth) is that which is not Sathya (true). Anithya (transient) is that which is not Nithya (permanent). By understanding these distinctions, men have sought to realise the Divine.

Misuse of the body by man today

The human body is precious. Man today is not realising what he owes to his body. The body that is composed of the five elements, which has been given to man to understand his true nature, to recognise the truth about his immortal Spirit, and to experience the eternal within him, is being used for the enjoyment of physical pleasures. The body surely has not been given for this purpose. The body is a *Kshethra* (shrine). The Indweller is the *Kshethrajna* (Knower). The relationship is that of *shareera* (body) and the *shareeri*

(Indweller). Instead of recognizing this integral relationship, man is concerned with only the body and seeks to realise the Divine. How is this possible? The first requisite is for man to acquire the firm conviction that the Divine dwells in his heart.

There is no need to search for the Divine elsewhere. There is no need to go to a forest and lead an austere life to experience the Divine who is within each one. When man turns his vision inward he can experience eternal Bliss. The source of Bliss, the Spirit, is within himself. God is nearer to everyone than one's parents, spouse or children. Kith and kin are outside one, but God is within the body. Forgetting the God who is nearest and closest to them, people are trying to seek for an invisible God elsewhere.

"Dhaivam manusha ruupena" (God appears in human form).

It is sheer human fancy to imagine that God is effulgent light or that he has four arms with conch and discus, and dwells in some remote place. A man who is attached to the body can never experience a formless, incorporeal God. Only when he gets rid of the body consciousness can he recognise the transcendental Divine. Hence, as long as one has attachment to the body, one must adore God in a physical form.

God is the indwelling Spirit in all beings

It is a waste of time to try to secure in one way or other a direct vision of God. God is manifesting Himself in the heart of everyone.

"Ekatma Sarvabhuutha-Antharatma"
(The One Supreme Spirit is the indwelling Spirit in all beings).

The *Sath* (Absolute Reality) is One only, through the wise call it by many names. We have to endeavour to experience that Divine. The significance of Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvathi has to be rightly understood. The three represent three kinds of potencies in man. *Ichcha Shakthi* (Will power), *Kriya Shakthi* (the power of action), and *Jnana Shakthi* (the power of discrimination). Sarasvathi is manifest in man as the power of *Vak* (speech). Durga is present in the form of dynamism, the power of action. Lakshmi is manifest in the form of Will power. The body indicates Kriya Shakthi. The mind is the repository of Ichcha Shakthi. The Atma is Jnana Shakthi. Kriya Shakthi comes from the body, which is material. The power that activates the body that is inert and makes it vibrant is Ichcha Shakthi. The power that induces the vibrations of Ichcha Shakthi is Jnana Shakthi, which causes radiation (of energy). These three potencies are represented by the manthra: "Om Bhur-Bhuvas-Suvah." Bhur represents Bhuloka (the earth). Bhuvah represents the Life force - also means Conscience in man, Suvah represents the power of radiation. All the three are present in man. Thus, Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvathi dwell in the human heart.

Physical forms of subtle potencies within man

Men are prone to exhibit rajasik qualities like anger and hatred. They are the menacing manifestations of Durga. The extolling of the Divine in song and poetry and the pleasing vibrations produced by them indicate the power of Sarasvathi. The pure qualities that arise in man such as compassion, love, forbearance and sympathy are derived from Lakshmi. When people worship Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvathi externally in pictures or icons, they are giving physical forms to the subtle potencies that are within them. The unfortunate predicament of man today is that he is not recognizing the powers within him and developing respect for them. He goes after the external, attracted by the physical forms. The relationship between the material and the subtle has to be understood. The remedy for man's ills is contained within himself. But man seeks remedies from outside. Here is an illustration of what happens in the world. A hotel and a drug store are adjacent to each other. When a hotel server gets a headache, he goes to the neighbouring drug shop for a pill to cure his headache. When the drug storekeeper gets a headache, he goes to

the hotel for a cup of coffee to cure him, instead of taking one of his own pills.

Turn the vision inwards to experience the Divine

Likewise, people today tend to ignore the divinity within them, but hanker after many external objects. There is no need to go in search of the Divine. Men must develop firm faith in the Divinity within them. All that is needed is to turn the vision inwards to experience the Divine within.

Men engage themselves in many outward *Sadhana* (spiritual practices). These must be internalised. All scholarship is of no avail if there is no realisation in the heart. The scholar may expound the texts, but lacks the internal experience. One who has mastered the Vedas may be able to explain the words, but cannot recognise the Veda Purusha, the Supreme Person hailed by the Vedas.

When a person goes to a temple, he closes his eyes in front of the idol, because what he seeks is an internal vision of God and not a sight of the external form of the idol. God is Omnipresent as proclaimed in the Geetha. God is One, though names and forms may differ. All education today is related to the physical world. It will not serve to reveal the Divine. It was this which impelled Shankaracharya to teach a pandith who was learning by rote Panini's Grammar that at the moment of death only the Lord's name (Govinda) will save him and not the rules of grammar.

Though this teaching has been propagated for centuries, very few practise it. Many read the Ramayana as a daily ritual. But how many carry out the commands of their fathers? How many practise the virtue of fraternal affection and love proclaimed in the Ramayana? Is there anyone standing for the gospel of *Dharma* (right action) as upheld by Shri Rama? Of what use is it endlessly to listen to discourses without putting anything into practice? The Geetha is being read and expounded all the time. Is a single precept from it being put into practice? Not at all. The Geetha shows the path to God realisation. But simply reciting the Geetha is valueless. Follow the Geetha and

tread the path indicated by it. Only then you will reap the reward.

Love is God. Get immersed in that Love

What is meant by practice? Direct your sacred love towards God. There is no need for any severe spiritual exercise.

Love is God. Live in love.

Get immersed in that Love. What should be pure love has been polluted today by all kinds of attachments. Pollution today is all pervading and has spread to the hearts of people. Purity has become scarce. *Prema* (Love of God) is all-powerful. Prahlada demonstrated this all conquering power of love for the Lord. He survived every kind of ordeal by his faith in Narayana.

Embodiments of love!

Though people live in the phenomenal world and carry on their activities, they should perform all their actions as an offering to please the Lord. What is it you should do during these ten days of the Navarathri festival? Convert your Ichcha Shakthi (Will power) into a yearning for God. Convert Kriya Shakthi into a force for doing divine actions. Convert your Jnana Shakthi into the Divine Itself.

"Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham, Brahma" (The Divine is Truth, Wisdom and Infinite)

proclaim the scriptures. These three are in man. You can experience the entire cosmos within your heart. The marvellous powers in man, the power of sight, etc. are all derived from God. Human birth has to be redeemed by

contemplation of God. Man today is misusing his precious body. Instead of filling it with the nectar of love, he is filling it with worldly trash. Man should be the master of his senses, instead of being their slave.

You must see, hear, study, observe, experience and reflect; only then can you understand Me.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

28. Turn your vision towards the Divine

Date: 14 October 1994 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

Wherever the mind wanders There you see the three worlds; Where the mind is absent There is only a void.

EMBODIMENTS of love! Wherever the mind moves, there the three worlds can be perceived as one. Wherever the mind is not present, there nothing seems to exist. From this, it is clear that the mind is at the root of all perception and is the cause as well as the witness of all that is perceived. The term Manishi (man) is derived from the word mind. All the three worlds are contained in man. In this vast cosmos, among innumerable living beings the human being stands foremost. Although it has been proclaimed that in all living beings the Divine exists as the Indwelling Spirit, not all living beings can recognise this truth. Only human being has the capacity to recognise it. This unique ability invests human birth with its rare quality, as proclaimed by the Vedas.

The difference between human and the animal

Moreover, in every living being, there are five sheaths Annamaya (food), Pranamaya (vital), Manomaya (the mental), Vijnanamaya (Awareness) and Anandhamaya (Bliss). But while other creatures are not aware of the existence of the power to discriminate between the transient and the permanent, man alone can recognise the existence of this faculty. The second is Vijnana (the ability to acquire the highest knowledge). This knowledge is not limited to the physical, but embraces also spiritual knowledge. This faculty is radiant in man, Now, to the third faculty: Every living being including man is born with Moha (attachment). But man alone has the capacity to realise that he can attain liberation by getting rid of this Moha. Thus there is a significant difference between human beings and all other living creatures. But the veil of Maya (illusion) envelops man and makes him go astray. What is this Maya? It is the combined expression of the three gunas - Sathva, Rajas and Thamas (the pure, the emotional and the lethargic). The Vedas have declared that it is only when man overcomes the

three gunas that he would be able to get rid of Maya (the illusion which makes one see the unreal as real). What is Moha? There are three kinds of acquisitions wealth, wife and progeny - which serve to promote Moha (delusion). When attachment to these triple possessions is given up, Moha will go and Mukthi (liberation) will be easily secured. Man constantly strives in various ways to elevate his status and condition. As he succeeds in one effort, he seeks success in another, and so it goes on. But, what is the hall-mark of a true human being? Human life is bound up with gains and losses, ups and downs. Man has to face them. Incidentally he has to suffer blows of one sort or another. Only he is a true human being who overcomes these challenges with fortitude.

There should be limits to every desire

What is the reason for the vicissitudes in a man's life? The cause is to be found in man's desires. Doubtless, desires are inescapable. One man, for instance, seeks to achieve some ideals. Another may seek to do well in his studies and secure a good job. Yet another may desire to acquire a good name and bring up a good family. There is nothing wrong in such desires. But what we are witnessing in the Kali Age is the limitless growth of desires. As a consequences, man falls into bad ways. There should be limits to every desire. There should be a limit even to the pursuit of power and position. It has been well said: "Nasshreyo niyamam vina" (there can be nothing great without restraints). Without such restraint man is bound to go astray: The Vedas declare that wherever the mind wanders, there the three worlds will be perceived. What are these three worlds? All are familiar with the pronouncements in the Geetha and in the Gayathri Manthra. The three worlds are: Bhur, Bhuvah, Suvah (the Bhuloka, Bhavarloka and Svarga). These three are present in man: Adhibhouthika, Adhidhaivika and Adhyathmika. These were worshipped as three Goddesses - Dhurga, Lakshmi and Sarasvathi - by our ancients. Every form is that of Dhurga - the deity that is associated with Shakthi (Energy). There is infinite power within man, power that is beyond Comprehension and which is Divine. But he makes no effort to recognise it. If man did not have this power, how could he have gone to the moon? What is the power that makes the earth revolve round itself. It is not any machine or

manthra. The power is within the earth itself. This energy, present in man and in other objects, has been characterised as Cosmic energy. What is this Cosmic power? The sun derives its energy and effulgence from this Cosmic source. It is the same Cosmic source that accounts for the power of the human mind and the marvellous power of the eye to see the most distant stars.

Cosmic energy that is present in man

With this power of sight, man is able to see the entire creation. There is no greater power than this. Thus, man is endowed with all powers. But this boundless power is being recognized and exercised by each one according to the level of his development. The same electrical energy is used for a variety of purposes for hearing, lighting, operating a fan, etc. Likewise, the divine Cosmic energy in human beings is used by different persons for varied purposes. This energy is latent in all beings. Because of his ability to manifest this divine, boundless Cosmic energy, man is described as a manifestation of the Vyakthi (Divine). Humanness consists in the manifestation of what is hidden and invisible in man. This energy in man is a Adhi Shakthi (primordial power). It is termed Om. This power permeates the Prakrithi (physical world) of matter. This is known as Bhur. There is another power which animates this material substance. This is the power of vibration. It is termed Prana Shakthi (the Life Force). It is this Life Force which activates every part of the human body. This is termed Bhuvah. Lakshmi symbolises this power Lakshmi is the embodiment of that power which enables a human being to see, to hear and to do many things. Lakshmi represents the power to see what is good, to hear what is good, to speak sweet words, to entertain good thoughts and to do good deeds. The Lakshmi Principle accounts for all the good, happy, auspicious happenings in the world. The third form of energy is symbolized by Sarasvathi. She is regarded as the Vak-dhevatha (Goddess of Speech). Lakshmi is Prana-svaruupini (the embodiment of the Life Force). Dhurga is Shakthi-svaruupini (the embodiment of physical energy). These three in their unified expression represent the Athmik principle.

Sankranthi, Sihvarathri, Navarathri

Today is an auspicious festival day for Bharatheeyas. There are three sacred festival nights for Bharatheeyas: Sankranthi, Shivaratahri, and Navarathri. Each of these has its special significance. Sankranthi enables man to turn his vision towards the sublime. It is the day when the apparent Uttharayan kala (northward motion of the sun) begins. The day is considered auspicious for man to embark on his journey towards the goal of a purposeful, sacred and blissful life. The north is described as Himachala. From ancient times, the Himalayas were regarded as the abode of the Eeshvara (Divine). Himachala symbolises a heart that is pure and cool as Hima (ice) and steady as a Achala (mountain). The message of Sankranthi is that people should direct their vision towards Himachal in this symbolic sense. It does not mean looking at the north with the physical eyes. It calls for enquiring into the truth of the Spirit with the Jnana dhrishti (inward eye of wisdom). Sankranthi signifies this internal vision. The next is Shivarathri. Darkness prevails at night. But during Shivarathri, the night is not dark but full of light. That light is experienced by contemplating on the glorious form of Shiva, meditating on the Divine, reminding oneself of unity with the Divine and attaining a state of pure holiness.

Then comes Navarathri. This festival is intended to make man realise his true worth as the most precious object in creation. All things in the world derive their value from the labour and skill of man.

Raga and Dhvesha

Navarathri means nine nights. What does the nine signify? There are nine Grahas (planets) according to Astrology. The human body has nine openings. If a deep enquiry is made, it will be found that mankind is dependent on the grahas (planets). Although astrologers speak about nine planets, in reality there are only two planets that matter. They are Raga (attachment) and Dhvesha (hatred).

Today animals also sustain themselves on food. They eat as much as is required to appease their hunger. Man, however, does not act this way. He

has limitless desires. He wishes to accumulate riches to last for generations so that he may live in comfort. In Bharath, there is no need for anyone to starve. There is enough for all. But some hoard food in excess. This maldistribution accounts for food shortage. The accumulation by the few is responsible for scarcity for the many. Hence, equitable sharing and distribution are essential. This must be brought about by social action inspired by a sense of justice. Students should get rid of the idea that education is for earning a living. They must realise that they owe a duty to their Motherland and the world. Students should realise that true education should inculcate in them the following qualities: Good thoughts, good speech, good actions, respect for truth, Discipline, devotion and dedication to duty.

Students today are lacking in discipline. They must cleanse their minds of impure thoughts. They must pledge themselves to serve the nation.

The vision and the world

In the worship of the deities during Navarathri every day one of them should be worshipped, not externally but with one's heart and soul. Bodily actions are ephemeral. The body derives its value from the spirit within. Hence it should be regarded as a sacred temple. Today, students develop many undesirable qualities like pride, envy and hatred even before they join college. With such polluted minds they view the world in dark colours. This may be illustrated by an episode from the Mahabharatha. One day, Krishna summoned Dhuryodhana and Dharmaja and asked them to make a study of the people in the kingdom. He asked Dhuryodhana to find out how many good people existed in the country. He asked Dharmaja to find out how many bad people were there in the kingdom. Dhuryodhana went round and reported that he could find no good man anywhere. If there was any good man, that was himself, he said. Dharmaja reported to Krishna that he could find no bad man anywhere in their Dharmik (virtuous) kingdom. He could find some badness only in himself.

The inner significance of this episode is that one sees only a reflection of one's self in the outer world. It is the vision that accounts for the difference,

just as the colour of the glass one wears alters the colour of the world one sees through it. Change your outlook and the world will appear differently. Hence everyone should fill his mind with good thoughts.

Meaning of offering Kumkuma to Goddesses

During the Navarathri festival, for the purpose of eradicating one's demonic tendencies, the deities were worshipped with Kumkuma (sacred red powder). The red powder is symbol of blood. The meaning of this worship is offering one's blood to the Lord and receiving in return the gift of peace from the Lord.

There are four kinds of tendencies in man: the animal, the demonic, the human and the Divine. Of the three constituents of man - the body, the mind and the Atma when man ignores the mind and the Atma and identifies himself with the body, he manifests only his animal qualities. When the body and the Atma are forgotten and only the mind alone is predominant, one becomes demonic. When the body and the mind are forgotten and one is immersed in the Athmik consciousness, one becomes Divine. If, in this manner, one explores the potentialities in man, it will be found that they include everything. Man, therefore, has to know himself. There he will find everything. Arjuna saw the Cosmic Form of the Lord (as described in the Geetha). All the worlds were seen in that Cosmic form of Krishna. That Lord resides in every human being. He is nearer than one's closest kith and kin and is dearer than anyone else. He is the sole saviour and refuge of man.

The means to progress spiritually

Therefore, the Navarathri festival is observed, by contemplating on God for ten days, cleansing one's self of all impurities, to experience the Divinity within. The penultimate day of the festival is dedicated to what is termed Ayudha Puuja (worship of weapons). The weapons to be worshipped are the divine powers in man. When the Divine is worshipped in this way, one is bound to progress spiritually. On the contrary, the usual practice now is to treat the Divine and the devotee as separate from each other. This is wrong. The Divine is omnipresent and is in everyone and in every object. This truth

has to be realised from the message conveyed by the process of inhaling and exhaling that goes on in everyone 21,600 times in a day. Each act of respiration proclaims the message: So-Ham (I am He). With every breath, the message is proclaimed: "I am God." Realising this oneness, all actions should be done as an act of dedication to the Divine. What bliss can be experienced in such a state of mind! It is essential to celebrate festival in this sacred spirit. It is not enough to do this for only ten days during the Navarathri festival. It should become the rule all through one's life, even as one draws one's life-breath till the end. Students today strive to achieve wealth, strength and friendship. But in addition to these three, they should also strive to develop divine qualities. Only then, they can lead ideal lives. Students! Embodiments of Love! Bharath has been from ancient times teaching many esoteric truths to the world out of its abundant spiritual wealth. You must pray for the welfare of all the worlds and not only for your own personal good. I expect all of you to pray for the happiness of all, with your thoughts centred on God.

Youth is the stage in life when the slightest turn towards wrong will spell disaster.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

29. Chant the Name : sing His glory

Date: 23 October 1994 / Location: Brindavan

When one gives up what has to be renounced, When one knows what needs to be known, When one reaches what should be one's goal, How can the Bliss that is got therefrom be described? What have to be given up are these worldly thoughts; What has to be known is the truth, about life; What has to be attained is the Brahmic Consciousness; What greater bliss can there be than this? EMBODIMENTS of love! Belittling human life as trivial and transient, people are forgetting the effulgent Divine that is eternal. Man is no ordinary being. The term Nara applied to man, means Atma (the Spirit). Man is the embodiment of triple entities. He has one form in the waking state, another in the dream state and a third in the deep sleep state. Although the waking state is described in many ways, the presiding deity of this is called Vishva. Tiffs Vishva is made up of twenty-five constituents - the five basic elements, the five pranas (life-breaths), the five sense organs, the five Koshas (sheaths), the mind, the intellect, the Will and Ahamkara (Ego) and the Jeevi (Indwelling Spirit). Together, these twenty-five represent the Lord of the waking state. This Vistula, making use of the sense organs in the waking stare, experiences the cosmos as pervaded by the Divine.

Dream experiences are mental creations of dreamer

In the dream state, the presiding deity is called Thaijasa based on Thejas. Thejas has only 17 constituents. The five sense organs, the five life-breaths and the five sheaths and the mind and intellect.

In the dream stare, the individual is creating his dream experiences, including joy and sorrow. The dream experiences are mental creations of the dreamer. In the deep sleep state, Prajna is the divine entity. In this state there is only one faculty present: the Prajna-shakthi (the power of Awareness). This awareness represents the Supreme Brahma Principle. The scriptures declare "Prajnanam Brahma" (Awareness is the Supreme Absolute). In this state, the five elements, the five-breaths and the five sheaths are absent. With the mind

and the intellect also absent, the individual is in a state of Supreme Bliss - Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Man is thus not one entity but a threefold personality in the three states of consciousness. However, not recognizing the unifying factor, man revels in multiplicity, becomes a victim of his own self-deception through Maya (delusion) and forgets his true nature.

Man is described as Thungabhadhra, the river of Life

It is because man becomes a slave of his senses that he descends to the animal level instead of rising to the state of the Divine Master, Pashupati. Man is like a piece of sugarcane, which has many knots. These knots in man are the evil tendencies like lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and envy. These tendencies assume various forms such as love of wealth, attachment to wife and children and the like. Because of these attachments, he forgets his true nature. The scriptures describe man as Thungabhadhra. This name is familiarly associated with that of a river. But, in reality Thungabhadhra is the River of Life. 'Bhadhra' means that which is auspicious. 'Thunga' means that which is immense and immeasurable. Thungabhadhra refers to the body which is capable of conferring limitless well-being on mankind. By misusing such a body man is ruining his life and destroying his true humanness. The body is intended for rendering help to others and not for self-enjoyment. Unfortunately because of the perversions of the mind, man loses himself in worldly pleasures. He is a slave to the vagaries of the mind and ignores the counsel of the Buddhi (intellect). Man should remember that the same Divine Prajna (Awareness) is present in all human beings. This truth is accepted by all faiths. It may be asked why God is not visible if He is all-pervading. The answer is that though God is omnipresent, He can be experienced only by those who have a pure heart. Just as a cow's milk can be got only from the udder and not from any other part of the cow, God's image can be visualized only by those with a heart full of love and which is pure and free from selfishness. God cannot be perceived by those with impure minds and polluted hearts. The sun cannot be seen when he is covered by a cloud. But when the wind sweeps the cloud away, the effulgent sun becomes visible. Likewise man has to drive away the cloud of ignorance enveloping his mind by meditating on God. In this Kali Age there is no greater or easier means of

realising God than chanting His name.

Four ways of chanting the Lord's name

There are four ways of chanting the Lord's name. One is through Keerthana (song). Then there is Sankeerthana (community singing). Another is Dhyana (meditating on the Divine). The fourth is contemplation of the form of the Divine. In all these, meditating on the name is basic. By meditating on the Lord, Chaithanya and Meera experienced the ecstatic vision of the Lord within themselves. Both of them were immersed in the feeling of devotion to the Lord. Those who experienced the Lord by chanting the Divine name are Naradha, Thukaram, Thulsidhas, Ramadhas and others. In reply to a question from Naradha, Krishna declared that He is present wherever His devotees sing His glories. The singing must not be merely a musical exercise but express genuine devotion. Some devotees sing songs about the leelas (sportive miracles) of God. Jayadheva, for instance, sang only about the sports of Krishna and was oblivious of all other things. He totally identified himself with Krishna.

Radha represents Ruupa sankeerthana (singing the glory of the Lord's form) of Krishna. She saw Krishna in every object. The heart is moved only when the words of the poem or song are rendered melodiously. (Here Bhagavan demonstrated how the manner of singing makes all the difference in the appeal of the song: "Rama Nannu Kapadu" - O Rama, Save Me). By devotional singing one can get merged in the Divine. That is the reason why the Lord is described as Ganalola or Ganapriya (Lover of song or one who is charmed by music). It will be befitting if a devotee combines the reciting of the Lord's name with singing and praying for merger with the Divine.

Now these three are considered as distinct from each other. This is not correct.

God is one: names are many

Devotees are inclined to worship the Lord under different names. They

consider the names different from each other. They forget that they are all equally, embodiments of the Divine: Sath- Chith-Anandha. (Being-Awareness-Bliss). There should be no feeling of high and low. Only the one who has the feeling of oneness can be called a renunciant. It is wrong to make a distinction between Rama and Shiva as some small-minded devotees do. Vaishnavaites and Shaivites who go to the Thirumala temple hail the Lord as Venkataramana or Venkateshvara respectively, as if the two names are different, though they represent the same deity. Thyagaraja pointed out that the word Rama is made up of the vital syllables "Ra" and "Ma" in the Narayana and Shiva manthras respectively. In this manner devotees should seek unity in apparent diversity rather than seek to divide what is one. The nature of the Divine can only be properly understood, by those who are filled with devotion. All should be filled with love. Love cannot flow from the manthras of those who are steeped in selfishness and self-pride. Love flows from those who are humble. It cannot arise in those who are conceited and pompous. The love of God can arise only from loving thoughts. There must be yearning for God, just as one has to experience hunger to think of food. There is hunger for God in every one, but the disease of self-pride prevents one from feeling that hunger. The denial of God is a kind of disease. The unbeliever is afflicted by a variety of diseases like pride, envy, anger and greed.

One should be pure to be attracted by the Lord

There are some who have one foot on faith and the other on disbelief. For sometime they live with devotion and then they get lost in worldly concerns. The result is they have the worst of both worlds. One should not attempt to ride two horses at the same time. Stick to one thing and pursue it with determination. There is no such perseverance today because men are attracted by various worldly pleasures. It is not good to be lured by such attractions. Man should be attracted only by the Divine. Krishna has been described as one who is alluring in every way - by his looks, words and action. One should be pure to be attracted by the Lord. A sensuous person is like a rusty piece of iron, which cannot be attracted by a magnet. In the world today man is caught between the forces of evil and the forces of good, similar to the

war in the Mahabharatha between the wicked Kauravas on the one side and the virtuous Pandavas on the other. Krishna was on the side of the Pandavas, though He did not take part in the fighting. God is always on the side of the good and the virtuous. "See good, be good, do good, that is the way to God." Make every effort to experience the Divine.

Bhajans are supremely valuable

People may say that when you go to Sai Baba, there is nothing but bhajan. Realise that there is nothing greater than bhajan. What bliss is there in bhajans! What a demonstration of oneness is it when a myriad throats join in uttering the name of God! The vibrations emanating from them make the heart vibrant. If you sing alone in your shrine, the vibrations return to you as reaction. But in community singing, what you have is not a reaction but a wave of vibrations. They enter into the atmosphere and purify the polluted air. The atmosphere today is polluted by bad thoughts and feelings. When you sing the glory of God, the bad germs in the air are destroyed and the air gets purified by a treatment with anti-biotics as it were. Bhajans are therefore supremely valuable. It has been said that in the Kali Age there is no greater spiritual practice than chanting the name of the Lord. Let one remember the name of Rama at the time of passing, whether he is a millionaire or a pauper, whether he is a scholar or an illiterate. Sing the name of the Lord and redeem your lives!

30. Education and culture

Date: 22 November 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 13

Wealth is worshipped as God, Selfishness has become the basis of life, Pomp and show have become the fashion of the day, Ego is ruling supreme in everyone, Ambition makes men ignore righteousness. There is no humility and no regard for truth, Education is sought for earning money, Hypocrisy has become the order of the day. How can the sons of Bharath Mathaji Hope to progress in the right path? Spiritual education is the urgent need Of the hour to reform our children And turn them in the right direction. STUDENTS, teachers and educators! What do you mean by education? What type of education should you have? What kind of education will set an ideal? What is the outcome of education? One must enquire deeply, investigate and get the right answer to these questions. People feel that education helps in materialistic pursuits and rest content with this. This is a not a right attitude. Education should promote culture. It is not by education alone but by culture that one gets refined.

Culture promotes refinement. It is termed as Samskara which consists of Sadhguna (good character), Sadhachara (good practices) and Sadbhavana (good feelings). For a person to be deemed educated, his behaviour should be good, his actions useful to society and his feelings should be compassionate and kind. "Sarvabhuutha Hithe Rathah" (One should have concern for the welfare of all beings).

What is education without culture?

It is not enough if a student is endowed with scientific and worldly knowledge. He should have essentially moral and spiritual knowledge also. The aim of education should be to bring about an all-round development of the personalities of the students. Education should make all virtues emerge and shine forth in students. Indian culture essentially aims at developing human beings with such a personality. What is education without culture? It is like a kite cut off from its main thread. It is not possible to predict where this kite

would land - whether on thorny bushes or on dwelling places. It is difficult to predict how such education is going to affect and harm society. It may also be compared to a house without light; bats and poisonous reptiles enter into such houses. Education without culture makes man forget his true human nature and take to evil ways. Such education is like a counterfeit coin. Even beggars refuse to accept a counterfeit coin. Even parents would hesitate to love a son without culture. Refinement and culture are the very life-breath of human life.

Knowledge with humility makes one blossom

It would be wrong to call it education if it merely teaches the meanings of words. The basic aim of education is to make men of character and virtue. Many people think that knowledge is power. It is not so. In fact, character is power. Education should confer humility. Education without humility, action without discrimination, scholarship without wisdom, words without truth, friendship without gratitude, music without melody, politics without morality and integrity can never shine in society. One's personality blossoms only when one has humility along with knowledge.

Education should be useful to society. It should make citizens follow the path of morality and righteousness and make their lives happy. Human life is very sacred and valuable. Today people are not aware of the uniqueness of human life. They have forgotten human values. That is the reason why one comes across various agitations and strikes in society today. What is the reason for the country getting poverty-stricken, for suffering from fear and anxiety, for not recognizing the sacredness of spirituality, for losing morality and integrity? The reason is that man is not living as a human amidst his fellow beings. He is living like an animal or like a demon. Today, the cloud of ego and pomp is covering the sun of Atma and hiding its natural splendour. Selfishness is rampant. The true meaning of word Svartha is that one has to know Sva (Atma). Understanding the Sva (Atma) is Svartham (Sva+Artha). The syllable Sva in Svartham does not refer to the body; but the soul. The Atma (spirit) is pure, unselfish and eternal. That was the reason why the ancient rishis described the Atma in such glorious terms, but today man is

misunderstanding the meaning of the word Sva, identifying it with the body instead of the soul.

Man today is treating the body as the source of all happiness. Such happiness is not true and permanent; it is momentary. Educated persons are not striving to earn spiritual, permanent and real happiness.

We need a fusion of knowledge and action

We are acquiring knowledge, but do not put it to proper use. Knowledge without action is useless. Action without knowledge is foolishness. There is a divorce between knowledge and action today. We need a fusion of knowledge and action. Students should cultivate patriotism and a spirit of service. It is conspicuously absent today. In India today there are 200 Universities and 9000 colleges. About a crore of students have been enrolled in these colleges. Universities are becoming factories which manufacture graduates. These students are let loose on the world after graduation. No one is bothered about the future of these graduates and how they will benefit the nation? What is the use of having education which does not benefit society? No one seems to bother to examine all these matters, whether Government, society, educational authorities, Vice-Chancellors or other administrators, etc. This is a sad state, which ails the system of education today. It is making man a slave of the senses. How can such people serve the society? Wherever you look at the students you find sacrifice conspicuous by its absence. Universities are busy developing different types of subjects to be taught, but are not aware of the Real Subject which they should reach. What is that subject which is the very basis of all other subjects? Atma-Vidhya (Spiritual knowledge), is the basis of all education. It is like the ocean while all other types of education are like rivers which must merge in the ocean. Today, education without a spiritual base is causing harm. The essence of Spiritual Education is faith and dedication. They are like the two bunds of a river. Only when the river of life flows between these bunds would the river be safe. If there are no bunds, the waters would flow over villages and towns and cause vast destruction. It is the absence of spirituality which is responsible for all the problems, violence, agitation and strike. Education should foster the two

bunds of dedication and faith in students.

From self-reliance to self-realisation

Education should inculcate in students the spirit of self-reliance and self-confidence. The first thing in life is self-reliance, second is self-confidence, third is self-sacrifice, fourth is selfrealisation. With self-realisation life finds its final fulfilment. Sage Valmeeki has compared Rama and Ravana in his epic, the Ramayana. Rama is described as a great Jnani and Ravana as a fool. Ravana had mastered 64 types of worldly knowledge whereas Rama had mastered only 26. Why was such a highly educated person as Ravana called a fool by Valmeeki? It is because Ravana lacked three important qualities which Rama had. They are working for the welfare of entire humanity, possessing the supreme knowledge and having great virtues. Ravana was only a slave of the senses. Knowledge bereft of noble qualities and virtues becomes only bookish knowledge which is of no use to society. What is it that made Rama God? It is imbibing of the six qualities, namely character, compassion, non-violence, control of the mind, control of the senses and fame. Students should imbibe these six qualities which make man God. Students should never indulge in violence. Hurting or harming any person essentially means hurting and harming oneself. It is in this context Vyasa stated that the essence of the eighteen Puranas is "Help ever, Hurt never."

Spread Bharatheeya culture

In today's system of education the teachers are not teaching this basic virtue. The Ramayana, Bhagavatha and Mahabharatha are like three important life-breaths for Indian culture. Today's students do not know these three texts without which a person cannot be called Bharatheeya. Instead, students indulge in reading cheap novels, which contain bad ideas. Students going out from Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning should take an oath that they would plunge into society and spread Bharatheeya culture from house to house to all people. Indian culture is the very backbone of our life. If you cannot spread this culture yore studies have no meaning. I desire only one thing from you. You should enjoy peace yourself and spread peace all around.

That is the gratitude which you have to show to the Institution which has given you free education and which has showered so much of love on you. Strive to bring about unity; there is no greater strength than unity. Whatever you have learnt should be made relevant and useful to society. The gap between learning and practice should be bridged. Knowledge from books and laboratories should be made relevant and useful to society. Work for the honour and glory of the society and the nation.

Carry on your secular life with spiritual outlook

What are you planning to do after you obtain the Degree from the University? It is no use going in search of a job from office to office with your Degree certificate or registering your name in the employment exchange. If the Government starts colleges without being able to give jobs to the graduates, it leads to all sorts of problems arising out of unemployment. The colleges must be operated, keeping in view the demand for graduates. Our University spends Rs. 60,000 per head on Arts students, Rs. 90,000 per head on Science students, but we do not charge any fees. What benefit do we get out of this? The only benefit is to make your lives exemplary to the world at large. We want you to carry on your secular life with spiritual outlook and attitude. With the education obtained in the Institute, if you have determination, there is nothing which you cannot achieve. During your student days do not enter into politics. After completing your education, you may enter into politics and practise the values which you have learnt as a student and serve the society and the nation. We got Independence, but unfortunately after Independence unity is lost. Independence without unity does not benefit the nation. Today in the Convocation you have taken an oath administered by the Vice-Chancellor. Oath taking is like giving a promise. You must take the oath whole-heartedly. It would be a great sin if you conduct yourselves in daily life contrary to the oath. Students! Whether you are aware of it or not, Mother Bharath is pining for you. You are not even recognizing the fact that you are born in the sacred land of Bharath. Mother Bharath has hidden an enormous treasure for you - the treasure of knowledge and spirituality. You may return to your places and conduct yourselves in keeping with human dignity and the type of training that you have obtained here. Do not get a bad name either for yourselves or

for your parents. You should be free from ego, jealousy; arrogance and be full of humility, nobility and sacredness. Service to society and the nation must dominate your thought, word and action. Benedictory address to the Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on 22-

The children must have reverence towards their religion, their culture, their educational attainments and their country. They must learn well their mother-tongue, so that they can appreciate the great poetical works and epics written by the Seers of their land. This will give them valuable guidance in the stormy days ahead.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

31. The Avathaar and the devotees

Date: 23 November 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 69

More effulgent than the Sun, Purer and Whither than snow, Subtler than space,

The Supreme Self pervades everything, From the minutest particle.

Holding everything within Him, Illumining everything By His Consciousness.

The Divine (Brahman) is in you And you are in the Brahman.

There is no difference Between you and Brahman.

What greater truth can I convey To all of you assembled here?

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma, When the Lord (Narayana) incarnates in human form, He cannot avoid abiding by the regulations set by Him. You should not forget that even if the Lord is the Director of the Cosmic drama, in His human form he is playing a specific role. If He does not act according to the role assumed by Him, either overdoes or underplays the role, departing from what is appropriate, He will be falling in His purpose. When the Divine assumes human form, He has to serve as an example by ideal actions.

Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu, impelled by their hatred, embarked on many enquiries in search of Narayana. They felt after their prober that Narayana was not in any of the five elements. But the tide of time and circumstances led to situations in which they faced the Lord in His most dreadful forms and met with their end. When Krishna made His advent on earth, He also had to play His part according to His role. While Sishupala was railing at Krishna, He allowed him a long rope and destroyed him, when the appropriate time came. The Bhagavatham relates the story of how Krishna retreated repeatedly in His encounters with Jarasandha. How can the All-knowing, All-powerful, Omnipresent Lord flee from anywhere? Where can He hide Himself? This is utterly fanciful. When one has faith in the ways of the Lord and abides by the will of the Lord, the Lord can be understood and

experienced.

For instance, there is the example of Draupadi in the Mahabharata. In the court of Duryodhana, although she was humiliated and dishonoured by Duryodhana and Dussasana, Krishna, in accordance with the role He had to play, did not intervene, as both of them were destined to meet with their death at the hands of Bheema. During Krishna's life-time, He was the target of attacks and accusations by many wicked persons. But the Divine has no likes or dislikes. The wicked persons suffer from the consequences of their own actions according to their deserts. What one gets in life is dependent partly on what he has earned by his actions. This is called *Prarabdham* (fate). This is by its nature temporary. What is got as the fruit of a past action will not last long. Forgetting this fact and forgetting also his *Svabhavam* (true nature) man is carried away by the transient and acts according to his whims. When an actor in a play is assigned a certain role, he studies the entire play, but while acting his role, he has to play his part alone in each scene as required in the play and not all the roles that he knows. He has to suit his actions to the demands of his role in each scene in the play. Likewise, the Lord, when He has assumed a role in the Cosmic play, has to act in each situation according to what is appropriate to it and according to the rules of the game.

Mankind's fall from righteous conduct

From ancient times, in accordance with the spirit of Bharatheeya Culture, Bharatheeyas have been according the Highest place to *Thyaga* (renunciation or sacrifice). They adored *Dharma* (Righteous Conduct). They were pledged to upholding justice. They adhered to Truth. People today have ignored these values of Bharath's ancient culture. They have fallen a prey to worldly and sensuous pleasures, believing that only earthly existence is real. People in the world today are taking to evil ways and cherishing evil thoughts the like of which have never before prevailed.

Men are consumed by a limitless passion for wealth and power. No doubt money is necessary for meeting one's daily needs. But even here there

should be a limit. The vast ocean, when it swells beyond its bounds, causes disaster. The food that is required for sustaining the body is conducive to health only when it is consumed within limits. Over-eating poisons the physical system. Food may give satisfaction or cause illness. By his food habits man is becoming a prey to disease. Food is essential, but it must be taken within limit for it to be wholesome. Likewise wealth is essential but within limits. When there is excessive wealth, many dangers ensue. With excessive wealth man turns arrogant and loses the sense of discrimination between right and wrong. He becomes a Duryodhana who exemplified greed rather than a Karna (who was noted for his generosity).

Wealth and sacrifice should grow together

Together with the growth of one's wealth, one's spirit of sacrifice should grow commensurately. Increase in wealth should bring about an increase in generosity. These days wealth increases but not magnanimity.

Of what use is wealth if one cannot be happy? Even if a river is overflowing, A dog can only lap a little of it. For a greedy man, there is no contentment Even if he has large hoards. Today, when a man's riches increase, he becomes increasingly miserly. As a result, he forgets his true nature.

When money earned by honest means does not always confer happiness, how can you get happiness through money earned by dishonest means? Hence, it should be realised that excessive wealth can never confer peace or happiness. When you have large wealth, offer it for good causes to help others. Thereby you will derive satisfaction.

In the pursuit of power men sacrifice morality

The second evil is the passion for power. From the villager to the topmost man in a city, everybody is after power. Power carries with it limits and obligations. There are five kinds of power - the power of knowledge, intellectual power, the power of fame, the power of character, and the power of sacrifice. Only the person who has all these five attributes should aspire for

a position of authority.

These days men conduct themselves in positions of power without any understanding of how to exercise authority. Every man aspires for positions of power from that of Panchayath President to the head of the government of the country. In the pursuit of power, men are prepared to use any means, sacrificing morality and justice. All sorts of corrupt practices are being resorted to for securing power. Law and order are being undermined. In this manner, the true nature of man is being forgotten. This is a highly dangerous situation. Those who seek positions of authority should recognise their obligations. They should exercise power with due regard to the restraints to be observed.

"Nasshreyo Niyamam Vina"

Nothing great can be achieved without restraint

Thus both wealth and power have to be used with restraint. But these restraints have been violated at present.

Divine bides for proper time to play His full role

All the troubles and disorders the country is experiencing today are due to these violations. Men are failing to recognise the nature of the Divine. Even though the Divine has come down as an actor on the world stage, He is biding for the proper time to play His full role. A fruit takes time to ripen. When the fruit is ripe it falls down of its own accord.

Likewise when the time is ripe for one to reap the fruits of his actions, he must be ready to gather them according to the nature of the actions. It is one's own actions which lead to bad or good results. That is why the scriptures have declared that man's mind is the cause of his bondage or liberation. Hence, the mind has to be turned towards the sacred path. It

should be concentrated on actions of service to others. It should be devoted to concern for the welfare of the world. Only then the purity of the mind expresses itself.

For all the confusion and conflict prevailing in the world today, it is the feelings and thoughts of people that are responsible. To rake offence when some one criticizes you or to think of retaliation when one does some harm to you, is not the right way of reaching to them. Consider whatever good or bad that happens to you as the consequence of your own actions. Do not attribute them to acts of the Divine. God is like a postman. The postman delivers one letter to one address and the people in the house rejoice over the good news contained in it. He delivers another letter at a second house and there is lamentation over the sad news contained in the letter. Is the postman responsible for the joy or the sadness of the recipients, of the letters? No. It is the content of the respective letters that is responsible. What you experience by way of joy or grief is a consequence of your own actions. God is only a witness.

Earn God's grace by getting rid of ego

In human society today, egoism is rampant. Ostentation is ubiquitous. Can peace and security be ensured in such a milieu? Can God's grace flow in such a state? No. Whatever one's scholarship or wealth, as long as there is Ahamkara (egoism) God's grace will not flow. Grace, like water, flows from a higher to a lower level. God's grace will be showered on those who have humility and discipline. Humility is essential for securing God's grace. Revere elders. Be content with what you have. Develop goodwill towards 'all. Bear no ill will towards anyone. When you desire that all should love you, you should equally love all.

The history of Bharath bears testimony to the pacific attitude of Bharatheeyas. They defended themselves when the country was invaded by outsiders, but they never embarked on wars of conquest. The ancient Bharatheeyas never resorted to wrongful or unrightful policies. Adherence to peace and truth was natural to them. Unfortunately today; in the pursuit of

power people are giving the go-by to morality and integrity. In western countries many leaders resorted to violence to capture power. In Bharath also, there have been many examples of Muslims who killed or imprisoned their own fathers or kinsmen to seize the reins of power. This greed for power converted men into demons. But look at what happened in the Ramayana. To carry out the promises of his father, Rama renounced the kingdom and chose to live in exile for fourteen years in the forest. He did not aspire for power or position. He cherished *Dharma* (the code of right conduct).

Rama's example for cherishing Dharma

Shortly after their entry into the forest, one day, when Rama and Lakshmana were sitting under a tree, they heard the neigh of horses and cries of elephants. Rama asked Lakshmana to find out the reasons for the unusual presence of horses in the forest. Lakshmana climbed to the top of a tree and surveyed the scene. He noticed the advancing of a huge army, but only the flag fluttering high over the haze could be seen clearly. Lakshmana concluded from the emblem on the flag that it was Bharatha who was coming with the army.

Lakshmana got down and asked Rama to get ready with his bow and arrows. "What for?" asked Rama. Lakshmana said that at the instance of his mother, Bharatha was coming with his army to seize them. Amused at Lakshmana's naivety, Rama told him smilingly: "Bharatha is not such a person. He will do no such thing. He is coming to see us because he did not find us in Ayodhya when he came back to the city."

Lakshmana retorted: "If he is coming to see us, why should he bring the army with him?" Rama said: "To allay the feelings of the people, Bharatha is coming with all the citizens. Lakshmana! You have failed to realise that no one born in the Ikshvaku line will ever shed blood to ascend to the throne. Those who seize the throne by the sword cannot be righteous rulers. No such Kings will ever be born in the Ikshvaku dynasty. The rule of conduct for the Ikshvaku Kings is to inherit the throne by righteous means and rule with the consent of the people. The spirit of service should inspire who seek positions

of authority. Without knowing how to serve, one cannot become a true leader. Rama allayed Lakshmana's apprehensions in this manner.

Meanwhile, Bharatha came running towards Rama, crying "Oh Brother!" and fell at his feet. Watching this scene, Lakshmana regretted his misjudgment and sought Rama's forgiveness. Thus, from ancient times, the rulers in Bharath never resorted to violence or unrighteous means to ascend the throne. They were dedicated to the practice of Dharma.

"Sathyam Vadhha: Dharmam Chara"
Speak the truth, follow Righteousness

These were the two basic tenets of the ancient Bharatheeyas. They esteemed them as their two eyes. Today the rule has been reversed - Sathyam Vadhha (Kill truth) Dharmam Chara (Imprison Righteousness). Today it is the reign of falsehood. Unrighteousness is the prevailing moral code. It is because of these tendencies. Bharath today is a prey to disorder. Every individual should try to practise and protect truth and righteousness. This is the bounden duty of every citizen of Bharath. This is the service they have to do to the nation. The nation will not be protected by an army or by the most modern weapons. If the people safeguard truth and righteousness, the latter will protect the nation and the world.

Swami's encounter with intellectuals

Once, more than two decades ago, Sri K.M. Munshi convened a conference of intellectuals in Bombay to be addressed by Swami. The so-called intellectuals today seldom have any intelligence. They are filled with conceit. The intellectuals in the gathering were proud and arrogant, gloating over their scholarship and book knowledge. Bhagavan was the Chief Guest at the meeting and Munshi was seated next to Swami. Munshi requested Swami to clarify the doubts of intellectuals regarding spirituality and right conduct.

Many questions were put to Swami and Swami answered all of them clearly and convincingly.

One member of the audience asked Swami whether it was not necessary for India to equip itself with atom bombs in view of the fact that both affluent America and Communist Russia had huge piles of atom bombs. Swami replied - "What folly is this! When there are millions in the country who lack food, clothing and shelter, the provision of these necessities is the most urgent task and not the manufacturing of atom bombs. Of what use are bombs when you cannot feed the people? Crores are being wasted on armaments. I cannot agree to such wastage."

Then another member asked - "How are we to meet an attack from outside?" Swami replied: "Our country's name is Bharath. For this country the Mahabharatha is the authentic guidebook. The heroes in this epic are the five Pandava brothers. Among them, Arjuna and Bheema are incomparable warriors. Nevertheless, they submitted themselves to Dharmaja, the eldest of the brothers. If India upholds Dharma, America and Russia will have to respect Bharath. Confronted by Dharma, anyone however powerful, will be cut to size. Therefore, the most vital thing for Bharath is Dharma." When Swami gave this reply, the entire gathering cheered Swami for fifteen minutes.

Thereafter Swami told them. "It is not enough to clap your hands; open the taps of your minds. Take to the path of Dharma. There is no use merely applauding my words." There are many in the country who worship the Ramayana as a sacred text. How many of them honour the words of the father? Of what use is it to recite the Ramayana without following its precepts? You have discourses on the Geetha in every street. But is anyone acting up to even one of its reachings? If you go on learning for years, when are you going to start practising the lessons? The endless study of books is sheer folly; to put into practice a single word is better than such studies. Today Bharath is full of such foolish persons.

Love is Sai's most potent weapon

Many of you have been coming here for over twenty or thirty years. You have listened to Swami's discourses many times. Swami has been repeatedly declaring that immortality can be achieved only by sacrifice and not by deeds, wealth or progeny. How many are making any sacrifice? How many are putting Swami's teachings into practice? Why are you gathered here? It is all useless unless you practise at least one of the teachings.

What is My directive? What is it that will please Me? What is it that I desire? Only one thing: Love, Love, Love. That is Sai's most potent weapon.

Was any invitation sent to any of you to come here? So many of you have gathered here attracted solely by the power of Swami's love. There is nothing that cannot be achieved in the world through love. Some things may be achieved by other means, but through love even the Divine can be held in the palm of one's hand. Savithri, Chandramathi, Seetha, and Dhamayanthi stood out as exemplars of Indian womanhood. People read books about them, but do not follow their example. The reason is that people are swayed by evil thoughts. These bad qualities are due to bad habits relating to food and recreation.

Eschew meat, liquor and smoking

Today, let it be anyone, whether one deems himself a devotee or not, he should give up meat eating. Why? Meat eating promotes only animal qualities. It has been well said that the food one consumes determines one's thoughts. By eating the flesh of various animals, the qualities of these animals are imbibed. How sinful is it to feed on animals, which are sustained by the same five elements as human beings! This leads to demonic tendencies, besides committing the sin of inflicting cruelty on animals. Hence, those who genuinely seek to become devotees of God have to give up non-vegetarian food. Calling themselves Sai devotees or devotees of Rama and Krishna, they fatten on chicken. How can they be deemed Sai devotees? How can God accept such a person as a devotee? Therefore, whether they are

devotees in India or outside, they should give up from this instant meat eating.

Next, there is the question of drink. The water that one drinks is life-giving. It issues from the head of Shiva. It is sacred. Instead of such wholesome drink, it is wrong to drink intoxicants. It makes a man forget his true nature. Alcoholic drink is utterly obnoxious. It degrades the addict. It makes him forget God. The drink addict is not conscious of what he says or does. The very sight of such a person is revolting. The drink evil has ruined innumerable families. Alcoholics have caused misery to their wives and children by wasting all their money on liquor. Of what use to the world are such derelicts?

In addition to liquor, many are addicted to smoking tobacco. Today cigarette smoking is the cause of many diseases like asthma, lung cancer, cosonaphilia and heart ailments. The evil effects of smoking can be easily demonstrated. If a whiff of cigarette smoke is blown at a handkerchief, the cloth turns red at the spot. If smoke can cause such damage to a piece of cloth, how much damage will it not do when it gets into the blood stream? It ruins one's health and shortens one's life-span.

Therefore, those who aspire to become true devotees of God have to give up meat, liquor and smoking.

Each one has to reform himself

Drink addiction is the cause of many evils. But no Government can stop this. The change must take place at the individual level. This can take place only through a mental transformation and not as a result of preaching by others. Each one has to recognise the truth and reform himself.

Embodiments of Love!

You are deeming this day as the sixty ninth birthday of Swami. I have no desire to celebrate such birthdays. As I was coming I was greeted by many

wishing Me "Happy Birthday".

I am always happy Why should anyone wish "Happy Birthday" for Me? Be happy yourselves. Your happiness is My happiness.

Today, as an offering to Swami, give up meat eating, consuming liquor and smoking. By renouncing these three, you will benefit yourselves as well as society and the nation. Swami's sole aim is to promote the welfare of the family, the society and the nation. If you wish to carry out Swami's aim, renounce from this moment itself these three bad practices. Do not put it off to tomorrow. Take the resolve from this moment.

Expecting that you will carry out Swami's wish and thereby promote the well being of your family and the nation, I bless all of you.

32. The devotion that God loves

Date: 18 December 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Paduka Puja

Clay is one, but pots are multifarious; Gold is one, but jewels are varied; Milk is one, though cows are of many colours. The Supreme is One, but wears many vestures. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Although clay is one, the products made out of it are varied in form and name. Gold is one, but many different ornaments are made out of it. Milk is same, though it may be derived from cows of different colours. Though the Divine is one, He manifests Himself in various forms with different names. From the fathomless ocean, countless waves arise. Though the waves appear as different from each other, the ocean is one. Likewise, though living beings appear in the Universe in a myriad forms, all of them are waves that have emerged from the ocean of Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being- Awareness-Bliss).

The joys and sorrows man experiences in daily life, his attachments and aversions, his pursuit of sensory pleasures, are all due to the vagaries of the mind. As long as man is subject to the feeling of duality, he cannot be free from attachments and hatred. There can be no escape from dualism as long as man does not recognise his inherent divinity.

Freedom from dualism

There are today few who recognise unity in diversity, though there are any number of intellectuals who are engaged in promoting divisions and differences. The world today needs righteous men who will promote unity. The mind is the cause of differences and only by control of the mind can differences be eliminated. How can man discover his oneness with the Divine without seeking to know his true nature? Nine forms of devotion have been indicated for man to realise his divinity, starting with Shraavanam (listening to the glories of God) and culminating in Atma nivedanam (total surrender to the Divine).

Of these nine forms of devotion, the greatest is total surrender. But who is to

surrender, what and to whom? When this question is pursued, man discovers that the entire universe is made up of the Pancha bhuthas (five basic elements), which are manifestations of God. Man is also a manifestation of God. God is not separate from man. But man is unable to recognise this because of his identifying himself with the body, which is only an instrument. When he gives up these feelings, he will experience the Self.

Elevate every object to the level of the Divine

Men are of three types. First, Bhakthi rasa-atmakam (emotional type), The second, Kriyaatmakam (active type). The third, the rational type. The emotional type of persons are engaged in activities like worship of idols, bhajans etc. They offer worship to an idol or picture in the faith that God in a certain form has shown to mankind the means to liberation. However, you may worship a picture as God, but not God as a picture. You may see God in a picture, but the picture is not God. No object exists with a form without the immanence of the Divine in it. Hence every object has to be elevated to the level of the Divine. Treat every object as a manifestation of the Divine. But do not reduce the Divine to the level of material objects. The process of devotion, beginning with adoration of physical objects, ultimately leads to the realisation of the Divine. Without this emotional yearning for God active pursuit of the Divine is not possible.

When devotion develops, one resorts to the path of action. And then, one starts enquiring into what is transient and what is permanent, what is real and what is unreal. While this discriminating faculty is essential for the spiritual aspirant, it is being abused in the name of rationalism. The process of enquiring has assumed bizarre forms. Today many young persons are misled by so-called rationalism to deride spirituality. Few persons attempt to get at the correct meanings of things. By misinterpreting things and creating confusion, many are taking to wrong courses.

Human life is precious, sublime and meaningful. But by involvement in purely worldly pursuits, the greatness of human birth is forgotten. Without values, life is meaningless. When there is purity in thought, word and deed, human

values are practised. The unity of the three H's is essential - Heart, Head and Hand. But today this unity is absent among people, with the result that men are becoming inhuman.

Man has to understand the inherent divinity

Because man has not been able to shed the animal qualities inherited from his past, he does not behave like a true human being. Hence, man has to endeavour to understand his true nature, his immense potentialities and his divine qualities. He must realise that whatever he perceives is essentially Divine. All his actions should be dedicated to the Divine. Thereby work will be transformed into worship. In essence, there is no difference between work and worship. But, unfortunately; in these degenerate days even worship is turned into some form of undesirable activity. Today devotion is used for deriving sensory enjoyment. It is used more as a source of fleeting pleasure than a fountain of enduring bliss. God will not approve of such part-time devotion. The Divine is omnipresent and is watching everyone of your actions, wherever you may be. 'People in their ignorance imagine that God takes no notice of them. Divinity cannot be understood as long as this ignorance prevails. Many people imagine that they are caught up in the coils of Samsara (worldly life) and are the victims of worldly existence. This is a ridiculous idea. It is not family life that binds you. It has no arms to clasp you. It is you who are endowed with hands, eyes and ears. It is you who are holding on to worldly life and suffering the consequences. This is the truth in the false and the unreality in the Real. This accounts for the fact that in the world today the false is deemed true and the truth is considered as untrue.

All that exists in cosmos belongs to God

How can man realise the Truth? Only when he experiences the Adhvaithabhava (non-dualism). As long as he is steeped in dualism (that he and the Divine are different), he is bound to be racked by the opposites: joy and sorrow, the real and the unreal. All that exists in the cosmos belongs to God. But man imagines that he is the owner of various things and is a prisoner of the conception of "mine" and "thine." In reality all are only

trustees of the property belonging to the Divine. This means that everyone has to consider himself as a trustee for the world's goods. A bank cashier handles an enormous amount of money. None of it belongs to him. He cannot use it for himself, but has to ensure its safety and right use. Likewise, all are trustees responsible for the proper use of the goods entrusted to them. No one can claim ownership.

Hence one's life should reflect the unity of thought, speech and action. Devotion should also be the unified expression of love for God, action in the service of God and total surrender to the will of God. These are intertwined like the braid of a woman's tresses. Bhakthi (devotion), Upasana (worship) and Jnana (awareness of the Self) together demonstrate the oneness of the Divine. This truth is common to all religions like Christianity, Zoroastrianism and other faiths. True spirituality emphasizes the truth that is common to all religions. One should not hate any religion or ridicule any form of worship. One must recognise the unifying truth in all religions. God is not separate from you. However, by regarding God as separate from him, man resorts to various kinds of worship. In the present day world this type of Karmopasana (worship through action) is necessary. But one should not be engaged all his life in this form of worship. Gradually one should reach a higher level. Only then humanness gets divinised.

Every human has latent tendencies of a sage

What is important today is not what particular faith one professes, whether he is a Christian, a Buddhist, a Muslim or a Hindu. The real question is how far he is a true human, being. Develop therefore, your human qualities. What constitutes humanness? It is good conduct alone. The Indian epics hail man as Manuja. One who belongs to the lineage of the sage Manu. As such every human being has the latent tendencies of a sage. Unfortunately, instead of these traits, only vicious tendencies are to the fore. Man must recover his spiritual heritage. He must cultivate sublime and divine feelings. However, owing to misdirected education men are taking to evil ways. Compared to the behaviour of the educated urban population, there seems to be more goodness and virtue among unlettered hill tribes. Injustice and wickedness

seem to flourish in the places where you have educational institutions and courts of law. Men should concentrate on their natural spiritual tendencies rather than succumbing to the allurements of worldly objects. For this purpose, association with good people is essential. Eschew totally the company of bad people. Good company does not mean participating in bhajans and religious gatherings. Sathsang truly means cultivating the company of one's Sath (conscience). It means being immersed in the contemplation of God. Carry on your daily, duties with your thoughts centred on God. Deem every action as an offering to God. That is the way to perfect one's human nature and sanctify one's life.

Likhitha japam purifies the mind

As this may not be an easy process, the method of Likhitha japam has been recommended for purifying one's mind. Likhitha japam is a form of spiritual exercise in which one is engaged in writing the name of the Lord). Likhitha japam should be performed in a spirit of devotion. A wealthy man, who had no peace of mind &spire his riches, went to a sage for advice. The sage suggested to him that as a way of reducing his insatiable desires, which were the cause of his worries, he should write the name of the Lord some crores of times. Unused to such an arduous exercise, the rich man found a shortcut to achieving what the sage had suggested, by resorting to mechanical devices for multiplying the number of times he wrote the name of the Lord. This is a total travesty of the spiritual exercise suggested by the sage. It is tantamount to cheating God. This sort of deception and hypocrisy is rampant today. It is not quantity that counts. Even the writing of a few names with sincere devotion is better than filling pages mechanically. In Tamil Nadu, numerous devotees have written with true. devotion the name of Sai Ram many crores of times, thinking of the name in their minds, spelling it by mouth and writing it by the hand. The unity of mind, speech and action has produced purity in thought, word and deed. Any spiritual exercise like Likhitha Japam should be done wholeheartedly. Only then it becomes sanctified and godly. All actions should be performed in this spirit of dedication and in accordance with the dictates of one's conscience. The name of the Lord is like a precious jewel which. must be considered valuable and cherished as a gem. Thulsidhas sang

in praise of the Lord's name (Rama's name) as the most invaluable gift given to him' by his guru. The Lord's name should be recited with deep feeling so that it gets firmly entrenched in the heart.

The example of Hanuman

Hanuman is the supreme exemplar of true devotion. At the time of Rama's coronation in Ayodhya after his return from Lanka, Rama gave presents to all those who had helped him in the battle against Ravana. When it came to Hanuman, Rama could not find anything that was worthy of the unparalleled devotion of Hanuman. Praising Hanuman's unexcelled services, Rama said that the only fitting reward for such a devotee was to give himself to Hanuman. He embraced Hanuman most lovingly. Seetha saw this and felt Hanuman should not be left unrewarded for his great services. She took out from her neck the pearl necklace she had received from her father Janaka at the time of her wedding and gave it to Hanuman. Immediately after receiving the necklace, Hanuman removed one pearl after another from the necklace, crushed it between his teeth, placed it close to his ear and then threw it away. Surprised at his strange behaviour, Seetha asked him why he was treating the pearls in that manner. Hanuman explained that he had no use for any object that did not chant Rama's name. Seetha asked him how he could expect to hear Rama's name from an inert object like a pearl. Hanuman immediately pulled out a hair from his arm and kept it close to Seetha's ear. The hair was chanting Rama's name!

True devotion means that even the blood stream should proclaim the Lord's name. Because Hanuman was such a devotee he could be the foremost servant of Rama. He was totally free from egoism, pride and envy. In Lanka, he did not boast of his prowess, but was content to declare himself a humble servant of Rama. This humility is the true mark of a devotee. When a person is asked "Where do you live?" the correct answer is: "I am dwelling in the (Indwelling Spirit)." This is the truth to be learnt from all the scriptures and epics. Everyone should realise the oneness in spirit of all mankind, which is proclaimed equally by all religions. Sometime ago a devotional exercise called Likhitha japam (writing the names of the Lord as a form of worship) was

started in Tamil Nadu. It was a collective (Samashti) exercise. Large numbers of devotees assembled at one place and wrote the name of the Lord as a (spiritual exercise). The joy to be derived from such a collective effort is indescribable. The community bhajan in which all join to sing in unison is an equally blissful experience. This community singing was started by Gum Nanak. During community singing divine vibrations emerge sanctifying the whole atmosphere. The same result cannot be expected when one sings alone. Community singing promotes unity which leads to purity and divinity. Today there is no unity, purity or divinity. What mankind needs today is unity based on the spiritual oneness of humanity.

Worship of the Lord's feet

Today we are celebrating the Padhuka Festival (a festival for worshipping sandals blessed by the Lord). What is the significance of worshipping the Lord's feet? There is the devotee's yearning for touching the Lord. How is this to be done? The easiest way is to touch the feet of the Lord. A spiritual significance is attached to the touching of the Lord's feet which sanctify the earth by walking on it. Scientifically also there is meaning in Padhasparsha (touching the feet). The blood circulates from the feet to the head. When one touches the toe of the Lord's Feet, he can experience a current present in the toe. That is a divine energy. From a mundane point of view the body appears as a physical form. But from the spiritual point of view, there is an aura around every body. It has Thejas (effulgence) from which arises Ojas (spiritual energy). This energy produces vibrations. That is why it is declared: "Dharshanam Papa nashanam" (Sight of the Lord destroys all sins). "Sambhashanam Sankata nashanam" (Dialogue with the Lord destroys all sorrows). "Sparshanam Karma vimochanam" (The touch of the Lord frees one from the consequences of one's actions). When the devotee touches the Lord, it is like the linking of the negative and positive wires, which generates divine energy. This connection should be from heart to heart. Only then the Divine energy will flow (from the Lord to the devotee). Then the Lord and the devotee become one. Because the spiritual significance of these practices is not properly understood people fall a prey to confusion.

Men should go away from the worldly path

Men should go away from the worldly path like the fish which swim against the current in a river. That is the way to realise the Divine. If you allow yourself to be carried away by the worldly current, you can only meet with a sad end. Whatever the world may think, keep your eye on the spiritual goal. When people ask for liberation, they should understand that liberation means oneness with the Divine. Become aware of your divinity. Then worldly thoughts will not enter your mind. To realise this oneness with God, one has to chant the Lord's name incessantly. You must pray for the vision of the Lord's feet in your heart. There should be no room for evil thoughts and feelings.

Lakshmana's unalloyed devotion to Rama

It was because of the unalloyed devotion of Lakshmana that Rama considered him greater than Seetha or anyone else. He declared: "It is impossible for me to find a brother like Lakshmana." This was a tribute to the way Lakshmana served Rama and Seetha for thirteen years in the forest. During all these years Lakshmana had never looked at the face of Seetha but revered her feet everyday. When the jewels dropped by Seetha were shown to Lakshmana he could identify only the anklets and not any of the other jewels worn by her. (Bhagavan recited the shloka from the Ramayana in which Lakshmana explained how he could only see Seetha's anklets because he saw them every morning when he prostrated at her feet). Can such reverence be found among the youth today? One feels ashamed when one listens to their talk. Young people should follow the ideal exemplified by Lakshmana. Devotees should not feel satisfied with what they deem as their devotion. They should find out whether the Lord has appreciated their devotion. God should acknowledge your devotion. Krishna acknowledged Arjuna's devotion to Him only when the latter declared: "Karishye Vachanam Thava" (I shall abide by your words). If one does not pay heed to the Lord's words and does not act up to His injunctions, to claim that one is devotee is only a pompous boast. Activise your devotion. Let your actions be pure and sacred.

Old devotee's example for dedicated service

For one to come to this godly path, one has to contemplate on God incessantly. Today in Tamil Nadu the Likhitha japam movement and the worship of Padhukas (sandals sanctified by the Divine Feet of Bhagavan) have grown by leaps and bounds. An 85-year-old devotee is striving to achieve even greater progress in these movements. In devotion it is not age that counts. What matters is the determination and the dedication. At this age, he comes almost every week to Prasanthi Nilayam without regard to the strain involved. His sole concern is service to Bhagavan. All devotees should become exemplars like him, of dedicated service. When that happens the world will be an earthly paradise. This old devotee has been able to bring together large numbers of people to get involved in this form of collective worship by his example and enthusiasm. The saint Thyagaraja had great difficulty in chanting the name of Rama 96 crores of times. But in Tamil Nadu today the Lord's name has been written 108 crores of times (one crore is ten million). Countless devotees have been engaged in writing the name of the lord, without wasting their time in useless gossip or meaningless activities. What a sacred pre-occupation is this! Do not waste your time in useless pursuits. Instead devote all the time available to remembering and writing the Lord's name.

33. Spread the message of Love

Date: 25 December 1994 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

The Cosmos is controlled by the Divine; The Divine is governed by Truth; Truth is governed by noble beings; The noble are the Divine Itself. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! The entire visible cosmos is under the control of the Divine. The Divine is governed by Truth. That Truth is subject to Utthama-dheenam (noble beings). A noble person is the embodiment of God. The human body, made up of the five basic elements and endowed with the five sense organs, is not different from the mind. The mind wears the body as a vesture. The mind, for its enjoyment, uses the body as an instrument. It is the cause of all experiences. A body without a mind is as illusory as a crop on a barren field. In ordinary life people regard the body as permanent and for the sake of its pleasures undertake all kinds of efforts. This is a sign of ignorance. A body without the mind is as useless as a school without a teacher and a temple without a deity. The body should be regarded as an instrument for right living.

Men are developing their intellectual abilities but are using their intelligence for wrong purposes. Knowledge without right action is useless. Mere action without knowledge is foolishness. Hence it is necessary to combine knowledge with cultivation of character. The most important faculty in man is Prajna-Shakthi (the power of integrated Awareness). It is from Prajna-Shakthi that other powers like Ichcha-Shakthi (will power), Medha-Shakthi (intelligence), Vak-Shakthi (the power of speech) and Vicharana-Shakthi (the reasoning powers) are derived. This integrated Awareness is sustained by thoughts.

Good company and good thoughts

The most important requisite for man in the world is truth based on thought. True thoughts constitute the proper wealth for man. But, alas, modern man makes no efforts to cultivate good thoughts. The absence of good thoughts weakens the will power. With a weak will man cannot accomplish even simple

things. To achieve anything worth while in life man has to strengthen his will power.

It is well known that humanness thrives on good company and good thoughts. What good thoughts can achieve is illustrated by the life of a poor boy in Tamil Nadu, Muthuswamy Iyer. His father died at a very young age. The forlorn widow summoned the young man and told him that there were many poor people in the world who were suffering many hardships because they were not able to get justice. "Somehow you must pursue your studies so that you may one day provide help to these unfortunate people," she said. The mother's words strengthened the determination of the young lad. He pursued his studies diligently though he lacked many necessities. In the evenings he used to study under street lamps, as there was no light at home. He was solely inspired by his mother's good advice. As a result of this hard work, he graduated and secured a law degree. He dedicated himself to the service of the weak and helpless. His zeal and devotion resulted in due course in his becoming the first Indian Judge of the Madras High Court. Consider the lowliness of his birth and what eminence he achieved! It was entirely due to the noble thoughts he cherished and his strength of will.

Noble thoughts strengthen will-power

In many foreign countries, young men who started their lives as dish washers, or newspaper vendors or shoeshine boys, achieved eminence as writers by dint of hard work and noble aspirations. Their achievements are entirely due to their ennobling thoughts which strengthened their will-power and inspired in others confidence in their abilities. In Britain there was a poor youth named James MacDonald who used to help school children by writing the addresses on letters for them. As he wrote each address he used to tell the boy; "God bless you." He also used to tell them, off and on, "God is great." Often he had to go without food, but his heart was filled with noble feelings. Such a lad one day became the Prime Minister of Britain. Only his noble thoughts could have raised him from his poor state to the office of the Prime Minister:

Good fortunes grow according to good thoughts

Man's bad or good fortune is related to his thoughts. Sowing the seed of thoughts man reaps the fruit known as Karma (deeds). Sowing the seed of karma, man reaps the fruit called Abhyasa (practice). From Abhyasa, man reaps the fruit of Seela (character). From Seela one reaps the fruit of Adhristam (good fortune). Thus fortune is based on character, which is based on good practices arising out of good deeds based on good thoughts. Thus according to the development of good thoughts, one's good fortune will also grow. Unfortunately; men today are deluded by bad thoughts and are engaged in evil deeds. They enjoy bad company and as a result come to a bad end. Everyone of you can experiment in a small way with the gradual elimination of bad thoughts. You will discover for yourself how your willpower grows with the diminution of bad thoughts. Man has forgotten that the spiritual path alone will rescue him from the grip of insatiable desires, endless worries and numerous troubles. He is indulging in various malpractices. As desires multiply; the will-power weakens and vice versa. You can find out for yourselves how when addiction to coffee, tea and smoking is reduced, the willpower gets stronger. The results can be verified with just one week of practice. By addiction to various deleterious practices, man's will-power and other faculties decline in strength. The will-power should be strengthened by giving up bad habits and it should be directed towards social service.

Jesus and social service

Jesus exemplified the spirit of social service. The inspiration for this came from his mother Mary. From his childhood Mary taught him such good qualities as truth, kindness, compassion and justice. In his twelfth year, Jesus and his parents went to Jerusalem for a festival. In the crowds the parents lost trace of Jesus and searched for him everywhere. Not finding him anywhere, Mary sat under a tree and prayed to God to come to her help. At that moment, a thought flashed in her mind that Jesus was perhaps in a nearby temple. And Jesus was there sitting in a corner of the temple and listening to the words of the priest. Mary affectionately rushed towards him and embraced him. "Child, what agony I went through on your account," she said. Jesus told her: "Mother! Why should you have any fear? Those who believe in

the world will have fears. But why should anyone believing in God fear at all? I am in the company of my Father. Why do you fear? You taught me that God is everything for us. How, then, can you worry like this?" Jesus had learnt his lessons from his mother and developed his spiritual faith. After they returned from Jerusalem, Jesus felt that service to his parents was his foremost duty, because he owed everything to them. In this spirit, he used to assist his father in his carpentry work. Joseph passed away when Jesus was thirty. He sought his mother's permission to devote himself to the service of the needy and the forlorn. After leaving home, Jesus had himself baptized by John. Then for forty days Jesus observed severe austerities without food and drink. At first he considered himself as Messenger of God. After the penance he realised he was the Son of God. He began his ministry with a group of fishermen as his first disciples. He taught them that they should first seek the Kingdom of Heaven. To enter that Kingdom they had to cultivate loving hearts. Then, their hearts would become the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus further declared to them: "I and my Father are one."

Foster love in your hearts and redeem your lives

What is it that men should acquire today? It is the broadening of the heart so that it may be filled with all-embracing love. Only then the sense of spiritual oneness of all mankind can be experienced. Out of that sense of unity will be born the love of God. This love will generate pure bliss in the heart that is boundless, indescribable and everlasting. For all forms of bliss, love is the source. A heart without love is like a barren land. Foster love in your hearts and redeem your lives. Whatever your scholarship or wealth, they are valueless without love. Without devotion all other accomplishments are of no avail for realising God. Men aspire for liberation. True liberation means freedom from desires. Today men cannot go to forests for penance or engage themselves in meditation and other spiritual exercises. The easiest spiritual path for all people is to dedicate all their actions to God. Today we celebrate the birthday of Christ. It is said that when Jesus was born in a manger, three kings were led by a star to Jesus's place of birth. In fact, they were not kings but three shepherds. One of them, seeing the infant Jesus observed: "This child will be a lover of God." A second one said: "No, God will love him." The

third one said: "Verily he is God Himself."

Oneness with God

The true significance of these three statements is-"To love God is to be His Messenger." To be loved by God is to be a son of God. The final state is to be one with God. As Jesus said: "I and my Father are one." Thus all persons are messengers of God. This means that they should divinise themselves. When can men call themselves "Sons of God?" Recognise what pure actions are done by God, selflessly for the sake of all. There is no trace of self-interest in Him. Everything He does, says or thinks is for the good of others. On the other side, everything men do, speak or think is born out of selfishness. Men have become puppets in the hands of selfishness. Men can describe themselves as "Sons of God" only when they are completely free from selfishness and become Godly. To call yourself the "Son of God," you have to manifest the qualities of the Father.

In the Prahladha story, consider the emergence of the Lord from a pillar. The significance of the destruction of the pillar is a prelude to the manifestation of the Lord. The illusion relating to the body has to be destroyed for the Divine to manifest Himself. The body is no doubt essential upto a point. It has been given for the performance of right actions and to discover the secret underlying action. Kaya (body), Karma (action), Marina (mystery) and Dharma (righteousness) together signify the purpose of Janma (human birth). Today men are not aware of righteousness or the role of Karma. Of what use is human existence?

Do not give room for the waywardness of the mind. Purify the mind and direct it towards the righteous path. It is a straight and narrow path. In the spiritual field there is no royal highway. The path is narrow because the goal is infinitely precious. Crowds swarm a fish market but only a few go to a diamonds shop. The road to God is for the few who are genuine sadhaks (spiritual aspirants).

The birthdays of saints and prophets are being celebrated these days with

feats and festivals. This is not the way to celebrate them. The followers should live upto the teachings of the great Masters.

Uniqueness of Christmas in Prasanthi Nilayam

Christmas is celebrated today in many countries. In every country small groups of people go to their respective churches, listen to the sermon and return to their homes. In some places people eat, drink, and make themselves merry. But nowhere in the world can you find Christmas being celebrated with the solemnity and holiness obtaining in Prasanthi Nilayam. Here are gathered men and women from all countries. There are many denominations among Christians and the members thereof celebrate Christmas in their separate ways. Only in Prasanthi Nilayam do Christians of all denominations and men and women of other faiths join to celebrate Christmas. Here are devotees from Germany, Russia, Argentina, America and many other countries. They speak different languages. Prasanthi Nilayam has become a mini-world. All of them work in unison. You witnessed last night the beautiful play by children from so many countries. They conveyed the Divine Message so effectively. Here is a concrete manifestation of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God.

People talk about brotherhood, but there is often no fraternal feelings among brothers even in one family. That is not the case here. Here you see brotherhood in action, from heart to heart and love to love.

Holy festivals are conducted in such an ideal manner only in Prasanthi Nilayam. Devotees should set an example of ideal living to the whole world.

Messengers of Sathya Sai

Today; the former girl students of Sathya Sai College at Ananthapur, who have formed as association called Messengers of Sathya Sai, are observing their annual day They are doing good service. They carry out the commands of Svami in the spirit and the letter. They are spread all over the world - Switzerland, Australia, Canada, Germany; Japan and other countries. They

come to Prasanthi Nilayam from these far off places out of their devotion to Sai. They are bringing their husbands and children also out of their deep love for Svami. They go out to villages and do various kinds of service there. They serve the blind and deaf and dumb children and make them self-reliant and useful citizens. They are carrying on their work wholeheartedly. For the expenses of their travel from far off countries they save money from their domestic budgets. This is a sign of their dedication to God's work. In this manner the old students of the Ananthapur College are leading exemplary lives wherever they are. In addition to all their multifarious household duties, they carry on their social service activities.

In this cosmic university all are students. Hence everyone should render social service to the extent of one's capacity and spread Svami's ideals among all. There is nothing selfish in Svami's message. Hence anyone can spread it selflessly.

Carry the message of unity to every home

Sow the seed of love in your hearts and it will grow in due course into a big tree. God is one. Do not entertain any differences of creed or caste. Carry the message of unity to every home. Embodiments of love! Regard Love as your life-breath and as the sole purpose of your existence.

You tell Me that you have read the Bhagavatha Vahini and all the other Vahinis that I have written for you. Good! But let Me ask you, have you put even a single direction given in them into daily practice? Question yourself calmly and decide to benefit by practising the process mentioned in them.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba