



Index Of Discourses

1. Service to Man is Service to God	2
2. Respect For Parents - The Greatest Virtue	15
3. Character Is The Goal Of Education	29
4. Love Is The Royal Path To Realise God	41
5. Concentration Of Mind On The Divine Is Real Sadhana	53
6. Recognise The Fundamental Principle Of Oneness	68
7. Manifestation Of The Vedas In Human Form	77
8. Uphold Truth Under All Circumstances	84
9. Develop Love To Experience Divinity	96
10. Mother Is Your First God	104
11. The Form of God is Love	118
12. My Students are My Wealth	125
13. Do Constant Namasmarana for Mental Peace	132
14. Divine Love Alone Can Save Us From Sorrows	142
15. The Lord Accepts Only a Pure Heart	151
16. God Protects Those Who Protect Sathya and Dharma	161
17. Teachings of noble souls essential for the young	172
18. Obtain Divine Grace By Obeying Your Parents	177
19. Your Reality Is In Your Own Self, Not Elsewhere	187
20. Experience Divinity Within In Total Silence	197
21. Dedicate Your Life To Serve Society	207
22. My Power Is The Power Of Love	221
23. Have Faith in God, the Only True Friend	227
24. Divine Discourse	238
25. Obey the Divine Command With Total Faith	240
26. Who are you? I am I	249
27. Cultivate Good Habits To Command Respect In Society	258
28. Uphold The Dignity And Honour Of Bharat Matha (Mother India)	274
29. Divine Discourse	287

1. Service to Man is Service to God

Date: 01 January 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: New Year

People can say that this is Brahman,
None can say, however, that this is not Brahman,
God only exists always,
The world is illusory, look!
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Today, everybody is enthusiastic about New Year's Day. Significantly, this New Year's Day started on a Thursday. It is one's foolishness to single out a particular day in a year and celebrate that day with great joy. For a true devotee, every day is a festival day. Therefore, it is essential that we consider every minute of every day as new and celebrate it with joy. In fact, every day is a New Year's Day.

Everything in this objective world is impermanent and unreal. Hence, we have to contemplate upon the eternal truth and reality. We should not waste our time brooding over the past or anticipating the future. It is great foolishness to worry about the future or the past, forgetting the present. Only the present is real. The past is past, you cannot get it back, however, much you may pray for it. The future is hidden in the womb of time. It is not possible to visualise it. Therefore, only the present is important. Unable to realise this truth, people are worried about the past and future.

The foremost activity that man should engage in is service to fellow human beings. Instead, people are wasting their precious time worrying about either the past or the future. Therefore, **Embodiments of Love!** You should always engage yourself in service to fellow human beings. There is no greater

sadhana than such service.

Considering the nine paths of devotion, namely *sravanam* (listening), *kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *vandanam* (salutation), *archanam* (worship), *dasyam* (servitude), *sneham* (friendship), and *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender) as the only important means for salvation, people are engrossed in these activities. They totally forget the importance of service. Only the fruits of service will be eternal. We must constantly engage ourselves in service to others. God has given us this body for that purpose only. This body is not meant to be engaged in mere eating and drinking and thus wasting our valuable time. We must realise the truth that God has given us this body for serving others and thus help others. There is nothing greater than service to humanity. Service to man is service to God. All great men have sanctified their life only by serving humanity. Therefore, you start serving humanity at least from now onward. Service is more important than bhajan and all other sadhanas (spiritual disciplines).

Embodiments of Love!

What, according to you, is service? You consider helping people in difficulties is service. No. It is not as simple as that. Your body should be constantly engaged in serving others. The human body consists of several limbs. All these limbs are meant to be engaged in serving the fellowmen and not for other activities. Unfortunately, we are forgetting this basic fact. Every limb in the human body has been granted by God for *karmopasana* (worshipping God through service). Karmopasana is the only means by which the human life can be sanctified. We are building several temples. We are undertaking various sadhanas. But, all these sadhanas can give us only temporary satisfaction, not eternal joy. Our ancient *rishis* (sages) have been able to achieve eternal joy through a conscious effort. Therefore, you must develop firm faith in the truth that nothing can provide eternal joy except service to humanity. Undertake service to the suffering humanity. Service is not merely confined to health services. Service encompasses every possible help to the

fellow human beings.

The ancient culture of Bharat (India) is still preserved in the villages, and not in towns and cities. In fact, our culture is defiled in all possible ways in the cities. Therefore, go to the villages, find out their necessities, and undertake such types of services that will alleviate their sufferings. Today, several people shift to the towns and cities in pursuit of comfort and luxuries. In the process, they end up in sorrows and difficulties. This is their own making.

Na sukhat labhyathe sukham (happiness cannot be obtained out of happiness).

Only through suffering can happiness be achieved.

You should undertake service. In fact, the hands are given to you to serve humanity. Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray. Therefore, undertake selfless service and attain glory. When you undertake good work, you enjoy peace in your life. Today, the boys who sang bhajans are former students of the Institute. They have undertaken several services to please Swami. God is not interested in worship and other sadhanas (spiritual disciplines). He is interested only in service. Hence, undertake service and more and more service.

The best way to love God is to Love all and Serve all.

God is interested only in love and service. If you can recognise the importance of these two sadhanas and conduct yourself accordingly, there can be no greater sadhana.

You need not have to spend a lot of money in service. Sanctify your life by undertaking loving service. Today, the old students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning have brought a cheque for Rs. 48 lakhs to present to Swami as a token of their love and service. This amount has been saved by them from their salaries, by undergoing lot of difficulties. But to whom should the amount belong, really? This amount is meant to be utilised for service in the villages. It is for serving the poorest of the poor. Therefore, I told them, "My dear ones! You deposit the money in the bank and undertake the service activities with the interest accrued on the amount." Money is of no help in developing good qualities. Sacrifice alone can develop noble qualities. It is only in sacrifice, there is real yoga. That is why it is said,

Thyagenaike Amrutatthwamanasu (it is only by sacrifice that man can attain immortality).

Today, however, people want *bhoga* (enjoy material comforts). By such bhoga, only *roga* (disease) will be contracted. They cannot attain *yoga*. Hence, you try to attain yoga by *thyaga* (sacrifice). Only then can you attain eternal joy.

Embodiments of Love!

There is no use contemplating on God without making sacrifice. By contemplating on God, you may perhaps derive some mental satisfaction. But that is of no use. Therefore, develop firm faith in the truth that every living being is permeated by God and act accordingly. God lives in every living being and experiences bliss. The Upanishads declare,

Easwarah sarva bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings)
and
Isavasyam idam sarvam (the entire universe is permeated by God).

You should not be under the impression that God is confined to some temple or a structure somewhere. It is said

Deho Devalaya proktho jivo Devah sanathanah
(the body is a temple and the Indweller is God).

The real temple for God is the body itself.

God is installed in the temple of our heart. That is why it is given the name of hridaya.

Hrid + daya = hridaya.

It is only when you cultivate compassion in your heart that it can be called hridaya. Therefore, cultivate the quality of compassion. Whatever service you undertake with a compassionate heart, it becomes sanctified. Consider every human being as a living divinity. God is present everywhere. Forgetting such an omnipresent divinity, we are hankering after petty and trivial bodily pleasures. The fact, however, is that we can never attain real happiness with the body. This body has several limitations. With such a body, you can never attain limitless *ananda* (bliss).

The body is made up of five elements and
is bound to perish sooner or later,
but the Indweller has neither birth nor death.
The Indweller has no attachment whatsoever and

is the eternal witness.
Truly speaking, the Indweller,
who is in the form of the Atma,
is verily God Himself.
(Telugu Poem)

You must be able to recognise such a divine Atma. Today, we are worshipping idols and pictures, thinking that God is somewhere in the outside world. But God is very much present in the human being. That is why our ancient rishis (sages) have proclaimed,

Daivam manusha rupena
(God incarnates in the form of a human being).

Of what use is it to worship unseen God while at the same time causing suffering to the living beings around us? Every human being that you come across is an embodiment of divinity. No purpose will be served by worshipping the idols and pictures, forgetting the living gods in front of us.

Therefore, give less importance to such indirect methods of worshipping God. Consider the human being standing in front of you as an embodiment of divinity. Even if you come across your worst enemy, say, 'hello' to him lovingly. Address him as brother. Then, he will also respond by saying, 'hello brother'. On the other hand, if you hate him and start scolding him, he will reciprocate the same thing to you. Respect every individual and you will be respected.

Man, today, expects others to respect him; but he will not respect others. If you do not respect others, how can you expect others to respect you?

Manava (human being) means an individual deserving respect. Since you are born as a human being, give respect and take respect. This is the quality you have to cultivate today. When you respect others, others will also respect you. When you offer your *pranams* (salutations) to somebody, to whom does it go actually? You are not merely offering pranams to the physical body consisting of the five elements. It reaches, in fact, the Indweller in that human body, who is none other than God.

Now, what is the nature of this body?

This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases;
it is subject to change from time to time;
it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara.
It is nothing but a structure of bones.
Oh mind!
Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent.
Instead, take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet.
(Telugu Poem)

What can you achieve by relying on such a body? It is only sin that you accumulate. You should sustain the body for the purpose of serving others. You have taken upon this human body only for the purpose of serving your fellow human beings. Develop firm conviction in that truth.

What happiness do you derive with the body? In fact, nothing. Whatever pleasures you enjoy with the help of this human body, you will have to leave all those pleasures as well as the body itself in a trice one day or the other. Should you have to undergo so many trials and tribulations for the sake of these momentary pleasures? You have to respect the *jiva* (individualized soul)

in the human body. That is the real *Daiva seva* (service to God). You have to dedicate your body to such service. If you do that, every minute of your life is fresh and new. Every day is a festival day. On the other hand, if you undertake service once in a year, that is not real service.

Your *deha* (body) is *mrinmaya* (made up of five elements). The divinity residing as Indweller therein is *chinmaya* (consciousness). Therefore, rely upon such a divinity and earn salvation.

You all know about Abraham Lincoln. He used to go to school in the company of wealthy boys, in his childhood. Those boys were wearing costly clothes and ornaments. Lincoln, however, had to go to school with worn-out clothes that were mended by his mother. One day, his friends made fun of his poor dress. He could not control himself. He went straight to his mother crying and told her, "Mother! I will not attend school hereafter. My classmates are making fun of me. They are looking down upon me as a poor boy unable to wear decent dress."

Then, the mother took him into her arms lovingly and consoled him saying, "My dear son! You need not have to feel sorry for such a trivial issue. All this is going to help you in your future life. You keep our family condition in view. Do not give credence to what others say. Lead a life of self-confidence and self-respect. Respect every individual and be respected by every individual."

From that day onward, Lincoln put his mother's advice into practice and started respecting everybody. He used to be courteous with even a cobbler saying "Sir! How sacred is your life! You are doing great service by stitching sandals for us so that our feet are protected from thorns". Gradually, Abraham Lincoln could command respect from all people by his good behaviour. He earned a very good name for himself.

After sometime, elections were held in America. He was persuaded by his friends and well-wishers to run for election. He expressed his inability saying, "I am a poor man. Who will vote for me? I do not want these positions and power". Today, Indians are spending crores of rupees to contest elections, but refuse to part with even a rupee as alms to a beggar.

The good words taught by Lincoln's mother made a lasting impression on his mind. He started respecting every individual. He used to speak courteously with everybody. As a result he earned a very good name for himself. At last, he bowed to the wishes of his friends and well-wishers and ran for election. He scored a spectacular victory and was elected the President of the United States of America. Then, he went to his mother and said "Mother! I am able to rise to this exalted position and command the respect of the people of America because of your noble teachings those days."

It is the mother that is responsible for the children earning reputation and fame. If children wish to earn good name, they should obey the command of their mother. That is why, the Veda has conferred the supreme position on the mother and father and declared

Matru Devo bhava, pithru Devo bhava
(Mother is God, Father is God).

The mother is like the body and the father, the Atma. Hence, we have to respect our father and mother. Then, we can earn any amount of respect.

Abraham Lincoln could earn great name and fame and became the president of America only on account of his respect for his mother.

What do children earn today? Nothing. They simply waste the money earned

by their parents. They bring bad name to their parents. This is not what children are expected to do. They should properly utilise the money given by their parents. In fact, every drop of your blood is the contribution of your parents. You owe your existence in this world to the love of your parents. Hence, whenever there is a need for blood donation, you should come forward to donate your blood. Thereby fulfil your obligation to your parents and society. Do not ever work for your selfish interests. In fact, selfishness and self-interest are the main causes degrading the human being. You might have heard about Winston Churchill, the former Prime Minister of England. He once declared "man has conquered all, but not conquered himself".

Children should cultivate good habits and good qualities and reach good position in life. Thus, they should bring good name to their parents. You can earn good name not by money but by sterling character. No matter how wealthy a person is, his reputation will be tarnished if his character is not good. A wealthy person may be living in great mansions and enjoying the luxuries of life, but he will not have peace of mind and happiness. People crave to earn more and more money. But of what use is the money they earn? They waste all their money in worthless things. One has to utilise the money earned for undertaking good and beneficial activities for the society. One should conduct himself with good behaviour and good habits. Only then will one have real peace in life.

Embodiments of Love!

Today, everyone is literally crying for Peace. But, what is this Peace? It is in you itself. You are most sacred souls. Love is within you. Peace is within you. Unfortunately, today you are losing the peace and happiness that is within you and craving to earn something in the outside world. You want to earn great wealth and build big mansions. Devoid of good qualities, all the wealth that you earn becomes mere waste. Therefore, cultivate good qualities. There can be no greater wealth in the world than good qualities. The more you spend the good qualities, the more you accumulate. They will never exhaust.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

Prepare yourself for sacrifices. You will find eternal bliss only in sacrifice. One who does not make sacrifice will not find peace anywhere. People of every country in this world pray for peace chanting 'Santhi, Santhi, Santhi' But do they get peace? No. They are engulfed in disappointment and despair. Therefore, one should develop faith in the truth that the eternal Lord is always with us. How can you obtain peace by ignoring the Divinity immanent in you and worshipping some unseen God?

Embodiments of Love!

Share your education and wealth with your fellow human beings. In fact, God is the real owner of the wealth acquired by you. The money you earn belongs to God's Trust. God Himself is the President of the Trust. Keep your trust on God and make proper utilisation of your money. Do not hanker after money and other forms of wealth. Constantly contemplate on God. You need not go to the forest or caves in the hills in search of God. He is always with you. Develop that faith and win over demonic qualities. Today, wherever you see, demonic qualities and violence are rampant. People do not hesitate to acquire wealth by sinful ways. What ultimately comes along with you at the time of leaving the body is the sin or merit you have accumulated and not the wealth you have acquired. Share at least a morsel of food you eat, with others. Help yourself and help others. This is the greatest *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). In fact, it is so easy to practise. Leaving aside this *sadhana* *sadhana* and forgetting the noble quality of love, you are going in search of peace in the wide world. Is it not foolishness on your part?

Embodiments of Love!

Develop the quality of love. Do not hate anybody. Develop the faith that whatever happens is for your own good. Whenever you encounter any difficulty or suffering, you alone are responsible for it. Respect others. That alone will protect you. On the other hand, if you insult somebody, that alone will punish you. Pleasure and pain are the products of your own making. The merit or sin committed by you will follow you like a shadow.

Man today is giving sermons to others. But he himself is not following his precepts. What values such teachings will have? All this is mere deception. Whatever teachings you may read or listen to can never help you if you do not put them into practice. Help your fellow human beings at least in a small measure. That alone will help you. Do not blame others for the difficulties you face. Do not ever abuse others. Love all. Treat all people as your brothers and sisters. Cultivate the feeling of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God.

Embodiments of Love!

The Bharatiyas (Indians) are really fortunate. They have all facilities. But the quality of love is missing in them. If only they cultivate love, none can excel them. Therefore, enhance your honour and prestige by cultivating the quality of love. Follow the twin principles of *sathya* (truth) and *dharma* (righteousness) with love. Love alone can protect you.

Embodiments of Love!

Why are you given hands? Is it for feeding the mouth? No, no. You have to sing the glory of God with your tongue. The hands are given to you for the purpose of keeping the beat in accordance with the tune. Bharatiyas are those who worship God with *bhava* (feeling), *raga* (tune) and *thala* (beat). The syllable 'Bha' also stands for *bhakti* (devotion), 'Ra' for *raga* (tune) and 'Tha' for *thyaga* (sacrifice). You have to sing the glory of the Lord combining these three aspects. They alone are the real Bharatiyas. Every individual born in the country of Bharat is sanctified. We do not need heaven. Let's participate in seva (service) while chanting the divine name. There can be no greater wealth than this. Why should we suffer when we have such a great wealth with us? Consider all your education and the service you undertake as God's work. The Gitacharya has given a clarion call,

Sarvadharmam Parithyajya Mamekam Saranam Vraja

(surrender unto Me all your activities and seek refuge in Me alone).

Hence, dedicate all your activities to God. Only then will you attain peace in every possible way.

Bhagawan concluded the discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Muditha Manase Kaho".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

2. Respect For Parents - The Greatest Virtue

Date: 12 January 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi

The sun shines serene and gentle.

The brief daylight is softly wafting the cool wind.

The fields are ripe with golden crops.

Marigold flowers blossom like garlands of pearls on the banks of rivers.

The farmers are rejoicing and singing.

The ripened chillies are colouring fields with vestments of bright red.

The sweet festival of Sankranti has come,

filling our homes with the freshly harvested grains of cereals and pulses.

(Telugu Poem)

Of all the festivals, the imminent Sankranti is the most important. It is the day on which the farmers bring home the harvested crop, feed the poor, and rejoice. On this day, the Vedic scholars get up during the sacred Brahmamuhurtha time and chant Vedic mantras, purifying the hearts of one and all. This festival has a special significance even for the householders. They invite their newly married sons-in-law to their house and present them with new clothes. The entire house abounds with joy. In this context, there is a folk song in Telugu:

Since Sankranti is the festival of festivals,

Oh newly married bridegroom, visit your in-law's house,

Come spend your time in fun and frolic with your brothers- and sisters-in-law,

The entire household and neighbourhood will honour you with love and affection.

It is also an occasion when the bullocks are decorated elaborately and taken to various houses in the village. The bullocks are worshipped and fed

sumptuously as an expression of gratitude for all the hard work they do in the fields. Even the bovine members of the household are feted, a symbolic marriage is performed between a pair of bull and cow, naming them as Rama and Sita. They are taken along the streets and made to dance to the delight of everyone.

In this manner, the festival of Sankranti bestows great joy and auspiciousness on farmers, householders, priests, and children. Not only human beings, even birds and animals rejoice with the arrival of the sacred Sankranti festival. At sunset, it is a wonderful sight to see the birds flying back to their nests chatting merrily loudly in their own language, filling the air with a joyous hum. It is an equally delightful sight to see the cows rushing back from the grazing fields to feed their young ones and to see the young ones craving the caresses of their mothers, mooing loudly to their mothers.

Sankranti festival is so sweet and endearing to one and all. Cool winds, mellifluous bird songs, and the sweet sugarcane crops herald the arrival of Sankranti. People celebrate this festival by distributing sweets and rice puddings. This festival drives away all disappointments and despair and fills our hearts with hope and enthusiasm. People get up early in the morning, have a sacred bath, and worship their chosen deities such as Ganapati, Subrahmanya, and Lord Easwara.

The divine form of Lord Siva is described thus:

The Lord of Kailasa has manifested his Divine form
with the crescent moon adorning his head,
the cool water of the Ganga flowing between the matted locks,
with his radiant eye in the middle of the forehead and
purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a blackberry.

He wears serpent bracelets and a snake belt,
his entire body is smeared with Vibhuti,
his forehead is adorned with a kumkum dot,
his ruddy lips glow with the juice of the betel,
diamond-studded gold earrings dangle from his ears, and
his whole swarthy body glows with divine effulgence.
(Telugu Poem)

However, nowadays people do not celebrate Sankranti in its true spirit. Their celebration is confined to mere performance of rituals. They lack purity and sanctity. They are unable to enjoy the bliss of Sankranti because of hatred, jealousy, and conflicts.

On this auspicious occasion of Sankranti, children aged 5 years are initiated into the process of learning with the chanting of sacred Vedic mantras. Our ancient sages declared, Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adityavarnam Thamasah Parasthath (I have visualised the Supreme Being, who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond thamas - the darkness of ignorance). The Vedas have extolled the Supreme Being in manifold ways. The Rig Veda contains mantras extolling God and His blissful form, which attracts one and all.

People address their bullocks with names such as Ramudu and Bhimudu. Similarly, cows are named after Sita, Gowri, Lakshmi, etc. The inner meaning of this is that even animals are treated with the same concern and care as human beings. They decorate the cows and bullocks with saris and dhotis and take them out in a procession.

These days, even birds and animals lead their lives in accordance with their natural qualities. So, they are able to enjoy happiness. On the other hand, man has forgotten his true nature and is behaving like an animal. Consequently, he is leading a miserable life. Birds and animals are better than men in the sense that they live in unity and harmony. But, due to the

impact of modern education, man has degenerated to the level of a beast. He has lost the virtues of honesty and integrity. Birds and animals have a reason and a season, but man has no reason or season. In every house and in every human endeavour, money is given utmost priority. People are ready to stoop to any level for the sake of money. Animals are satisfied once their hunger is satiated, but man has no sense of satisfaction. The more he earns, the greedier he becomes.

When a dog is sick, it does not eat. If you have a pet dog, you might have observed this. Even if you pour milk into its mouth by force, it refuses to drink. It likes to keep empty stomach.

But man observes no such restraint with regard to diet when he is sick. He wants to take complete rest even if there is a mild rise in his temperature. He covers himself from head to foot and lies down on his bed. However, he gives no rest to his stomach; nor does he observe proper diet restrictions even when he runs a high temperature. He likes to eat sweets like mysorepak, burfi, gulab jamoon, etc., which will only aggravate his sickness. Man is behaving like an animal and animals are behaving like humans!

When a person misbehaves, the elders reprimand him saying, "Why do you behave like an animal?" Due to the impact of modern education, man has lost morality and integrity and has become worse than an animal. He is acquiring high academic qualifications like B.A. and M.A. But what is the use? He is adding the letter 'D' (dirty qualities) to his qualification and becoming BA'D' and MA'D'. This type of perverted behaviour is unbecoming of a human being. Man should develop good thoughts, good qualities and good character. On the contrary, he is taking to wrong ways to earn money. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. But man is selling morality in the market for the sake of money.

Embodiments of Love!

At least from this Sankranti day, make efforts to cultivate good qualities. Let there be a change in your behaviour for the better. The festivals of Bharatiyas (Indians) are meant to impart sacred teachings and transform human behaviour. They are not meant to merely eat, drink, and make merry.

First of all, there should be transformation at the individual level. There should be unity in the family. In olden days, people used to live in joint families. The young couples would live in harmony with their parents, in-laws, and other elders of the family. Whenever there was any difference of opinion between the couple, the elders in the family would give proper guidance and pacify them. The daughters-in-law would implicitly follow the advice of their in-laws. As a result, there never used to be any scope for conflicts in the family.

But the modern trend is such that the daughter-in-law does not want to live in the house of her in-laws. She wants the family to be divided. Because of such divisive mentality, conflicts in the family are on the rise. Consequently, Kali Yuga (the present age) has become Kalaha Yuga (age of conflicts) and Kalmasha Yuga (age of pollution).

People in those days always talked in a pleasing manner. They would welcome guests wholeheartedly by exchanging pleasant feelings like "How are you? Please have your food with us," etc. More than the food, it was the warmth and affection of the host that appeased the hunger of the guest.

But nowadays, even on a festival day, people do not like to entertain guests. When they find a guest entering their house, they greet him with the remark, "Please come, hope you have already had your lunch; please be seated." Man has become so narrow-minded that he does not want to offer even a morsel of food to guests.

Such being the sorry state of affairs, how can you expect the children to be ideal citizens? Due to the influence of parents, even children are becoming narrow-minded. Parents want them to acquire modern education and earn a lot of money. In order to get the children educated in expensive prestigious schools, even the mother has to take up a job. The children are left to the care of ayahs (female attendants). Consequently, the children are unable to experience the love of the mother. They shed tears when the ayah dies, but not when the mother passes away. The children should be brought up under the loving care of the mother. They should listen to her sacred teachings. Otherwise, how can they come up in life? Modern education cannot redeem man's life.

One may have acquired high academic qualifications such as B.A. and M.A. and attained name and fame.

One may have all the wealth, and one may do acts of charity and earn merit and good reputation.

One may have all the physical strength and lead a long and healthy life,

One may be a Vipra (Brahmin) who teaches the Vedas and performs spiritual practices such as penance and meditation.

But none of them can be equal to the devotee of the Lord.

(Telugu Poem)

What is this education? It is leading only to agitation. People are only acquiring degrees but are not broadening their mind. True education is that which brings about transformation of the heart. There should be expansion of love. But the present-day education system is leading to narrow-mindedness.

People are highly egoistic of their academic qualifications. They have given up morality and integrity, the very essence of Indian culture. Without the virtue of honesty, how can one attain ananda (bliss)? How can education

bereft of morality redeem your life?

Today, students are going to countries like America, Japan, Germany, etc., as soon as they complete their studies. When the parents go all the way to spend their time with their children, they are asked to have their food in restaurants. Modern educated people are not so fortunate as to serve food to their parents with their own hands. They do not show gratitude to their parents, who brought them up with love and care. This is the worst sin. You should look after your parents well. You should take care of their needs in their advanced age and protect them with love and concern. Today, when parents become old, the children demand a share of their property. They are interested in property but not in developing a proper mind. They do not hesitate to go even to the Supreme Court to settle their property disputes. Instead, one should strive to attain the Supreme State by cultivating virtues. The more one is educated, the more virtuous one should become.

Dear Students!

Just now, you have seen Me calling an American boy. This boy is studying in our Institution. Simultaneously, he is also learning Veda. In whichever portion of the Veda you question him, he will be able to chant the concerned mantra beautifully. In fact, it is the good fortune of the parents to have such children. It is only because of such parents that children are able to cultivate good qualities. This boy's parents are living in America, yet they have admitted him in our Institute, which is far away from their native place, to enable him to learn good qualities and good behaviour. In fact, they have all the facilities available in America to educate their son there itself. But they did not want to educate their son in America. They love our country and the noble qualities that the children imbibe here. Here, the children learn education coupled with love. The children prostrate before their parents with respect and reverence. Such noble qualities have impressed these parents, and therefore they have brought their son to pursue his education in our Institution.

Here is a small example. Once upon a time, there lived a Hindi pandit who

was reputed for his literary skills. His two sons were studying in Allahabad, while he and his wife lived in a small town. One day, he and his wife had to go by train on a visit to another town, and they had to pass through Allahabad. He wrote to his sons to come and meet them at the station on that particular date.

The train halted at the station and the parents stood at the door of the carriage. They saw their sons hurrying toward them. The elder one touched the feet of both the parents before talking to them, while the younger son did not show such respect and reverence. The parents enquired about their health and studies. The elder son said, "We are fine here. Please take care of your health. Your happiness is our happiness." On the other hand, the younger son did not ask about their health at all. He asked for more money. As the train was about to start, once again the elder one bent and touched the feet of his parents while the younger one just waved his hand. As the train was leaving the platform, the parents were watching their sons through the window. The elder one was offering his Namaskar till the end, whereas the younger son was keeping his hands in the pocket and looking somewhere with a callous attitude.

The mother became worried seeing the behaviour of the younger son. She blamed her husband for the reckless behaviour of the younger son. She said, "You have kept him away from us for the sake of his education. He is behaving like an animal because there is no one to guide him properly."

The father pacified her saying, "After all, he is young, he will learn and improve in the course of time." But the mother could not come to a compromise and said, "He is already doing his degree course. If not now, when will he learn?" Unable to control her feelings, she shed tears.

The mother's words proved to be true. In the course of time the elder son, by virtue of his diligence and good behaviour, attained a high position in society. He was very much respected for his manners and sense of courtesy. He prostrated before his parents and said, "It is because of your blessings that I

have come up in life."

The parents shed tears of joy and blessed him profusely. "Son, it is because of your virtues that you have attained an exalted position in life."

What happened to the younger son? He could not fare well in the examinations and ultimately had to be contented with a clerical job. While the elder one received salutations from everyone, the younger son had to salute everyone.

How can one who does not respect his parents be respected by others? *Yad bhavam tad bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). Our future depends upon our present behaviour. In Western countries today, they give respect and take respect. But this quality is becoming extinct in our country. When you do not respect your own parents, even dogs would not care to look at you. Therefore, wherever you go, you should never forget to respect your parents.

The Vedas in our country have also exhorted, *Matru Devo bhava, pitru Devo bhava, acharya Devo bhava, atithi Devo bhava* (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God). Thus, they promoted noble qualities by their exhortation. Whoever respects his parents and obeys their commands will certainly reach high positions in life. In fact, the festival of Sankranti exhorts us to cultivate such noble qualities.

"Kranti" means transformation. Therefore, Sankranti is supposed to bring about a transformation in our lives. But, how are we reacting to this? Are we able to achieve transformation in our life? No. The purpose of our education is to remove the bad qualities and cultivate good qualities and good behaviour. This is what the festivals in India are meant for. But nobody realises the inner

meanings of these festivals.

Embodiments of Love! Students!

Your parents are struggling hard to feed you, educate you, and bring you up in life. Even if they have to starve, they would somehow try to feed you and look after your welfare. They always struggle to keep you in good mood and good condition. They give you good food, good clothing, and good education. If you do not respect such parents, how do you expect to be respected by society?

You all know about Abraham Lincoln. He used to go to school in the company of wealthy boys, in his childhood. Those boys were wearing costly clothes and ornaments. Lincoln, however, had to go to school with worn-out clothes that were mended by his mother. One day, his friends made fun of his poor dress. He could not control himself. He went straight to his mother crying and told her, "Mother! I will not attend school hereafter. My classmates are making fun of me. They are looking down upon me as a poor boy unable to wear decent dress."

The mother took him into her arms lovingly and consoled him saying, "My dear son! You need not have to feel sorry for such a trivial issue. All this is going to help you in your future life. You must keep our family condition in view. Do not give attention to what others say. Lead a life of self-confidence and self-respect. Respect every individual and be respected by every individual."

From that day onward, Lincoln put his mother's advice into practice and started respecting everybody. Gradually, Abraham Lincoln could command respect from all people by his good behaviour. He earned a very good name for himself. After sometime, elections were held in America. He was persuaded by his friends and well-wishers to contest the elections. At last, he bowed to the wishes of his friends and well-wishers and contested the

elections. He won the elections with a thumping margin and was elected President of the United States of America in due course of time. He attained such an exalted position because he implicitly followed the advice of his mother and respected everybody. Truly speaking, he did not have much money, but he had the wealth of virtues. He was happy at the prosperity of others. He was contented with what he had and did not crave for money and material possessions. Because of such noble qualities, he rose to become the President of America. During his tenure, he passed a decree for abolishing slavery of black Africans in America thereby putting an end to their inhuman suffering.

It is self-respect that protects man and takes him to an exalted position. You may be poor financially, but if you uphold your self-respect, you will be respected by all. Do not look down upon the poor. Respect them and treat them with love. That is the true human nature. Lincoln's mother inculcated such noble qualities in her son. That is why Lincoln considered his mother as God and revered her. Whoever inculcates sacred qualities in you is your God. He is not to be sought after somewhere else. When you develop self-respect, He will manifest right in front of you.

Dear Students!

You must respect your parents, whoever they may be and in whatever condition they may be. You must respect their words and obey their commands, without any reservation. Then only you will be able to command respect from society. All the great people in yesteryears did obey and respect their parents and set an example to the world. Do you know the underlying meaning of the ancient customs and traditions of Bharat? For example, they used to build big mansions with small doors. Do you know why? We think that these small doors were to prevent thieves from entering the houses and escaping with ease. No, that was not the reason. These doors were purposely kept low to enable the visitors to observe the custom of entering the houses with their heads bent in reverence to the inmates. Thus, every custom and tradition of Bharat were meant to promote mutual respect and goodwill among people. It was established with great care and wisdom. But, even the

Bharatiyas (Indians) have forgotten such noble traditions. Nowadays you will not find even a gadapa (threshold) to the door frame of the main entrance to the house. They think that the threshold is an unnecessary hindrance to enter the house. No, it is not a hindrance at all! The ancient traditions and customs of Bharat are meant to promote humility, respect and reverence among people.

Dear Students!

You must learn and observe such great traditions and command the respect of people. You must bring joy to your parents, by your behaviour. The parents must feel happy that their children are obeying them. It is enough if you earn such a good name. God's grace cannot be obtained by performing mere rituals like worship. However highly qualified you are, it will only promote ego, but not humility and respect toward parents and elders. Therefore, you must cultivate the qualities of humility, respect, and reverence. Then only you will become good citizens of the country. It is not necessary that you should become great. It is enough if you become good citizens.

Name and fame come today, but may be lost tomorrow. But, the good name acquired will last forever. Therefore, earn a good name. We must earn the Grace of God. But, contrary to this, people are craving for the "grass" of worldly desires. Grass is something that is consumed by the cattle. You should not become cattle by developing a taste for grass. You must strive to earn Gods Grace and thus become good individuals.

Dear Students!

These are the sacred days of the festival of Sankranti. On this occasion, we must cultivate the quality of giving respect to others and taking respect. I am giving you a small example here. (Swami called the American boy, a student of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, and said), "This boy is securing first class not only in studies but also in the study of Vedas. He has given immense joy to his parents with his good behaviour. His father is very happy

that his son has earned a very good name and is appreciated by one and all."

(Swami called his father to the dais and showered His blessings on him.) This boy's mother is working in our Primary School and spending her time blissfully. The boy's parents have earned the love and respect of all because of his exemplary behaviour. In this manner, every one of you should strive to bring good name to your parents. Only then will your parents experience the real joy of begetting you as their son. You may earn a lot of money and build big mansions, but they cannot bring you good name. They are temporary. Once you earn good reputation, it will remain with you forever. Bring good name to the institution in which you have studied. Observing your noble qualities, people should be able to recognise you as Sathya Sai students.

You are aware that we are not charging even a paisa from our students. Further, I am also providing books and other facilities for the needy and deserving students. The students have immense love for Swami and Swami also showers His love and grace on them. Even while leaving their parents and coming here, they do not shed tears. But when I go to Brindavan and return to Puttaparthi, the students in Brindavan start shedding tears unable to bear the separation from Me. How did they acquire such intense love? It is Swami's love that is responsible for this. It is only the love that I disseminate to all. My property does not comprise mansions and palatial buildings. Love is My biggest property. I am giving My love and receiving your love in return. I often tell the students, "Give Me your love, and I will give you whatever you want." That is why the students have such intense love for Me. Develop love more and more. Love your parents. Obey their command. Your lives will certainly be sanctified.

Think of God always. Wherever you are, in the forest or in the sky, in the village or in the city, on the hilltop or in the middle of the deep sea, love alone can come to your rescue. It is always with you, in you, around you, above you, and below you.

Chala Santhosham (very happy).

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin".)

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

3. Character Is The Goal Of Education

Date: 15 January 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi, Sports Meet

Students, Boys and Girls!

The present Vice Chancellor, the former Vice Chancellor, the Secretary of the Central Trust, and two other students have made excellent speeches in beautiful vocabulary. In this vast world, wherever you see, you find most wonderful and joyful events that awaken your inner being and fill your heart with immense bliss. Our students also have developed great skill, intelligence, and expertise in the fields of sports, games, and music and demonstrated their talents giving joy to one and all. Whatever the activity they undertake, they do it to please Swami and not for temporary happiness.

Right from the time of birth, all activities of man are centred around the process of learning and acquiring wisdom. It is absolutely necessary to teach the spirit of idealism to our students so that they fill their hearts with love and give happiness to one and all. Today, there are a number of educational institutions all over the world, but, nobody seems to have understood what education really means. Students fill their heads with mere bookish knowledge, write examinations, secure pass marks and claim that they are educated.

In spite of his education and intelligence,
a foolish man will not know his true Self and
a mean-minded person will not give up his evil qualities.
(Telugu Poem)

Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom.
What is the use of acquiring education that cannot lead you to immortality?

Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.
(Telugu Poem)

Vidya (education) means jnana (wisdom). Jnana does not mean worldly intelligence. True education is that which develops inner vision and makes you experience everlasting bliss. In what way are students benefited by the present educational system? They are merely acquiring degrees and earning the appreciation of the authorities, but they do not understand the real significance of education. Modern students are unable to realise the true spirit behind their participating in sports and cultural events. In all events of sports and games, you have a winner and also a loser. People are interested only in the outcome of the events and not in enjoying the spirit of sports. The aim of sports and games is not to produce a decisive result but to inculcate the spirit of sportsmanship in the participants. Life is a game, play it. Life is a dream, realise it. Life is love, enjoy it. It is only he who understands the import of these statements and realises them in his daily life is a true student.

Modern system of education, instead of developing the power of discrimination in students, is making them narrow-minded. It neither bestows true wisdom nor helps them to become broad-minded. The present-day education has become meaningless. The textbooks that are prescribed for students do not contain the essence of true education. I wonder why the government promotes such meaningless textbooks! Perhaps even the government is unaware of the realities. It appears as though somebody at some low level is taking these decisions without consulting the higher authorities. It is bringing a bad name to the government, but nobody seems to be concerned about it. Such an unhealthy trend is on the rise.

Nobody is making efforts to understand the sacredness associated with the ancient system of education. Students are interested only in bookish knowledge, not in the essence of education. Only their textual knowledge is tested, but not practical knowledge. Students think that degrees are meant to

earn a livelihood. Education is for life, not for a living. But neither the students nor the parents realise this truth. Parents are happy if their children score high marks in their examinations. They are not bothered about the heap of bad remarks their children get. If only they care to look into the remarks, they will truly understand the type of education that their children are receiving. Due to the advancement in modern education, the study of Vedas and Sastras (spiritual texts) has declined. In this situation, how can the present education confer true wisdom on you?

Students!

You should acquire such education that will be beneficial to the society and the world at large. What is the present state of society? In what way can we make it ideal? How should one work for the advancement of the society? Nobody seems to think on these lines. Even the present system of education does not lay emphasis on service to society. If someone talks about reforms in the system of education, the students just brush it aside. They think that textual knowledge is the be-all and end-all of education. The elders should take up the responsibility to give proper education to students. Students should uphold the honour of the society. We should follow the teachings of our ancient sages and seers who have given us the true meaning of education.

It is a sign of foolishness to become egoistic by merely acquiring a few degrees. You should understand the needs of society and utilise your education for its progress. People say they are serving the society, but without really understanding what the requirements of the society are. Such service is not samaja seva (social service), but samadhi seva, meaning a lifeless, mechanical activity. Society will progress only when the system of education is set right.

As the craze for Western education has increased, the study of Vedic texts is being neglected. Parents should teach their children what is good and what is

bad right from their childhood. They should not be satisfied merely by securing admission in a college and acquiring a degree by their children. They should ensure that their children utilise their education to serve the nation. The government may not be able to do much in this regard; it is the responsibility of the parents to guide their children on proper lines. They should encourage the children to work for the progress of the nation.

But nowadays, parents do not have such broad-mindedness. Even teachers are not interested in the welfare of the nation. They feel that their responsibility ends with imparting bookish knowledge to students. They do not even enquire whether the information contained in the textbooks is beneficial to society or not. They do not take up the matter with the government. Even if they do take it up, the government is not responsive. They are changing educational institutions into factories that produce degree holders. Students alone are not to be blamed for this state of affairs. Parents, teachers, and the government are equally responsible for this dismal state of affairs.

It is not enough if students secure high ranks in the class and earn a good name. They should work for the progress of the society and the nation and thus bring a good name to parents. Parents should monitor the progress of their children from time to time, inculcate virtues in them, and mould them into responsible citizens. They should not rest satisfied if their children get good marks. They should also observe what type of books they read at home. Some students read meaningless novels. But the parents do not bother to correct them. On the other hand, they say, "What is wrong in reading novels? It is enough if they are happy." In this manner, they spoil their own children. They do not care to observe how their children behave in their absence. There is no point in merely educating the children without correcting their behaviour. Parents should emulate the ideals of our forefathers who brought up their children in the most ideal way.

Embodiments of Love!

The modern system of education needs reforms. Parents today, take pride that their children are studying in English medium schools and are able to recite English poems. They fail to understand what type of impact and influence this modern education has on their children. The tiny tots in kindergarten are taught nursery rhymes like "Ba Ba Black Sheep". Because of such education, children are ultimately becoming black sheep themselves. I am really pained and disgusted watching the present-day system of education, which is totally spoiling the lives of students.

That is why I have established educational institutions spending crores of rupees to mould the character of students. I am providing even textbooks free of cost to the students. In the present-day world, the situation is so bad that even for admission to a primary school one has to register well in advance paying thousands of rupees as donation.

Parents are happy if their wards get admission in what they consider good schools, but they do not bother about the benefit that would accrue on account of such an educational system. The children do not appreciate the privations the parents have to undergo for educating them. Parents take loans and even forgo proper food and sleep to educate their children. Ultimately, the children do not benefit from this system of education. They are unable to understand what is good and what is bad for them. Today when the quality of education has become so "cheap"; how can such education make one a "chief"?

Neither the parents nor the teachers nor the students are able to understand how the society and the nation are benefited by the present system of education. Therefore, all of them should join hands and work unitedly to bring about a complete transformation in the society.

At present, students' agitation is on the increase. However, it is not their fault.

They are in themselves very good-natured. Fault lies with the teachers, elders and the government. It is a decided factor that the present system of education is not designed to mould the character of the students. There are many good students, but parents, teachers and textbooks do not guide them properly. It is high time that the parents open their eyes and see the real state of affairs. They should see to it that their children come up in their life by acquiring proper education. They should encourage their children to pursue such type of education that will lead them to immortality. Of course, secular education is also necessary. But, secular education should be harmonised with spiritual education to mould the character of the students and make them better citizens of the country.

Students!

Do not feel proud that you are pursuing higher education. Along with higher education, you should cultivate noble qualities. Education bereft of virtues is useless. The end of education is character. Today, many students read useless, even immoral fiction novels. The authorities should ensure that such books are not sold in the market. Students should read only such books that can improve their character. They should participate in sports and games in the true spirit. This advice would equally apply to the girl students as well. They question, "When boys ride motor bikes, why can't we do the same?" In this way, they argue and waste their time. Nobody says that girls should not ride motor bikes. But one should act according to the time and circumstances. The number of fatal accidents of young people involved in two wheelers is on the increase. Parents make many sacrifices to bring up their children. But, if the precious lives of students are lost in motor cycle accidents, I can understand their agony.

Today, girls want to compete with boys in every field. They also aspire for name and fame. Their argument is, "In what way are we inferior to boys? Why can't we acquire the same type of education as boys?" However, each one should acquire such type of education that is appropriate and suitable to them. It is essential for women to look after their families well and shape the character of their children in an ideal manner. Along with inculcating virtues

in children, they should also be given proper education.

The present-day education is leading students in the wrong direction. Parents are to be partly blamed for this. They want their children to acquire high qualifications and get married to another highly qualified person. Some parents while trying to fix up marriage alliance ask, "My daughter has completed her post graduation. She is good looking. What about your son? Has he completed his post graduation? Is he handsome?" In fact, beauty is related to character, not to the physical appearance. Beauty of character is what one should aspire for. Is it always possible to get a post graduate bridegroom for a post graduate bride? The present-day education is leading to unhealthy competition and conflicts.

I do not say that girls should not pursue higher education. If I am against women's education, why should I establish women's colleges? I have established various educational institutions with the sole purpose of inculcating virtues in students. I am providing education free of cost. There are no examination fees even. My only aim is that students should acquire proper education, become ideal citizens, and give happiness to their parents.

Students!

Do not misunderstand My words. I am telling you all this for your own welfare and progress. You should acquire such education that will bring a good name to you and uphold the reputation of your family. Do not become egoistic and take to wrong ways in the name of freedom. I quite often caution the boys not to look here and there while walking on the road. Some boys, while speeding on their motor bikes, keep looking at girls who are passing by. In the process, their attention is diverted and they end up in accidents. If your character is good, you will always be protected. You should always keep your senses under control. You should always have a check on your vision, listening, and speech. Buddha undertook various spiritual practices with a view to have mastery over his senses.

Why are the eyes given to you?

Is it to look here and there?

No.

The eyes are meant to see the beautiful form of the Lord.

Why are the ears given to you?

Is it to listen to vain gossip?

No.

The ears are meant to hear the glories of the Lord.

(Telugu Poem)

The ears are given for hearing good words and putting them into practice and thereby lead a virtuous life. Having realised that God has given the sense organs for the purpose of leading a virtuous life, Buddha discarded all ritualised spiritual practices and put his senses to sacred use. He assured himself that what he had to achieve in life was virtues, and not sensual pleasures. He realised that conscience was his true guru and made efforts to control his sense organs like eyes and tongue. If these two sense organs are controlled, all the other organs would automatically come under control. Having thus set a goal for himself in life, Buddha entered the wide world, after renouncing his wife and only child.

I am not however advising you to leave your wife and children and go to the forest like Buddha. You look after them well and fulfil your responsibilities towards them. Teach your children noble qualities and bring them up in life. Lead a life of virtue. This is what Buddha taught. If you cultivate samyak drishti (right vision) like the Buddha, the whole world will be under your control.

Do not pay heed to the wrong advice of others. Foster noble qualities. If you can control your senses, that itself amounts to realising the essence of the epic, Bhagavata. The study of the epic Bhagavata is meant to transform you

into a man of virtue. Hence, control your senses and become a master of the world. This is what you have to strive for, today.

Explain to your parents also about your priorities in life. Tell them, "Mother! You expect me to go for a job that offers a fat salary. But high salaries are not as important as a virtuous life. If we give preference to money instead of a noble life, our life itself will be ruined."

When you keep your senses under control, you will become a person of noble qualities. You will also gain strength of character. Hanuman, the illustrious servant of Lord Rama, is an example of such noble qualities. He was extolled as "Santhudu, Gunavantudu, and Balavantudu" (calm and serene, one of virtues, one of mighty strength). He became a great Guru because of his noble qualities. We should emulate his noble qualities.

Dear Students!

You are like pure gold. You are people of noble qualities. You are precious. But some of you are misguided by bad elements. Even if others try to mislead you, do not deviate from your chosen path. Stand firm. Only then will you acquire name and fame. This is My advice to the students. In today's education, you are taught skills that will enable you to rise up in your career, but nobody teaches moral education. Morality is the most important aspect of education. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. Therefore, cultivate morality. That will earn you respect from society.

God is your sole refuge, wherever you may be,
be it in a forest or in the sky or in a city or in a village
or on the top of a mountain or in the middle of a deep sea.
(Telugu Poem)

Cultivate noble qualities. I shall give you everything. Nay, I shall give Myself to those who cultivate noble qualities and also to those who teach them. In fact, I am living only for their sake. I do not seek anything in return from them. Lead a life of character and nobility. Bring good name to your parents, your institution, and to Swami.

Dear Students!

You are all men of noble qualities, but you are influenced by contemporary society to a certain extent. Therefore, do not succumb to distracting influences. First and foremost, make proper use of your senses. Any elders you come across, revere them as your father and mother. Earn good name for yourself by your thoughts, words, and deeds.

Join good company, speak good words, cultivate samyak drishti (right vision) and pursue good education that will build your character. This is what I expect from you, students. In fact, this is what your parents also wish for. No father or mother will expect their children to be spoiled. But, they are unable to advise the children properly and put them in order, out of some sort of inhibition.

Of course, I have no such qualms. Therefore, I am advising you, with all the emphasis at My command, to see good, be good, and do good. Cultivate noble qualities. Thyaga (sacrifice) is the noblest of all qualities, not bhoga (indulgence). In fact, bhoga will lead you to roga (disease).

The Veda has proclaimed Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice). Hence, Bangaru! (My dear golden students) cultivate such noble qualities as thyaga. I am prepared to sacrifice everything for you. But you must also be in a position to receive My grace. I am yours and you are Mine. That should be the relationship between us. Try

to understand Swami's love.

All this is meant to advise you to tread the right path. Do not go against the wishes of your parents. If, by any chance, you have to differ from their views, explain to them lovingly your viewpoint. They will also feel happy that you have respected their feelings. The Veda has declared, Matru Devo bhava, pitru Devo bhava, acharya Devo bhava, atithi Devo bhava (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God). Speak sweetly and softly to your parents. Convince them, if necessary. I am prepared to sacrifice anything for the sake of such students.

Several students join our educational institutions. Some of them may not be in a position to pay fees. Therefore, we have decided that all education in Sathya Sai institutions should be totally free and no fees be collected from the students. You should be free from all anxieties and enjoy peace. Only by conforming to good behaviour can peace be obtained. Several students today wish to enjoy good things in life, but are following wrong methods. They wish to partake of sugar, but consume bitter pills. They say one thing and do another. That is why it is said

Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam
Manasyanyath vachasyanyath karmanyanyath duratmanam

Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are
in perfect harmony are noble ones;
Those who lack harmony of these are wicked.

I like students whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect accord. I am

prepared to sacrifice anything for them, nay, I will give away Myself to such people.

Dear Students!

Knowingly or unknowingly, you might have committed mistakes in the past. But, at least in the future, cultivate good qualities and try to keep your parents as well as Swami always happy.

[Swami called students from the Primary School, the Higher Secondary School, and the three campuses of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and gave away glittering silver trophies in appreciation of their performance in the Sports and Cultural Meet.]

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html			

4. Love Is The Royal Path To Realise God

Date: **27 January 2004** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions (Alike and Muddenahalli)**

[Discourse in Kannada, Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions (Alike and Muddenahalli) 27-1-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

The sacred feet of the Lord are as vast as the cosmos, as pervasive as the sky.

They reach even Patala Loka (lower world). His sacred crown lies beyond Bhrahmanda (cosmos).

He is inaccessible, imperceptible and incomparable.

(Kannada poem)

Embodiments of Love! Students, Teachers and Educators!

I FIND it difficult to deliver a speech in Kannada language. It requires regular practice. If you do an activity regularly, you become adept in it. I get a chance to speak in Kannada very rarely, not always. N. Kasturi stayed at Prasanthi Nilayam for about 30 years and he was always with Me. He made good use of this golden opportunity for Seva Sadhana.

Kasturi was a well-known creative writer in Kannada. He was popularly known as "Kannada Kasturi." He was very pure and sacred. Just by looking at his

respectable personality one could make out the fragrance and sacredness of Kannada language. It is likely that I may make some mistakes here and there while speaking such an extremely fragrant language.

Pioneering Efforts Of Narayana Bhat

Narayana Bhat established two schools in Karnataka one at Alike in Dakshina Kannada district and another at Muddenahalli in Kolar district. Following Sathya Sai educational principles, he worked very hard for a long period of time to develop them into model schools (loud applause). In order to develop the schools, he had to take loan from various sources and also from a large number of his well-wishers. But he had to struggle hard to pay off the loan. He and his mother went to so many villages and towns and approached several persons for raising money. But the debts went on increasing and never showed any sign of coming down. On one occasion, Narayana Bhat approached Me and briefly explained how those outstanding debts were causing him a lot of worry. He prayed to Me, "Swami, Anyatha sharanam nasti, Twameva sharanam mama, Tasmad karunyabhavena.... (I have no other refuge except You. You are my saviour. Show mercy on me and protect me.) Swami, I beg and plead with You, please take over these two schools and put new life into them.." Then I said to him, "Narayana Bhat! Health and education are essential for all. I know that. But right now, don't give them to Me. You look after them as long as you can." I encouraged him to go ahead with his service activities. I blessed him and said, "Be happy. Carry on teaching spiritual truths." Later on, Narayana Bhat worked with much more zeal and vigour. These institutions made rapid progress. They were hailed as model schools. He was indeed a beacon light for all spiritual-seekers and service-minded persons. Yad bhavam tad bhavathi (As is the feeling, so is the result). Soon many good teachers joined him. They were all men of character, intelligence and sacrifice. They renounced everything and stood by him steadfastly. Presently, all those dedicated teachers together are running the institutions very efficiently.

Noble Ideals Set By Alike And Muddenahalli Institutions

Narayana Bhat carried on his mission and worked tirelessly day in and day out. But his time was drawing near. This body goes with time. 'Kalaya namah, Kala kalaya namah, Kaladarpa damanaya namah, Kalatheethaya namah, Kalaswarupaya namah, Kalaniyamitaya namah (salutations to time, to the one who is beyond time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, to the one who is the embodiment of time, and to the one who ordains time). Time is supreme. Everyone has to bow down to time. As time moved on, all of a sudden, Narayana Bhat met with a car accident in 1978. The accident proved fatal and he left his mortal coil at once. The organization lost its mother. It was orphaned. Then Gangadhara Bhat, Narayana Rao, Narasimha Murthy and others came to Me and said, "Swami, that day You made a promise that You would look after these institutions. Kindly take over these schools and protect us all." They intensely prayed and pleaded with Me.

My intention is to give proper direction to the present educational system. I always encourage any good move in this direction. Vidya has an important role in the life of man. Life without vidya is useless. One has to learn real Vidya and share it with others to lead them on the righteous path. That is what I intend to do in the field of education. If I took Alike and Muddenahalli institutions, I had to bear the burden of those debts standing against them. It was not a meagre sum. It was ten lakh rupees of those days! But all the teachers were praying; "Swami, You are our Lord, You are our saviour. You have to save us." My heart melted at their sincere prayer. Instantaneously, I took over those institutions and cleared all their outstanding debts once and for all.

From then onwards, I used to visit Muddenahalli while travelling between Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan. I would talk to those dear children and

enthuse them. Darshanam papa nashanam, Sparshanam karma vimochanam, Sambhashanam sankata nashanam (sight of the Lord destroys all sins, His touch frees from Karmic consequences, conversation with Him destroys all sufferings). Thus, I gave them Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan. The teachers too felt encouraged and happy. Being free from all worries and problems, the teachers worked with relaxed mind and brought the institutions to this level. Now the institutions do not have the burden of debt. The schools have made a considerable progress attracting the attention of the world. The teachers are very good. They recognize the good qualities in each other and adopt them in their lives and thereby raise their moral and spiritual levels. They do not get into bad and demeaning company. You are judged by the company you keep. Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are. Association plays crucial role in one's spiritual life. Teachers should always relish the company of the good and thereby work for the growth of the institution. The teachers of Alike and Muddenahalli are doing it. They are developing the inner strength of the schools. The schools have been showing excellent progress. They have now reached college stage. They have already won a lot of fame. People call them Sathya Sai Loka Seva Colleges. They will become full-fledged colleges in a few years. To reach the same standard, the remaining institutions of the Sai Organisation will have to put in a lot of effort.

The day-scholars in these institutions come from distant places. Some students walk some distance and then catch a bus and reach the schools. The heads of the schools and teachers cooperate with each other and help each other to make good progress and march towards perfection. The students there have a high moral and spiritual standard. Students should totally avoid bad company. You should always associate with the good. You should always join the group of students who are good in their speech, behaviour and actions. By doing so, you will reach the height of eminence. In Treta Yuga, Lakshmana closely observed Hanuman and reported to Rama: "Swami, Hanuman is virtuous and mighty. He serves Sugriva very competently. It is Sugriva's good fortune to have the satsanga of Hanuman. The company of Hanuman will help Sugriva and remove all his sufferings." In the same way, students should become good by associating themselves with good company.

Going to Muddenahalli is what I always like. In the past, I frequently went there and saw those children and guided the teachers with timely advice. But the times have changed. Under these changed circumstances, I cannot go there so easily as I was doing in the past. Now hundreds of vehicles follow Me. It is very difficult to provide even a minimum hospitality to so many people. Why should I put those teachers to trouble unnecessarily? That is why I have reduced the number of these visits.

Dedication And Devotion Of Gangadhara Bhat

Let us talk about Alike now. Alike was also handed over to Me along with Muddenahalli school. It is not near but far from here. It is not possible to personally go there quite often. That does not mean that I don't like to go there. They have been praying for My going to Alike for so many years. Especially on one particular occasion, Gangadhara Bhat pressed Me so much that I had no option but to yield to his intense prayers. He, in fact, said, "Swami, we are getting old. Once at least You should come to our village. You are our Redeemer. You have to grant us salvation." He prostrated and intensely prayed to Me. I finally yielded to his feelings and emotions. At once I rented a helicopter and went there. You must know why I had to hurry to Alike. Gangadhara Bhat's prayer came straight from his heart.

Even now, except Gangadhara Bhat, there is no one who can shoulder that great responsibility and lead the institution towards progress. That is why I said to him, "Gangadhara Bhat, you must stay there only. You remain there as My reflection. For every action, there is a reflection, reaction and resound. You have to conduct yourself in such a way that your words should reflect My views. You must have a feeling that the places you go about are the ones Swami has already trodden. While carrying out your duty, do it with a feeling that it is in fact Swami personally doing it. You must not leave the institution." After I told him firmly, Gangadhara Bhat took up the assignment as per Swami's command and marched along by putting his heart and soul in all the duties he performed. Right now both the institutions are making good

progress. Seeing them itself gives Me great pleasure and happiness. Now they are developing at a quick pace. What you saw there yesterday, you will not see it now. Growth is rapid there. It has become possible because of the efforts of the dedicated teachers.

Understand The Real Meaning Of Educare

Our schools and colleges (Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan, Anantapur) have also shown considerable progress. As the growth is inward, it is not possible for all to recognize it. This inner growth is educare. Educare brings out our latent sacred values. Values are not to be taught but manifested. Mere accumulation of information from various books is not educare; it is education. Educare is the blossoming of the Divine Lotus in our heart. Educare enables us to be not just receptors but vibrators and radiators of values to all creation. Values are to be translated into action. That means, both precept and practice are equally important. How to put the principles of educare into practice? Many modern boys and girls have no knowledge about these principles. It is absolutely necessary that every student should know all about educare and its importance. The latent powers in each student have to be brought out. These powers must play their part in all his activities as reflection, reaction and resound. Thus, the process of education has to work in such a way as to transform the students into reflections of their latent powers. They are to be moulded properly and shaped beautifully. Our institutions bring out ideal students and present them to the world.

Sathyannasti paro dharma. (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). "You shall not tell anything but truth. What has happened should be reported truthfully. What all you have done, you should say it exactly." This is what most people say and believe when they give the meaning of truth. But this is only one dimension of the vast interpretation of truth. Similarly, you must understand that Educare has much deeper meaning. In fact, Sathya (truth) is educare; Dharma (righteousness) is educare. It is truth and

righteousness which protected India from all dangers. Sathya and Dharma do not come from outside. All that comes from outside is not permanent. Today it comes, tomorrow it goes. But what comes out from one's heart is permanent. Educare comes from the heart and it has to go to other hearts only.

Recently, Vice Chancellors of 25 famous universities of India came to our Institute to take part in a Seminar on Value Education. They were all very eager to know about educare. They also wanted to know the workable method for introducing it into their curriculum. "Vidyannasti parodharma." (There is no Dharma greater than Vidya). Therefore, one has to acquire real Vidya. Heart is the source of real vidya. Mere accumulation of information is not vidya. Vidya is eternal bliss. Real vidya is educare. But head is the source of education. Educare starts from the source of the heart and comes out through buddhi (intellect) whereas education is merely bookish knowledge emerging from the mind. Educare is Buddhigrahyamateendriyam (Educare transcends the senses and can be grasped only by the intellect).

Saturate All Your Actions With Love

Whatever activities you do, love should be their foundation. There is no Prana (life) without love. Life without love is of no use at all. Education system should be so transformed as to develop love principle in one's heart. Sathya (truth) and Dharma (righteousness) are the reflections of Prema (love). They give you the much desired Prasanthi (supreme peace). If love springs out from your heart, it is enough. It will give you salvation. In Dwapara Yuga, Gopikas said to Krishna, "Lord! Kindly pour down the nectar of love on our barren hearts. Sow the seeds of love. May the flood of love flow from our hearts!"(Kannada poem) They earnestly prayed to Krishna to fulfil their heart's yearnings. If the world is to prosper, the rain of love should pour on it. The sacred land of Bharat has been laying great emphasis on the importance of devotion and surrender since ancient times. It has set lofty ideals for

mankind in all spheres of life.

Every being has love in his heart. If we do not have love, we are not human. Love is with us from our birth. We have got this body because of the merits of our previous births. The body becomes sacred only if it is saturated with love. So, you must cultivate love principle.

Then your life becomes holy. You must cultivate love towards all beings regardless of what they are or what they do. It is natural for children to show love towards their parents. But it is important that they should be so moulded that they develop love for the entire mankind. Love comprises all aspects of Vidya.

The knowledge that the students acquire in schools and colleges is only information-oriented. Mere bookish knowledge is not of great importance. Expansion of love is very important. Your thoughts have to be purified. Only pure hearts comprehend God. Intellectual reasoning does not help you to realise God. Pure thought is another name for pure life. Love is God. God has no form except love. I wish that you all install love principle in the deep recesses of your heart.

Love is your Prana (life). It is enough if you have love. Love redeems all. Love wards off all suffering, hardships, pains and agonies. Love is nectarous in form. "Srunvantu viswe amrutasya putrah" (Oh, the children of immortality! Listen). You are amritaputra, not anritaputra (sons of untruth). Do not weaken yourself by considering yourself as sons of untruth. Feel that you are amritaputra. Then the tree of love will grow in your heart and give you the fruit of atmic bliss.

Do not be attached to the body. Get rid of body attachment. You have to realise the atmic principle. Immerse yourself in the ocean of atmic

consciousness.

As long as you have body attachment, you will not understand the atmic principle. You have to do self- inquiry "Who am I? From where have I come? Whither am I going? How long will I be here?" The entire spiritual inquiry begins with these questions. When you feel that you are the Atma, you start contemplating on the atmic principle. "What is Atma, what is Atma?", you think seriously about it. By making such an inquiry, you will understand the atmic principle.

All objects have both name and form. But the atma has no name or form. If you understand the atmic principle, you will understand the Paramatma principle. That is parama thriпти (supreme satisfaction), parama asha (supreme hope), parama gamya (supreme goal), parama sathya (supreme truth). In order to realise amrutwa (immortality), you have to become the embodiment of love. You have to radiate love. You have to treat everyone as your brother and sister. Whether others talk to you or not, you have to consider them as your own brother. If you are able to put it into practice in all walks of life, love will grow in your heart. You may have some enemies. You think that they hate you. Don't consider them as your enemies. Don't hate them. Instead whenever you happen to meet them talk to them lovingly and ask, "How are you, brother?" Then their feeling of enmity will suffer defeat in an instant. Their extreme dislike towards you will vanish and love will spring forth from their heart. Naturally, you will become friends. When love occupies your heart, jealousy, hatred, etc., cannot enter it. You will get absolute peace. People say, "We want peace, we want peace." Peace does not fall from heaven. It has to come from love. Love is the royal path to realise God.

What is the purpose of your birth as a human being? It is not just eating, loitering and merry-making. You must understand that you are born to realise the love principle. If love blossoms in your heart, you yourself will become Paramatma (God). You need not look for God here and there. He is in you. He

is in the form of love. There is no escape from dualism as long as man does not recognize his inherent divinity. You should expand your love. Live in love.

Selfless Service Is Real Penance

At this juncture, I would like to say something more about Gangadhara Bhat. He was Narayana Bhat's trusted follower and a dependable person. He was verily his right hand. Once Narayana Bhat said to him, "Gangadhara Bhat! Serve sincerely for the well-being of the institution. Whenever you run into difficulty, pray to Bhagawan Sathya Sai. Then He will personally take care of you all." From that day onwards till today Gangadhara Bhat has fully depended on Swami. He has unshakeable faith in Swami. Swami is his Paramatma. He firmly believes that Sai Paramatma will lead him. He has such a feeling of surrender. He performs his duties with devotion and dedication. He is working sincerely for the progress of both Alike and Muddenahalli institutions. In fact, they have flourished under his honest leadership. I went to Alike two years ago (in 2002). I was wonderstruck on seeing the total transformation of Alike. When I went to Alike for the first time in 1979, there were only a few small buildings. Now Alike has become a town. That itself is not greatness. Its greatness lies in its inner strength. Mere buildings will not suffice. People construct expensive houses and tall buildings in towns and cities. They consider their houses as everything. They don't have purity of heart. Their hearts brim with evil thoughts and evil schemes. Such men do not understand the love principle. Purity in thought, word and deed is a basic requisite for man.

Thus, Gangadhara Bhat has been running the organization braving all hardships and unpleasant situations. Once he said to Me, "Swami, it is not possible for me to manage all the affairs effectively. I am getting old. It requires both physical and mental strength. Swami, I request You earnestly to appoint any good person who will manage everything very well." As a matter of fact, all are good in My view. No one is bad. People think that they are bad.

That is all. It is their feeling only. Badness exists in our thoughts. As love is in everyone, all are good. I said to Gangadhara Bhat: "Don't leave your post. You remain in the same position. Do not worry. I will always help you and lead you. I will look after everything."

My words gave him courage and confidence. He has been continuing his work with enthusiasm. Where can he go if he relinquishes the post? He will have to go somewhere else and do Thapas (penance). What is penance? Simply spending time, doing nothing is not penance. Simply sitting at a place and reciting "Rama, Rama, Krishna, Krishna" is also not penance. Real penance lies in doing good work constantly, having good thoughts always and developing good qualities in oneself. Leaving one's home, going to forest, doing shirshasana (standing on one's head) and publicising, "I am doing penance", is not at all penance. It is indeed false penance. Foster love in your heart; talk lovingly; do all work with love. Be in love. This is real penance. The teachers of Alike and Muddenahalli are doing real penance. (loud prolonged applause). This is how these schools produce students with purity of heart. I am happy to see all these students who have come here for the function. Today small children came to the dais and spoke beautifully. They gave a beautiful description of the Atma. Especially one high school boy spoke with heart full of love. What a sincere feeling he has! I am really delighted. That is real Vidya. I often tell the authorities of our Institute to give topmost priority to the boys of Alike and Muddenahalli while making selection for our colleges. Sometimes, these students may lag behind a little in Jagath Sathya (worldly knowledge). But they know Atma Sathya (atmic knowledge) very well. I am always telling everyone here not to leave them. Here, a little boy spoke with feeling of love. He expressed his love for Me in beautiful words. I am very much pleased. It is what I want. I do not want that you come forward to offer the whole world to Me. I want your love. Give me your love. This is enough for Me. The seed of love should sprout in the field of your heart. Later on, it will grow into a kalpavriksha (wish-fulfilling tree). Then the world will flourish.

Students!

You have to follow the instructions of your parents. Mathru devo bhava, Pithru devo bhava (Revere your mother and father as God). You have come from your parents. Mother is the maker of your fortune. She is responsible for your progress. Don't act against her wishes. Don't oppose her words. Treat your mother with love. Then you will get your mother's grace. Mother is Lokamatha (mother of the universe), Jaganmatha (mother of the world). Don't think that she is related to your body only. She is the Jaganmatha who has come in the form of your mother. Gangadhara Bhat served his mother tenderly and lovingly. As a result of his sincere service to his mother, he got Swami. That is why Swami has kept him so near and dear. (loud applause)

Our Narasimha Murthy (now Warden, Brindavan) came to Prasanthi Nilayam and took charge as Warden. One day, he came to Me and said, "Swami, my mother is serious. She has cancer." I asked him, "Foolish boy! You are telling me, mother is serious. Which mother? That is your body's mother. Body's mother is not permanent.

You take hold of the permanent mother, eternal mother." After some days, he came to Me again and said, "Swami, mother passed away." I comforted Narasimha Murthy and said, "Narasimha Murthy, stay here itself. Don't leave Puttaparthi. This is your birthplace. Swami is your mother. I will look after everything." Narasimha Murthy's mother was a noble soul. She would often say, "Narasimha Murthy, even in adverse situations, don't go away from Swami. Stay with Him always." (loud applause). All mothers are suffused with love principle. They pray to so many gods and goddesses for the well-being and progress of their children. Try to understand your mother's selfless love. All should look after their mothers lovingly.

5. Concentration Of Mind On The Divine Is Real Sadhana

Date: 19 February 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

Nachiketha, son of Vajasravas, prayed to Lord Yama to teach him *Atma Vidya* (Science of Atma). Then, Lord Yama said,

"Oh the son of immortality! Listen. First establish your link with the source from which you have come into the world."

He also advised Nachiketha that since the body was perishable like a water bubble and the mind was fleeting, both of them must be discarded, meaning, no importance should be attached to them, and efforts be made to realize the fundamental Truth.

The Lord of Kailasa has manifested his Divine form
with the crescent moon adorning his head,
the cool water of the Ganga flowing between the matted locks,
with his radiant eye in the middle of the forehead, and
the purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a blackberry.

He wears serpent bracelets and a snake belt,
his entire body is smeared with Vibhuti,
his forehead is adorned with a kumkum dot,
his ruddy lips glow with the juice of the betel,
diamond-studded gold earrings dangle from his ears,
and his whole swarthy body glows with divine effulgence.
(Telugu Poem)

"Nachiketa! You need not search for Lord Easwara for He is very much present in you," said Lord Yama.

Dear Students and Devotees!

You have to understand the true significance and philosophy underlying the festival of Sivarathri. First, realise that you are not the physical body, which is perishable and impermanent. You have to look at this objective world with *jnana chakshu* (the eye of wisdom), not with the *charma chakshu* (physical eye). The animals, insects, birds, and beasts are looking at this world with their physical eyes. If you also look at this objective world with mere physical eyes, what difference is there between you and those beings? You will then simply remain an animal, bird, beast, or insect. You will not be able to realize your true nature, which is beyond the physical world. You have to comprehend the transcendental reality, which is beyond the body and the mind. This is possible only with the help of jnana chakshu (the eye of wisdom).

The body is like a water bubble.

It will disappear one day or other.

You are not the body that has birth, growth, decay, and, ultimately, death.

Therefore, Lord Yama exhorted Nachiketha to realize the *Atma Thathwa* (the AtmaPrinciple) that has no birth and death.

Then, the question arises as to **what is Atma?** Atma has no form. It is infinite, indescribable and immeasurable.

Nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana nikanam, nitya, shuddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam

(Atma is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened,

free, and embodiment of sacredness).

Such an Atma Thathwa is immanent in every individual, nay every being, in the form of consciousness. Your life as a human being will acquire a meaning and purpose only when you realise the consciousness. Enquiries relating to worldly matters are meaningless and are an exercise in futility. Lord Yama exhorted Nachiketha to realise that principle, having realized which he would have known everything else. The body has birth, growth, decay, and death. But, Atma has no such qualities. It is the eternal witness to everything in this Universe. You have therefore to realize Atma Thathwa. Thus taught Lord Yama to Nachiketha.

The Atma Thathwa is eternal without birth or death.
It has no beginning, middle or end.
It is omnipresent and eternal witness.
(Telugu Poem)

Look! There are several electric bulbs glowing here. Though the bulbs are of different sizes, colours, and capacity, the electrical energy manifesting as light through them is one and the same. Similarly, the same divine power is present in every living being and makes it function. That is Atma Thathwa.

I often refer to the terms *Sathya* (Truth), *Dharma* (Right Conduct), *Santhi* (Peace), and *Prema* (Love).

Sathya is the electricity, Dharma is the wire through which the electric current passes.
Santhi is the bulb. And Prema is the effulgence.
If you want to attain Atmananda (Atmic bliss), you have to follow Sathya and

Dharma.

That is why, the ancient culture of Bharath (India) exhorted humanity,

Sathyam vada (speak Truth) and
Dharmam chara (practise righteous conduct)

In contrast to this noble principle, what is happening today? Sathyam vadha (Truth is being killed) and Dharmam chera (Righteous Conduct is being imprisoned). No, No. This is not humanness. **Speak truth and observe righteous conduct.**

Lord Yama told Nachiketa, "This human body, which is like a water bubble, is bound to burst one day or other. Therefore, realize that Atma Thatwa, which is real and eternal."

You have to recognize that Atma Thatwa - not by your charma chakshu (physical eyes) but by the jnana chakshu (eye of wisdom). Then, the question arises as to **what is jnana** (wisdom)?

Is it physical knowledge or secular knowledge or knowledge relating to the objects of nature? No, none of these.

Experiencing the principle of non-dualism is true wisdom
(Advaita darsanam jnanam).

Atma transcends the name and form. Lord Yama, therefore, exhorted Nachiketha to attain Atma jnana.

Today, people are going mad in search of spiritual knowledge. They adopt umpteen number of practices and bodily postures and call it spiritual *sadhana* (practice). But none of these can help to attain Atma jnana. What is important is Prema (Love), which is the undercurrent of all forms of spiritual sadhana. Realising the perishable nature of this deha (body), one has to realise the indweller (Dehi), who is none other than the eternal Atma.

The body is made up of five elements and
is bound to perish sooner or later,
but the indweller has neither birth nor death.
The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and
is the eternal witness.
Truly speaking, the indweller who is in the form
of the Atma is verily God Himself.
(Telugu Poem)

The true and eternal Atma Thatwa is immanent in one's own body. It can be realized only by the jnana netras (eyes of wisdom). You have to gradually give up *dehabhimana* (attachment to the body) and cultivate *Atmabhimana* (love toward the Atma). You think you are the body and develop attachment to it. As long as the process of inhalation and exhalation continues in the body, you consider it as yours. Once the process comes to a halt, you do not know what is happening around.

The human body, though of perishable nature, teaches one great lesson, namely, "**SOHAM**" (you are nothing but the eternal Atma Thatwa). When you inhale your breath, you make the sound "So" and while exhaling you make the sound "Ham". The inhaling process represents life and exhaling represents death. **If you wish to overcome life and death, one moment is enough. You have to give up body attachment, which I am demonstrating right before you day in and day out. This body, which**

I have taken upon Myself, is undergoing several types of suffering. Just as you suffer from physical ailments, so this body also suffers. But I do not attach importance to this suffering. Several students and devotees have expressed anxiety and concern that I might undergo a lot of suffering while the Linga emerges from My body. No doubt your apprehensions are true, but, I do not feel any suffering. In fact, only when I identify Myself with the body do I undergo pain. Since I am not the body, I do not suffer any pain.

For example, this is a handkerchief (holding a kerchief in His hands) As long as you consider this kerchief as yours, you pick it up, wipe your face, and carefully put it back in its original place. Just because the kerchief is yours, do you accept it if there is dirt on it? No, never. You at once discard it. In the same manner, you should realize that you are different from the body. You should not attach any importance to the suffering of the body. All those objects that you consider as yours have to be discarded one day or the other. When you do not consider something as yours, you do not feel any pain in discarding it. This body underwent several types of suffering, the recent one being a fracture in the hip bone.

The body is, after all, a conglomeration of *indriyas* (senses). Whatever has happened is only to the body and not to Me. When you adopt such type of attitude you will get peace. For example, when you find an ant crawling on your hand, if you try to scratch it, you will have more pain. After all why should you have to suffer so much on account of a small insect like an ant crawling over your body? It is only because you are under the illusion that you are the body. The eye sees something. But what it sees may not be real since it is bound to undergo change after some time. What the ears have heard may undergo change after some time. In the same way, the food we eat will also undergo change after a few hours. Nothing is permanent in this world. You have to realise this truth. You have to enquire as to what is it that remains unchanged in the past, present, and future. If I teach you this truth by quoting big Sanskrit slokas (verses) and mantras, you may not be able to understand this simple truth. If this is related to your day-to-day experience, you will understand it better.

Some time back, when My hip bone got fractured, I was taken to the hospital. The doctors were planning to perform a major orthopaedic surgery. I told them, "You can do whatever you wish to. This body is yours. I am not the body. I am not under the control of the body I am I." The doctors performed a major operation on this body. But, I did not suffer any pain. Whatever pain was there, only the body suffered, not Me. If you also adopt similar attitude, you will not feel any pain. Therefore, reduce your dehabhimana (attachment to the body) gradually.

All of you are undertaking some sort of sadhana (spiritual exercise). What exactly is the real meaning of sadhana? Sadhana is not merely acquiring knowledge about the nature of body. In fact, you have to forget about the body and concentrate on the Atmic Bliss. How do you attain that bliss? It can be attained only through Prema (love). If there is only pure love, all your suffering will be removed. Therefore, cultivate pure and selfless love.

Suppose you came across a person on the road who is inimical to you. If you hate him and move away from him, considering him as your enemy, the distance between you and him increases further. On the other hand, if you greet him lovingly, saying, "Hello! how are you?," naturally he would respond with love. Thus, when you both greet each other lovingly, there is no scope for hate persisting anymore. As is your feeling toward others, so is their feeling.

The same idea is contained in the Vedic declaration:

Yadbhavam thadbhavathi
(As is your feeling, so shall you become).

Today, we are directing all our negative feelings on others. We should not

however bear any ill-will toward anybody. Whatever negative feelings are there, they are just passing clouds. They come and go. The sun may not be visible while it is under thick clouds. The moment the clouds move away, the sun is visible. Similarly, when your negative feelings scatter away, what remains is pure love. You can achieve anything in this world with love. In fact, you can get the entire world under your control through love. People say they are sitting in meditation, both morning and evening. But what kind of meditation is going on? What benefit are they deriving out of it? How long is its effect lasting? Not even a moment. Remember, all worldly matters are like passing clouds. Therefore, do not engage yourself much in them.

Once, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was walking through the market place, chanting the divine name. In fact, he was dancing in ecstasy. Some people on seeing him thought he was a madcap. They snatched away his *mridanga* (drum). But, he did not resent for this. He started chanting the divine name while beating the cymbals. The irate onlookers took away the cymbals also. Even then he was not bothered. He thought perhaps God did not like his beating the cymbals. He resolved not to touch the cymbals, which he thought were not to the liking of God. He consoled himself saying whatever musical instruments were taken away from him, they were not to God's liking. God's will prevails, ultimately. Such was his faith.

From then onward, he gave up all worldly attachments and concentrated on *Premathathwa* (Principle of Love), which none could take away from him. **One has to aspire for that which cannot be taken away by others. That is Pure Love.** A printed matter on a piece of paper cannot be separated from it. Likewise, your heart should be like a pure white paper and love the printed matter. These two are inseparable. Cultivate such love.

Love is your sole refuge wherever you may be,
in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village,

on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea.
(Telugu Poem)

Wherever you may be, divine love will protect you always. Cultivate such type of love. That is the real sadhana (spiritual practice).

Sadhana is not something that is associated with dhana (money).
Sadhana stands for Salokya, Sameepya, Sarupya, and Sayujya.

Unfortunately today people do not understand the real meaning of sadhana.

Students!

You are reading big books written by elders. However, mere reading will not help. When you read a *pustaka* (book), whatever is contained in it will enter your *mastaka* (head). That means both the *pustaka* and *mastaka* become one. You should not stop at that. Whatever has been stored in the *mastaka* must get into the heart, where it will remain for ever.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

Atma is Divine. Never forget this aspect. Some people find happiness in physical sadhana. But the pleasure they derive out of it is only physical and temporary in nature. All that is associated with time is bound to disappear one day or the other. You have to attach yourself to that which is permanent, eternal, and real.

God's love is beyond all description. It is supreme. On the other hand, physical love is momentary and is associated with physical relationship. Whatever is associated with the body comes and goes. But pure and selfless

love that emerges from the heart comes and grows.

You have to cultivate such love. It will never diminish. You need not have to beg for this from somebody. You cannot purchase this from the market either, since it is not a saleable commodity. God is the only source from which love flows. It is available only in His shop. Therefore find out a way to reach Him.

Unfortunately, today, people do not aspire to acquire such pure love in spite of being very near to the source of such love. They do not even realise that this invaluable gift is available right in front of them. People crave worldly favours and objects, thinking there is great happiness in possessing them. No. They can never give real happiness. The happiness arising out of worldly things is only momentary. Only God's love is the eternal principle. Therefore love such Divine Love. You do not get it anywhere else except from God.

God has neither birth nor death.
He has neither beginning nor end.
He is present in all beings as the eternal witness.
(Telugu Poem)

God's love is the only Truth. It will never change. Worship such changeless Truth. Seek refuge in that Truth. That is the only real sadhana for attaining liberation.

What is meant by *moksha* (liberation)? Is it living in some palatial building with air-conditioned rooms, located in the heaven above? No, not at all.

To get rid of moha (attachment) is true moksha (liberation)

You have to give up the body attachment in the first instance. Once you get rid of body attachment, you will naturally develop *vairagya* (renunciation), which will ultimately lead you to liberation. Love is the only path that can lead you to liberation.

You might have heard the story of Mandana Misra, a scholar of great repute. His wife, Ubhayabharathi, was also a great scholar. When Adi Sankara was proceeding on his victory march, he met Mandana Misra and entered into a scholarly debate with him. It was decided that Mandana Misra would take to sannyasa (lead the life of a renunciant) if he was defeated in the debate. Ubhayabharathi was chosen to be the adjudicator of the contest. Will anyone accept such a proposal wherein the rival's wife acts as the adjudicator? But Adi Sankara had no hesitation to accept her as the adjudicator, for he knew that Ubhayabharati adhered strictly to the principle of truth in letter and spirit. She was impartial in her judgement and declared Sankara to be the winner. Mandana Misra took to sannyasa in accordance with the terms and conditions of the debate. Ubhayabharati, being his *ardhangi* (better half), followed suit.

Ubhayabharathi lived in a hermitage near the bank of river Ganga. Many women became her disciples. Every day in the morning, they used to go to the bank of the Ganga to have a bath. On the way, there lived a sannyasi, whom people considered as *Brahma Jnani* (the knower of Brahma). He had renounced the world to attain true wisdom. However, he was very much attached to a dried bottle-gourd in which he used to preserve water. One day he was lying down, using it as a pillow, lest someone should steal it. Ubhayabharathi observed this and asked her disciples who he was. One of the disciples said that he was known as Brahma Jnani.

Then Ubhayabharathi remarked, "Though he is one of wisdom, he is attached to his bottle-gourd, which he is using as his pillow." The so-called Brahma Jnani heard their conversation and became angry. When Ubhayabharathi and

her disciples were returning from the Ganga, he threw away the bottle- gourd on the road, just to show that he was not attached to it. Seeing this, Ubhayabharathi at once remarked, "I thought there was only one defect in him: *abhimana* (attachment). Now I realise that he has another defect also - *ahamkara* (ego). How can one with ahamkara and abhimana be a jnani (one of wisdom)? Her comment was an eye opener for the sannyasi. Immediately he fell at the feet of Ubhayabharathi and prayed to her to teach him true knowledge.

To visualise multiplicity is ajnana (ignorance) and to visualise unity in multiplicity is jnana (wisdom).

Ubhayabharathi imparted such sacred teachings and transformed the individuals. Since she understood the principle of unity, she ultimately attained liberation. On the other hand, Mandana Misra could not attain liberation because he was immersed in worldly feelings.

Ubhayabharathi started preaching and propagating the path of wisdom. She became the guru of one and all. A true guru is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance and lights the lamp of wisdom. That which remains changeless in all the three periods of time is true wisdom. People accepted Ubhayabharathi as their guru because her thought, word, and deed were in complete harmony.

Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam
(Those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones).

Manonashanam (annihilation of the mind) is what you should strive for. You

should have desire for God and nothing else. You should not get entangled in the worldly relationships. That is true wisdom.

The teachings of Ubhayabharathi spread far and wide, and she became highly reputed for her wisdom. Even today there are many such people of wisdom. Without men of merit and wisdom, how can there be light in the world? However, wisdom cannot be acquired from individuals. It can be acquired only by developing love for God. A beggar who comes to our doorstep begs for alms saying "Bhavati Bhikshan Dehi." He addresses Dehi (indweller) and not deha (physical body). In this manner, you can learn a profound spiritual truth even from a beggar.

One may acquire a high academic qualification,
such as M.A. and B.A., and attain exalted position.
One may amass wealth, perform acts of charity and
attain name and fame.
One may have physical strength and
enjoy a long and healthy life.
One may be a great scholar,
studying and preaching the Vedas,
None of them can equal a true devotee of the Lord.
(Telugu Poem)

No doubt, worldly education is also essential to eke out a livelihood, but it cannot impart true wisdom. Only Atma Vidya (knowledge of the Self) can grant you everlasting happiness. However, secular education is also essential to take care of your physical needs. You should not give it up altogether. Worldly education is Negative and spiritual education is Positive. Both are essential for happiness here and hereafter.

Students!

You should become masters in both forms of knowledge, secular and spiritual, like Ubhayabharathi. But always remember that only Atmic knowledge is the true knowledge. Once you acquire it, you will have acquired everything else.

Last night, I came to the Sai Kulwant Hall at 1 o'clock. It is during this auspicious time that the divine lingas emerge from Kailasa. The lingas emerge of their own accord at the divine will. I saw several students and devotees singing bhajans with great devotion. But who are the real devotees? I observed that only a few people were singing with real devotion and a pure heart constantly contemplating on the divine name. There were thousands of people participating in the bhajans. But not all of them are real devotees. Their body was present in the hall but their mind was not fixed on God. They were mechanically participating in bhajans. This is not real devotion. Wherever you sit, whether in the prayer hall or elsewhere, if your thoughts are fixed on God, then you are a true devotee and you will attain His grace. If you feel sleepy, you can sleep. There is no objection. However even in sleep, may your thoughts be fixed on divinity.

Is it not because of your love and devotion towards God that you came all the way to Prasanthi Nilayam to participate in Sivarathri Bhajans? I can understand your devotion. A true devotee does not need any conveniences. He does not wish any type of comforts. Wherever you go, keep the mind under your control and direct all your thoughts toward God. That is real devotion. That is what Ubhayabharathi taught to her disciples. If you also cultivate such devotion, your lives will be sanctified.

Do not divert your attention on physical comforts. **Always chant the Panchakshari Mantra, "Om Namah Sivaya"**. If you merely chant with lips, it will merge into worldly sounds. On the other hand, if you chant the divine name sincerely with full concentration of your mind, it will spread all over the world. Chanting of the divine name with full concentration by the mind is real sadhana.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha

Santhi Nahi").

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html			

6. Recognise The Fundamental Principle Of Oneness

Date: 21 March 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ugadi

Good and bad coexist.
None can separate them.
But one with sraddha (steadfast faith)
will always experience goodness.
What else is to be conveyed to this august assembly?
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Today marks the beginning of another new year. Many new years have gone by, but there is no change in the life of man. What is the reason? The reason is that man is not making efforts to experience the principle of divinity, which is present in all in the form of love. Love is the true form of God. It is your foremost duty to recognise this eternal principle of love.

Today you are in search of divinity. Where is the need to search for that which is everywhere at all times? You are in search of God because you are unaware that God is always with you and in you. You are trying to have the vision of God through meditation. However, you should not be satisfied by merely performing such spiritual practices. **What is meditation? Adherence to truth is true meditation.** The eternal, immortal, wonderful and blissful principle of divinity is present everywhere. You should make efforts to realise this truth. This is the royal path to attain the goal of life.

Recognise your Innate Divinity

People are making efforts to realise truth, but their efforts are not yielding the desired result. Divinity is the very embodiment of eternal bliss and is present in all of us. How can you visualise it? Firstly, you should understand that there is nothing superior to truth in this world. Your foremost duty is to recognise the principle of truth that is present in you. But you are forgetting your innate divinity. You are undertaking a number of sadhanas (spiritual practices) to experience divinity. In fact, you do not need to perform any special sadhana to have the vision of God who is always with you, in you, above you, around you.

Embodiments of Love!

It is a sign of ignorance to search for God, who is all-pervasive. People perform various spiritual practices such as yama , niyama , asana , pranayama , pratyahara , dharana , dhyana , and samadhi to have the experience of divinity. What is meant by samadhi ? It should be termed as sama-dhi, meaning equanimity in all situations. Equanimity is, in fact, present in every individual. It is a misconception to think that only those who perform sadhana are capable of attaining it.

Do you go about searching for yourself in the outside world? Such a person can only be called foolish. In fact, you are distancing yourself from your own sacred Self by searching for it outside. This mad search will not lead you anywhere. You are endowed with the sacred principle of love. Wherefrom does it come? Where does it go? It neither comes nor goes. It is always present in you. You waste your time just in the name of doing sadhana. Instead, realise the truth: "I am I". All spiritual practices become superfluous for one who realises this truth.

Where does this "I" come from? It is in you. Without realizing this truth, you search for it outside. It is therefore necessary for every human being to recognize this truth. **He is a true sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) who realises the divinity present within him.** Those who search for it outside follow the wrong path.

Many people made efforts to fathom Krishna Tattwa but none could succeed. Where is Krishna? Where is God? God is present within you. Do you ever go in the street and ask others, "Have you seen me?" Try to look within and realise this sacred principle of "I". You can know it the moment you turn your vision inward. You see all external objects except your true Self when you see with open eyes.

Once, Arjuna asked Krishna about his true identity. Krishna said, "Arjuna! I am yours and you are Mine. You and I are one." We should try to realise this principle of unity.

Give up false identification with the body

The boy who spoke earlier said that he was doing sadhana to attain the vision of God. One need not search for God in some distant corner.

Sarvata Panipadam Tat, Sarvatokshi Siromukham,
Sarvata Sruthimalloke, Sarvamavritya Tishthati

With hands, feet, eyes, ears, heads, and mouth pervading everything,
He permeates the entire universe.

Where is the need to search for God when He is present everywhere? Whatever you see is permeated by God. There is no place or form in which God is not present.

God is love and love is God.
You can connect yourself with God only through love.

Develop love and achieve the supreme state of equanimity.
(Telugu Poem)

God is present everywhere as truth. The same truth is present in you. Some people think that Lord Krishna was born at a particular place and He left His mortal coil at such and such place. No! This is a misconception. Krishna is everywhere. Whatever you see, it is Krishna. Krishna is in every form, and all forms are divine. Only the names change; God is only one. Instead of searching for God outside, close your eyes and see within to know the divinity immanent in you. Enquire who you are. Do not identify yourself with the body.

It is only when you identify yourself with the body that the question of "I" and "you" arises. When this "I" and "you" merge into one, there will be unity. But people are unable to forget "I" and "mine". Right from your birth, you are accustomed to identifying yourself with the body. Therefore, you are unable to give up your false identification with the body. Once you realise that the same Atma is immanent in every individual, the differences of "I" and "you" will vanish.

Embodiments of Love!

Love, truth, peace, and divinity are not different from each other. They are all one. You will be able to realise this truth only when you strengthen the spirit of unity. Love is not something that is acquired from outside. It emerges from within. When you develop and expand love, you will be able to realise the truth that all are one.

(Bhagavan showing His handkerchief) What is this? This is a cloth. It is made up of thread. Thread, in turn, is made out of cotton. Cotton is the basis of the cloth. But cloth is made by weaving the threads. Similarly, the mind is also made up of the threads of sankalpas and vikalpas (resolutions and

aberrations). You should know your real identity by transcending the mind.

Embodiments of Love!

You have to enquire as to what extent you have understood the principle of love, which is uniformly present in all. Man is carried away by his identification with the body and, therefore, he perceives diversity in creation. In fact, it is unity alone that is behind the apparent diversity. Whatever differences are there, they are only the creations of your mind. If you want to eliminate these differences and realise the principle of unity in diversity, you have to realise your true nature. You experience diversity when you turn your perception away from this fact of unity. Recognise the principle of unity. You are God. God is not separate from you. It is a mistake to consider yourself separate from God. This difference is the result of your deluded vision. When you rectify this defect in your vision, you will realise "I am I".

When you identify Sai Baba with the physical form, you become separate from Him. It is only these feelings of identification with the physical form that create differences between individuals. The feelings of "I" and "mine" are behind all this multiplicity of forms. If you stand before a mirror, you see your image. Even if there are many mirrors, you see the same image. Though the mirrors are many, the image is one. You should realise this oneness behind multiplicity.

Boys and Girls!

Students!

Embodiments of Love!

You should try to know the fundamental principle of oneness. If you know this, everything else will become known to you. This world has a plethora of forms but there is one divinity, which permeates all these forms. Know this truth.

Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti

Truth is one but wise men call it by many names.

You see diversity due to the effect of maya (illusion). There exists only unity everywhere, not diversity. It is your illusion that causes diversity. Forget this diversity and contemplate on divinity. You may ascribe any number of names and forms to God but God is one.

At one time, Radha realised her oneness with Krishna. But later she was overcome by delusion and started considering herself different from Krishna. This feeling of separateness is a big mistake. Reminding Radha of her true identity, Narada told her that she had no separate identity. It was her mistake that she had identified herself with her name, he said. He added that she was not separate from Krishna, and she was, in fact, Krishna.

Embodiments of Love!

Whatever you see, whomever you come across, consider every form as nothing but the manifestation of divinity. Do not entertain differences of "I" and "you". You look into a mirror and say that you are in the mirror. In fact, you are not in the mirror. It is only your reflection that appears in the mirror. When you go behind the hill and shout "Oh!", you will hear the echo of your voice. You may think that someone is shouting at you with the same intensity. But it is not so. That voice is yours and nobody else's. Similarly, all that you see in the world is only your reaction, reflection, and resound.

It is a mistake to consider the reflection as reality. When you understand the true nature of the reflection, you will know the truth of oneness. Here is a small example. Once, a young cowherd took his cattle to the forest for

grazing. While the cattle were grazing, he began singing loudly. The song created an echo from the hills. The innocent boy thought that someone was imitating to make fun of him. He grew angry. After he returned home, he told his mother, "Mother! I will not take the cattle to the forest tomorrow. There is someone in the forest who is imitating whatever I sing. I feel humiliated."

The mother said that she would accompany him to the forest the next day. He took her behind the hills and started singing loudly. Again, an echo of the song was heard.

Then the mother said, "Son, it is not that someone else is repeating your song to make fun of you. Whatever you sing, its echo is being heard by you." Similarly, you should understand that everything in this world is your own reflection, reaction, and resound.

Understand the Principle of Unity

If you want to see God, you should firmly believe that you are not the body. You identify yourself with the body due to your illusion. Students should try to understand this clearly. All that is seen outside is only a reflection and not the reality.

You see Sai Baba in front of you. You identify Sai Baba with the body. But I am not the body. You and I are one. Once you understand this truth clearly, there will be no difference whatsoever.

If you slap someone on the cheek, it amounts to slapping yourself. If you abuse others, it amounts to abusing yourself. You are bound to face the consequences of your actions. You are the cause of your happiness or suffering. Others are not responsible for it. In fact, there are no others. All are one. It is your own thinking that creates the feeling of separateness in you.

You should make efforts to understand your true identity.

You are the very embodiment of love. The principle of love is one and the same in all. You share your love with your children, parents, and spouse. The feeling toward each of them is different but the fundamental principle of love is the same. You should recognize this fundamental truth. The fundamental truth is one without a second. That is the Atma.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

The Atma is one, not two. Once you recognize the truth that the same Atma is present in all, you will be free from all differences and conflicts. Develop firm faith that the same Self is present in all. Understand this principle of unity. Only then can you experience truth. All the students have immense love for Me. They are happy that Baba loves them. Understand that it is only Baba who loves all. (loud prolonged applause.)

You see differences in individuals. But in My view, all are one. I am you and you are I. Have firm faith in this unity. Only then can you transcend duality. When you enquire deeply, you will be able to understand this truth. Have patience. Do not feel disappointed that you are unable to have the vision of God. When you understand the principle of unity and hold on to it firmly, you become Sai Baba yourself.

You are "divine". But you are unable to realise it because you are intoxicated with the "deep wine" of worldly desires.

All are the embodiments of divinity. I am not different from you and you are not different from Me. We are one. When you go on contemplating on this

thought of unity with the Divine, you become one with Him. Then, all differences will disappear and you will attain the experience of unity with God.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

7. Manifestation Of The Vedas In Human Form

Date: 30 March 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Rama Navami

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd,
sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Rama.
Constant repetition of this sweet Name
gives one the taste of divine nectar itself.
Therefore, contemplate on the Name of Rama incessantly.
(Telugu Poem)

The Vedas are the quintessence of profound, immeasurable and infinite wisdom. In the Treta Yuga (era), the four Vedas assumed physical form and incarnated as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna. While Rig Veda assumed the form of Rama, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharvana Veda manifested in the forms of Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna, respectively.

Divine Power of Mantras

Rama symbolized Rig Veda. He was Mantraswarupa (embodiment of mantras).

Lakshmana was Mantradrasta (one who contemplated on the mantras) and he put the teachings of Rama into practice. He followed Rama faithfully. He considered Rama Nama (repeating Rama's name) as the taraka (liberating) mantra. He, in fact, considered Rama everything - mother, father, Guru and God.

Bharata was the embodiment of Sama Veda and chanted Rama Nama

incessantly with bhava, raga, and tala (feeling, melody, and rhythm). While Bharata was engaged in nirguna worship (worship of formless God), Lakshmana rejoiced in saguna worship (worship of God with form).

Atharvana Veda manifested itself as Satrughna, who followed his three elder brothers and conquered not only the secular world but achieved victory over the kingdom of senses also.

The Vedas thus incarnated in the Treta Yuga (era) to impart a most precious message to mankind. The two great sages Vasishtha and Viswamitra declared to the world that the four Vedas had taken birth in human form as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna. As a consequence of great merit earned by Dasaratha, the four Vedas incarnated as his sons. If anyone asked Sage Viswamitra any questions about the Vedas, he replied, "All the four Vedas have incarnated as the four sons of Dasaratha to set an ideal to the world." Hence the Vedas are not formless; they have a form.

The mantras contained in the Vedas are of immense significance. When Sage Viswamitra realized that the rakshasas (demons) wanted to stop the chanting of Vedic mantras and destroy righteousness and truth on earth, he sought the help of Rama and Lakshmana, who symbolized the divine forces that descended on earth to destroy the demonic forces and establish peace in the world. With the power of mantras taught to them by Sage Viswamitra, Rama and Lakshmana annihilated the Rakshasas. This incident signifies the fact that with the power of Vedic mantras man can destroy his demonic qualities. By engaging themselves in the chanting of the mantras, the people of Treta Yuga annihilated their demonic qualities.

Symbolising the divine powers of the Vedas, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna destroyed demonic forces and fostered divine forces in the world. The four brothers thus established the supremacy of the Vedas as manifestation of the aspect of God with form.

Each mantra has a form. It has also its own inner significance. When chanting is done with contemplation on form, it leads one to the path of self-realisation. The Vedic seers declared, "Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam Aditya Varnam Tamasah Parastat (I have seen the Divine Being who shines with the splendour of a billion suns beyond the realm of darkness)." The seers and sages transcended the darkness of ignorance and visualized the effulgence of the Divine. They chanted the mantras, contemplated on the form of the Divine, performed yajnas (sacrifices and rituals) and attained peace and bliss. They made use of mantra, tantra, and yantra in the performance of yajnas, which ensured peace and prosperity of the people in Treta Yuga. With the help of the mantras, they quelled the rakshasas (demons) and established the reign of gods.

Namasmarana for Man's Liberation

But the people of the Kali Yuga (the present age) have forgotten these mantras with the result that Kali Yuga has verily become Kalaha Yuga (the Age of discord and conflict). Even brothers quarrel with each other. They live and eat together in the same family, yet there is hatred and conflict between them.

Different means for man's liberation have been prescribed for each of the four Yugas. While meditation is prescribed as the primary means of liberation in the Krita Yuga, performance of yajnas and chanting of mantras forms the means of liberation in the Treta Yuga. Similarly, archana (worship of God) is the chief means of liberation in Dwapara Yuga. But it is namasmarana (repetition of the name of the Lord) that is the main means of man's liberation in Kali Yuga. Since the people of Kali Yuga do not have the strength and capability to carry out rigorous sadhana (spiritual practices), they have been advised to do namasmarana.

Harernama Harernama Harernamaiva Kevalam;
Kalau Nastyeva Nastyeva Nastyeva Gatiranyatha.

In Kali Yuga, there is no other means more effective
than the chanting of Divine Name for man's liberation.

The Ramayana is not an ordinary story. It contains the direct message of the Vedas. Rama symbolizes the wisdom of the Vedas. Rama married Sita, who represents Brahma Jnana (knowledge of Brahman). When Sita is taken away by demonic forces, Rama and Lakshmana search for her desperately.

The Ramayana contains thousands of slokas (verses). Since it was not possible to remember all the slokas of the Ramayana, the sages recommended the chanting of the Name of Rama. When the disciples of Vasishtha asked him what Divine Name to chant, the sage said, "It is enough if you chant the name 'Rama'. The Name of Rama will make you free from raga (attachment) and roga (disease)."

As I often tell the students, the name Rama has two syllables, Ra and ma. These two powerful syllables are derived from the names of Vishnu and Siva. The syllable , Ra comes from the ashtakshari (eight syllabled) mantra Om Namō Narayanaya. It is the life-breath of the ashtakshari mantra. Similarly, ma is the very soul of the panchakshari (five lettered) mantra Om Namah Sivaya.

The ashtakshari mantra Om Namō Narayanaya and the panchakshari mantra

Om Namah Sivaya become meaningless when ra and ma are respectively removed from the words of these mantras. Without ra, the ashtakshari mantra becomes Om Namō Nayanaya, which is meaningless. In the same way, the panchakshari mantra without ma becomes Om Nah Sivaya, which is inauspicious. The Name Rama is the life-breath of both the Vaisnavites and Saivites (worshippers of Vishnu and Siva).

In the Treta Yuga, when the sages and seers were engaged in the chanting of the Divine Name of Rama, Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and other demons tried to put hurdles in their way. They thought that if they abducted Sita, who symbolized Brahma Jnana (knowledge of Brahma), Rama would lose His power. The Name would lose its potency without Jnana, just like sugarcane loses its sweetness without Rasa. Hanuman resolved to bring this rasa back to Rama and rejoiced in drinking Ramarasa (ambrosia of Rama's Name).

The people of the Treta and Dwapara Yugas considered the Name Rama to be the essence of all sweetness and enjoyed its nectarine taste. Instead of tasting the delicious spiritual sweetness of the Name of Rama, people today devour worldly sweets and expose themselves to the risk of becoming diabetic patients. Worldly sweets cause diseases, whereas the delicious sweet of Rama Nama rids one of all diseases. In ancient India, even the cowherds and shepherds chanted the Divine Name while tending their cattle and sheep. There were not many diseases in ancient times. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrugna propagated the glorious power of Vedic mantras to free the world from diseases and suffering.

Never Neglect the Teachings of the Vedas

Mandodari, the queen of Ravana, strived hard to save her husband Ravana. She gave wise counsel to him, but Ravana paid no heed to her. When a husband takes to evil ways, a virtuous wife acts as his wise minister to put him on the right path. Mandodari was one such wife.

Bharya (wife) is not the one who provides worldly pleasures to her husband; she is the one who does good to him by leading him to the path of wisdom and righteousness. Mandodari was a true sati (wife), who tried to mend the ways of her pati (husband).

Sita also tendered wise counsel to Rama and advised Him not to destroy all the demons. She suggested that only those who committed the evil deeds should be punished. Justice does not lie in destroying the entire clan. Women are great because they show the right path to man. They are, in fact, the light of wisdom in the world. They, therefore, deserve protection and reverence. Sita symbolizes jnana tattwa (principle of wisdom). Sita told Rama that goodness was universal, regardless of caste, creed and community. It is because of women like Sita that men have made progress in life.

There are numerous species in this world. Every one of them has a definite purpose to fulfill in God's creation. Some of them may appear more beautiful than others. One cannot say whether a cow is more beautiful or a bull. But virtues are more important than physical beauty. Observing the good and bad in the world, the students should develop discrimination to choose the former. They should strive hard to cultivate virtues. Right from an early age, they should inculcate good qualities and develop good character. Wherever you go, character is of utmost importance. When the students develop good character, the entire country will become good and great. It is virtues that lend greatness to any person. Rama shines in the Ramayana because of His sterling virtues. Virtues are more important than bookish learning.

In spite of his education and intelligence,
man does not give up his mean-mindedness and evil qualities.
He has no knowledge of the Self.
Modern education leads to argumentation,
not to total wisdom.
(Telugu Poem)

Students - Boys and Girls!

You should try to attain total wisdom. You should make right use of eyes, ears, and tongue, which God has gifted to you. Whoever is able to control these three will achieve greatness. One should therefore cultivate right vision, right hearing, and right speech. Always speak sweetly and softly. One who cultivates these three virtues will verily become divine. This is the primary objective and fundamental basis of all your education. Those bereft of these virtues are virtually demons. This is the essence and the message of the Ramayana. The four Vedas and other scriptures exhort man to follow these principles.

Dear students! Never neglect the teachings of the Vedas. They are for the emancipation and redemption of mankind. Put them into practice in your life.

(Bhagavan concluded His Divine Discourse with the bhajan, "Rama Rama Rama Sita".)

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

8. Uphold Truth Under All Circumstances

Date: 11 April 2004 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Kerala Youth Conference

The Effulgent Lord who shines in every atom and pervades the entire universe will protect you always. He is the Omnipotent Lord of Parthi, who will grant you Bhakthi (devotion) and will certainly help you in all your endeavours. What else is to be conveyed to this assembly of noble souls?
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

God does not need anybody's support or help. He takes care of everything of His own accord and bestows His grace on all.

Humanity cannot Exist without Divinity

Devotees! Do not think that God is confined to a particular place and that you have to search for Him. It is a sign of ignorance to search for God, who is everywhere at all times. First and foremost, you should enquire and understand who God is. He is the one who pervades in every particle and every atom of prakriti (nature). Nature is the direct manifestation of God.

There is nothing that God cannot accomplish. He sees everything at all times. Without recognizing the divine power of God in Nature, it is a mistake to think that God does not respond to your prayers and come to your rescue. Devotion and divine grace are interrelated and interdependent. Man is unable to understand the divine power of God because of maya (illusion).

Whatever God does is for the welfare of the world. Not a single act of God is without a purpose. Man gets confused because he is unable to understand the inner meaning of God's actions. The earth rotates on its axis at the speed of one thousand miles per hour, causing day and night. Rising and setting of the sun as well as waxing and waning of the moon promote all activity on earth. Not merely that, the earth revolves around the sun at the speed of 66 thousand miles per hour, giving rise to various seasons. The seasons benefit man in many ways. Formation of clouds and occurrence of rainfall help man to grow food. In this manner, the earth provides food and sustenance to all beings. Can a human being or a government, for that matter, accomplish such a mighty task? No, no. Without recognizing these beneficial acts of God of such enormous magnitude, man wastes his life in delusion and doubt.

If you enquire deeply, you will know that divine power is at work at all times. Every kana (cell), every kshana (moment) and every yuga (aeon) is governed by Divine Will. God is everywhere and is in the form of Nature. Unable to realize this truth, people develop doubts regarding the existence of God. Everything is supported and sustained by God. There can be no manavatwam (humanity) without Daivatwam (Divinity). Your life will be sanctified when you understand this truth.

Offer all your Actions to God

God does not waste even a single moment. All the time, He is engaged in action for the welfare of all. He is the sole refuge of all at every moment of time. Nothing is impossible for God, who permeates anda, pinda, and brahmanda (terrestrial, celestial and cosmic planes). Every second of our life is dependent on the Divine Will. Every breath of our life is governed by God. We cannot take even one breath without His Will. People are unable to recognize such omnipresent, omnipotent God and waste their time in vain argumentation regarding His existence. They do not experience even an iota of joy due to their lack of faith in all-powerful God.

Once, Arjuna asked Lord Krishna, "Swami! Why are You always engaged in

action?"

Krishna replied, "Arjuna! I perform karma (action) in order to demonstrate an ideal to the people to emulate. When I perform action, people follow My example. The entire world will come to a standstill if I do not perform action. The value of action is beyond all description."

Na Me Parthasthi Karthavyam Trishu Lokeshu Kinchana,
Nanavapathamavapthavyam Vartha Eva Cha Karmani.

Oh Partha! There is no action that I need to perform
in all the three worlds.
Nor is there anything worth attaining unattained by Me,
yet I am constantly engaged in action.

I do not perform actions for My sake; nor do I gain anything out of them. There is nothing that I need to achieve by performing actions. Whatever I do is for the welfare of the world. You should understand this and emulate My example. God is teaching you everything not merely by precept but by practice. Only through proper enquiry can you understand this truth. You should enquire with sincerity and steadfast faith. If you lack faith, you cannot understand anything, however long you may try. Each step of Mine has a definite purpose. Each act of Mine reflects a certain facet of dharma. Nothing can happen in the world without My sankalpa (will). But you are unable to understand My sankalpa and dharma. God has incarnated not for His sake but for the sake of all beings. God is the reality and the world is its reflection. It is natural that the reflection follows the reality. Whatever God does is for your welfare. Likewise, whatever you do should be pleasing unto Him.

Morality Earns Divine Grace

You may proclaim in public that all your actions are meant to please God. But that does not mean that He is really pleased with you. God will be pleased only when you cultivate papa bheethi, Daiva preethi, sangha neethi (fear of sin, love for God, morality in society). Bereft of morality, you cannot be called a human being in the true sense of the term. Morality is the hallmark of a human being. That which adheres to neethi (morality) is true manava jathi (human race).

First, you should develop love for God. Daiva preethi gives rise to papa bheethi, which in turn develops sangha neethi. Hence, Daiva preethi is the basis on which the mansion of human life rests.

Humanity can progress only when there is morality in society. But modern man has no clear understanding of the term morality. Even birds and animals adhere to the code of conduct prescribed for them. But man is not following the rules of morality. If only he adhered to morality, God would certainly bestow His grace on him. Morality is not something that you should force upon yourself. It is your nature. Therefore, first and foremost, develop morality. Only then will Divinity blossom in you. The entire world will prosper when man adheres to morality. Only then can man lead a happy life. Wherever you are, whatever you do, consider morality as the basis of your life. Morality is, in fact, your true reputation. You can earn Divine grace when you have morality.

Truth is the Real Name of God

What is true worship? It is not merely offering flowers to God and performing some rituals. You should implicitly obey the divine command and strictly adhere to morality in your daily life. That can be termed as true worship of God. Today people think that they are praying to God and singing His glory. But God does not need all this. You pray to God only for your sake and not for

His sake. You undertake various spiritual practices such as japa, thapa, yoga, etc., only for your satisfaction. In fact, you need not do all this to worship God. It is enough if you discharge your duty properly. Then, God will certainly bestow His love and grace on you. If you do not do your duty sincerely, how can you expect to be the recipient of God's love? God thinks of your welfare every moment.

Where is God? He is everywhere. Wherever we are, there God is. Sarvata Panipadam Tat Sarvatokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Srutimalloke Sarvamavirtya Tishthati (With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). It is sheer ignorance to think that God is confined to a particular place.

As Mukundan (an earlier speaker) has said, truth is God, God is truth. Hence, we have to safeguard truth. Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness). Truth and righteousness are the two main pillars on which the entire world rests. If we protect truth and righteousness, they will in turn protect us wherever we go. Truth is the source of all happiness. If you do not adhere to truth, how can you expect to attain happiness? Truth is the fundamental principle of life. But today, man's thoughts, words, and deeds are tainted with untruth and unrighteousness. That is why he is unable to enjoy happiness in life. The culture of Bharat (India) teaches, Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath sathyamapriyam (speak truth, speak pleasantly and do not speak unpalatable truth). God protects those who protect sathya (truth) and dharma.

There is nothing superior to truth in this world. Truth pervades the entire universe. But people ignore such all-pervasive principle of truth. They try to suppress truth and indulge in falsehood. Consequently, unrighteousness is on the rise in the world.

Embodiments of Love!

Truth is your life. There is no God other than truth. Only truth can protect you always. Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat (India) has been emphasizing the need to follow truth and righteousness.

I am pleased to note that the devotees of Kerala are leading their lives in an ideal manner by cultivating love of God, fear of sin, and morality in society.

If you have love for God, you can achieve anything in life. Once you put sathya (truth) and dharma (righteousness) into practice in your life, every moment of your life will be filled with happiness. Those who are unable to experience everlasting happiness should come to Me; I will show them the path to happiness. If you uphold truth and righteousness, God will be with you always to protect you. What is truth? Trikal- abadhya sathyam (Truth is that which transcends the three periods of time). That which undergoes change with the passage of time cannot be called truth at all.

But today, children are not being made aware of the real significance of truth and righteousness. Small children do not understand the correct meaning of truth. It is not enough if you teach them to adhere to truth in their speech and conduct. We should teach them that truth is God and that it is truth alone that can protect them. Without teaching the correct meaning of truth and its importance, how can we expect the children to adhere to truth? Our entire life is based on truth and righteousness. There can be no dharma without sathya. Sathyannasti paro dharma (There is no dharma greater than adherence to truth). Truth is the root, righteousness the branches and sub-branches, and happiness the fruit of the tree of life. Hence, we should lead our life keeping truth and righteousness as the basis of all our actions.

Many people perform ritualistic worship of God with great pomp and show. I feel like laughing at their ignorance. These are not the true spiritual practices. How can such sadhanas (spiritual practices) lead to Sakshatkara (vision of God)? Instead, you should put sathya and dharma into practice in your life.

Without sathya and dharma, all that you do is mere show. Truth is changeless and eternal. It transcends time, space and circumstances. It should form the basis of all your actions. If your actions are not based on truth, they become artificial. Truth emerges from your heart and it should be put into practice. We should pray to God with purity of thought, word and deed. You should never give up truth at any time and under any circumstances. Only then will you be protected by truth.

Body Consciousness is the Cause of your Delusion

Embodiments of Love!

There is no point in adhering to truth and righteousness with a negative attitude. It is like building castles in the air! Whatever you do with a negative attitude is bound to yield negative result. Hence, develop positive attitude. Fill your life with love. Man has accomplished mighty tasks, but what is the use? He is unable to understand the importance of sathya and dharma.

In fact, there is none superior to man. There is divinity in humanity. But man is unable to realize his innate divinity because of the influence of maya (illusion). Man should make efforts to recognize his divinity. Only divinity can redeem humanity. Instead of realizing his innate divinity, man is getting entangled in worldliness. What do we have to experience today? It is divinity, divinity, and divinity alone. It is eternal and is always with you wherever you go. You should never forget this positive power even for a moment. Give up negative feelings and develop faith in the positive power, i.e. divinity. It is very much present in you in the form of conscience, guiding you and guarding you. If you take to wrong ways, your conscience will immediately caution you. It shows you the right path. It is impossible to experience divinity if you ignore the dictates of your conscience.

All that you see is only God, and nothing else. You may point to an individual and say, "I see him as another person. How can he be God?" Wherefrom has he come? He has come from God. Everything is God. How can you have the

vision of God if you see multiplicity in unity? In this world, wherever you see, there is unity and unity alone. Truth is only one. It cannot be two. Likewise, God who is the embodiment of truth is only one. Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti (Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). You may call Him by any name, worship Him in any form, but always remember that there is only one God. You may call Him Allah, Jesus, Rama, or Krishna but He is one. Once you understand this principle of unity and get established in it, you will certainly attain divinity.

You should always speak truth. Truth is the real name of God. If you want to pray to God, it is enough if you say, "Sathyaswarupaya Namah (salutations to the embodiment of truth)." All other names are His duplicate names. Truth is God. This truth is installed in your heart. If you realize this truth, you can achieve the ultimate goal of life. It is possible to realize this truth in a moment. The same divine principle is present in all - in mother, father, child, etc. But you have forgotten this divine principle. You think that God appears only in a specific form. In fact, God has no specific form. Wherever you see, He is there. All are His forms. Conduct yourself with such sacred feeling. That is true devotion.

Give up body attachment. Whomever you come across, right from a child to an old man, consider everyone as the embodiment of God. When you develop such a sacred feeling, your devotion will become steady. If you do not give up body attachment, and if your mind wavers every moment, you will end up in utter confusion. Body consciousness is the cause of your delusion. Hence, get rid of body consciousness and develop God consciousness. Do not be carried away by the illusory world. Develop love for God. Then gradually you will be able to overcome body consciousness and your devotion will become strong and steady. Why do people lack steady devotion? They do not contemplate upon one name and one form. Your devotion becomes steady when you install one name and one form in your heart. When you do Laksharchana, you chant many names such as Kesavaya Namah, Madhavaya Namah, Narayanaya Namah. (Salutations to Lord Kesava, Madhava, Narayana.). You may chant any number of names but you worship only one God. Keeping such principle of unity firmly established in your heart, you should pray to God.

Wherever you see, only God exists.
Never doubt that God is here and not there.
Wherever you search for Him, He is there.
(Telugu Poem).

When you contemplate incessantly upon the Atma, you will see divinity everywhere. Hence, make efforts to recognize unity, realize it, and become one with it. If you want to realize divinity, it is enough if you hold on to the principle of truth. Truth has a name and a form. Hold on to it firmly. Follow it implicitly. Only then will divinity reveal itself to you.

Everything is the Manifestation of God

Do not get deluded by names and forms. The youth of today lack steady mind because they are carried away by names and forms. Have firm faith that God is one, truth is one. Consider God as your sole refuge. Then, wherever you go and whatever you see, you will find His manifestation. Wherever you see, He is there. He is not confined to one place. He is everywhere.

What happened to the wicked Kamsa, who followed the pravritti marg (path of worldliness)? Whenever he uttered the name "Krishna", He was there. But he thought it was a mere illusion. He could not realize the divinity of Krishna because of his body attachment.

You can have the vision of the Divine only when you develop Atmabhimana (love for the Self). Atma is one and only one. Consider, for instance, the three words Dehatma, Jeevatma, and Paramatma. Atma is common in all. You should always contemplate upon Atma. Develop firm faith that Atma is God. Atma is always with you, in you, around you, above you, and below you.

Other than the Atma, there is no other entity in this world.

Embodiments of Love!

Do not waste time. You waste not only your kalam (time) but also your kayam (body). You may be performing spiritual practices, but you are unable to overcome worldly illusion. Consider everything that you see as the manifestation of God. Even a mosquito is a form of God. An ant is a form of God. That is why Saint Thyagaraja sang thus,

Oh Rama!
You pervade everything right from a
cheema (ant) to Brahma.
You are in Siva and Kesava as well.
Please come to my rescue.
(Telugu Poem).

There is divinity even in an ant. You all know very well what the pain is like when an ant bites you. Not merely that, ants build big anthills, which become the dwelling places for snakes. If not for the presence of divinity within, how can a small insect like an ant be endowed with such power? Divinity pervades everything, right from microcosm to macrocosm. Never disregard microcosm since divinity is all-pervasive.

Modern youth do not understand what divinity is. This is the effect of their age. In youth, one's blood is hot and mind is unsteady. How can one understand divinity with a wavering mind? First, you should keep your mind steady. Only then can you realize divinity. Truth is the best friend of love, and righteousness is related to both truth and love. Terms such as truth, love, and righteousness may be different but the underlying principle of divinity is one

and the same in them.

Embodiments of Love!

Today, three thousand youth have come from Kerala out of their immense love for Swami. Develop such love day by day. Consider love as God. Only love will come to your rescue in times of need.

When Surdas, a blind devotee of Lord Krishna, was travelling in a dense forest, Krishna came to his help in the form of a small boy. He told him, "Surdas! I am going to Brindavan. Hold My hand. I will take you with Me."

When he heard the name Brindavan, Surdas's joy knew no bounds. The boy had told him to hold His hand. Being under the influence of maya (illusion), Surdas held the stick that Krishna had in His hand. With Krishna's Divine Will, gradually the stick became smaller and smaller. Consequently, Surdas's hand was about to touch Krishna's hand. It was then that Krishna revealed His identity. He told him, "Surdas! God is your sole refuge wherever you may be, in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea. That is why I have come to your rescue."

No sooner did Surdas's hand touch Krishna's hand than he attained divinity. Till then, he was speaking to Krishna and was listening to His sweet words, but he had not touched Him. The moment he touched Krishna, he became ecstatic and called out loudly, "Krishna! Krishna!"

It is said, Darshanam Papa Nashanam, Sparshanam Karma Vimochanam, Sambhashanam Sankata Nashanam (The vision of the Lord destroys all sins, His touch destroys the bondage of karma, conversation with Him destroys all troubles). God incarnates to grant darshan (sight of the Lord), sparshan (touch), and sambhashan (conversation) to His devotees.

Krishna came to Surdas in order to show him the way to Brindavan. Then, He started conversing with him and ultimately granted him His sparshan and thus relieved him of the bondage of karma. Hence, darshan, sparshan, and sambhashan, all the three are essential. You should not be satisfied with mere darshan. You should aspire to attain all the three.

Treat everyone as the form of God. It means that every individual is the embodiment of divinity. All names and forms are His. Here you are able to see thousands of forms of God. How lucky you are! It is a sign of ignorance to consider yourself weak, forgetting your innate divinity. Truly speaking, you are not a mere mortal, you are the embodiment of immortal divinity.

God Himself is playing the role of a human being in this cosmic drama. Daivam manusha rupena (God assumes the form of a human being). Hence, develop firm faith that all are divine. Then you will lose your individual consciousness and become one with Divinity. Seeing multiplicity in unity is due to maya (illusion). When you understand unity, your jeevatwa (individual self) will be transformed into Daivatwa (Divine Self).

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.")

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

9. Develop Love To Experience Divinity

Date: 15 April 2004 / Location: Brindavan

All names and forms are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being who is the embodiment of peace and auspiciousness.

He is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute and non-dual. He is Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Goodness, Beauty).

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

MANY describe at length the power of Sai, the love of Sai and the truth and peace that He embodies. But, do they really practise Sai's teachings? The answer is an emphatic no. That is why I do not feel like giving discourses these days. People are heroes in giving speeches but zeros in practice. What is the use of speaking to those who do not put My teachings into practice? People are interested in acquiring bookish knowledge but not in practising what they have learnt. No benefit accrues by merely learning the teachings by rote. You only strain your throat when you do not practise what you preach. Different people have different opinions about the path of spirituality. However, spirituality can neither be described in words nor be understood by merely listening to discourses. Spiritual teachings cannot fill your heart with bliss unless you put them into practice.

Krishna Permeates Every Atom Of The Universe

It was the time of the Mahabharata war. One day, Abhimanyu approached his mother Subhadra with the request to grant him permission to enter Padmavyuha (lotus-shaped military formation). He prayed to his mother to bless him so that he could vanquish the enemy and emerge victorious.

Subhadra said, "My dear son, I will certainly bless you to emerge victorious but ultimately it is God's Will that prevails. Everything depends on His grace. How can I permit you to enter Padmavyuha knowing fully well the danger involved in it? Padmavyuha is not an ordinary formation. It has been devised by the great military genius Dronacharya himself. Moreover, your wife is in the family way. We do not know whether the time is favourable for us or not. Your father Arjuna and uncle Krishna are also not here to give you necessary guidance and support. Hence, give up the idea of going to the battlefield." Abhimanyu replied, "Mother, there is no place where my uncle Krishna is not present. He is everywhere." Bestowing her blessing on her son, Subhadra said, "Krishna is the embodiment of love. Every atom of the universe bears the touch of His love. His love can be experienced through love only; there is no other way to experience His love. But, my dear son, how can you experience it in the battlefield? You see Lord Krishna everywhere. But do not act out of ego. Do not think that your views have divine sanction."

Lord Krishna permeates every atom of the universe.

Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, Sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). He is love personified. One can experience Him only through love. You can earn His grace only through love. Love can be conquered only through love. When there is love, the question of war does not arise at all. Love confers peace, prosperity, success, auspiciousness and bliss. They are not separate from each other; they are the various aspects of love. The principle of love is present in everyone in the form of atma. The atma is infinite and eternal. That is why the Vedas declared, Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma (Brahman is the embodiment of truth, wisdom and eternity). Where is God? He is everywhere in the form of atma. He is present in all beings. All names and forms are His. He is the embodiment of truth and bliss.

Everything Is Good In God's Creation

God's ways are mysterious. People develop doubts as they are unable to

understand His actions. You consider something as good and some other thing as bad but everything happens according to God's Will. You say yes for good and no for bad but both are the manifestations of God. Man tries to judge something as good for him and some other thing as bad. It is impossible for man to make correct judgement. How can he know what is good for him? Good and bad happen according to Divine Will. Certain forms may not be pleasing to the eye but for God everything is Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (truth, goodness and beauty). How can you describe such a principle? There is beauty in whatever God does. But none can fathom His ways. From a worldly viewpoint, some things may appear bad to the eye but when you enquire deeply, you will understand the truth that everything is good. Since you have only external vision, you consider something as beautiful and some other as ugly. Whatever God creates is beautiful. But people are not able to appreciate real beauty because of their external outlook. If you enquire into the truth, you will know that everything in God's creation is beautiful. To every mother, her child appears to be beautiful. None can deny this fact. A child may appear to be ugly to you but his mother sees only beauty in him. You have no right to dispute the judgement of the mother in this regard. Similar is the case with God's creation. Then, how can you say that something is good and some other thing is bad? The entire world is full of beauty and charm. Can you show Me anything right from microcosm to macrocosm that is bad in this vast universe? It is impossible. You should accept everything as God's Will with an open mind. Consider everything as good. You do not have any right to pass judgement on God's creation or on what He does. The ways of God are highly mysterious and wonderful.

The sankalpa (Will) of the Lord and His stories are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds.

They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage. They are most ennobling and elevating.

They confer bliss on the sages and seers doing penance in forests.

(Telugu poem)

See Divinity In God's Creation

Prahlada was a great devotee of the Lord. He incessantly chanted the Divine Name of Narayana and consequently experienced his oneness with the Lord. He could see the entire world as the manifestation of Lord Narayana. God pervades the entire universe. Such being the case, how can you say that God is present here and He is not there? You see the world but you fail to recognise it as the form of God. In fact, everything is divine. Do not get deluded by whatever you see with your eyes.

Man does not have any power of his own. It is divine power that makes him function. But man, out of his ignorance, is carried away by a sense of doership and develops ego. This is what we witness in the world today. Under these circumstances, it is not possible to differentiate between truth and untruth. It is better to consider everything as good. When God is all-pervasive, how can there be anything bad? Try to visualise God everywhere. Do not superimpose your feelings on His. It is impossible to understand the principle of divinity through the study of scriptural texts or worldly education. Even sages and seers of yore were unable to comprehend divinity. He is beyond the three worlds. How can anyone understand such divinity? What Ajit Popat (an earlier speaker) has said is true. But one should be realistic in one's views. You say that you have seen the form of Lord Vishnu. How does He look like? You say that He has Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma (conch, discus, mace and lotus) in His four hands. Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma are only symbolic. Such a form does not correspond to reality. It is only a superimposition of your feelings but not the ultimate truth.

Suppose, you find a snake in front of you while walking on a road. You think it is poisonous. Who is relatively more poisonous? Is not man more poisonous when all his thoughts, words and deeds are full of poison? In fact, he is more dangerous than the snake. Whatever is seen may not correspond to reality. You have to enquire deeply to know the truth. The Mahabharata is full of these teachings. He is a true human being who understands the teachings of

the Mahabharata and puts them into practice. The sacred teachings of this epic are a great contribution of Bharat to mankind. With your limited understanding, you have no right to pass judgement on anything. True wisdom lies in accepting everything as good and following the path of truth.

Embodiments of Love!

There is love in each of you but you cannot experience it unless you give up body attachment.

This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases;
it is subject to change from time to time;
it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara.
It is nothing but a structure of bones.
Oh mind! Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent.
Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet.
(Telugu poem)

How foolish is it to develop attachment to such a transient body? The world appears to be permanent but in reality it is not so. What appears good to the naked eye may not be so in reality. To see bad in good is a great sin. You should try to see good even in bad. Never condemn anything as bad. Even if something appears to be bad, you should enquire deeply and try to visualise the positive aspect in it. You find innumerable forms in this vast world. However, all forms have emerged from the same source. They are the different aspects of the same divinity. All forms are essentially divine. Such being the case, how can you condemn something as bad? Everything is good. When you eat food, you consider it sacred. So long as the food remains in your stomach, you feel it is good. But when it comes out as waste, you cannot bear its sight and smell. If it is so disgusting, how could you keep it in your stomach earlier? Good and bad depend on your likes and dislikes. Leave aside

your likes and dislikes. You have to keep in mind what God likes. Only God knows what is good for you. Hence, surrender to His Will and take refuge in Him.

True Love Is Changeless And Eternal

Embodiments of Love!

The principle of love cannot be described in words. All descriptions will only reflect a part of the whole truth. So, instead of trying to describe it, make efforts to become deserving of God's love. Love is the form of God. He may bestow His love on you in any form. Love is your ultimate goal. Only love can sanctify your life. Hence, develop love more and more. Love alone will protect you. Love for the physical body is attachment. A child becomes a youth and a youth becomes old, and accordingly the physical body undergoes change and gradually loses its beauty and charm with the passage of time. But love remains constant at all times. The term prema (love) is not just a word; it has a form. There is no place where love does not exist. Love is all-pervasive. It encompasses anda, pinda and Brahmanda. Love is the basis of all our activities such as eating, talking, walking, etc. In fact, love sustains our life. People tend to forget such a sacred principle of love even after knowing its significance. How foolish they are! One should experience love, enjoy it and share it with others.

Embodiments of Love!

It is impossible to describe the principle of love in full. Love attracts all. Love of God has manifested in the form of Nature. Therefore, Nature attracts all. Karshati iti Krishna (Krishna is one who attracts). God attracts everyone and confers bliss on all. He is the embodiment of sweetness. People prepare various types of sweets but sugar is the same in all. Similarly, divinity is the same in all names and forms we see in this world. God cannot be limited to any particular form. Consider all forms as His. You may go anywhere, worship any form. All forms are divine. When you develop such love for and faith in

God, you can see Him everywhere and experience His love. It is not possible to experience divinity without developing love. That is why the Gopikas prayed to Krishna thus:

Oh Krishna, play Your sweet flute and sow the seeds of love in the desert of loveless hearts.

**Let the rain of love fall on earth and make the rivers of love flow.
(Telugu song)**

The Gopikas yearned for Krishna's love and nothing else. You are the drops of nectarous love. A number of drops join to make a stream which ultimately merges in the ocean. But today man is not able to understand what true love is. If he likes a particular object, he thinks he loves it. When you have likes, you will also have dislikes. But when you have love, there cannot be anything negative. Love is changeless and eternal. It is divine. It is truly the form of divinity. Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam (One without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three gunas of sattwa, rajas and thamas).

It is not possible to describe love in worldly parlance. It is foolishness to think of love in a worldly sense. You cannot find a term equivalent to love. You may describe love in various ways for your own satisfaction. But none of them corresponds to the reality. Only love equals love. It is not possible to describe it in any other way. It is this divine principle of love which you have to understand and practise.

Embodiments of Love!

You may get immersed in love, experience it and enjoy it. But your hunger for love can never be satiated. Love can be experienced only through love. There is no other path to experience love. Love is love and that is all. Have firm faith that God is the embodiment of love. Love Him wholeheartedly. Do not superimpose your worldly love on God's love. His is the only true and eternal

love. Focus your love only on God. God is present everywhere in the form of love. You should

never entertain doubts in this regard. The stream of love should flow in you incessantly. Only then can you have the divine vision. No doubt, you have the desire to see God but you are not expanding your love. If you are interested, I am ready to grant you the vision of God. But you can see Him provided you cultivate true and eternal love in you.

Embodiments of Love!

I always teach you love, love and love alone. You may try to describe love in various ways. It is impossible to do so. Love has only one form, i.e., the form of attraction. Love confers bliss and grace. Love is God, live in love. On some other occasion, I shall dwell further on the principle of love. Worldly love is but artificial. But man, out of his ignorance, thinks that there is happiness in it. All that man loves is negative. He should direct his love towards the positive principle. It never changes. Here is a small example. You have been coming here for a number of years. Do you ever feel satiated with Swami's darshan? No. The same Swami whom you saw in the morning comes again in the evening. But you long to see Him again and again. The reason for this longing is love.

10. Mother Is Your First God

Date: 06 May 2004 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

When man emerges out of his mother's womb,
He has no garland of any kind around his neck:
Neither of pearls nor of gold, nor a necklace of topaz
nor of rubies or other precious gems.
There is, however, one garland carrying:
The unbroken link of the consequences of
the good and bad deeds of the past lives strung together.
Brahma, the creator, strings together the consequences of
his past deeds into a heavy garland and
puts it around his neck at the time of his birth.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Every individual has four gurus (teachers) in this world. The Vedas proclaim "Mathrudevo bhava, pithrudevo bhava, acharyadevo bhava, athithidevo bhava", which means the mother, father, teacher, and the guest are to be considered as God. Among the four, the mother is the first and the foremost guru.

There are several inner meanings to the teachings of the mother. A true disciple is one who meticulously follows the mother's instructions. The mother may appear to be an ordinary individual like any other, but when you delve deep into her teachings, you will realize that she is a great guru (teacher). But, those who are not on the spiritual path, may take all this lightly.

Once, mother Eswaramma was returning from the Chitravathi river with a vessel full of water. An old woman was walking along with her with great difficulty, unable to bear the burden of the vessel filled with water. Eswaramma enquired "Mother! Are you feeling difficulty in carrying the vessel full of water?"

The old woman, who was perspiring and unable to keep pace with her, replied, "Yes, mother! I am unable to carry this vessel for such a long distance. But, I have no children to help me in this task. I myself have to carry this vessel full of water everyday."

These words of agony were imprinted on the mind of Eswaramma. After walking for some distance, she saw a small boy holding a slate and pencil in one hand and carrying a heavy load of books in a bag hanging round his neck. He was unable to walk, but he had to continue his journey to the Bukkapatnam School. Eswaramma enquired of the boy, "My dear son! What for are these slate and pencil? Why are you carrying such a heavy load of books?"

The small boy replied, "Mother, I am carrying these books so that I can note down all that the teachers teach me".

Eswaramma kept all these incidents in her mind. After walking for some more distance, she came across a frail lady carrying her infant child on her shoulders proceeding toward Bukkapatnam. Eswaramma again enquired of this lady, "You appear to be frail and weak, unable to carry the child. Why should you to have to walk such a long distance up to Bukkapatnam?"

The lady replied "Mother! What else can I do? There is no doctor in this remote village who can give some medicine for my child. He is suffering from

cold and fever. I have to take him to the Bukkapatnam hospital". This incident also made an imprint on the mind of Eswaramma.

There used to be a mother and small child in a remote village near Kolkata. As soon as the child was born, the father died. The mother somehow brought up the child with the meagre income, she earned by doing some odd jobs. There was not even a lamp in the house for the boy to study during the night. He used to sit under the street lights and study. Thus, he continued his studies with great difficulty and earned a high degree of qualification. That little boy blossomed into the legendary Eswarachandra Vidyasagar.

Once, a fair was being held in Kolkata. Eswarchandra's mother also started out to visit the fair, wearing a worn-out sari. He saw her pitiable condition. While everybody else was going to the fair wearing expensive clothes, Vidyasagar could not bear the sight of his mother going to the fair wearing a worn-out sari. He asked, "Mother! Why are you going to the fair wearing such a worn-out sari?"

The mother replied, "My dear son! I am happy with whatever I have. Please do not worry. You continue with your studies and come up in life".

A few years after this incident, Vidyasagar completed his studies. He was able to secure a good job with a decent salary. He bought some good saris for his mother with his first month's salary. Then, his mother told him, "I will not be really happy with these costly saris. If you help these poor people in our village and alleviate their suffering at least to some extent, that is enough for me". She further expressed that she had three desires.

Immediately, Vidyasagar fell at her feet and prayed, "Mother! It is my duty to fulfill your desires. It is the responsibility of a son to fulfill the desires of his mother and make her happy. Please let me know what your desires are".

The mother replied "My dear son! There are several poor, uneducated, and sick people in our village. Who will alleviate their suffering? I will be really happy only when you can remove their difficulties. The children in this village have to walk long distances and go to the neighbouring village for studies. I am really moved at their pitiable condition. Should they have to undergo so many difficulties for the sake of education? I want you to build a small school in this village itself so that these children can comfortably study here".

Vidyasagar built a small school in his village, as per the wishes of his mother and she was happy.

On another day, Vidyasagar found his mother sitting in a pensive mood and asked what the reason was. She told him, "My dear son! The people of our village are suffering a lot for want of drinking water. They have to fetch the water from long distances, walking all the way. The well in our village has completely dried up. How can old ladies like me fetch water from such a long distance? If you can arrange for the digging of a well in our village, it will be a great boon for them. This is my second desire".

Vidyasagar assured her, "Mother! I will certainly fulfil your desire. I will try to solve the drinking water problem in our village". Initially, he got two or three bore wells sunk in the village, but they were not of much use. The bore wells were able to supply water only during the rainy season. During summer, they used to dry up, yielding not even a drop of water. Therefore, the mother advised him to find a permanent solution for the problem. Then, Vidyasagar arranged for digging a big well and solved the problem of water scarcity permanently. His mother was happy.

After sometime, Vidyasagar got a promotion in his job. His salary also increased. Then, he approached his mother and enquired, "Mother! What is your third desire?"

She replied, "My dear son! You have built a school. You have provided drinking water to the villagers. But the mothers in our village are compelled to take their children whenever they fall sick, to the neighbouring village for treatment. I am unable to see their plight. Hence, I will be happy if you can arrange to build a small hospital in our village."

In accordance with his mother's wish, Vidyasagar got a hospital built in his village. Thus, he fulfilled all the desires of his mother in due course.

Gradually, he reached a high position in his career due to his good behaviour. His salary was also increased commensurate with the high position. In spite of that, he continued to be humble and obedient and thereby earned a good name for himself.

One day, his mother called him and advised him, "My dear son! I am happy that you have attained a very high position in life. But, do not become arrogant."

For some people,
excessive wealth gives rise to ego,
which in turn paves way the for many wicked qualities.
When wealth leaves you,
ego also vanishes and, as a result,
the evil qualities disappear.
(Telugu Poem)

However, this was not the case with Vidyasagar. He cultivated the quality of humility along with education. He earned a good name for himself as a great orator. Educated people in large numbers used to flock round him to hear his speeches. Once, a meeting was arranged in a neighbouring town and

Vidyasagar was to address the gathering. Vidyasagar started for that town. An ICS officer was traveling in the same compartment as Vidyasagar. The officer was going to that town to hear Vidyasagar's speech. However, he had only heard his name but had never seen him before. As soon as the officer alighted from the train, he started shouting "Coolie! Coolie!"

On seeing this, Vidyasagar approached him and asked what luggage the officer had. The officer replied that he had only a small suitcase. Then Vidyasagar asked him, "Is it necessary for you to engage a coolie to carry this small suitcase? I will carry it for you. But, where are you going?"

The officer replied, "I understand that a great scholar and orator by name Eswarchandra Vidyasagar is going to deliver a speech. I am going to attend his speech."

Vidyasagar took the suitcase into his hands and started walking along with the officer. Both of them reached the venue of Vidyasagar's lecture. There, Vidyasagar handed over the suitcase to the officer. The officer then took out his purse and enquired how much money he had to pay Vidyasagar as portorage charges.

Vidyasagar politely refused his offer saying, "Sir! You have given me an opportunity to serve you. I don't need anything more." He silently walked away from that place.

Considering Vidyasagar to be a madcap, the officer proceeded to the venue and sat in the audience. The organizers of the function were waiting to garland Eswarchandra Vidyasagar on his arrival. In a few minutes Vidyasagar arrived there, dressed in very simple clothes. He was accorded a warm welcome and profusely garlanded by the organizers of the function. The officer who was observing this welcoming ceremony realized to his utter

astonishment that the person who had carried his suitcase from the railway station was none other than Eswarachandra Vidyasagar himself. He felt ashamed. He reverentially offered his pranams to this great, yet humble individual, in his heart of hearts.

Then Vidyasagar began his speech. He explained that humility is the foremost quality of an educated person. He said that pride and arrogance are the result of excessive wealth and consequently such a person loses the fundamental quality of human nature.

After the conclusion of the programme, the ICS officer met Vidyasagar and offered his sincere apologies for his mistake. He pleaded with Vidyasagar "Sir, your speech was a great eye opener for me. I behaved arrogantly due to the pride that I am a highly educated person. Please excuse me."

In the course of time, Vidyasagar's reputation as a scholar and orator increased by leaps and bounds. He continued to do great service to the people. He got several poor students educated. He provided drinking water to several villages, where there were no such facilities. His mother felt very happy that her son was doing great service to the poor and needy. She prayed to God that every mother should be blessed with such noble children.

Similarly, Sathya Sai has undertaken several community welfare activities in Puttaparthi like constructing residential houses for the poor, educating their children, providing drinking water to the villagers etc., as per the wishes of His mother. What the mother expressed in those days were small desires. But, in the course of time, they assumed the form of gigantic projects and created history.

Mother Eswaramma was very happy at the great service rendered by Swami to the villagers. She expressed with satisfaction, "My dear son! You built houses for the poor, You solved the drinking water problem for the villagers, You provided electricity to the village which was reeling under darkness. Not

only that, You have also built a school and a hospital. You have fulfilled all my desires." She felt extremely happy that her son had undertaken and completed such great tasks. She used to tell the ladies gathering round her, "I requested Swami to build a small school in Puttaparthi village. But Swami established a great educational institution in its place."

Thus, the humble wishes of the mother transformed themselves ultimately into great projects providing immense benefit to the humanity at large.

What the country needs today is children who follow the teachings of their mothers. The teachings of the mothers may appear to be very simple and insignificant; but, in the course of time, they provide great happiness. Eswaramma's desires were very simple! She wanted drinking water to be made available to the small village of Puttaparthi. But Swami provided drinking water to the entire district of Anantapur. She wanted Me to build a small school. But Sathya Sai built huge buildings and established great educational institutions. In those days, villagers used to suffer due to lack of basic medical facilities. Therefore, Mother Eswaramma asked Me to build a small hospital. But Swami built great temples of healing, the Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospitals, one in Puttaparthi and another in Bangalore. Thus, the small wishes of the mother resulted in the establishment of great institutions.

Embodiments of Love!

You need not follow anybody. It is enough, if you engage yourself in activities that would satisfy your mother. If your mother is happy and contented, that will confer great blessing on you. Whatever your mother says, obey her command willingly and sincerely. That is what is required today! Obey your mother and become recipients of her love. Then the whole world will progress. You need not undertake any other acts of merit. Sacrifice your entire life to satisfy your mother. It is only because Sathya Sai fulfilled the wishes of His mother and provided satisfaction to her, His glory has spread far and wide.

Sathya Sai has built great Hospitals and provided expensive medical treatment absolutely free to everyone, right from the poorest of the poor to the richest. In the field of medical services, no institutions anywhere in the world can be compared to Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. In this hospital, medicines, operations, food - everything is provided free of cost. Nobody is able to comprehend how we are able to provide all these things free of cost in the present day scenario of sky-rocketing costs. Unfortunately, people are not able to realize the great value of the services being rendered by our hospitals.

Today, many hospitals advertise their facilities through electronic media, attract people, and loot them of their hard earned money, and even go to the extent of causing death to patients by negligence. This is not right. The poor people should be given free food, free education, free water, and free medicine. There can be no greater service than providing all these services free of cost. I wish that all the students, past and present, should undertake such services.

We are not collecting even a paisa from our students, as fees. The Sathya Sai Educational Institutions provide education totally free of cost. People have to spend huge amounts for acquiring higher education in other institutions. But our students need not spend any amount for their education here. I am providing totally free education from KG (kindergarten) to PG (postgraduate) to all the students who come here with love and great expectation. In fact, all our services are provided with loving care and free of cost.

The Sikh student who spoke earlier tried his best for a long time to acquire higher education. But he could not pursue his higher studies, due to paucity of funds. Hence, he took up employment on a meagre salary. Later on, he joined our college and earned his MBA degree. Now, he is contributing his services to the hostel as a grateful offering to Swami. There are several students like him, who are undertaking service activities in Swamis Institutions.

The boy who spoke after him hails from Delhi. He also had great expectations to pursue higher education but had no funds. He joined our Institution and qualified himself with an MBA degree in first class. All this is free of cost. Since then, he remained here in the service of Swami. He has decided to dedicate his life to the Institution that produces such boys.

Thus, all the students of the Sathya Sai institutions have been cultivating broad-mindedness and the spirit of service. All our students are broad-minded. You do not find any narrow-minded students here. They are filled with love and behave among themselves like brothers. It is My endeavour to train such ideal boys and girls. It is My wish that all our students should willingly undertake free service activities to the society with a spirit of love and sacrifice.

Many of our students are working in highly paid jobs in big cities like Delhi and Agra. In fact, top companies in India are seeking the services of our students, offering them high-salaried jobs. Our students working in these places are also undertaking service activities like providing free tuition to poor students. Wherever they are, our students are undertaking various service activities with a spirit of sacrifice and broad-mindedness.

Education is not mere bookish knowledge. Developing broad-mindedness, spirit of sacrifice, sharing one's resources willingly with the fellow members of the society, and making them happy - these are the true qualities of an educated person. There are several such students in Prasanthi Nilayam who are happy and contented by undertaking service to society. My main task is to prepare such boys and girls. I am providing everything that is required for them. I am even sending them abroad for higher education, if necessary.

Dr. Padmanabhan who is sitting here may be known to all of you. He qualified as a doctor at a very young age and wanted to set up a small clinic here in

Bangalore. I called him and told him, "Doctor! You must acquire higher degrees in medicine. You should not stop your education with the present degree. Your family circumstances may not be conducive to pursue higher education. But, I am with you. I will provide for your higher education."

One day, I called him for dinner and later sent him to Vienna for higher education in medicine. Accordingly, he went abroad and obtained higher degrees in medicine. After his return, he is now doing wonderful service in Brindavan. He is not money-minded. The great name he has acquired in Swami's service is all that matters to him. Can there be greater wealth than a good name? He serves the poor. Even though he has undergone a heart surgery, he continues to serve the poor and sick patients. Thus, Swami has moulded him as a loving, soft-hearted and selfless individual with a sacred heart and prompted him to serve several people.

Our students, in spite of being highly qualified, are very unassuming and without ego. They subsequently take up teaching jobs in our educational institutions. It is My firm resolve to foster such noble souls.

There may be some minor ailments now and then to this body. However, they do not bother Me. They are natural to the human body. Last year, one boy was decorating colour buntings to the door, standing on an iron stool. Meanwhile, I opened the door and came out from My room. As soon as he saw me, he became nervous and fell down from the stool. As he was falling, the iron stool got tilted and fell on Me. That was the time when My hip bone was fractured. That is how it happened. It is not due to any past karma. I did not, however, mind My injury. Yesterday, as I was entering My room, I casually took the support of a brick projection from the wall. The brick, however, got loosened and fell down on the floor. Consequently I also fell down, landing heavily on the wrist. It was an accident. But, I have to perform My duty, come what may. Of course, accidents do happen due to past karma, but this incident is not of that kind. It is due to My mistake, which was inadvertent. Such disruptions may happen now and then, but no disease can ever afflict Me. I carry on My work unmindful of such incidents.

There are seven boys here. All of them did their post graduation. They want to stay with Swami permanently, doing service here. I am looking after them. I told them "My dear children! You must progress in your education. You need not depend on your parents for this. I will take care of all your requirements. You study well and come out with flying colours. Set an example to others." Thus, I am making arrangements for their higher studies. I always help others and do not cause inconvenience to anybody.

As for Myself, I will never be afflicted with any disease whatever. Some minor incidents may happen. But, I will carry on My work, unmindful of such incidents. Yesterday, when I fell down, there was a loud noise, and people present there were very much afraid that some major accident had taken place. They thought to themselves, "What has happened to Swami! Till recently, He was not able to walk properly due to the hip fracture. Now He has sustained an injury to His hand. What a misfortune has befallen us!"

But, I consoled them, saying that nothing serious had happened and they need not worry. The devotees have arranged a meeting here, in which I had to participate. I do not like to desist from performing My duty, whatever may happen to this body. Therefore, I agreed to come here. I put on My dress. The students arranged a shawl to cover My gown, so that I may not be inconvenienced with the bandaged arm. The doctors, however, advised Me not to move. They were right in their advice. But I volunteered to come down against the doctor's advice, with the help of two boys. Since, I love My boys so much, they also love Me with the same intensity. They are constantly in attendance on Me and look after Me.

(As per Swami's instructions, some boys stood up. Showing them to the audience, Swami said). These boys have come from far off places like Delhi and other cities and studied here in Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam. They are all staying with Me and doing great service to Me. This problem is not something that can be cured with medicines. Their love itself is working as a great medicine for Me. Their love alone is protecting Me in different ways.

(Again pointing toward a student,) This boy did his PhD. All these boys are highly educated. Still, they would like to stay back and serve Swami. There are some more boys inside Swami's residence. For example, Sathyajit and some other boys are constantly in attendance on Me as a shadow and are looking after Me. Such boys are My only property.

Several people ask Me, "Swami! How much is the value of your property? Where is it located?"

I tell them "My dear! I cannot say that the value of My property is this much. My students are My property. It cannot be estimated in terms of money. Any amount of description of the love of My boys will be incomplete."

I cannot remain for a single day without this property. They also cannot live without the loving care of Swami. These boys are setting a great example to the world by their service. Seva (selfless and loving service) alone confers great value on the educated. I cannot describe the amount of service they render, so lovingly. No one can adequately estimate and express in words the loving nature of our students. No one can understand their broad-mindedness. Outwardly, they appear like any other students. But each one of them is highly educated, with double post-graduate degrees. Such boys can render great service to the world. They are serving Me in various ways.

Sravanam (listening), kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (servitude), sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (self-surrender).

They are expressing their total and unconditional love toward Me in the nine paths of devotion described above.

The doctors advised Me bed rest. In spite of that, I decided to fulfill My commitment to My devotees. Having known My firm resolve, the boys stitched a shawl to cover My robe and brought Me downstairs. This service may appear to be a small and insignificant one. But if you enquire into the matter deeply, you will understand that it is very difficult to get this opportunity to serve Swami in this way. Only because of their loving care am I able to come down without much inconvenience, to speak to you. Is it really possible in My present condition?

In fact, it is their pure love that brought Me down here. These boys have good character along with good education. The service rendered by the boys here or in the Primary School or Higher Secondary School or other institutions in Puttaparthi is beyond description. Even little boys in these Institutions behave well. I am standing before you today to describe the good qualities of My students; otherwise, I had no intention to give a discourse. The students are doing great service to the society, as per My advice. I exhort the new entrants who join the Institution this year, to cultivate noble qualities, be healthy and happy and humble like these boys, and render good service to the society.

I conclude My discourse with blessings to one and all.

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html			

11. The Form of God is Love

Date: 02 July 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat.
Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance.
The most nectarous feeling in this country is the feeling of
love toward one's mother.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

In this sacred land of Bharat (India), forbearance is the real beauty. The modern man has no idea of what forbearance is. He is not able to realise that forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land. One bereft of forbearance is no human being at all. We should have sympathy and forbearance toward the poor and the physically challenged. But modern man shows disgust toward such unfortunate people. In fact, sahana (tolerance) is the most valuable and sacred mantra of the Bharatiyas (Indians). But man, out of his ignorance, has given up such a sacred mantra and is carried away by yantra and tantra.

The foremost quality expected of a devotee is forbearance. What is bhakti (devotion)? Several people are under the mistaken notion that worshipping some idols, observing certain vows and performing some rituals is bhakti. It is not as simple as that. The foremost duty of a devotee, especially of the Bharatiya, is observing the quality of forbearance in practice.

Adherence to truth is the real thapas (penance). Man, today, has forgotten this principle. Forbearance is a quality that inspires people to undertake noble deeds. This noble quality is to be taught to others as well, to enable them to

imbibe it.

The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling of love toward one's mother. Today, people overlook the most important duty to look upon every woman as one's own mother. There is nothing greater and sweeter than this motherly love in the world. One who has cultivated such noble feeling is most fortunate. It is not a quality that can be purchased or hired. This motherly feeling flows from the natural love that one has for one's own mother. The people of Bharat are forsaking such noble qualities and are trying to imitate and cultivate alien cultures and traditions today. In fact, they are running after alien culture with excessive enthusiasm, treating it as their very life breath.

Embodiments of Love!

You cannot find anything more sacred than love in the world. Today, you will find worldly and physical love everywhere. But, it is very difficult to find love suffused with Atmic bliss.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is not merely that which exists between two individuals at the physical level. True love is that which exists between two hearts. Bharatiyas today are neglecting such sacred and noble love. It is only the love toward God that has sustained and protected the people in this sacred land of Bharat since ancient times, just as the eye lid protects the eye. This divine love permeates the entire universe. Wherever you look, it is present. There is nothing in the world, except divine love. All other types of love are only mere passing infatuation. Real love emerges from the depth of one's heart. Cultivating such divine love and sharing it with others is most pleasing to Me. Today, you find worldly and physical love for achieving selfish ends everywhere. But, you cannot call it real love. Real love, which is sacred, divine, and selfless, has to spring from one's heart.

Embodiments of Love!

Cultivate and strengthen such divine love. When you cultivate such love, you will not be lacking in anything. It is only when you cultivate such noble love that you will be entitled to be called "Embodiments of love". God is omnipresent. Who is God? In fact, you are verily God. You must strive to attain that state. Though God is present everywhere, you should not forget the divinity immanent in you. Some people think that God exists separately in some distant place.

Prahlada, the child devotee of Lord Vishnu declared:

Never doubt that God is here and not there.
Wherever you search for Him,
He is there. (Telugu Poem)

This is the real culture of Bharat, which we are not able to perceive today. Everyone chants the name of God. But, where is God? In fact, you yourself are God. You and God are not separate. Man forgets the divinity latent in him and runs after trivial and mundane things.

Embodiments of Love!

Under all circumstances, do not give up love. Love is your greatest treasure. One who forgets this treasure is not a human being at all!

We love our father, mother, brothers, sisters, etc. All these relationships are but mere roles in the Divine Drama. You must try to apprehend true love. In fact, it is always in us. You need not search for it outside.

Unfortunately, today we are going after things that are not real and permanent. (Showing a flower) What is this? This is a flower. Everybody says so. But, the truth is, it is a manifestation of Divinity. There are several petals in it, which represent Divinity. If the petals are taken out one by one, it cannot be called a flower. Similarly, if there is no love in a human being, the human being cannot be called an "Embodiment of love".

The source and sustenance for the entire universe is love. This quality of love takes different shapes in different individuals, say between father, mother, brothers and sisters, but you refer to it all as love. All these individuals together constitute a family. It is not enough if you limit your love to the family members. The entire universe must live like a family. Whomever you see, offer your pranams (salutations). Say "Om Namaskar! Namaskar!" Can you come across a nobler feeling than this?

All the forms you come across in this world are embodiments of Divinity. There is nothing in this universe that is not divine. You consider the different objects in the universe as mere objects. No! No! Consider them as "Embodiments of Divinity". Unfortunately, today we have become foolish and are searching for God in some distant corner. Wherever you see, there is God. Therefore, it is the noblest feeling to consider everything in the universe as "Embodiments of Divinity". The universe is but a form of God! God is manifest in all forms. Consider such an omnipresent divinity as God. Do not give credence to the outward form of any object, but firmly believe in the divine power that is immanent in that object. We are not experiencing anything other than Divinity in our day-to-day activities. For example, we are thirsty. Thirst is a fire manifest as divinity. We quench our thirst by drinking water, which is another manifestation of the divine.

Thus all five elements in the universe, the five senses, five sheaths, and the five vital breaths in the body are all manifestations of divinity. Today, we are

misusing our senses. This is an act of grave sin. All the senses are pure, sacred, and selfless. The senses have no distinction of caste, creed, religion, nationality, etc. Keeping such noble qualities in our own self, we are searching for Divinity in the outside world. What a great pity! What do you think the human values are? They are nothing but divine qualities. God has no attributes separately. Divinity itself is the sole attribute. We are deluded to see the attributeless Divinity as God with attributes.

Embodiments of Love!

Whatever I speak, it is only love. I do not know any other word. There is no other quality greater than love. Hence, we have to love that quality of love, which is God.

The different ways by which we describe God such as Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam (God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness) are only for our satisfaction. They cannot, however, describe God in full. In fact, God is beyond description. The only word by which we can describe God is "love". Nothing better can describe Him.

Embodiments of Love!

You are all the "Embodiments of love". Your form is love. God's form is also love.

I am very much distressed to see those physically challenged children seated on the tricycles. They are, in fact, "Embodiments of Divinity". To look down upon those divine children with contempt is a great sin. In fact, there are no lowly people in the world at all! That low thinking is in us only. It cannot be attributed to God. God has only one attribute, which is love. That is His form.

When someone converses with Me lovingly, My joy knows no bounds. If people employ empty rhetoric without love to describe My qualities, I am not at all pleased or impressed. Talk to Me with a loving heart. Pray to Me with a love-filled heart. Whatever you pray for with a loving heart, I will readily respond. You call Me "Sai" with love; I will readily respond saying "Oyi". Any amount of prayer devoid of love cannot move Me. If you call Me with love, I will respond immediately, wherever I am. There is nothing greater than love. Therefore, if you wish to have the darshan of God and experience Him, pray to Him lovingly. You may have any amount of wealth and virtues, but they are no match to the quality of love. The sweetness inherent in the word prema (Divine Love) is not to be found anywhere else in the world. The more you cultivate and practise it, the sweeter will be your personality. Therefore, cultivate love as the foremost quality in you.

Love is your sole refuge wherever you may be,
in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village,
on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea.
(Telugu Poem)

Love is not confined to any particular place or residence; it is universal. Therefore, cultivate such universal love. Such a universal love cannot be purchased with any amount of money. It can only be attained with a heart filled with intense love. Man has, therefore, to cultivate such pure and selfless love. In order to cultivate such pure love, bhakti (devotion) is prescribed as a means. Bhakti is not somewhere in some distant corner. prema (love) is bhakti (devotion). Devotion without love is deep ocean. And how is that ocean? It is full of salt water, whereas devotion with love is like sweet water. Love is a nectarous feeling. Love is verily bliss. Love is a wonderful feeling. It is unfathomable. Therefore, such a nectarous, sweet, blissful and

unfathomable love, you should never give up.

Embodiments of Love!

Instead of making hollow claims of bhakti, keep prema as your goal to be attained. There is nothing greater than this sadhana (spiritual practice). There is nothing that can liberate you easily than pure and selfless love. There are four words: mukti (liberation), bhakti (devotion), rakti (attachment) and anurakti (attachment or love toward God). But, love is the undercurrent in all these things. On this auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima, love is the most valuable gift I hand over to you. This is my most precious gift to you. Devoid of love, whatever other gifts I may give, they will be of no use. My love is pure, sacred and most precious. You also cultivate such love.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho"/

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html			

12. My Students are My Wealth

Date: 21 August 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

One may acquire a high academic qualification such as
M.A., B.A., MBA and MFM and attain exalted position,
One may amass wealth perform acts of charity and attain name fame,
One may have physical strength and enjoy a long and healthy life,
One may be a scholar, but if he lacks human values all his
achievements will prove futile.
(Telugu Poem)

Students! Boys and Girls! Teachers! Patrons of Education!

By mere acquisition of worldly education man cannot attain exalted position in life. All human efforts will be in vain without divine grace. There are many in this world who are highly educated, but are they rendering any service to the nation? No. In this respect, the unlettered people appear to be better human beings than the highly educated. In spite of his education and intelligence, a person who does not know his true Self is but a fool. One may be highly intelligent and educated, but, bereft of human values, his life is meaningless. In fact, one devoid of human values is no human being at all! There is little use in acquiring a number of degrees without imbibing human values.

Embodiments of Love!

To know and recognise a truly educated individual, you have to look closely at our students. They are not satisfied with mere acquisition of degrees. They utilise their knowledge for the benefit of society. Education that is not useful

to society serves no real purpose. Our boys are highly virtuous and are endowed with the wealth of character. They consider virtues as their very life. Men of eminence who come here from all over the world learn many things from our students. Some of our students remain here and serve as teachers after the completion of their education. I am very happy about it. We don't need to be worried about getting good and noble teachers from elsewhere for our Institute. Our own students, after their studies, take up the responsibility of teaching. In other academic centres, students are interested in pursuing higher studies for their own selfish ends, but our students are interested not in accumulating degrees but in disseminating their knowledge for the benefit of others.

One cannot acquire such character and nobility from mere education. The education they received here is not limited to textual knowledge alone. It develops virtues that originate from the heart. Our students are incomparable. They are taking up the roles of teachers all over the world and are helping society by moulding ideal students and men of character. Character is the prime objective of education here in our Institute. A person of such education and character can rule over the entire world. Education without character is useless.

I am very much pleased to have such students who are virtuous, energetic, and intelligent. Our MBA students have all the noble qualities that are expected of them. In addition to their studies, they learn various languages. Students from Kerala have gained proficiency in various languages, such as Tamil, Hindi, English, Telugu, etc. They speak all these languages with such fluency that it is very difficult to identify their mother tongue. For such talented students, it is not difficult to learn the language of the Atma. They give talks even in Sanskrit. But they also adhere to our samskriti (culture). Samskara is not imbibed by learning Sanskrit, it comes from adherence to samskriti. One who adheres to samskriti will be able to attain all types of wealth and be an ideal to others.

When I asked one of the students which place he belonged to, he said, "Swami, I belong to Puttaparthi." That boy speaks Sanskrit very fluently. He has also learnt various other languages. Students who have studied in Puttaparthi are spreading Swami's message in various countries, such as America, Japan, Germany, Italy, etc. Students who have such dedication and devotion are very rare these days. But here are many such students in our institutions. It gives Me great joy to have such students here. We need such students. I wish that these students, after completion of their education, share the knowledge that they have acquired here with fellowmen in society and transform them. Men of eminence like the President of India, the Prime Minister, and Chief Ministers are all praise for our students. They extol our students whenever they visit this place.

In our Institutes, students are provided education totally free of charge. In addition to this, scholarships are provided to deserving students.

If you ask what is Swami's property, I say, "Students are My property." Without the students, I will not be able to do anything. They are looking after Swami with utmost love and care. In fact, they are responsible for all the development that we find in our educational and other institutions.

The culture of Bharat (India) is based on the Vedas which are in Sanskrit language. Here students chant the Vedic mantras both in the morning and in the evening. You cannot get such students even if you do intense penance. They can certainly bring about progress in society.

There is no language that our students do not speak; they are very versatile in all kinds of skills. You may be under the impression that Swami is taking great pains to mould the character of students. There is no pain whatsoever. In fact, students are of great help to Swami. They are spreading the ideals of Sai to the rest of the world giving hai (joy) to one and all. There is a need to establish more similar institutions in order to mould such ideal students.

Parents themselves are not aware of the innate potential of their children. Our students are filled with noble thoughts and sacred feelings. They give top priority to the service of their parents. They treat their friends and relatives with love and affection. They have no desire for accumulating wealth. Their sole aim is to obey Swami's command and work for the progress of society. I do not want any other property than My students.

With the help of these students, many educational institutions can be developed. Unlike students elsewhere, who wake up very late in the morning, our students get up in the early hours at the crowing of the cock. They observe moderation in food and habits. Such discipline you do not find among student community elsewhere. They are attentive in classes and learn their lessons well. They are obedient to their teachers. They take part in sports and games, such as badminton, tennis, and volleyball, in the right spirit. They take good care of their health too. They are all very strong in physique and spirit. You do not find anyone weak and afflicted with diseases. Such students who take care of themselves are capable of taking care of the country as well. Our institution is fortunate to have students of such calibre. If there were another five institutions of this quality, they would be able to raise the happiness level of whole regions of the country. In fact, other colleges are trying to emulate our institution.

Our students are like diamonds. They are obedient to elders, courteous towards relatives. Seeing their good conduct and listening to their sweet words, the guests who visit their houses are highly impressed. They are creative in their thinking and shine as role models. We do not wish to praise the qualities of our own students. But when dignitaries who visit this Institute talk highly of our students, I feel very happy.

[Here Bhagawan referred to the hip bone fracture He suffered last year.] I am not suffering from any disease or any ailment. Last year, one boy was hanging colour buntings on the door while standing on an iron stool. Meanwhile, I opened the door and came out of My room. As soon as he saw Me, he became nervous and fell down from the stool. As he was falling, the

iron stool got toppled and fell on Me. He too fell on Me. That was the time when My hip bone was fractured.

The doctors tried their best to set it right. They felt sorry that it would be difficult for Swami to walk. I told them, "No one needs to feel sorry for Me. My students will take good care of Me. They will follow Me like shadow wherever I go." My students have become My doctors. It is because of them that I am able to move around. Our students tell Me, "Swami, we don't need to be worried about anything when we are with You. We want to sanctify our lives in Your service."

With such love and faith, hundreds of students have remained with Swami after completion of their education, performing various duties assigned to them. They do not want to go outside for a job. You may find it hard to believe if I tell you about the work they do. Once someone from outside came here and took two of our boys for employment. They were given a salary of 50,000 to 60,000 rupees per month. They utilised the money to serve the poor children. Later on, they resigned their jobs and came here because they could not bear the separation from Swami. Our students have transformed Prasanthi Nilayam into a big workshop. They are able to handle various types of instruments and equipments very efficiently. They are striving hard for the development of hospitals. It is not possible for anyone to understand the sacred feelings of our students.

[Swami asked one of the boys who was sitting near Him to get up.] This boy did his Engineering and then completed his MBA degree in our Institute. Many people from all over the country requested him to join their companies. But he rejected their offers. What is he doing at present? He is spreading Swami's message all over the world through Radio Sai Global Harmony. Even his parents tell Me, "Swami, please keep him with You always." When he was with his parents, though they would force him to eat more, he did not put on weight. But after coming here, he has gained 18 kg. even without timely intake of food. Now he is always with Me, attending to My needs. At the same

time, he does not keep his office work pending. He attends to it at night.

[Swami asked another boy to get up.] What do you think of this boy? He hails from a backward area in Orissa. His father has three sons. Now, all the four of them are working in Puttaparthi. These boys have completed their M.Sc. and MBA. They do not want to undertake any job outside. All of them have remained here serving Swami. They are satisfied with the salary they are paid here. In this manner, all the boys who are working here are full of virtues and are leading a life of sacrifice.

For the last few months, our boys are taking good care of Me. I do not have any pain. I do not require any medical treatment. I do not need to be worried about anything. It is because of the loving service of My students, I am spending My time blissfully without any inconvenience or suffering whatsoever. They are always ready and eager to serve Me. They carry out My instructions meticulously. There are 200 such students around Me in Prasanthi Nilayam. They do not sit idle; they discharge their duties diligently. It is not possible to describe the magnitude of work they do. They attend to all jobs. If there are such students everywhere, the nation will certainly prosper. They help everyone. I want to make them totally self-reliant. They should depend on the work they do and not on anybody else. They will certainly be able to lead their lives in that manner.

I am telling all this today so that you will know the noble qualities of our students. They are gunavantulu (virtuous), balavantulu (energetic), and also dhanavantulu (wealthy). They earn their own money. They do not take even a paisa from their parents. Sometimes, the parents may come and ask, "Do you require anything?" They reply, "Swami has provided everything. He is taking care of us very well."

In the future, many great events are going to take place. The country need not fear. Bharat will certainly become a land of plenty and prosperity. Our students will contribute a lot to the development of the nation. They are the

future leaders. It is a matter of great joy for Me to see the students as future leaders.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

13. Do Constant Namasmarana for Mental Peace

Date: 23 August 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Oh man!

You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly.

You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields.

Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness you have achieved by

spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth, while forgetting God.

[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love!

Whether a pauper or a millionaire, one has to eat. But, having attained the sacred human birth, it is unseemly of man to spend his entire life merely for the sake of filling his belly. Why don't you spend a few minutes in the contemplation of God, instead of spending your entire life just to earn a living? There are of course a few people in this land of Bharat (India), who are sanctifying their time and their environment in the contemplation of God, but the vast majority are wasting their births in vain pursuits.

Embodiments of Love!

Not only in Srikakulam District but in many other places all over India, there are people who are struggling and straining to eke out their livelihood. In spite of all the effort, they are unable to attain peace, happiness, and comfort. Only those who are spending their time in the contemplation of God are able to experience peace and happiness. Those who forget God and spend all their time and energy in mundane pursuits are bound to suffer. Till

this day, nobody has been able to enjoy mental peace and physical comfort in full measure.

The body is like a water bubble. It is nothing but a bag full of bones. Mind is like a mad monkey. It is a mistake to strive for the happiness of such a physical body and wavering mind. As long as one is alive, one should make efforts to keep the body healthy, so that one may not cause inconvenience to others. Many spend their entire life for the sake of physical comforts and pleasures. It is only a few who are not concerned with their mind and body, but are centred on eternal peace and happiness.

Human birth is meant to experience divinity and not to crave for fleeting pleasures. Human body is a divine gift, which is being put to improper use instead of its proper purpose of adoring God. Do not be under the mistaken notion that body is meant only for eating and enjoying physical pleasures. Certain duties have been assigned to man by performing which he will be able to experience happiness at the level of the body, mind, senses, and spirit.

One should enquire what the purpose of human birth is. The goal of human birth is to work for release from the cycle of birth and death. This body is a den of dirt and is prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara. The body should be used as an instrument to rise from the level of humanness to divinity. Human life is sanctified only when we experience divinity. There are many people who are making efforts in this direction. But only a few are able to realise the truth and achieve the goal. One may undertake any type of activities, but one should always aspire to attain peace of mind. Without peace of mind, whatever enterprise that man undertakes will only add to his restlessness.

Embodiments of Love!

You are really fortunate to have come here all the way from Srikakulam in spite of your financial constraints and various other difficulties. Swami is very well aware of your aspirations. You have come here to experience divine bliss. You were feeling sad that Swami has not spoken a word to you even after two days of your stay here. In fact, last night you were all praying intensely. In response to your sincere prayers, I have decided to address you this morning. It is not My intention to satisfy you with just a discourse. I am ready to extend all the help required to fulfil your aspirations. Many of you are facing problems due to shortage of water. Some of you do not have even proper food to eat. Food and water are very essential for everyone.

Do not give room to worry and anxiety. God is not stone-hearted. He will certainly take care of your needs. His heart is filled with compassion. Swami's concern for you is hundred times more intense than the concern you have for yourselves. You need not be worried at all. Develop the feeling that difficulties and suffering are for your own good. Even insurmountable difficulties will vanish like thin mist when you have firm conviction. Hence, do not be unduly perturbed about your problems. Difficulties come and go. Not only the poor, even a millionaire cannot escape from difficulties. Swami confers His blessings on you so that you will be relieved of your suffering soon.

You may consult the elders of your villages and take the help of those who are willing to cooperate with you. I will see to it that there is plenty of water available in your mountainous area. Do not be depressed or bogged down by difficulties. Having put on the vesture of the human body, one cannot escape from difficulties.

The physical body may undergo suffering, but you should make efforts to attain peace of mind. Mind is the basis for happiness for everyone. All physical comforts will be of little use without peace of mind. Only through contemplation of God can you attain peace of mind and not by any other means. Hence, chant the Name of God incessantly unmindful of the difficulties that come in your way. It is because of contemplation of God's

Name that you have been able to experience peace in spite of the innumerable difficulties you faced. God is the refuge for the poor and the forlorn. He is always with them through all the vicissitudes of life. Do not think that God is in some distant land. God is by your side always. In fact, He is present in the inner recesses of your heart. Never think that God is away from you at any point of time. Neither friends nor relatives can come to your rescue. God is your sole refuge. He will protect you under all circumstances.

In spite of numerous difficulties, Bharatiyas (Indians) never swerved from the Godward path. If Bharat occupies a pivotal position among all nations, it is only because of Bharatiyas' one-pointed devotion to God. There are many affluent countries where people lead a luxurious life, but they are unable to attain peace of mind. It is the good fortune of Bharatiyas' that they are able to enjoy peace of mind. Their devotion to God is responsible for this. Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has been protecting the Bharatiyas' in all respects. Its glory and grandeur defy all description.

One who has peace of mind will have moral strength. Hence, chant the Divine Name constantly. Yesterday, you went round the entire village singing the glory of God and entered the portals of Prasanthi Nilayam; you experienced peace of mind. It is not possible to experience peace by any other means. Hence, never forget God. Sanctify your time by chanting His Name. Contemplation of God should be man's constant endeavour.

There may be some jealous people who will try to dissuade you from chanting God's Name. They say, "What is the use of chanting God's Name? It will not help us to eke out our livelihood. We have to work hard for our survival. So, stop chanting God's Name." Do not pay heed to such narrow-minded people. Never forget God's Name. You may not be aware; people all over the world in all villages are facing hardships. They are suffering from physical ailments and mental agitations. Only Bharatiyas' are able to enjoy peace of mind because of their devotion to God. There is no happiness greater than

experiencing peace of mind.

Mental peace can be obtained only by constant contemplation of God.

This cannot be purchased from the market.

It is only by constant contemplation of God that mental worries can be overcome.

This is the experience of people all over the world.

Contemplation of God alone can bring about mental peace and happiness.

No other means can achieve this.

To be born is a worry, to be on the earth is a worry;

World is a cause of worry and death too;

Entire childhood is a worry and so is the old age;

Life is a worry, failure is a worry;

All actions and difficulties cause worry;

Even happiness too is a mysterious worry. [Telugu Poem]

Contemplation of God is the right royal path that will remove all types of worries. Therefore, do not try other means for achieving mental peace and get into trouble and worry. March on along the divine and glorious path. All the karmas (actions) in the spiritual field are meant to bring peace and happiness to us. They are not intended to trouble us. Mental peace can be achieved only by performing one's own duty, not by any other means. Karma brings about a result; and that result brings happiness and peace. Even when you are undergoing difficulties, always think that they are meant to bring you happiness. Every human being undergoes difficulties, only to enjoy happiness later. However, he does not realise this during the period of suffering. But, in course of time, when suffering ends and happy days arrive, he would realise the truth. Hence, always remember the truth that sorrows and difficulties are prelude to happy days ahead. In fact, real happiness comes out of suffering only.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the only property that always grows - the more you spend, the more it grows; it never diminishes. Supposing you go up a hill and sing the glory of God; the Divine vibrations will reach a large area, and the people hearing the namasmarana, even from a distance, will feel very happy. Divine music can confer solace even to children and animals. By hearing namasankirtan, even the heart of a stone-hearted person will melt. We have heard of several instances in Indian history where great devotees of God, by their namasankirtan, could bring about complete transformation in die-hard criminals.

Suppose you are digging a pit; the soil in that is taken out and stacked by its side becomes a mound. You need not feel anxious that the pit is becoming deeper and deeper. The soil that is dug out of the pit and the soil that is piled up next to the pit are the same. Similarly, along with the difficulties you undergo, you will experience happiness also in abundant measure. When you fill in the soil that is piled up (namely happiness) in the pit of sorrows and difficulties, you will attain a state of equanimity. This is what you have to realise today. You need not feel sorry, Oh! I have fallen into this pit of sorrows and difficulties. How can I come out of this? How am I to bear this? Oh! The soil of happiness stacked next to the pit of suffering may be filled into the pit. You will attain a state of equanimity. You have to do this sadhana.

Embodiments of Love!

You have come here with love-filled hearts,
undergoing lot of difficulties and physical strain.
It is your love and devotion to Swami that brought you here.
Go back to your places with the same intensity of love and devotion.
Continue to enjoy the moments of joy and happiness you experienced
in the presence of Swami.
Pleasure and pain, good and bad co-exist, none can separate them.
You cannot find pleasure or pain, good or bad to the exclusion of the other.
Pleasure results when difficulties fructify. [Telugu Poem]

Thus, happiness and sorrow come to teach us equanimity.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the only wealth that can never diminish. That is the property of God. Therefore, cultivate pure and selfless love. God's love will always follow you wherever you are and will protect you at all times. Do not ever consider that money alone is your property. In fact, love is your real wealth. The wealth of Love always grows (expands), never diminishes. Those who realise the Paramatma will be able to understand this truth better. My heart is overflowing with love and joy on account of the namasankirtan you have done yesterday in the streets of Puttaparthi. Continue this namasankirtan wherever you are throughout your life. Especially when your spirits are down with sorrow, sing the glory of God full-throated. Never feel diffident to sing the glory of God, thinking that others may make fun of you. Irrespective of what others may think or say against you, continue this sacred activity of namasankirtan. Only then will you be charged with Divine power.

Embodiments of Love!

I am very happy that you are all gathered here. I always wish joy, happiness, comfort, and peace for all of you. Today, 8000 devotees from your place have come here to share the happiness of Swami's Divine Presence. All of you, please go to the canteen and partake of Swami's Prasadam happily. Swami's Prasadam will become akshaya (never diminishing) and will remove all your sorrows and difficulties. Everything that is granted by Swami is suffused with love. Whatever is granted by Bhagawan is always free. God will never succumb to monetary considerations. Wherever any service activity is associated with money, it is tainted. The entire property of Swami consists of Love only. Such Divine love must become your very life-breath. All your past karmas will become extinct, if only you cultivate that pure love.

All of you go to the canteen and have food, as Swami's Prasadam. Thereafter,

you can go to your respective villages, happily.

Embodiments of Love!

Having come here from such a long distance, fill your hearts with love. Some time ago, there was a singer by name Saluru Rajeswara Rao. He used to visit Swami, regularly. He remained absorbed so much in music that he would sing while walking in the streets, unmindful of what others thought of him. Today, his son has come here to sing some devotional songs in the Divine presence of Swami. These devotional songs fill the hearts of people with overwhelming joy.

The late Rajeswara Rao used to sing a particular song on Sri Krishna melodiously, "Challagalilo Yamunathatipy Shyama Sundaruni Murali" (Shyama Sundara is melodiously playing His flute on the banks of the Yamuna, while the cool breeze is blowing). His voice as well as his feelings were sweet.

Both Rajeswara Rao and another devotee Adi Naryana used to come here regularly. They were the people who composed the "Sai Charita" and sang those songs melodiously. They may be anywhere; the lives of such pure-hearted devotees are sanctified. Those, who sell their God-given talents and make a wholly living out of it can never be truly happy. Rajeswara Rao and Adi Narayana never made business out of their musical talents. They always sang to their heart's content, with love and devotion. The glory of such devotees, whether dead or alive, will remain forever.

There was another well known devotee by name Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao. He also underwent many difficulties. But, he was always devoted to God. Whenever he was in difficult situation, he used to sing, "Oh! God! Won't You pull me out of these difficulties?" Even when he was sick and was hospitalised, he used to sing lying in the hospital bed, "Oh! Lord! How long have I to suffer this agony! Won't you relieve me of this pain?"

Once I went to the hospital to see him. I consoled him saying, "My dear Ghantasala! Never think of these difficulties and suffering. These things happen to test your faith in God. You will come out successful in this test, by constant namasmarana."

A devotee like him who is constantly engaged in namasmarana under all circumstances, will become immortal. Namasmarana is the only property that lasts forever. Therefore, you also undertake this sadhana (spiritual activity) as a lifelong activity. Whether your voice is good or not, continue to sing the glory of God by constant namasmarana at least in your heart. Thereby, you will acquire merit that will protect you throughout your life. If you do this sadhana, God will always be with you, in you, around you.

Whenever you take food, do namasmarana before partaking of the food. By doing so, the food will be sanctified and will become Prasadam. (gift) of God. Your heart also will be purified. That is why, our ancestors prayed thus before partaking of food:

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir
Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam
Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam
Brahma Karma Samadhina.

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva
Praninam Dehamasrita

Pranapana Samayukta
Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.

(My dear! I am present in you in the form of Vaishvanara,
digesting the food which you partake of.)

The prayer thus made invokes an immediate response from God. That is reaction, reflection and resound. Therefore, constantly engage yourself in namasmarana, which will confer Bliss on you.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin".

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
	http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html		

14. Divine Love Alone Can Save Us From Sorrows

Date: 28 August 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

Oh man!

You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly.

You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields.

Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness

you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in

in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth while forgetting God.

[Telugu poem]

Embodiments of Love!

Hunger, thirst, pleasure and pain, are quite natural to man. One follows the other. Food is essential for man. But filling the belly is not the be-all and end-all of human existence. Man is born not for the sake of ahara (food) but to experience ananda (bliss). One who is oblivious to ananda and spends his time and energy in the pursuit of ahara will ultimately fritter away his life. The purpose of celebrating festivals is to experience bliss and not merely to partake of delicious food. No doubt the body requires food, but life is not meant for food alone. Unmindful of this truth, man is treading the path of unrighteousness for the sake of food and physical pleasures. The body is made up of five elements and is transitory. The Mind is a mere bundle of thoughts and desires. We should not be unduly attached to the body and the mind. We should strive to experience bliss.

Embodiments of Love!

Human body has emerged out of love. Hence, we should lead a life for divine love and not for food. But man has not understood this truth. He struggles hard from dawn to dusk for the sake of filling his belly. He is not utilising the gift of the body for the purpose it is assigned to. This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; how foolish it

is to develop attachment to such an impermanent body and strive for its pleasures?

Embodiments of Love!

We should lead our lives in such a manner to redeem ourselves. We should love God and aspire only for Him. Your love should be directed only toward God, not for the body. Our speech, actions, and the life-breath itself are meant to experience the Atma. Sometimes the body may be afflicted with ailments, but they are like passing clouds. Man is born to attain the eternal truth of the Atma. Life is meant for Atmanveshana (quest for the Atma) and not for Annanveshana (quest for food). Annanveshana gives cause to physical ailments. They come and go like passing clouds. How foolish it is to be depressed about such passing clouds! We should never forget the truth that we are born to experience the eternal bliss of Atma.

Embodiments of Love!

You have come here all the way from Kerala to celebrate the holy festival of Onam and experience joy and bliss in the divine presence of Swami. We should not allow trivial matters to dampen the spirit of enthusiasm. We should march forward with courage and conviction, unmindful of any hurdles and inconveniences in the way. A few minutes ago, when all of you were blissfully immersed in the celebration, all of a sudden My nose started bleeding. I went inside, wiped the blood and came out cheerfully as if nothing had happened. How can we discontinue the celebration of a sacred festival of this kind on account of such trivial matters? We should not lose our self-confidence on such minor physical discomforts. They are transient in nature; you should not get distracted by them. Ailment and suffering are but natural to the physical body. Sometimes even the sun is covered by clouds. But can the clouds ever diminish the effulgence of the sun? No. Just as the sun is not affected by the clouds, you too should remain unaffected by ailment and suffering. When you develop such courage, conviction and determination, you will not be depressed or dejected by any suffering.

Embodiments of Love!

We should sanctify our time by performing sacred actions. This is the

spiritual lesson we have to learn today. We can experience transcendental bliss only when we overcome the difficulties and suffering that come in our way. Never be afraid of difficulties; face them with courage. Only then humanness will blossom in you. Once you experience the bliss of the Atma., difficulties and suffering will no longer bother you.

Embodiments of Love!

Amidst the joyous celebration of the festival, My slight physical discomfiture has caused anxiety to you. You should never give scope for anxiety or worry. In order to allay your fears and anxiety and to give you joy, I came back immediately. In this world, many difficulties come in our way. Truly speaking, they merely cause anxiety in you; they cannot harm you.

Onam is the most sacred festival of Kerala. You have to understand the significance and message of this festival and put it into practice. Onam is an occasion to share our joy with others. You cannot experience happiness without undergoing difficulties. Na sukhat labhate sukham (one cannot derive happiness out of happiness). Happiness gains value in the face of difficulties. Even insurmountable difficulties will vanish like thin mist when you face them with courage and self-confidence. The problems may appear to be mountainous in nature, but you should not give scope for fear or anxiety in your mind. Mind is like a mad monkey. It easily gets swayed by difficulties. Hence, you should brush aside the difficulties that come in your way. Never allow them to get the upper hand. Mind is the veil of maya (illusion) that stands as an obstacle in your path to spirituality. You should not become a slave of the mind; you should conquer the mind. Only then can you attain Divinity. But you are carried away by the vagaries of the mind which is nothing but maya. You should ignore the dictates of the mind. We consider the mind to be the most important aspect of humankind. However, it can lead you to dangers and difficulties if you are carried away by its whims and fancies. Hence, do not submit yourself to the mind.

Embodiments of Love!

One who has control over the mind is a true manishi (human). One who lacks control over the mind is no human at all. How can you call yourself a human

being if you are fickle-minded and depressed over trivial problems? You should make efforts to overcome problems posed by the mind without being unduly worried about them. In this world, there is nothing greater than God's love. Hence, we should transcend the mind that stands as an obstacle in the Godward path.

Embodiments of Love!

You are born out of love and sustained by love. You should sanctify your life by leading a life suffused with love. Treat love as the very basis of your life. You are not fit to be called a human being if you submit yourself to trivial problems. Even tiny ants are able to overcome obstacles that stand in their way. Problems are not limited to human beings alone; even birds, beasts and insects have problems.

Saint Thyagaraja sang,

"Oh Rama, You pervade everything right from a cheema (ant) to Brahma.
You are in Siva and also in Kesava.
Please take care of Me."

[Telugu poem]

The same divinity that is present in an ant is also present in man. Likewise, difficulties are also common for all. The suffering that an ant undergoes is similar to that of man. When such a tiny creature like an ant is able to withstand suffering, why can't man do the same? He is influenced by his food and habits and thus has become a slave to his mind. That is the reason he is unable to withstand suffering. We should face the challenges of life with fortitude and brush aside the difficulties. Never be cowed down by difficulties. You can attain God only when you face difficulties with courage and overcome them.

Embodiments of Love!

You should not seek anything other than divine love. There is nothing

superior to love in this world. You consider gold, silver, diamond, etc. as most valuable. In fact, all these so called valuable things are meant to delude man. We should not care for such worldly possessions. Instead, we should focus our mind on God. Perform your daily activities keeping God as your goal. Only then will your human birth find fulfilment. We should strive to attain the grace of God and not be deterred by difficulties and losses. When you have God on your side, you can achieve anything. All your difficulties and suffering will vanish in a trice. When such omnipotent Divinity is within us, why should we be worried about trivial matters?

Love is the divine power that bestows on us the courage to overcome difficulties. Anything can be achieved with the power of love. We should be afraid of sin, and not difficulties. We have to develop Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti (fear of sin, love of God and morality in society). Instead of developing fear of sin, we are enslaved by sin. Instead of seeking refuge in God, we are submitting ourselves to difficulties. Morality in society will lead to love of God, which will in turn lead to fear of sin. Hence, we should uphold morality in society and dedicate ourselves to God.

Thyagaraja once prayed, "Oh! Lord, I am deeply concerned about the fear of sin. I am unable to surrender to your love. Please grant me the strength of conviction to bow down before your divine love. Please give me the strength to overcome the fear of difficulties." What did we achieve in our life? What is the purpose of constant contemplation of God? One who is constantly contemplating on God should be able to keep himself away from sinful acts and develop love for God. There can be no greater fortune than having love for God. One must strive to achieve that great treasure. One should not be deterred by sorrows and difficulties in that sadhana (spiritual exercise).

Embodiments of Love!

You have all gathered here to attain that great fortune of love for God. One should never be subdued by sorrows and difficulties. Sorrow and sin are obstacles in the path of spirituality. They are like the waves. When one gets into the water and attempts to swim, the surging waves must be pushed

aside, so that one may move forward. Similarly, in the stream of life, if one wants to move forward, one has to push aside the surging waves of sorrow and sin. From a child to the adult, everyone has to strive to attain the love of God. This struggle for God's love, moulds the personality of a human being.

What is meant by personality? Does it mean height, weight, and a strong body? No, it is a mistake to think so. Undeterred by the sorrows and difficulties, one has to march forward with courage and adventure to attain God's love. That is the real meaning of personality. In fact, God has already granted such personality to every human being. Unfortunately, we fail to realise this truth. The word "person" implies a great Divine force that is granted by God to Man. Our ancestors called this Divine force as "persona". This is a great gift of God, granted to every individual. We are unable to safeguard this great treasure. These sorrows and difficulties are like passing clouds that come and go. Why should we be afraid of them? We have the eternal divine principle immanent in our personality. Therefore, there is no need at all to be afraid of anything as long as we are constantly aware of our latent divinity. March forward with courage and conviction and achieve your life's goal. It is only to instill this feeling of courage in you and reinforce your faith in God that you are subjected to face certain anxious moments.

Embodiments of Love!

I am aware that you are very anxious about the physical discomfort that Swami underwent a few moments ago. You are very worried about this physical body. Understand and be convinced by the fact that a body is after all physical in nature. It is like a water bubble; the mind is like a mad monkey. You need not be afraid of this mad monkey. You should not worry about these passing clouds. They are like visitors who come and go. We have to be firmly established in the Atma Tattwa (Principle of the Atma), which is nothing but Divinity. Develop full faith in the Atma Tattwa. That alone will protect you in every way.

Embodiments of Love!

God can do anything by His divine will. Why should you fear when such all

powerful God is always with you, in you, and around you? Develop such courage and conviction and march on. There cannot be a more powerful force than faith in God in this world.

Embodiments of Love!

All these children have gathered here to spend some sacred moments in the divine presence of God. They are really fortunate. Their good fortune is the result of the merit acquired by their parents. Here is a small girl (pointing toward a girl). She participated in a group dance programme a short while ago. While doing so, she was constantly observing the steps made by other girls in the group. She developed so much concentration in this activity that she was constantly maintaining her steps in tune with the steps of other girls. (Swami created a gold chain and put it round her neck.)

Embodiments of Love!

I will be very happy, if all of you can become children once again. A child will never have the bad qualities of anger, passion, jealousy, conceit, and ego. Jesus Christ was always appreciative of the quality of innocence in children. Once, he lifted a small child from the lap of her mother in the crowd and said "I like this small child very much; she has all the qualities of Divinity. She is pure, selfless and is in perfect bliss." Children in general are divine in nature. As they grow up, they develop bad qualities like excessive desires, attachments, anger, jealousy, etc. Along with advancing in age, sorrows and difficulties will also increase. Therefore, one should strive for attaining control over one's desires. That is ceiling on desires. If you can develop this control, you will come under the influence of divine power. Otherwise, you will be deluded by the power of desires and get into that vortex from which you can never come out. A childlike simplicity, purity, and innocence, is the road to Divinity.

Embodiments of Love!

I wish you should become children at least for one minute a day. You should emulate those noble qualities, which are characteristic of children. Supposing you are troubled with desires, chase them away as unbecoming of your noble personality. Only then can you hold your head high. A few minutes ago, my

nose was bleeding profusely. If I were to submit myself helplessly to this bodily ailment, it would have aggravated further. Therefore, I decided to defy this bodily discomfiture and stand erect with firmness, unmindful of what is going to happen to the body. I washed my face and came back to give My Discourse. After all, this body and the blood circulating therein are nourished and nurtured only by the food we supply. If we cannot control our own body, what is the purpose of our living? Wherever we are, we must keep the body in our control. Only then we become real human beings and can move closer to Divinity. The more you control your body and mind, the nearer you move to God.

In fact, love is the only quality that takes you nearer to God. There is nothing greater than love. It is a Divine attribute. Love is God. Live in Love. When you cultivate this noble quality, you deserve to be called a human being. This divine love is like the blood that circulates in every human being, nay, every living being. If we can cultivate this universal love, you can love not only every human being, but all living beings. Love is God and God is Love. Therefore, take every individual lovingly to your heart. Do not ever show anger or hatred toward anybody.

Embodiments of Love!

The quality of love that permeates every human being is one and the same. There are no differences whatsoever in this regard. When you cultivate such universal love, it becomes your very life-breath, which is dearer to God. Therefore, cultivate such pure, unsullied, and selfless love. Love your neighbour's child as your own child. All are embodiments of love. The message of this sacred festival Onam is love. This festival is observed to spread this message of love among all human beings. In fact, we are born to cultivate this sacred love and share it with others. If we fail in this endeavour, our whole life becomes a waste.

When my nose was bleeding a few minutes ago, some doctors advised me to take complete rest and not to go out to give a discourse. I asked them why? The doctors explained that if I go on talking, the bleeding may reoccur. Then I replied, "Ok! Let me see!" Thus, I faced the problem squarely with courage

and confidence. Thus, when we encounter a difficult situation, we should not feel sorry and dejected. We must face it with courage. Only then can we overcome the situation.

Embodiments of Love!

Whenever you encounter suffering either bodily or mentally, do not lose your cool. Do not get dejected. Instead, face the problem squarely and undertake activities that will instill a sense of courage and confidence in you. No doubt, situations do arise in life when we have to undergo sorrows and difficulties. When our loving parents depart from this world, we are in deep sorrow. Instead of losing our poise in such difficult situations, it is advisable to face the ordeal with courage, expressing gratitude to our parents for granting us the gift of this body.

Embodiments of Love!

I hope I am not causing inconvenience to you by speaking at length. It is only to instill courage in you that I am giving this long discourse. When I was suffering with a bleeding nose, all our children were anxiously waiting in the adjacent room in an anxious mood. I told them, "Do not feel worried. I will go out and administer a strong dose for this ailment. Such is My courage and confidence in facing difficult situations. In fact, this courage is My real strength. Come! Let us go!" The children collected all the blood-soaked towels and felt very distressed on seeing them. If those clothes are washed, the blood stains will vanish in no time. Likewise, only God's love can wash our sorrows off! Therefore, cultivate such divine love. All your sorrows and difficulties will be removed.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudhita Manase Kaho".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

15. The Lord Accepts Only a Pure Heart

Date: 06 September 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

Oh Krishna! You don't eat what I give You,
You don't eat our home food,
You go to the houses of the cowherds,
And eat butter stealthily,
You spoil Your good name, my dear!
(Telugu poem)

Thus, mother Yashoda expressed her anguish one day, having been vexed by the complaints of the neighbours. She chided Him saying, "Oh Krishna! I have to face a lot of trouble on account of Your mischievous pranks. You don't have taste for the food prepared in our house. You always like the items prepared in the neighbouring houses. How shall I manage with You?" True, people develop a taste for food in the neighbouring houses. A sweetmeat shop owner sitting in his own shop, all the while enjoying the sweet smell of the laddus, develops a taste for puffed rice from another shop.

Kashyapa, a great devotee of the Lord had completely surrendered himself at the Lotus Feet and was totally lost in divine bliss. One day, his wife, Aditi, approached him and advised him, "My dear! We do not have children. You have surrendered everything of yours to the Lord. Why don't you pray to Him to bless us with a child?"

Emperor Bali, in Krita Yuga, performed many *yajnas* (sacrificial rite). After completion of one hundred and seven yajnas, he made arrangements for performing the one hundred and eighth yajna known as Viswajit. As he was performing this yajna, Lord Vishnu appeared before him as Vamana in the guise of a dwarfish Brahmin. Vamana asked for three paces of land in charity

from Bali, which he was about to give. In the meanwhile, Emperor Bali's preceptor Sukracharya came there and tried to dissuade Bali from giving this gift of charity. He advised Bali, "Please do not give anything in charity to this short Brahmin, much less the three paces of land. Do not underestimate Him. He is not an ordinary Brahmin. He is an Avatar of Vishnu. He is born to Sage Kashyapa, in fulfillment of the boon granted by Lord Vishnu to him."

But Emperor Bali did not pay heed to the advice of his preceptor. He asked Lord Vamana, "Sir, What can I do for you?"

Vamana replied, "Oh King! I do not need anything. Just give Me three paces of land."

Sukracharya again pleaded with Bali, "Oh King! You consider this person as an ordinary Brahmin. No. No. He is capable of filling the entire universe. It is not wise on your part to grant his request." But, Emperor Bali turned down his advice saying that he could not go back on his promise, because it was a great sin not to stand by one's word.

In those days, people considered death preferable to going back on one's word. But today in Kali Yuga, people make promises and break them at will. Emperor Bali was of pure heart. Once a promise was made, he fulfilled it, come what may!

He said, "I gave a word to this Brahmin boy. I am prepared to face any eventuality in fulfilling my promise. I will offer the fruits of all the yajnas I have performed, including the one I am now performing, to this Brahmin boy. So saying, he put the garland of the fruits of 108 yajnas performed by him round the neck of Vamana and prostrated before Him."

(As He said this, Swami created a necklace of 108 gold coins.)

Vamana covered the entire land given in charity by Bali under one foot. He grew in size and filled the entire universe with His second foot. There was no further space to put His third foot. Then Sukracharya said, "Oh emperor! You did not pay heed to my advice. You underestimated this Brahmin boy and got yourself tricked by His innocent looks."

Vamana received the offering of Emperor Bali and praised his large-heartedness and blessed him. Vamana was short in stature, but he could fill the entire universe. Being an Avatar, He was *Aprameya* (beyond all limitations, indescribable and immeasurable). Human beings have limitations, but not an Avatar.

The sunrise and sunset happen according to a predetermined Divine command. It happens regularly, uninterrupted. The sun, the moon, and the stars follow a definite pattern of schedule. All the five elements in the universe discharge their duties regularly as ordained by the Lord. Even God Himself observes the rules that He lays down for all. Everything in God's creation goes on according to a predetermined order and Divine command. Nothing in the universe, including the five elements, has an independent existence. But, unfortunately, man is unable to recognise this divine force that regulates the functioning of the universe. Scientists are making unstinted efforts to discover this divine force. The stars shining brightly in the sky at night are, however, not visible during daytime.

The sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening
with utmost regularity everyday.

The stars glitter beautifully in the sky at night and
hide themselves during the day.

The wind blows incessantly and sustains the living
beings without taking rest even for a moment.

The rivers make gurgling sounds as they flow perennially.
(Telugu poem)

What could be the reason for this phenomenon? Scientists probed into this aspect and concluded that the stars were not visible during daytime because the sun was shining brilliantly in the sky during that period. Similarly, they tried to explain the divine force in ever so many ways.

The moment the umbilical cord is cut and the child is separated from the mother, it cries. Why? Nobody could explain and explore this secret. The moment a drop of milk or honey is put on the tongue of the newborn child, it sleeps happily. This means ever since a human being comes out of his mother's womb, he struggles to satiate his hunger.

Oh man!

You struggle hard to acquire various types of knowledge
in order to fill your stomach.

In spite of all your hard work and acquisition of knowledge,
you are unable to experience everlasting happiness.

Instead, why don't you contemplate on the Lord
and seek refuge in Him?

He will certainly show you a way to overcome your misery.

(Telugu poem)

Every human being thinks that he is born merely for filling his belly. He constantly struggles to acquire food.

There is another interesting phenomenon in nature. The branches of a tree rub against each other due to the wind, and fire is born out of that friction between two pieces of wood. How does it happen? Though there is fire in the wood of a tree, it is not burnt away. Why? No scientist could ever discover this secret so far. There are several such inexplicable phenomena in nature. With a view to recognise and understand such phenomena, man is constantly engaged in the quest for Divinity. However, one need not search for God, who

is omnipresent.

Oh man!

You struggle hard in life merely
for the sake of filling your belly.

You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields.

Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness
you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk
in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth,
while forgetting God.

(Telugu poem)

Everything in this universe moves strictly according to the Divine Will and force. Man, of his own accord, cannot achieve anything. The Divine force manifests itself in several ways in this universe, in the form of various types of energy. People think they are created by somebody. Strictly speaking, nobody has created them. They are natural phenomena that manifest out of divine will. For example, when two pieces of stone are struck against each other, fire is born. It means that there is fire latent in the stone, but it does not manifest outside. Thus, all the powers are latent in nature.

A few minutes ago, one boy spoke about Nanda and Yashoda, the foster parents of Lord Krishna. In those days, there was no electricity. People in the village used to go to the house of Nanda (since he was the chief of the village) and lighted their oil lamps from the lamp lit up in Nanda's house. People were of the belief that they would attain plenty and prosperity if they lighted their oil lamps from the lamps lit in the houses of well-to-do-people.

A newly married daughter-in-law by name Suguna arrived in that village. Her mother-in-law told her to go to the house of Nanda and get her lamp lighted from theirs. When Suguna went to the house of Nanda and lighted the lamp,

she could visualise Krishna in that flame. On having this divine vision, she lost her body consciousness. She fixed her gaze on that beautiful form of Lord Krishna and was lost in bliss. She could not even realise that her fingers were being burnt, having come into contact with the flame. She was in total bliss. In the meanwhile, other ladies from the neighbouring houses also came there to light their own lamps. They were wonderstruck on witnessing this scene. They could notice that Suguna was not moving away from the flame even though her fingers were being burnt. They then realised that she had the vision of Krishna in that flame. They sang a song describing this incident.

(Swami sang a Telugu song, the meaning of the first few lines is as follows ...)

It seems Suguna had a vision
of Gopala in the house of Nanda.
She saw Krishna in the flame!

On hearing this song, Yashoda came there literally running. She saw Suguna's fingers getting burnt in the flame. While all the gopis (cowherd maids) were dancing in ecstasy, Yashoda went near Suguna and pulled her hand away from the flame. She chided her saying, "Oh! Suguna ! Did you not notice your fingers being burnt on coming into contact with the flame? Do you wish to bring a bad name to us that if anyone goes to Nanda's house, their fingers will be burnt?"

Suguna's mother-in-law was by nature a short-tempered woman. On hearing about this incident, she came running to the house of Yashoda and made a big issue of this incident. She ordered her daughter-in-law not to go to the house of Nanda again in the future, for getting the lamp lighted.

Several miracles happened in the house of Yashoda. After Krishna left for Mathura, the gopis could not bear His separation and were pining for His

darshan (site of a holy person). In such a moment of yearning, Krishna appeared in Gokul. However, neither Nanda nor Yashoda could see Him. All the gopis gathered at the house of Nanda and prayed that they may be allowed to have Krishna's darshan. They started complaining, "Nanda and Yashoda! you have kept Krishna away from us. Please tell us where he is." But, Krishna did not make his appearance in public. He appeared to some gopis individually in answer to their prayers.

A few minutes ago, a student of our University narrated an incident wherein Swami had appeared before him in answer to his prayers. No one else could see Swami. Then, the boy prayed again, "Swami! What is the use of giving darshan to me alone? Please give darshan to all the students; otherwise, they will not believe my words and make fun of me." I replied, "Does not matter. Let people think whatever they wish to. This is your *prapti* (deservedness), only you deserve to see Me." So saying, I disappeared.

Once, Yashoda reprimanded child Krishna saying, "Oh! My dear Krishna! You don't eat the food I prepared for you. You go to the houses of the milkmaids and stealthily eat the butter stored in their houses. You are creating problems for me. Is it that the butter suffused with mother's love does not taste good for you?" So saying, she tied Krishna to a mortar with a rope.

It is everybody's experience in the world that we do not like the food cooked in our own house. The items cooked in others' houses will appear to be tasty. This is quite natural. However, Krishna did not steal the butter from others' houses for its taste. There is an underlying message in this *leela* (play, sport). Here, butter symbolises a pure heart. Wherever such a pure heart is available, Krishna takes it. Such a pure heart will be soft and sweet. The hearts of gopis were ripened with devotion. They were pure, soft, and sweet. Hence, Krishna had gone to their houses to steal their hearts.

Krishna is referred to as *chora* (thief). What does He steal? He steals the butter-like hearts of the gopis, hearts that are pure, soft, and sweet. If you address someone as "chora" (thief), he will be annoyed. But if you call Krishna

as "*chiththa chora*" (stealer of the heart), He will enjoy this appellation. That is why, devotees sing in praise of the Lord most endearingly,

"Chiththa chora Yashoda Ke Bal! Navaneetha chora Gopal! Gopal, Gopal, Gopal! Govardhanadhara Gopal!
(Oh! Yashoda's little Krishna! Oh! Gopala! Stealer of butter! Oh! Gopala! Lifter of the Govardhana mountain!)."

The song thus sung melodiously with *bhava* (feeling), *raga* (tune), and *thala* (beat) will be liked by everyone.

Great Singer-saints like Thyagaraja made sweet offerings to God in the form of Kirtanas suffused with bhava, raga, and thala and won His grace. There is so much sweetness in such devotional songs. God's grace can surely be obtained by such devotional singing. You cannot win the grace of God by empty rhetoric. It is only through devotional singing suffused with bhava, raga, and thala that Divinity can be attained. God will be moved by such sankirtan. Even the Vedas have extolled the efficacy of devotional singing.

Even by chanting the Vedas, God cannot be attained. There are several hymns in praise of God in the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharvana Veda. But not even a single individual chanting those hymns could obtain divine darshan. However, when these hymns are set to tune and sung with devotion, they could experience Divine Love. That is why God is extolled as "*ganalola*" and "*ganapriya* (pleased by devotional singing)". Therefore, you pray to God with devotional singing.

You can easily win the grace of God. Some people may have a doubt, "We cannot sing well; we have not learnt the art of singing. How can we please

God?" Do not worry. You may not have knowledge of music or a mellifluous voice. It does not matter. Sing the glory of God with intense love, in some tune that you know. That is enough to move the heart of God.

What is music? It is not necessary to make a special effort to learn music. A simple song with intense love and yearning will move God. For example, you recite a poem, "Rama! Nannu kapadu (Oh! Rama! Please protect me)." There will be no sweetness in the poem. It is simply a literary rendering of your feelings. Similarly, if you make an appeal to God saying "Rama! Nannu kapadu", it becomes an empty repetition of words. The same feeling, if it is expressed in a song set to a beautiful tune, "Rama Nannu kapadu", it will be so sweet and endearing to Divinity. There is so much sweetness in music. Therefore, if you want to attain God, you have to do it only with devotional singing.

You need not be disappointed if you have not learnt music. Why disappointment? If there is an appointment, there will be disappointment. Therefore, do not make an appointment, in the beginning itself. You sing the glory of God in your own way. That is the easiest way to attain God. The Divine bliss enjoyed by the gopis in the Krishnavatar in Dwapara Yuga is unparalleled. Therefore, remember that divine bliss and try to please God with your love and devotion.

In no Avatar have devotees merged in the Divine Love to such a great extent as in Krishnavatar. Thousands of devotees merged in Sri Krishna during His Avatar. Hence, if you want to merge in divinity, devotional singing is the only means. God is said to be ganapriya (pleased by devotional singing). Krishnavatar is the best example for this statement. One simple name "Krishna" sung by a devotee is enough to move Him. The leelas, mahimas, and miraculous deeds performed by Lord Krishna during His Avatar are unparalleled.

Dear students!

You are singing several bhajans. All of you are participating in the bhajans.

But each one is singing in his own way. This is not proper. If all of you sing in one voice and one tune with divine feeling, God will surely install Himself in your loving heart. Krishnavatar is the only Avatar that had granted darshan to different people in different ways, clarified their doubts about His divinity, and merged them in His own Self. Krishnavatar is the only Avatar that made everyone happy and blissful by His sweet and loving words.

Embodiments of Love!

There is nothing superior to devotional singing. What a great joy and happiness you derive by singing the song,

Nanduni Yinta Gopaludanta Deepana Kanipinchenanta
(It seems Gopala has appeared in the flame in the house of Nanda).

Therefore, sing such soulful songs with bhava, raga, and thala to please God and obtain His grace. You may sing any number of bhajans and songs, but it is only when they are suffused with intense love, devotion and sweet and soft feeling (bhava), you will derive immense happiness and joy.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

16. God Protects Those Who Protect Sathya and Dharma

Date: 06 September 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

No visit to any pilgrim centre, no penance,
no Yogic practice, No study of sacred texts or charitable acts
Will help you in crossing over the ocean of Samsara,
But the service rendered to the noble.
(Sanskrit Sloka)

Embodiments of Love!

You would have read in sacred texts that Ravana was a master of four Vedas and six *Sastras* (spiritual texts). Having learnt these sacred texts, was there any transformation in him? No. Instead of developing *daivatva* (divine qualities), he developed *danavatva* (demonic qualities). The ten heads of Ravana symbolised four Vedas and six Sastras. In the decisive battle, Rama severed Ravana's heads since he did not put into practice the knowledge he had acquired. Mere learning of sacred texts and chanting of Vedas will not bring about any transformation. In order to drive home this message, Rama cut off with his arrows Ravana's ten heads. Only right at the end, just before his spirit left his body did Ravana recognise his faults and repent for them and become sacred thereby.

All that God preaches is for the benefit and welfare of humanity. Therefore, it is enough if one puts into practice at least one of the teachings of the Vedas. It should be a natural trait for everyone to put into practice the divine teachings.

In Prasanthi Nilayam, you find that even the primary school children join the

senior students in chanting Vedas. They know all Vedas, but they do not have the required knowledge to put them into practice. Mere recitation of the Vedas is of little use.

Only God exists everywhere and at all times. The world is but an illusion. The sacred teaching that God exists everywhere should be propagated to everyone. You find many *sadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) chanting and teaching the Vedas. Consider this example. A cassette tape or a disc merely plays, but does not experience the melody. It would be fruitless if one does not practise what he preaches. So, one should recognise, understand and practice the sacred teachings.

Lord Krishna put into practice what He propagated and also insisted that everyone should follow suit. You find many elders in the Mahabharata who were great scholars themselves but failed to put into practice the knowledge they acquired. The same is the position today. God has no preferences or no dislike whatsoever. All are equal for Him. But He watches to see how much a person puts into practice what he has learnt.

Many people study sacred texts, go on pilgrimage, perform penance, repeat God's Name, but what is the use? Many ask Me for a *japamala* (rosary). Is it to adorn your neck for publicity or is it for spiritual experience? One hand is enough for one who wants to practise this *sadhana* (spiritual exercise).

(At this point, Swami demonstrated with His hand as to how one should do namasmarana.)

The five fingers of the hand contain nine *aksharas* (letters), which are further divided into twelve Brahmas, and this makes up to hundred and eight beads of the rosary. Chanting the name of Rama nine times twelve will make up to one hundred and eight. This sadhana requires neither a japamala nor a fixed place. It can be done while walking or even while lying down till you go to sleep. When there are such easy and sacred paths, why should one go for

strenuous sadhanas, foregoing sleep?

Droupadi is known for her chastity. She has protected her husbands in many ways. After the gruesome massacre of the young Pandava children, Arjuna tracked down Aswatthama, the perpetrator of the atrocity, and dragged him before Droupadi. Instead of cursing the evildoer and pronouncing punishment for him, she fell at the feet of Aswatthama, the son of her husbands' most revered Guru, and said:

It is at the feet of your father, Dronacharya that
my husbands have learnt all that they know.
Being the son of Dronacharya,
was it proper to kill my children?
How could you have the heart to kill them
who were unharmed, young, quietly asleep,
Were not having any grudge against you, and
were not contemplating any harm to you?
(Telugu poem)

When Droupadi was praying like this, Bhima could not bear to see this. Exploding in anger, Bhima roared:

This Droupadi is a stupid woman, for she pleads for this wretch's freedom.
She feels no anger against this murderer of her sons.
(Telugu poem)

When Arjuna was about to kill Aswatthama, Droupadi fell at his feet and reasoned with him thus: "Arjuna! Will my sons be revived by killing Aswatthama? His mother too would experience the same kind of sorrow that I am undergoing at the loss of my sons. Having studied the Vedas and Sastras,

how is it that you are not able to maintain your tranquillity?"

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later,
But the Indweller has neither birth nor death.

The Indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the Eternal Witness.

Truly speaking, the Indweller, who is in the form of the Atma, Is verily God Himself.

(Telugu poem)

Thus, Droupadi pleaded with Arjuna to forgive Aswatthama for his heinous act. Arjuna replied, "You are preventing me from keeping up my vow."

To this Droupadi said, "Tonsuring his head and removing the crown jewel from his head is equivalent to killing him."

Arjuna paid heed to Droupadi's advice and as a token punishment shaved Aswatthama's head, took his crown jewel and sent him away.

What is *papa* (sin)? Hurting, abusing, and killing others is sin. What is *punya* (merit)? Helping others is merit. Therefore, one should not retaliate to an evil act with an evil act. Instead, one should be magnanimous in forgiving the offender. There are many such sacred teachings in the Mahabharata.

There are many such noble women like Droupadi. She stands as an ideal for all women. Why are we forgetting the teachings of such great women? Today, women are treated as mere puppets. But they are full of courage, valour, sacrifice, determination, and righteousness. Have you ever cared to recognise the power latent in women? Men do not possess such valour and courage of women. It is because of such great women that our *Bharatiya* (Indian) culture is held in high esteem. Otherwise, it would have declined long ago. Did you

ever recognise the fact that women are endowed with such great powers as courage, valour, determination and righteousness? These qualities are not to be easily found in men. Why? Most of them are afflicted with the disease of anger, which is ruining them.

One with anger will not be successful in any of his endeavours. He will commit sins and will be derided by one and all.

(Telugu poem)

It is possible that women may also succumb to anger and indulge in sinful deeds now and then. Such people should be pardoned and encouraged to make amends, not denounced and condemned. The quality of patience and perseverance in women is great. In fact, it is the quality of equanimity in times of difficulty that was characteristic of the Droupadi, which saved the Pandavas. There are several such women even in present times also.

The bad qualities of anger, passion, jealousy, envy, and pride are more prominent in men. Women are able to control such evil qualities from overtaking them. Under the circumstances, is it not our duty to encourage and honour such women who preserve and promote peace and harmony? On the contrary, women are belittled and slighted. No, no, this should not happen. Such women with noble qualities deserve to be encouraged and upheld.

A few days ago, you had witnessed a function in this Hall, where the glory of womanhood was highlighted. A playlet was put up in this Hall by Chethana, in which the greatness of mother Sita, as the ideal woman, was presented. Sita and Droupadi were great *pathivrathas* (women of chastity). Such efforts to highlight the greatness of women need to be encouraged.

Sathya and *Dharma* (truth and righteousness) are the greatest characteristics

of Indian culture. If these two are protected, the country can be saved from degeneration. If you want to protect your country, you need not join the army and fight a battle. If truth and righteousness which are inherent in you, are protected, they themselves will protect the country. It is not great to kill the enemies in a war. First and foremost, protect truth and righteousness in you. The country will automatically be protected.

Indian culture exhorts,

sathyam vada (speak truth) and
dharmam chara (practise righteousness).

When you do this with perseverance, you will become a great hero. When you protect sathya and dharma, God will, in turn, protect you. Instead of trying to worship God and obtain His grace, if you protect truth and righteousness, God will protect not only your country but the whole world. Truth is your very life-breath. Righteousness is your armour. Therefore, protect truth and foster righteousness. That is enough. Truth and righteousness are inseparable. One cannot exist without the other.

They are the very life-breath for the universe. Droupadi was assiduously observing and propagating these two.

Sathya Dharmamu Santhi Premalatho

Nee nithya jeevana yathra saginchu.

Oh man! Carry on your life's journey with the help of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, and Love.

You must hold on to these principles, come what may. God will always protect such people. History is replete with several examples wherein people held steadfastly to the principles of sathya and dharma and were constantly protected by God. One such example is that of Pandavas and their chaste wife, Droupadi.

You may argue, "Where is sathya and dharma in the present-day world? Whom are they protecting?" This is a totally wrong argument. If you protect sathya and dharma, they will, in turn, stand before you and protect you. They are the very embodiments of Divinity. Unfortunately, today, instead of sathyam vada (speak truth) and dharmam chara (practise righteousness), people are following the distorted version *sathyam vadha* (kill truth) and *dharmam chara* (imprison righteousness). This is utter perversion. You should lead your lives based on sathya and dharma, and consider them as more important than your lives.

When Droupadi was pleading with Aswatthama, who killed her sons, Bhima was furious with uncontrollable anger. He clenched his fist and proceeded toward Aswatthama to kill him. In that uncontrollable rage, he argued with Droupadi, "Are you mad? Why are you trying to save this man who mercilessly slit the throat of your five sons? I will break the head of this child-killer into pieces with my fist. Do not come in my way."

At that moment Droupadi fell at the feet of Bhima and pleaded with him to spare the life of Aswatthama. She prayed for regaining his composure. People around, who were witnessing this scene, were wonderstruck. They were wondering whether Droupadi was really mad! In fact, the world would be better if everyone was afflicted with such madness.

When Droupadi pleaded with her husbands for saving the life of Aswatthama, he prayed for forgiveness. Droupadi was happy at the change of heart in Aswatthama and advised him, "Brother! You need not beg for my forgiveness.

Instead, you pay your respect and do service to your mother. Do not drown her in sorrow. Never cause her anguish; take good care of her." Even the loss of five sons did not make Droupadi shed tears of sorrow.

Several women come to me with a heavy heart and tell me "Swami! My husband's death has caused me deep sorrow and anguish. How do I bear this calamity?"

Then I would respond saying, "Oh! Your husband died? Very happy."

They feel very unhappy with My attitude and question Me, "What is this Swami? Are You so happy on hearing the news of my husband's death?"

What am I to say? I am always happy. I do not know what sorrow is. I always discharge My duty.

God is the only person who protects everybody. Therefore, pray to God always. Forgetting God and depending on the mercy of human beings! What madness! You must depend on God, for everything in your life. That is real *thapas* (penance).

Since ancient times, women have been the very life-breath and foundation for *Bharat* (India). They are the very embodiment of truth and righteousness. How much respect and reverence we must show towards such noble women? On the contrary, there are several people today who put them to untold suffering. Due to bad habits and bad company, people lose their sense of discrimination and torture the women. No woman should be put to mental and physical torture, whatever be their nature. They must be revered and respected and protected in all ways. Women in Bharat have always been held in high esteem. There are several chaste and noble women in Bharat, and still *Bharatiyas* (Indians) are undergoing difficulties. What is the reason? Whose fault is this? It is only because the Bharatiyas are not giving proper respect

and place to women in society. The fault lies squarely on the men.

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat. Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance.

(Telugu poem)

The truthful character of the women is really their thapas (penance). Therefore, such noble women must be encouraged and honoured. If you can put this one great principle into practice, your life will be sanctified. Those who ill-treat their wives can never be happy and prosperous. If men cannot protect their women, who are prepared to sacrifice even their lives for the sake of their husbands, what for is their existence? Women are really the presiding deities of their homes. Our primary duty is to protect them. Never let your women shed tears. If women shed tears, such homes will be ruined in no time. Women are ideals to the society. Never cause them distress.

Men should lead a life of truth and righteousness. Only then can they protect the country and become worthy of being called real men. Otherwise, how can they become heroic men? Several people go to temples. When they visit a temple, they must make a vow that they would respect and protect the women. Only then will they be protected. It is only when the women are safe, the whole world will be happy. Therefore, if you wish to protect dharma, in the world, you must first protect your dharma, toward women.

Embodiments of Love!

Imagine a situation wherein you are in the role of women and some men torture you. How miserable and helpless you would feel! Women are prepared to sacrifice even their lives for the sake of their husbands. But men do not have such spirit of sacrifice. Men should also cultivate such a spirit of sacrifice, like women. Only then will you be fit to be called men. Otherwise, you will be men only in form, but lacking in masculinity. You consider women

as *abala* (weak). But, the truth is they are *sakthi swarupas* (embodiments of strength and power). Only I know the plight of women who lost their husbands. It is our duty to protect such women. If you can discharge this duty properly, you will be happy throughout your life.

Embodiments of Love!

You must follow truth even in small matters. There are three letters "sa", "tha", and "ya" in the word Sathya. If you reverse the order, it will become "ya", "tha", and "sa". This means when you do thapas with austerities like yama (control of the inner senses) and niyama (control of the outer senses), you will have the divine vision of Sathya Swarupa (Embodiment of Truth). You have thus to recognise the inner meaning of every word and follow them meticulously.

King Janaka, a great renunciant king, used to propagate truth and righteousness to his subjects among his own example. His daughter, Sita, also led a pious life based on truth and righteousness. You are not studying the life history of such ideal women. Instead, you are reading trash. No. No. This is unbecoming of you. You should study the ancient history of Bharat, which is so sacred. The character and morality of women in Bharat are very sacred. You will become worthy of being called men only when you undertake to protect such great women. By mere sporting a moustache or growing a beard, will you become men? Moustache and beard are not the real signs of masculinity. You must protect ladies and uphold the dignity of the family. Only then can you become great heroes and men of character.

Embodiments of Love!

Consider women as embodiments of truth. Even if some minor faults are noticed in them, do not give credence to them. Respect and revere them. Do not use even a single word that would offend them. If they really wish, they can achieve any great task. You should be even prepared to lay down your lives for the sake of protecting and fostering women. At least from today, all of you should come forward to protect the honour and dignity of women in

the world. Women also should undertake a vow to contribute their mite in this great task of protection of sthri dharma.

As regards men, there is nothing great or new in trying to protect women. That is your duty. Her duty is to foster and maintain the entire family as a unit. If women are protected, they in turn will protect the entire world. Never belittle women and treat them as mere playthings. I hope all of you men will, at least in future, undertake to protect the dignity and honour of women and thereby protect your own dignity and honour. I conclude My discourse blessing you all.

(Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Rama Rama Rama Sita".)

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html			

17. Teachings of noble souls essential for the young

Date: 15 September 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Neither by penance nor by pilgrimage, nor by study of scriptures, nor by japa can one cross the ocean of life. One can achieve it only by serving the pious.
(Sanskrit Poem)

Several noble souls have worshipped God in different ways - some by doing penance, some by charity, some even by sacrificing their lives. Some others dedicated their lives for teaching and propagating the sacred scriptures by touring the entire world. Nevertheless, they could not win God's grace and love. Why? Samsara sagaroththara sajjana sevanam vina (one cannot cross the formidable ocean of Samsara, except by serving the noble souls). It is only by serving noble souls and great men that one can attain the power of penance. No sadhana (spiritual exercise) other than selfless service will enable one to attain Divinity.

The punya (merit) of our students is indeed great. They have been able to have the darshan, sparshan, and sambashan of several noble souls and obtain their grace. In fact, several people in Bharat (India) sanctified their lives by such darshan, sparshan, and sambashan.

(Referring to Sant Asaram Bapu, Swami said) He has taken a lot of trouble to come over here, all the way from Gujarat, to address our students. It is their good fortune. He has a kind and loving heart. His teachings are very essential for our students. In an age when faith and devotion have eroded and atheism has become the order of the day due to the effect of Kali (the age we are in), such teachings are very much necessary, especially for the students to keep them on the right track.

Dear Students!

You cannot get fulfilment in life by merely having darshan or sparshan or sambashan of noble souls. You will attain peace and tranquility only when you have all the three. In order to sanctify human life, the navavidha bhakti (nine forms of devotion) are very essential. They are sravanam (listening), kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (servitude), sneham (friendship) and Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). Man can sanctify his life by sravanam, mananam, and nidhidhyasanam (listening, recapitulation, and contemplation). Today's children are very intelligent. But only when they put their intelligence to proper use can they make their lives sanctified. And, spirituality is the only path that can make one's life sanctified! Today's students are, however, putting their intelligence to wrong use and are wasting their time engaging themselves in vain argumentation. God's grace can be obtained only through love and by no other means. It is the only raja marga (royal path). Students should develop the faith that their lives will be sanctified by treading that royal path.

Dear Students!

Education is not mere reading of books. By reading books, we can acquire only bookish knowledge. Whatever knowledge has been acquired must be put into practice. If you want to earn God's grace, love is the royal path. Man has been able to acquire several powers by love. It is by love alone that one can win the minds of others. He can even gain control over nature. Spiritual sadhana can also become fruitful by love alone. The mind can never be controlled by bad qualities, bad thoughts, and bad company.

Human nature can be sanctified only by divine and selfless love. The only property and power that will never diminish in every human being is love. You may share it with any number of people, yet it does not diminish but will continue to grow. The reference in this context is not to worldly love but to transcendental love. We must love God in the same way as we love our own father and mother. It should be so natural and spontaneous. You cannot find a parallel to such love. Therefore, every individual, from the time he gets up

from bed till he goes back to bed, must strive to make his life sanctified by love. You must love your fellow human beings, treating them as your friends. By cultivating such universal love, the whole world can be united as a single family. It is not possible by any other means. Therefore, develop such universal love.

Dear Students!

You are struggling a lot to acquire education. By this education, you may perhaps read some textbooks, appear for examinations, pass them, and secure a degree. But all this education is negative in character. You must acquire positive education, which would bring out the latent qualities in you like divine love, peace, compassion, forbearance, etc. You must cultivate those qualities assiduously by constant practice. Several people of the older generation sanctified their lives by fostering such noble qualities. If the human mind is to be transformed, it could be done only by love, nothing else. Mind-mind-mind. You know how it works. It is always changing and very powerful. It cannot be controlled by any power, except love.

Dear Students!

Dedicate your love only to God. There are people in the world who dedicated their love for different purposes, for example, for acquiring education, for acquiring proficiency in various arts, sports, and games, for the sake of certain individuals, etc. Could they attain Divinity? No, No. You must realise the truth that it is only by constant contemplation of God with single-minded devotion that one can attain Divinity. Therefore, dear students! Realise the truth that God cannot be attained by any other science, except the science of love. God gives Himself to love easily. Hence, attain Divinity through love. There is no force greater than love in this world.

Everything in this world is a worry.



To be born is a worry,
to be on the earth is a worry;
world is a cause of worry and death too;
entire childhood is a worry and so is the old age;
life is a worry, failure is a worry;
all actions and difficulties cause worry;
even happiness too is a mysterious worry.
(Telugu poem)

If you are able to win the grace of God, all your worries will be removed. You may pursue worldly education; nothing wrong in that. But you must be prepared to sacrifice your life, even, for attaining Divine love, which is permanent, changeless, and eternal. Several great and noble souls have traveled throughout the world and strove to uplift the world by their sacred teachings. What would have been the fate of the country of Bharat if such great souls were not born! Every individual shall, therefore, strive to emulate the ideals of such great souls and elders. Whatever they say, must be taken as an authority of the scriptures. You may perhaps think that you are able to speak eloquently in English and therefore feel proud that you know everything. Pride and arrogance are most reprehensible qualities. They land you in abysmal depths. It is only by the quality of love does a human being becomes great.

Dear Students!

Therefore, cultivate love and strive to attain the grace of God and sanctify your lives by humility, devotion, and faith in God. Love is the sole refuge for a human being, which will take him to God. Several elders have reached their goal only through love. You follow their example. Never lose your wealth of love. Make love your primary objective in your life. Love may appear to be a very simple thing to you. But there is no force greater than love. Love is God, God is Love; therefore, live in Love. That is what you have to learn.

Bhagawan concluded His Divine Discourse by singing the bhajan, "Prema muditha manase kaho".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

18. Obtain Divine Grace By Obeying Your Parents

Date: 18 September 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ganesh Chaturthi

The moon illumines the world at night and the sun during the day.
Righteousness illumines the three worlds, and
a virtuous son illumines his entire lineage.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

A virtuous son is greater than even those who have acquired jnana (knowledge), vijnana (wisdom), sujnana and prajnana (constant integrated awareness). Lord Vinayaka is such a virtuous son. Every individual has a guru. But, Vinayaka has no guru at all. He is the Guru of Gurus and the leader of leaders. He is called by the name Vinayaka because He has no leader above Him and He is the leader for all.

Embodiments of Love!

Whenever a new task is undertaken, it is customary to perform puja (worship) to Lord Vinayaka to invoke His blessings for the successful completion of the task. Even while starting a musical concert, the singers pray to Lord Vinayaka with the kirtan (song), "Vinayaka Nannu Brovara (Oh! Lord Vinayaka! Please come to my help.)" Only when you thus pray to Lord Vinayaka and seek His blessings will all your task meet with success.

Lord Vinayaka has an elephant's head and trunk. It denotes that Vinayaka can be compared to an elephant in intelligence, which always thinks twice before setting its foot forward. Similarly, it is only after intelligent discrimination that Vinayaka moves forward. The four letters in the word Ganapathi (ga, na, pa, and ti) denote that Lord Vinayaka is full of vijnana, sujnana, and prajnana.

People today forget the underlying meaning in the name Ganapati and engage themselves in mere rituals. You may not perform any rituals, but never give up worshipping Lord Vinayaka.

Especially, it is the foremost duty of the students to come under the leadership of Vinayaka, who is a leader unto Himself. You would not find a parallel to Lord Vinayaka. When you take such a Lord as your ideal and pursue your studies, you will be able to master all branches of education. Vinayaka has a big tummy, which is full of jnana (wisdom). That wisdom is His power. We should worship such a powerful Lord. No one can fully comprehend the true nature of Lord Vinayaka.

Lord Vinayaka is the leader for one and all. He is the divine father and mother to everybody. In accordance with the prayer Twameva matha cha pitha Twameva, Twameva bandhuscha sakha Twameva, Twameva vidya dravinam Twameva (He alone is the father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth to every individual). No one else can be compared to Lord Vinayaka in terms of power and prowess in this world. The world is unable to recognise the true nature of such a divine leader. We are, today, prepared to accept the leadership of ordinary mortals. This is an unfortunate situation.

Today is the holy day commemorating the birth of Lord Vinayaka. In fact, He has no birth at all. He created the entire universe. All the Vedas are the result of the divine sankalpa (will) of Lord Vinayaka. All forms of knowledge have originated from Vinayaka.

Embodiments of Love!

Lord Vinayaka does not know what anger is. He is the embodiment of love. Where there is love, bad qualities like anger, passion, conceit, etc., cannot gain entry. You might have witnessed the facial features of Vinayaka. Did His face ever reflect anger? No. He will always be smiling.

Vinayaka is omnipresent. People attribute a particular place as the birthplace of God and consider it as a kshetra (a sacred place of pilgrimage). But no single place can be ascribed as the birthplace of God. He is Swayambhu (Self-emergent). There is no specific place that can be ascribed as place of birth, place of upbringing, etc., for God. He is omnipresent. God will manifest in such a place where people get rid of their bad qualities and sincerely pray to Him with devotion. He is Gunatheetha (beyond attributes). He is Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathanam, Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam (God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness).

God appears to be angry at times. But that is not real anger. In order to put devotees on the right path, He pretends to be angry. If He does not pretend so, there is no chance for the devotees to change their behaviour. His pretending to be angry is just a drama. God has no trace of anger in Him. When we commit mistakes or tread the wrong path, we are afraid that God will be angry with us. But, God only pretends to be angry on such occasions so that you become aware of your own faults and deficiencies.

For example, when Swami keeps Himself away from you, you feel very sad and think that Swami is not talking to you because He is angry with you. In fact, Swami does not know what anger is. He is the embodiment of love. He is full of love. However, on some rare occasions when He speaks harshly, it might be misconstrued that He is angry.

This is quite natural even in our day-to-day life. When you call somebody, "Son! Please come here," it sounds that you are calling him with love. But, if the same words are uttered with a raised voice (in an angry mood), it looks as though you are angry. Therefore, all these are variations in expression and nothing else. The same was the case with Sage Durvasa, whose expressions revealed anger and thus became synonymous for anger. But in fact, Sage Durvasa had no anger at all!

During the Mahabharata war, Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya, took a terrible vow to annihilate all the Pandavas. Having come to know of this, Droupadi prayed to Krishna to save the Pandavas. The leelas (sports, playful actions) of the Lord are not only wonderful but also mysterious. God enacts dramas and even changes the scenes in His play for the welfare and safety of His devotees. In this instance, the Lord saved the Pandavas with a delicate touch that He alone is capable of.

He went to Sage Durvasa. He was immensely delighted to receive Krishna. The sage asked, "Lord, what brought You to my humble ashram?"

Krishna smiled and said, "I have a small job for you."

The sage was happy and said, "I am at Your service. You just have to command."

Krishna then said, "Good! Tonight, you have to save the Pandavas."

Durvasa was puzzled and asked, "Lord, it is You who protect everything in creation. Who am I to do that job?"

Krishna replied, "That is a different matter. But for this job, you will be My instrument. I extend protection in many different ways. On this occasion, you have to do something specific as per My instructions." Durvasa wanted to know what it was, and Krishna continued, "Dig a pit, ask the Pandavas to hide themselves in it, cover it with planks, grass and mud, and then take your seat on the shelter so prepared. The enemies of the Pandavas may come and ask you about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. They may say, "You know the past, present, and future. Please tell us where the Pandavas are hiding."

Durvasa intervened and said, "Lord, I cannot tell a lie."

Krishna countered, "Did I ask you to utter falsehood? I am Myself the Embodiment of Truth, and I will always ask you to speak only the truth. However, you are at liberty to change your voice suitably to achieve the desired result. I am sure you understand." The sage nodded and smiled.

Some time later, after the Pandavas were hidden, Aswatthama came there, exactly as Krishna had foretold. Durvasa was sitting with his eyes closed. Bowing to the sage, Aswatthama enquired, in a most humble manner, about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. Durvasa slowly opened his eyes; which were like flame. Angrily he roared, "Yes, the Pandavas are here, right below me." Aswatthama was frightened because the sage was well known for his bad temper and his propensity to curse those whom he is angry with. Promptly, he fled from the scene, and the Pandavas were duly saved.

All Avatars employ such techniques, and Swami too does the same when required.

The sages and saints, yogis, and jnanis for ages have been providing rakshana (protection) and sikshana (correction) and make people tread the right path. Sage Durvasa did the same thing. Ignorant people accuse him of being one of anger in spite of being a great tapasvin. But, those people who are able to understand the real intention behind his apparent anger realise the truth. God has no anger. In fact, one who has anger is not fit to be called God at all!

Once Mother Parvati and Easwara called Vinayaka and His younger brother Subrahmanya and advised them to go round the world. They also told them that whoever came first would be given a phala (fruit) as reward. This competition was intended to demonstrate the greatness of Vinayaka to the world. The younger brother Subrahmanya immediately plunged into action. He mounted His vehicle, the peacock, to fly round the world. But, Vinayaka

did not move and sat in His own place. Easwara enquired, "My dear son! Why did You not start on Your journey round the world?"

Vinayaka laughed at this question and replied, "Oh! Father! I need not go anywhere. The fruit of all My journey round the world is right in front of me." So saying, Vinayaka made a pradakshina (circumambulation) round His father and mother (Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati) and sat down calmly. He claimed victory in the race.

In the meanwhile, Subrahmanya came there, after completing His journey round the world. He was very much tired and reported to His father about His successful completion of the task. Lord Easwara then declared Vinayaka the winner in the race and handed over the fruit to Him. The place where this episode took place is called Palani, in the State of Tamil Nadu.

The underlying meaning in this story is that the parents are the very embodiment of divinity and it is enough if one does pradakshina to them in reverence. That would be tantamount to the punya (merit) acquired by visiting all the holy shrines in the world. Without the parents, there can be no son at all! If children are to be virtuous, it is the parents who have to take care of them. The parents are responsible for the success of their children in all the endeavours.

It is common practice for students to visit temples during examination time and pray for success in the examinations. They offer coconuts in the temples with the pocket money given by their parents. These are all external practices, which have little to do with sincere devotion. If they really wish to achieve success in their endeavour, it is enough if they please their parents and obtain their blessings. If they are satisfied, you are sure to succeed. In order to drive home the point that children should strive to please and satisfy their parents first, Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati arranged this competition of going round the world for Lord Vinayaka and Lord Subrahmanya.

If you want to obtain the grace of God, it is enough if you obey the command of your parents lovingly. There is no greater divinity than the parents who are present right in front of your eyes. They have struggled hard in several ways to bring you up to the present state. They made a lot of sacrifice, so that you may come up in life. No parent would ever like to displease his children. They appear to be angry sometimes and may even give some punishment, but that is only outward. In their heart of hearts, they have abundant love for you. Even if they pretend to be angry, it is for your own good. The stream of infinite love ever flows in their hearts. Here is a small example: When the child does some mischief, the mother gives a beating. But how? The beating merely produces sound but does not cause any pain to the child. Her anger is borne out of love only.

On certain occasions, they may show anger, but it is only temporary. It is never permanent. You may think that your parents are angry with you. But, that is your own misunderstanding; you may not be able to understand their love, which is lying dormant. Even if they show anger and say chee (an expression in Telugu to indicate one's disapproval), it is only out of love. Students shall, therefore, try to understand the real nature of their parents.

In fact, one's anger is his own enemy, and happiness one's heaven. One should always be happy. A person with anger and irritable temperament can never achieve anything. Vinayaka is one who always obeyed his parents' command. That is why it is said that there is no leader above Him. Students sometimes ask for money from their parents to go to a cinema. When parents refuse, they think that the parents are angry. These are trivial issues. The parents, especially the mother, will be even ready to sacrifice her life, in order to save her children in times of danger. Unfortunately, today there are sons who even go to a court of law against their mothers. It is, therefore, essential that they change their attitude toward their parents and realise that they are verily embodiments of love.

Any number of diversions or silly thoughts may arise in children, but the parents' love toward their children remains unwavering. There are several

sons in the world who are angry with their parents, but the relationship of the parents and their children is one of love only. Whatever differences that may arise between them are only temporary. The relationship between parents and their children is one of love, nothing else.

Lord Vinayaka is the embodiment of love. He always showers love only. When He was acting as a scribe to write the Mahabharata to the dictation of Sage Vyasa, he displayed the same attitude of love. Since He was the embodiment of Love, Vyasa selected Him particularly to undertake the duty of a scribe. Throughout the period of writing the Mahabharata, Vinayaka displayed this quality of pure love. That is why you do not find even a single mistake in the Mahabharata. Since He was flawless, His word was also flawless. You do not find the bad qualities of anger, jealousy, envy, or pride in Vinayaka. They are the qualities of a human being devoid of noble qualities.

Dear students!

From today onward, give up whatever little anger you have toward your parents and cultivate pure love toward them. Love begets love. Receive love from your parents in abundance and prosper in life.

Today is the festival of Vinayaka Chaturthi. It is a very important festival. There is a custom in some families to invite the newly married son-in-law for the festival. Therefore, do not hesitate to go to your in-law's house to spend some time happily with them.

Oh newly married bridegroom, visit your in-laws' house.
Come, spend your time in fun and frolic with your
brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.
The entire household and the neighbourhood
will honour you with love and affection.
(Telugu song)

When a son-in-law visits his spouses parents' house, the entire household gets into a festive mood. One is sure to feel happy and mentally relaxed. There are, however, some stone-hearted sons-in-law who cultivate ill-feelings toward their in-laws and do not visit their house. Such ill-feelings are the result of food. As the food, so is the head. The feelings of the heart reflect the thought in the head (mind). Therefore, we must take the right food. You should never take such food as would kindle the flames of anger and envy in you. Since ancient times, sages in India have observed strict diet regulations. They always made it a point to consume sattwic (pure) food, not rajasic (passion-producing) food. By consuming rajasic food, anger is generated. On the other hand, if you consume thamasic (dull, lethargic) food, you will feel sleepy even while you eat. Therefore, both rajasic and thamasic types of food must be avoided. Only sattwic food must be taken. Excess of chillies, salt, and sour items must be avoided in food. Before you take food, never forget to offer your prayers:

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam Brahmaiva
Thena Ganthavyam Brahma Karma Samadhina.

Brahman is the ladle as well as the oblation.
He is the sacrificial fire as also the sacrificer.
And finally, Brahman is the goal of one
who is engaged in the act of sacrifice.

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva Praninam Dehamasritah Pranapana Samayukta
Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.

I am present in all beings in the form of digestive fire.

United with the prana (exhalation) and apana (inhalation),

It is I who consume the four kinds of food.

While taking food, you must always ensure that you take only such items that you can easily digest. Never consume food that you cannot digest. Just as you sit down happily for taking food, so also when you get up after taking your food, you must feel happy and light. Some people sit for food with a light stomach and get up with a heavy stomach after eating a bellyful. This is not the proper method of taking food.

Always take light food. These are the habits you must cultivate at least from this auspicious day of Vinayaka Chaturthi. If you cultivate these good habits and qualities you can become as great as Lord Vinayaka.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Prema muditha manase kaho".)

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

19. Your Reality Is In Your Own Self, Not Elsewhere

Date: 25 October 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

By which power of love the earth does rotate without axle or bearing,
By which power of love do the stars remain in the sky
without falling on the earth,
By which power of love do the oceans confine themselves
to the limits without inundating the earth,
By which power of love does the wind-god blow cool
breeze in all the worlds,
That mighty power of love is verily the Atmic power.
That power of love is most wonderful, unique and all-pervasive.
The entire creation is permeated with love.
(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Man need not undertake any special sadhanas (spiritual exercises) to visualise the all-pervading truth. We call God by different names like Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara. These are the names given by man to God based on some imaginary forms. But who has actually perceived these forms? None so far.

There is only one power in the world, which is all-pervasive. That is the power of love. Only by love are human societies formed. There can be no humanity without divinity. It is only when man establishes contact with divinity to some extent that he can acquire a little of that divine power which is omnipotent.

Embodiments of Love!

In fact, all modes of power are immanent in manavatwa (humanness) itself. It needs no special agent to vest it with any extra powers. The divine power fully manifests itself in a human being. Human power cannot function without the help of divine power. There are four mahavakyas (major aphorisms) in the Vedas, namely, Tattwamasi (That Thou Art), Prajnanam Brahma (constant integrated awareness is Brahman), Ayam Atma Brahma (This Atma itself is Brahman), and Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman verily). The essence of these mahavakyas is further explained in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. But man is getting deluded because he is unable to understand the import of these mahavakyas. He is not able to realise divine power that, in fact, is in his own self. Divinity in humanity expresses itself as sakthitattwa (energy). Today, man is striving to acquire several powers and make use of them for getting relieved of his sorrows and sufferings. In fact, these sorrows and worries are the stepping stones to Divinity. Man should not give too much importance to these worries. If one analyses carefully, what is there in human existence that does not cause worry? Man's life from birth to death is full of worries. I often quote a poem to describe this fact:

To be born is a worry, to be on this earth is a worry,
The world is a cause for worry and death too;
The whole of childhood is a worry and so is the old age;
Life is a worry, failure is a worry; All actions and difficulties cause worry;
Happiness too is a mysterious worry.
(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Some people say they had the vision of the Divine in their dream. Some others say they had it in their meditation. Yet others declare they had seen God through their jnana methra (eye of wisdom). Most of these claims are the

result of man's delusion. They are not real. Some people claim to have seen God in their dream. Where is dream? Where is God? In fact, dream experience itself is not real. It is only an illusion. They are deluded to think that way. The day man gets rid of this delusion, he will acquire divine power. Hence, everyone should come out of such illusion.

Some sit in meditation and think they are contemplating on somebody. Some others claim to have seen some effulgence in their meditation. What is meditation? It means ekagratha (concentration on the inner vision of the omniseft). It is visualising a drisya (scene) in a state of absolute stillness of the body and mind free from illusion. But wherever a man is, there is his mind as well. There is no place in this world without the mind being present. The mind is all-pervasive. It is said, Manayeva manushyanam karanam bandha mokshayoh (the mind alone is the cause for bondage as well as liberation).

We say we are happy. Where does this happiness come from? Certainly, it is not from outside. It wells up from one's own heart. The nature of the mind is chanchala (fickleness). This fickleness is in our own nature. It has not come from outside. All relationships we maintain in the objective world are only illusory. Supposing you marry a girl. From then on, you maintain a man and wife relationship with her. Even prior to the marriage, both of you were existing in the world, but this relationship was not there. From the moment you both are married you think she is related to you. Thus, it is a mental relationship.

Embodiments of Love!

Even maya (delusion) is associated with love. You do not find anything in this world, devoid of love. Love is in everything in this world. All relationships between people in this world are established and cultivated on account of love. Again, love becomes the cause for separation of two individuals. There are several types of sadhana (spiritual exercise) in this world; bhrama sadhana (coming out of delusion) is one such. In fact, Brahma, Vishnu, and

Maheswara cannot be visualised in your sadhana (meditation, etc.). What all you see in your meditation are only reflections of your feelings. Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara are not really existing in this world. They are only your imaginary forms.

What really exists in the world is manavattwa (humanness). Unable to believe the humanness that is present right in front of your eyes, if you contemplate on divine nature, how can you find it? The name and form that you attribute to Divinity, namely, Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara, are not real. They are only a mirage born out of your delusion. Everything is contained in the human being. You are Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara and every conceivable name and form attributed to Divinity. When you begin to believe that you are everything, there can be no cause for any kind of worry. When you are able to realise Aham Brahma, Aham Vishnu, Aham Easwara (I am Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara verily), there is no scope for any doubt. All these names and forms are products of your own imagination. There is no power greater than humanness in this world.

Embodiments of Love!

You say that Swami appeared in your dream last night. This is not correct. I do not appear in anybody's dream. When you intensely desire that Swami must appear in your dream and constantly think of the same, that intense desire will assume a form in your dream. God does not assume a form or change into another form. Some people think that God is angry with them. This presumption is also not correct. God has neither love toward somebody nor anger toward another. All these presumptions are of your own making. You attribute anger or other feelings to God. Instead, if you live in love constantly, you will not find anger in others. In fact, love is your true form. Man is born out of and brought up with love. Not only a human being, but every living creature experiences love right from its birth. There is no force more powerful than love in this world. No power on earth can change love. Do not get deluded by the thought that you have acquired this power and that power. All these are only illusions (bhrama). Bhrama is not Brahman. Nor can

Brahman be equated with (bhrama)..

Embodiments of Love!

What is meant by Divyatma? It means Divine Atma. Atma is nothing but consciousness. And, that consciousness is all pervading. You do not find a place where there is no consciousness. Consciousness is omnipotent. There is one aspect to be borne in mind in this context. Consciousness is movable. But we are deluded to think that it is static. In fact, the real power is within you only. That is Atma Sakthi (atmic power). We have already known that Atma is consciousness. Therefore, Atma Sakthi is chaithanya sakthi (power of consciousness). This is all-pervading. This enables you to witness different forms.

The immense power in humanness is divine in nature. It confers peace and happiness. You may think that divine power is some special power. It is not true. Your own power of contemplation assumes the form of divine power. Therefore, first and foremost, realise your own innate divine nature.

All that is written in the books or read by you are not in fact true. There are some kinds of power which are temporary. They are not eternal. Such transient powers should not delude one. You are learning the Vedas. Every sound that emanates from the Vedas emerges from the navel only. We are experiencing the sound emanating from our own navel. Supposing you go to a hill and shout "Oh!" The sound comes back to you as resound. Similarly, good and bad emanates from you only. They do not come from somewhere and get into you.

Embodiments of Love!

For example, you go on repeating loudly a particular sentence taken from a

book. After sometime, you will get it by heart. But, the sentence memorised by you is not yours. It is only a resound. In God's creation, everything is reaction, reflection, and resound. All that we experience in the outside world is only a reaction, reflection, and resound of the inner being. We are, however, deluded to think that this reaction, reflection, and resound are real ones. Whatever feeling comes out of your heart and takes a shape outside is the real form. It means that that form has already been conceived by you.

Suppose you imagine a particular form for Lord Rama. Then, contemplate on that form, closing your eyes. You can visualise the same form as a reflection of your inner thoughts. All that is manifested in the outside world is only a reaction, reflection, and resound of your inner being.

Embodiments of Love!

You yourself are Rama, Krishna, Easwara, etc. Think that you are Easwara and contemplate on that form. You will become Easwara, verily. *Yad bhavam tad bhavathi* (as you think so you become). Similarly, think that you are Rama, Krishna, etc., and you will become Rama and Krishna.

Today, people sit in meditation. It is only for developing concentration, not with a view to contemplate on God. People mistake concentration for meditation. This is not a correct method. All these exercises are reaction, reflection, and resound. Only you are real; you are the truth. You are able to visualise God only in human form. Man cannot conceive or visualise anything greater than him. You are everything, and everything in creation is immanent in you. Unfortunately, man today is forgetting his real nature and is imagining something that does not exist. This is the result of delusion, which, in fact, is of his own making. It is only when man comes out of this illusion that he will be able to realise Brahman.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the most important factor. If you pray to God with intense love and devotion, your prayers will certainly be answered. Such is the power of love. Devoid of love, nothing can be achieved even in this mundane world. Love is God, live in love! Without love, the whole world becomes a vacuum. That love alone assumes a form. Realise this truth. You sit in your so-called meditation and try to forget yourself through imaginary experiences. If you forget yourself, how can you visualise the truth? Constantly live in the awareness "I am God, I am everything, and I am the reality. All forms are subject to change." For example, an infant at the time of birth will be small in size. Then it will grow into a child, a boy, youth and an old person. In all these different stages of life, man alone is the reality. "All are one, be alike to every one." This is the lesson one must try to learn.

Embodiments of Love!

Let the flame of your love be steady, not flickering. There is no greater sadhana (spiritual practice) than love. That is the spiritual practice you have to adopt. That is the divine practice. Divinity is omnipresent. You have to realise that omnipresent divinity within your own self. It is present in all the three states of consciousness, namely, dream, wakeful, and deep sleep state. One has to strive to experience that divinity constantly. That is Prajnanam Brahma (constant integrated awareness is Brahman). That is Sakshatkara (vision of divinity), an experience that transcends all the three states of consciousness.

Embodiments of Love!

You are worshipping several forms of divinity. However, you cannot afford to forget your own innate divinity. In fact, you yourself are ascribing umpteen number of names and forms to divinity. But divinity is only one, which is changeless. That changeless eternal divinity is immanent in you. All external forms and names are like fleeting dreams. And those dreams are not real. Hence, strive to come out of that bhrama (delusion). Only when you come out

of that bhrama will you be able to realise Brahman. You have witnessed something in your dream. What is it? It is your own self, nothing other than that. You are visualising your own self in the dream state. Your real nature is love. Hence, you manifest your real nature. There are several aspects that you have to learn in future. What is future? Future is uncertain; past is past; only present is what matters. Both past and future are contained in the present. You alone are present in all the three - past, present and future.

Embodiments of Love!

Divine powers and divine manifestations are immanent in the human being; they are not to be sought from elsewhere. By constant sadhana, man can realise this truth. Your reality is in your own self, not elsewhere. In order to visualise that reality, one has to turn one's vision inward. Reaction, reflection, and resound - all the three are existing in your own self; they are not external. Suppose you have a brother who earned a good name and fame. Who is he? He is your brother. He represents a particular form. From where did this form come? It came from reality. And that reality is his true nature. Thus, a form that manifested from reality deludes us from visualising the reality itself.

Embodiments of Love!

If you wish to understand certain aspects more clearly, I will explain in greater detail after some time. The kind of meditation you are doing is not correct. You are keeping one form in your mind and contemplating on that. Where did this form come from? It is of your own making. You are deluded to think that God is confined to only this form. Thus, right from the beginning you are with a deluded belief. If only you come out of this delusion, can you visualise the truth.

Do not ever be under the illusion that God is somewhere in a distant place. You are, in fact, God verily. Your own form is divine. Your bliss is divine. Your reaction, reflection, and resound are divine in nature. Never deviate from the

firm faith that you are God. Always contemplate on one aspect: Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman). What is the meaning of the mahavakya (divine maxim) Tattwamasi (That Thou Art)? Tat is that. Twam is this. Together they become Asi. They become one. Thus, all these four mahavakyas - Tattwamasi, Prajnanam Brahma, Ayam Atma Brahma, and Aham Brahmasmi - lead you to the same truth, that, you are God verily. Adi Sankara had expounded and explained this great advaita (non-dual) philosophy in ever so many ways and ultimately merged himself in that great truth. Thus, reality is not somewhere in a distant place. It is within you. Your very nature is reality. How can you realise this truth? Only by cultivating pure, selfless and divine love. Without love, nothing can be achieved in this world. Love is the source and sustenance for the entire universe. Love is God and God is love.

Embodiments of Love!

All of you are Embodiments of Divinity. Your forms are divine. You and God are one. You are not different from God. Experience this unity. Ekam sath (truth is one). Unity is truth. Unity is divinity. God is not separate from you. God is manifest in you. Unfortunately, you are forgetting this truth. If you forget your own nature, it amounts to forgetting everything else. Never forget your reality. Without forgetting that reality, meditate on it. Always remember one fact: wherever I am, I am always divine. Hold on to this firm belief, steadfastly. That is the truth contained in the mahavakya (divine maxim) Tattwamasi, the inseparable and non-dual nature of Divinity. Do not be under the illusion "Rama has appeared in my dream, Krishna has appeared in my dream, Swami has appeared in my dream." This is a sign of ignorance. All these are only dreams. How can a dream be called a reality? The very word "dream" explains its nature. As long as you are in sleep, this experience may be true. The moment you wake up, the experience vanishes.

Embodiments of Love!

Keep your love securely. Never give up love under any circumstances. There is no God other than love. Love is God, verily. Love is your path and goal. Never deviate from this path of love. If you find any difficulty in treading this

path or if you have some doubts to get clarified, I am always there to help you. Try to reduce your doubts. These doubts will lead you to delusion. Always get yourself firmly established in the truth Tattwamasi (That Thou Art). It is a mistaken idea to think that this form has visualised that form of Divinity, for you and God are not separate. Brahman is very much immanent in this body. Brahman and Aham are one and the same. Undertake sadhana to realise the oneness of these two. That is the "Pathway to God". If you wish to meditate on God, never allow your thoughts to be disturbed by worldly objects. Meditate on your own real nature, which is Divinity. In that divinity, everything else is contained. If you thus meditate on your own innate Divinity, you will realise your unity with Divinity. In fact, that unity is Divinity.

The four mahavakya (divine maxims) Tattwamasi, Prajnanam Brahma, Ayam Atma Brahma, and Aham Brahmasmi are Vedic declarations that emphasise the oneness of the individualised soul and the Supreme Soul. They exhort the individualised soul to realise this truth. Therefore, one has to strive to attain that state of unity. As you gradually progress in that sadhana, you will ultimately reach that goal. Suppose you want to learn the spelling of a word; just think how many times you will be repeating that spelling. In the same way, you must set out on this path of sadhana. This is a scared sadhana. If you are able to know the true meaning of these mahavakya, you will be able to realise the truth.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Muditha Manase Kaho".)

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

20. Experience Divinity Within In Total Silence

Date: 22 November 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 23

Embodiments of Love!

YOU are very well aware of the present condition of the world. There is no scope for talking about God. Today *dhanam* (money) is considered as *daivam* (God). In such a situation, how can *dharma* (righteousness) prevail in the world?

Principle Of Love Is Changeless

Embodiments of Love!

There is no other path except that of love to attain God.

Love is God, God is love.

But people do not understand what love is. They consider attachment to all that is worldly and material as love. Out of their selfishness, they love worldly objects and materials. So, man's love today is tainted with selfishness. There is selfish motive behind whatever he does. How can then man have the vision of God who is the very embodiment of selfless love? Love is present in all beings, right from a *pamara* (ignorant person) to a *Paramahansa* (realised person). How can one describe such a principle of love?

Ego and pomp have become rampant today. Desires have become limitless. Man's heart is filled with selfishness, and compassion has no place in it. That is the reason why he is unable to have the vision of the Atma and experience bliss. I always speak about the principle of love. I do not know anything other than love (loud applause). When divinity is uniformly present in all, how can

you share your love with some and deny it to others? How can anyone say, "Love this and not that"? **God has no specific form. But if you firmly resolve to see God and make sincere efforts, God will assume a form and manifest before you.**

There is love in everyone of you. What is the form of love? What is the nature of love? When we analyse carefully, we will realise that love is not limited to human beings alone but is present in all living beings. Every being is endowed with the quality of supreme divine love. One has to give up enmity and cultivate unity and purity in order to understand this truth. Love cannot be explained in words. How can you describe it? It can only be experienced and enjoyed. The experience of love confers bliss on us. Hence, we can say that bliss is the form of love.

Embodiments of Love!

Everything in this world is bound to change except the principle of love. Love is the only true and eternal path which will lead you to divinity. Divinity pervades each and every limb of the human body. It can be visualised only when we understand the principle of oneness. People attribute various names and forms to God. In fact, God should not be confined to a particular name and form. God is beyond all attributes and transcends all names and forms. Divinity is present in all in the form of love but each one experiences it in his own way. People imagine a particular form of divinity. They think divinity is limited to a specific name and form. That is why they are unable to experience it.

One whose heart is filled with love will see the manifestation of divinity everywhere. It is a mistake to think that Nature is different from God. People give various names to divinity based on their own experience. Jewels are many but gold is one. Likewise, names and forms are different but divinity is one. Where does gold come from? It comes from the earth. Similarly, God manifests in human body.

Daivam manusha rupena (God incarnates in the form of a human being).

Hence, consider everyone as divine.

Sahasra seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra pad (The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes and feet).

All heads, all eyes and all feet are His. Such transcendental divinity can be experienced only in absolute silence and in solitude. There lies hidden sacred divine power in the depth of total silence. The tongue is given to you not to indulge in vain gossip. That is why the ancient sages and seers practised *mounam* (silence). It is possible to experience God only in the depth of silence. However, we should understand the true meaning of silence. Silence does not mean merely refraining from speech. It is much higher than that and includes the mind also. The transcendental nature of divinity cannot be described in words. It is beyond the grasp of the mind.

Focus Your Mind Only On God

Whatever you see in this world is the manifestation of truth. When divinity is all-pervasive, how can there be untruth? But you are unable to realise the all-pervasiveness of divinity. Turn your vision inward and observe absolute silence. Only then can you realise the all-pervasive divinity. Mere intellectual exercise will not help you in this regard. Whatever you see, hear and experience is the manifestation of divinity. Only God exists everywhere. Such being the case, is it possible to attribute a particular name and form to Him? He is present in all forms. When we experience the principle of oneness, we will be immersed in bliss. Hence, we can say that bliss is His form.

Nityanandam, parama sukhadam, kevalam Jnanamurtim, dwandwateetam,
gagana sadrisham,
tattwamasyadi lakshyam, ekam, nityam, vimalam, achalam, sarvadhee
sakshibhutam

(God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, He is wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the mahavakya Tattwamasi, the one eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect).

Embodiments of Love!

When God is all-pervasive, where is the need to go in search of Him? You should make efforts to experience your innate divinity by observing total silence and turning your vision inward. You can experience divine bliss only in absolute silence. That is why it is said, "Silence is golden".

God is present in all forms. All names and forms are His. The Vedas state the same principle when they declare: "Sahasra seersha Purusha..." Various types of jewels are made out of gold. Likewise, God has assumed all the names and forms that we find in the world. Hence, you should develop faith in the existence of God. If you make sincere efforts, you can certainly realise Him. Many spiritual aspirants in the past could have the divine vision by their intense sadhana and by going into total silence. One has to annihilate the mind in order to have the vision of God. You cannot experience divinity until and unless you transcend the mind.

Today people conduct enquiry and research into various aspects of the world. But divinity cannot be experienced with such enquiry and research. Select a divine form of your choice and contemplate on it. When you focus your mind on the divine form, your mind gets transformed completely and becomes one with divinity. Today man's mind keeps wavering from moment to moment. Do

not rely on such a wavering mind. Instead, rely on divinity which is steady and changeless. Once you fix your mind on a divine form of your choice, never change it. Close your eyes and contemplate on it. Only then can you experience divinity.

Understand The Principle Of Unity

People use the word "divinity" without really knowing its meaning. The Vedas declare,

ekameva adviteeyam Brahma (God is one without a second),
ekatma Brahma (atma is Brahman).

You may call Him by any name. He has thousands of heads, hands and eyes. Wherever you see, there is God only and no one else. The same primordial principle pervades everything. Contemplate on Him with single-minded devotion.

Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha,
Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam
(God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free
and embodiment of sacredness).

Divinity is present within you. Unable to realise your innate divinity, you waste your time searching for God outside. Whatever you see and experience in the world is only the reaction, reflection and resound of your feelings. Do not get deluded by the reaction, reflection and resound. Turn your mind inward and contemplate on the reality within you. You will certainly be able to experience divinity. You should have divinity as your goal and nothing else.

Divinity is one without a second, and is all-pervasive.

Understand the principle of oneness and install God in your heart. Without the principle of unity, there can be no multiplicity. If you do not understand unity, you cannot understand the multiplicity of Nature. Nature is the best preacher. Follow the ideals demonstrated by this preacher with preeti (love). The more you develop love, the sooner you can see God. Body attachment is the cause of all differences. You will understand and experience unity in diversity only when you give up body attachment. Once you are free from body attachment, you can experience God in a moment. Whatever you see is the manifestation of God. The principle of unity in diversity is divinity. But you are unable to understand and appreciate this truth. In order to understand this truth, there should be total transformation in your feelings. As is the colour of the glass, so is the colour of the scene outside. Remove the colour glasses of body attachment and see the reality.

Make Your Mind Steady

Embodiments of Love!

Hold on to the principle of love firmly and you can achieve anything. When you fill your heart with love, you will be protected wherever you go. Love is the reality and everything else is only reaction, reflection and resound. In order to experience the reality, you have to cultivate steadiness of mind in the first instance. How can you make your mind steady? You have to contemplate on one name and one form. Be firm in your chosen path. Do not get deluded by what appears to the physical eyes. Open the eye of wisdom and see the reality.

Embodiments of Love!

Consider everyone as the embodiment of divinity. God is the mother and father of all. That is why, we pray:

Twameva mathascha pitha twameva,
Twameva bandhuscha sakha twameva,
Twameva vidya dravinam twameva
(Oh God! You alone are our father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom
and wealth).

Have firm faith that God is your everything. Do not entertain any doubts in this regard. It is because of doubts that man's mind is in a confused state. Many people ask Me about the proper way of meditation. I always tell only one thing, "Meditation does not mean merely closing your eyes and imagining anything and everything. Choose one form, install it in your heart and see that it is steady. Have total faith in one name and one form and contemplate on it incessantly. That is true meditation. If you follow this practice earnestly, you can experience divinity."

Embodiments of Love!

There is no greater sadhana than following the path of love. Your love should flow only in one direction, and not in many directions. Your love should constantly flow towards God. Only then can you have the vision of God, who is the very personification of love. If you are unable to visualise God, it only means that you have not directed your love towards Him.

Make your mind steady and fix it on God. Mind is the cause of everything in this world. Mind by itself does not go anywhere. It is we who direct it and divert it in different ways according to our whims and fancies. We are responsible for its unsteadiness. When you keep your mind steady and focus it on God, you will find the brilliant and blissful form of God wherever you see. You are unable to see and experience God because you doubt His existence. First of all, develop unwavering faith in God. Your faith alone will protect you. Do not follow the vagaries of the mind. You should be the master of your mind and not its slave.

Embodiments of Love!

People talk about meditation. Meditation is very simple. Meditation is not mere concentration. Concentration can never be equated with meditation. With unflinching faith and unwavering mind you should let your love flow towards God. If there is unsteadiness in your mind, it is reflected outside. All unsteadiness comes from within you. I am rather surprised to note that man's mind is wavering every moment. Why should the mind waver? It has no such power. *Manas* (mind) and *Manishi* (man) should be one. When you achieve this oneness, you can experience the principle of unity.

Embodiments of Love!

You must firmly resolve to hold on to the principle of unity and divinity. What is the purpose of human birth? Is it to spend your time in eating and drinking? No, no. You should make efforts to understand the underlying principle of unity of five elements, five senses of action, five senses of cognition and five life sheaths. If you make sincere efforts, you will certainly be able to experience the principle of unity. Among all the living beings, only man is endowed with the ability to understand and experience unity and divinity. In fact, the very purpose of human birth is to experience unity in diversity. Hence, make every effort to experience unity and sanctify your lives. It is possible only by following the path of love. There is nothing superior to love in this world.

Today I have awarded the gold medal for all-round excellence to a girl student from Anantapur Campus. She has been a diabetic right from her childhood. Her parents and doctors have been trying their best to control her diabetes but all in vain. However, she has unflinching faith in Swami. That is why she had no problem at all in spite of her blood sugar level being very high. She is not worried at all. In fact, when her parents get worried, she infuses courage in them, saying, "Don't worry. God is with me." In this manner, she has spent sixteen years.

She has studied in Puttaparthi school and Anantapur college. Sometimes, her blood sugar level is very high. No medicine can control it. Her father becomes anxious. But she is protected by her steady faith. Swami told her firmly, "This disease cannot harm you. Have total faith in God. Do not pay heed to what others say." She forgets her badha (suffering) remembering Swami's bodha (teaching). She has followed Swami's words implicitly and has remained steady in her faith. That is why she has come up in life.

She devotes all her time to studies. She will pursue higher studies. She has absolutely no worry even if her blood sugar level shoots up. She says, "It comes and goes. I have nothing to do with it." She has faced her health problem with fortitude. In this manner, one should never be afraid of problems. This body is a storehouse of dirt and a den of diseases. One should never rely on such an ephemeral body. The body may have to undergo suffering on account of some diseases. But whatever may be the problem, one should not worry about it.

Her father is teaching in Puttaparthi college. Sometimes, he gets phone calls from his daughter's teachers in Anantapur Campus, telling him, "Your daughter's blood sugar is very high today. She is unable to attend the classes. What should we do?" He comes to Me for guidance and I tell him not to worry. I infuse courage in him, saying she would be all right. Because of her devotion and steadfast faith, she is maintaining her health and carrying on her studies without any hindrance.

Having resolved, what ought to be resolved, hold on to it till you have succeeded. Having desired what ought to be desired, hold on to it till your desire is fulfilled. Having asked what ought to be asked, do not leave the hold till you get it. Having thought what ought to be thought, hold on to it till you have succeeded.

With heart mellowed, the Lord must yield to your wishes or forgetting yourself,

you should ask Him with all your heart.

Persevere, be tenacious, and never give up,
for it is the quality of a devotee never to retreat, abandoning his resolve.

(Telugu poem)

She is leading her life with such unflinching faith and determination. Sometimes, she becomes very weak because of anaemia. Even in such a condition, she continues to do her work. That is true devotion. She is leading her life with total faith in Swami. She has stood first in her studies and has also achieved excellence in co-curricular activities. That is why she has been given the gold medal for all-round excellence.

21. Dedicate Your Life To Serve Society

Date: 23 November 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 79

All your education, all your positions of authority,
all your acts of charity and service have little value
without the four virtues of sathya, dharma, prema,
and santhi (truth, righteousness, love and peace).
(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

You are all forgetting the purpose for which you have come into this world. Wherever you are, you must remember three things, namely, Where did you come from? Where are you at present? And what is the purpose of your coming here? Suppose you are dropping an envelope or letter in a post box, it should have the "From" address and "To" address written thereon. If these two addresses are not written, where will the envelope or letter go? It will go to the "dead letter office". Similarly, you are in the world now without these two addresses. You can very well imagine what will happen to such an individual. You must therefore find out yourself an answer at least for one of the three questions. Otherwise, your life itself will become a waste.

Here is a small story. The business people in the delta areas of East and West Godavari districts in Andhra Pradesh cross the river on boats. Once, a businessman was traveling in a boat. There was no one else in the boat except himself and the boatman. Usually, people would like to engage themselves in conversation with somebody during travel in order to forget the tedium of the journey. Therefore, he started a conversation with the boatman to while away the time. He asked the boatman, "Do you have a newspaper?"

The boatman replied, "Sir! I don't have a newspaper. I cannot read and write."

To this, the businessman commented, "Alas! If you cannot read and write, one quarter of your life is consigned to the waters of Ganga." The boatman felt sorry for his pitiable condition and kept quiet.

After a few minutes, the businessman enquired again, "My dear! Do you know the present prices of gold and silver in the Bombay market?"

The boatman replied, "Sir! I do not have any experience in gold business. Hence, I do not know the prices of gold and silver in the Bombay market." Then the businessman commented, "If you do not know about gold business, half of your life is consigned to the waters of Ganga." The conversation continued.

Observing the wrist watch worn by the boatman, the businessman again enquired, "My dear! What is the time now?" Though the poor boatman had a watch on his wrist, he did not know how to read a watch. The businessman again asked, "Why then did you wear a wrist watch?"

The boatman replied, "Though one does not know how to read a watch, it is a fashion nowadays to wear a wrist watch. That is why I am wearing one."

Then, the businessman commented, "If you do not know even to tell the time from a wrist watch, then three-fourths of your life is consigned to the Ganga."

Meanwhile, a gale started with great force raising high waves in the river. The boat started tossing up and down and became unsteady. The boatman then

asked the businessman, "Sir! By the way do you know how to swim?"

The businessman replied, "Alas! I do not know how to swim."

Now it was the turn of the boatman to comment, "Then, your entire life is about to be consigned to the waters of Ganga."

Today, we are all in the same situation and are tossed in the river of this world. But, unfortunately we are not making any effort to know why we are here, what have we to learn in this world, where we have to go, and by knowing what we could reach there, etc. Thus, by being ignorant of these aspects, our entire life is being consigned to the Ganga.

Therefore, we have to first try to find out answers to the queries of: Why have we come here? What are we supposed to know? Where do we go from here? If we are not able to know the answer to at least one of these queries, our life's journey will be without a purpose. Only when we are aware of the "From" address, "To" address, and the "present resident" address will our life be meaningful and sanctified.

Dr. Michael Goldstein (Chairman, Prasanthi Council and a devotee of Swami) and his wife visit Puttaparthi often. When I was going to the college one day, he approached Me and requested, "Swami, if You kindly permit me, I will accompany You to the college." I told him to come. While we were travelling in the car, I asked Mr. Goldstein, "What is your programme?"

He replied, "Swami, I have to start my journey back home today." Then I advised him not to leave on that day. He again told Me, "Swami, I shall go today, but I shall take the next day's flight from Bombay."

Thereupon I told him firmly, "You do not talk to Me about all those things. If I

say don't go, it is final." Goldstein could not realise that his life itself would be in great danger if he decided to start on the same day. At last I told him, "Okay, you can go, if you so wish."

Then he returned to his room, packed up his luggage for the Bombay flight. Thereafter, he boarded the plane for the USA. Soon after the plane took off, it was realised that there were some hijackers in the plane. The entire atmosphere in the aircraft was extremely tense. Two hijackers stood guard at the entrance. Another two were roaming about in the aircraft with fully loaded guns pointed at the passengers. It is then that Goldstein realised why Swami wanted him not to board the aircraft on that particular day. He could not do anything in the situation and was praying to Swami as his sole refuge. His wife is a great devotee of Swami. She started chanting Swami's Name, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram".

When the aircraft gained some altitude, the hijackers started shooting the passengers. The passengers were struck with terror not knowing what to do. As the hijackers opened fire, the aircraft was strewn with dead bodies. He and his wife were seated on the front portion of the aircraft. The hijackers started shooting the passengers around them. They thought it would be their turn next. Goldstein then told his wife, "Swami advised me not to start on this day, but I did not follow Swami's instruction completely and that is why we are in this situation."

Meanwhile, one hijacker set his eyes on the couple. Goldstein's wife, however, had been chanting the Name of Swami incessantly, forgetting everything. The chanting of Swami's Name worked wonders and Goldstein's wife was spared. Goldstein then got up and stood at the entrance of the aircraft. The hijackers, however, could not notice him even though he was such a hefty person. Thus, the life of Goldstein was saved by Swami's grace. They remained on the plane as hostages for a long time without food, water, and sleep. They were very much depressed.

Goldstein's wife has intense devotion for Swami. Normally women are more devoted than men. It is not that men do not have devotion, but they do not show it outwardly. Goldstein's wife advised him, "You do not worry, contemplate on Swami." At this point the hijackers began to shoot men, women, and children mercilessly. Goldstein and his wife, however, continued to pray to Swami, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram". They silently prayed to Swami closing their eyes. In the meantime, all the ammunition in the guns of the hijackers was exhausted. The police caught the hijackers. Goldstein and his wife were released and put on board on another aircraft bound for America. However, the ordeal that they underwent continued to haunt them. After a few days, the police came to enquire about the incident. Goldstein was offered some compensation, but he did not accept it.

After two or three months, Goldstein again came to Puttaparthi and had Swami's darshan. Now he realised through his own experience that he need not fear anything under any circumstances if he did *namasmarana* (chanting of God's Name). After he had Swami's darshan, calmness was restored in him. From then on, when Swami would enquire about his return journey, he would leave it to the Lord's Will. He realised that it would be better to leave the matter in Swami's hands. From then on Goldstein developed unshakeable faith in the words of Swami and stood firmly by them.

People today are unable to realise from where they came and where they would go. It is only after people have undergone such experiences that they realise the strength of faith. They have come into this world and somehow spend their time. When someone questions them how they spend their time, they reply that they have come into this world for enjoying food and comfortable sleep. However, it should be understood that man has taken birth in this world not merely for enjoying food and drink. The same truth has been explained by Adi Sankara in his famous Bhaja Govindam song thus:

Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam
Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane

Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda;
the rules of grammar will not come to your
rescue when the end approaches.

When people are questioned why the human birth was given to them, most of them would reply that it was for *khana* (food), *peena* (drink), *sona* (sleep), and *marna* (death). This assumption is totally incorrect. There are several things in life that one has to achieve. The purpose of a human birth is not for enjoying food and comforts. It is not even for pursuing education. The purpose of human birth is totally different and the people have forgotten it. You have to fulfil your life and sanctify your birth. The body comes, grows and dies, and finally undergoes decay. Before the body dies, one has to fulfil the purpose for which he has come into this world.

Embodiments of Love!

There will be several trials and tribulations in the journey of life. One has to acquire the power by which he can courageously encounter them. That is the power of spirituality. One should not become diffident and withdraw from his effort in the middle. In this *bhavasagara* (ocean of life), there will of course be, turbulent waves which will toss your boat up and down.

Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam
Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare

Kripayapare Pahi Murare.

Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death;
time and again, I am experiencing the agony of staying
in the mother's womb.

It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life.

Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.

The purpose of human birth is not to be born again and again from the womb of the mother, spend the life aimlessly and finally depart from this world. There is a specific purpose why one is born in this world. Therefore, one has to realise the purpose and sanctify his life. Our education, our work, and the money we earn - all these must be spent in a purposeful way. The students of the present day are pursuing education to make a living. They are acquiring degrees with the sole purpose of earning money. What is so great about struggling for filling one's own belly? Even dogs and foxes fill their bellies. You might have observed in the circus that even the monkeys learn several types of feats and display them. You, who are born as human beings should not behave like dogs, foxes and monkeys. If you do so, of what use is your education? The education you acquire must be put to proper use. Only then will it become meaningful and will give strength to your personality. The purpose of your life is not merely pursuing education and acquiring degrees. Of course, you may study, but it is not enough if you simply study for acquiring degrees.

Can you call all those who know how to read and write educated?

Can one be called educated merely by acquiring degrees?

Can you call that education which does not confer virtues?

(Telugu poem)

Only when you keep education for both life and for living as your goal will your education be meaningful. Therefore, every human being must keep the purpose of life in view. Of what use is it, if you exult in your success thinking, "I have passed MBA; I have acquired several degrees." Those degrees must be put to proper use.

Only a human being has the power to realise the purpose of his life. If one is satisfied thinking, "I am born, I am educated, I earned money, I have sufficient bank balance, I have got my children educated and sent them for higher education to foreign countries," that is not the sole purpose of life. You should never forget the purpose why you were born in this world. Unfortunately, today, you have forgotten the purpose of your life and are indulging in futile activities. As long as you live you must experience peace until your last breath. You should attain true and eternal bliss.

Mahatma Gandhi went to London and was conferred with the degree of Bar-at-Law. He wished to fulfil his life by utilising his education in the service of society. Therefore, after his return to his motherland, he joined the Indian National Congress. He sacrificed his entire life for achieving independence for the country. He started wearing a simple dhoti and a piece of cloth to cover the upper portion of his body. He underwent several difficulties in the north Indian States during the freedom struggle. He was beaten by the police with *lathis* (batons) in Lucknow. However, in spite of undergoing several difficulties and physical torture at the hands of the police, he did not give up his resolve to attain independence for the country. He started practising Law. Even then, his life did not go smoothly. He joined the independence movement on behalf of the Indian National Congress and underwent great torture at the hands of the British. Nevertheless, he did not lose heart.

His wife, Kasturba, was a noble lady. She always served her husband with great devotion, even when Gandhi was in jail. Simultaneously, she was also engaged in service to the country. It is only her spirit of service that protected her throughout. During the days of their involvement in the Independence movement, there were occasions when the husband and wife got separated.

But Kasturba was reconciled to the situation that whatever happened was for her good only. Thus, people who serve others with a noble heart will always see good only. At last, the country attained Independence and Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister.

Subhash Chandra Bose was another great leader of the freedom movement who was good at heart and was a great patriot. It is only because of the efforts of such men of sacrifice that the country could attain Independence. However, it is not merely *Swatantrya* (Independence) that we have to wish for. We must attain *Swarajya*. That is great. Swatantrya is a temporary phenomenon of freedom from foreign rule while Swarajya is concerned with and attained by the heart.

Dear Students!

You must be prepared to sacrifice even your life for the country. You are not the body. The body is only an instrument and a means for achieving something higher and noble. The body has to be put to use for achieving these higher and noble aims. The body is like the dress we wear. One day or the other the dress is bound to decay. Till then the body has to be maintained properly. It is only by sacrifice one can attain *yoga* (union with God).

That is what the Veda has proclaimed,

Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaike Amrutatthwamanasu
(immortality is not attained through action, progeny, or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice).

Having been born as human beings, you must dedicate your lives in the service of God and in the constant contemplation of God. If you do so, none of the physical ailments will trouble you.

Here is a small example that I would like to narrate to you. When I was in Bangalore some time back, this body fell in the bathroom. There were two students by name Satyajit and Achintya who used to attend to My needs. They did great service to Me. I told them "I have no body attachment. You may conduct an operation on this body, but I have nothing to do with this body. I am not this body. As long as the body is there, I have to do My work." The doctors wanted to put Me in bandage, but I did not agree. They advised Me to undergo an operation so that the fracture would be healed quickly. I placed this body in the hands of the doctors and let them do whatever they wished to do with it. I continued to walk, which I am still doing. I have no pains or suffering. Several devotees are anxious that Swami is walking with great difficulty and perhaps is undergoing great pain. I would like to reiterate that I do not undergo any pain or suffering. Till today, I did not undergo any body pain whatsoever. If you thus sacrifice your *dehabhimana*, you can achieve anything in life. Whatever I do, I tell the same thing. One has to do what he says and say what he does. That is what is meant by

ManasyekamVachasyekam Karmanyekam Mahatmanam
ManasyanyathVachasyanyath Karmanyanyath Duratmanam
Those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect
harmony are noble ones;
those who lack harmony of these are wicked.

That is the real *manavatva* (human nature). I can stand for any length of time, though the doctors advised Me against it. Even now I have been standing for a long time. I have no suffering at all. I don't take even a single tablet. I don't put on any bandage. Mine is *Atmabhava* (strength of the soul) and Atmabhava alone. I set an example by My own actions.

Dear Students!

The body may undergo any amount of suffering. It is like a water bubble.
The mind is like a mad monkey.
Therefore, we should not follow either the body or the mind.

We must follow our *antharatma* (conscience). We must develop *Atmabhimana* (feeling of oneness with the soul). If Atmabhimana is developed, no pain can trouble us. It is only for teaching you about this Atmabhimana, I am undergoing all this trouble. I don't feel any pain at all. I am telling you the truth. I am not suppressing the facts. In fact, I don't know or feel what pain is.

We must face the difficulties courageously. It is only to teach you this steadfastness and courage, I have taken upon Myself this pain. You must follow My ideal. Do not ever give importance to the suffering of the body. Give up dehabhimana. However, engage the body in proper activities. Engage the body in the service of God. Our body is a gift of God. For what purpose has God given us this body? It is only for dedicating it in the service of the Lord.

Embodiments of Love!

The body has been given to you for performing sacred *karmas* (actions). Several people wonder why Swami does not feel tired in spite of undergoing so much physical suffering. Especially, the ladies can observe the signs of weakness quickly. I want to assure you that I am maintaining a constant body weight and good health throughout. I have neither put on weight nor become weak. I can walk swiftly, but I am desisting from doing so only to satisfy the doctors.

The doctors are particularly pressurising Me not to walk swiftly. They advised Me, "Swami, please do not walk fast. You always keep two students with You to help You." It is only to please them and satisfy them that I am keeping these two students with Me. I am not causing any inconvenience to these

boys. Both these boys, Arun and Prusty, go to their offices and work there besides attending to My needs. The moment I call Prusty, he immediately rushes in. I ask him to get Me a glass of water and I drink the water given by him. Similarly, both these boys constantly attend to My needs. They are serving Me with great devotion and love. I do not cause any inconvenience to anybody.

Embodiments of Love!

Today you are celebrating Swami's birthday. In fact, it is the body that has a date of birth. This body has already passed 78 years and has entered the 79th year. But do I look like a 79 year old man? No. No. Not only now, even after 80 or 90 years of age, I will be like this only. I will never depend on anybody. My eyes and teeth are in perfect condition. Normally, by the time a person attains 79 years of age, all his teeth will be lost. His eyesight will be affected by cataracts. His skin will have wrinkles, but I have no wrinkles at all. I will not have old age. In fact, I have no old age.

Similarly, you also develop such courage and confidence. You will certainly feel good. Not only Myself, all of you should be in sound health. But you are spoiling your own health. You are misusing your physical strength in so many ways. If you put your body to proper use, you can come up well by Swami's grace. You can serve any number of people with a healthy body and a sound mind. Therefore, you have to maintain your body in healthy condition in order to serve others, not to show off your beauty. Even for Me, this body is required for serving others. In the service to humanity, I am prepared for anything, even to sacrifice My life.

Similarly, you must also be ever ready to serve others. Do not ever consider that the body is very important. And don't fritter away the physical strength. You must make proper use of the physical body. You must also gain enough mental strength. You must come up well in your educational career and make your life sanctified in the service to humanity. You must always be ready to

face any situation in life boldly. That is the real nature of humanity. Whenever your services are required, you must respond immediately, saying, "I am ready, I am ready, I am ready." Develop such a courage and confidence and set an ideal to the world.

This body is a den of dirt and prone to diseases;
it is subject to change from time to time;
it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara.
It is nothing but a structure of bones.
Oh mind!
Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent.
Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet.
(Telugu poem)

You seek refuge in the lotus feet of the Lord. Do not mind any amount of suffering of the physical body. You serve the country to the extent you can. Utilise every small opportunity to serve the country and society. Even a small help done to an old woman that you come across on the way is service. Do not ever think, "What do I gain by helping this woman?" There is great merit even in such a small service. Therefore, continue to serve. There is no greater *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) than service to the fellow human beings.

Seva Bina Nirvan Nahi
(there is no redemption without service).

You should not mind any inconvenience that you may undergo while serving others.

I have no intention of celebrating My birthday on a grand scale. My only intention is that the body should be maintained in a proper condition and,

through the body, service should be rendered to others.

**You must always be prepared to dedicate your life to serve society.
That is the real service.**

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahini".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

22. My Power Is The Power Of Love

Date: 25 December 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

How is it that the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening with utmost regularity every day?

How is it that the stars twinkle beautifully in the sky at night and hide themselves during the day?

How is it that the wind blows incessantly and sustains the living beings without taking rest even for a moment?

How is it that the rivers flow perennially making gurgling sounds?
(Telugu poem)

The word *jagat* (world) means that which is born, sustained, and ultimately dissolved. God, who is responsible for the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the world, has no specific form. He pervades the entire world in the form of the five elements, namely, ether, wind, fire, water, and earth. There is no place or person where these five elements are not present. The same truth is proclaimed by the Bhagavad Gita:

Sarvatah panipadam Tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati

(with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe).

There is no place where God does not exist. How can anyone comprehend or explain the principle of such an all-pervasive divinity?

People attribute various names and forms to God. They celebrate the

birthdays of their chosen divine forms, worship them, and derive joy thereby. But it is not possible for anyone to fathom fully the nature of divinity. However, no one can afford to ignore this fact. When the child is separated from the womb of the mother, it starts crying. What is the reason for this? The moment you put a drop of honey or milk on its tongue, the child stops crying. From this we can say that everyone is born with hunger and thirst. What type of hunger is that? Is it worldly or spiritual? It is difficult to judge who is born with what type of hunger. However, hunger is common for all. Food is essential to satisfy one's hunger. It is the duty of every individual to strive for sustenance for himself and also share it with others.

God has neither birth nor death. He is beyond all names, forms and attributes.

God is eternal without birth or death. He has no beginning, middle, or end. He is omnipresent and is the eternal witness.
(Telugu Poem)

How can anyone give a specific name to God, who is all powerful and all-pervasive? The earth absorbs rainwater and supplies it to the crop. As a result, we reap the harvest. Thus, mother earth sustains our life by providing our sustenance. Water is very essential for our survival. One may live without food for a few days, but no one can live without water. Water is the gift of God. It can be acquired only through prayer and not by any other means. People in many places perform worship and offer special prayers to invoke divine grace for water. Pauper or millionaire, everyone must pray to God, for He is the one who gives us food and water. Man cannot create food and water by himself. He does not even know what type of food is essential to lead a healthy life. He should make efforts to understand this.

Whatever God does is for the welfare of the world. You must understand that world is the very form of God. The creator and the creation are not different

from each other. One should not worship God for the fulfilment of worldly desires. One should pray to God to attain Him. He showers His grace on the devotee and gives the devotee everything they require. He alone knows what is good for the creation. Everything needed is provided by Him when the time is ripe. Without any overt effort from you, He gives you what you deserve. It is not the quality of a true devotee to feel disappointed and blame God if desires are not fulfilled. It is the duty of devotees to find ways and means to earn divine grace and make efforts to attain Him.

No one can comprehend the ways of God. In this context, Saint Thyagaraja sang a verse:

Not even a blade of grass will move without divine Will. Right from an ant to Brahman, God pervades everything, Some people do not understand this and take pride in their intelligence. But no one, however mighty, knows what is going to happen in the next moment.

(Telugu poem)

Nobody can understand or explain divine plans. God alone knows His plans, and only He can reveal them. No one can predict when God will shower His grace on an individual. Only God knows the answers to the questions like who, when, where, why, and how. If one forgets God and gets carried away by ego and a sense of doership, one will not meet with success in one's endeavours. Anything can be achieved through prayer. There is nothing greater than prayer. Hence, everyone must necessarily offer their prayers to God. However, one should not pray for worldly gains. "Oh God! I want your love and nothing else." This should be your constant prayer. Once you become the recipient of God's love, you can conquer the entire world.

You may undertake any task, but do not pray to God for the fulfilment of the task undertaken. Instead, leave everything to His Will. Have full faith that He will do what is good for you. Pray to Him, "Oh God, please take care of our

needs every moment of our life." When you discharge your duties surrendering everything to God's Will, you will certainly achieve success in your tasks. But Swami's Will takes shape without any prompting or planning at the appropriate time. Whatever Swami requires arrives unasked.

However, Swami would like to make one more thing clear. As things come to us unasked, we utilise them for the benefit of others, too. Swami does not want anything at all! Swami's only purpose is that, having come here, you should make best use of this opportunity and lead your lives in a happy and sacred manner. You need not give anything for Myself. Swami is always ready to fulfil your desires. But before you express your desire, you should enquire yourself whether you really deserve it.

Any mighty task can be accomplished by prayer. Hence, pray to God silently. Do not pray for the fulfilment of your petty desires. Give up all desires and pray to God wholeheartedly with love. You will certainly find fulfilment in life. You can understand and experience divinity only through love. Some people complain, "Swami, God is not coming to our rescue in spite of our incessant prayers." I tell them, "The mistake lies in your prayer and not in God." If your prayers are sincere, they will certainly be answered. There is nothing that God cannot accomplish.

The stories of the Lord are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds.

They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage.

They are most ennobling and elevating.

They confer bliss on the sages and seers doing penance in forests.

(Telugu poem)

Today, we are celebrating the sacred festival of Christmas. We should celebrate it in the true spirit without entertaining petty desires. Jesus was the

son of God. While he was being crucified, he said, "Oh father, let thy Will be done."

When you surrender yourself to God's Will, he will take care of you. Do not develop superiority complex. Give up ego and pomp. Pray silently and sincerely. If your prayers are not answered, you can certainly question Me. God is not confined to a place somewhere in a distant corner. He always resides in your heart. He can accomplish anything. He is ever ready to perform any task, be it big or small for the sake of His devotees. All are His children. Hence, He will certainly answer our prayers.

Jesus taught, "All are children of God." When you have such firm conviction, you can accomplish any task. You need not go through voluminous books. Fill your heart with love and leave everything to His Will. You will certainly achieve success in your endeavours.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the quintessence of Swami's discourses. His love is power. There is nothing greater than love. When you develop love, you can face the challenges of life with ease and emerge victorious. God will always be with you, in you, and around you and will take care of you. Any mighty task can be accomplished through prayer. However, your prayers should be sincere. There should be unity of thought, word, and deed. Develop firm faith that Swami is in you and that He always listens to your prayers. If you think that Swami is outside, how will your prayers reach Him?

Embodiments of Love!

It is only love that will help you to achieve success in your life. Hence, develop love. That is the true prayer that God expects from you.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase

Kaho".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

23. Have Faith in God, the Only True Friend

Date: 17 October 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

How is it that the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening with utmost regularity everyday?
How is it that the stars glitter beautifully in the sky at night and hide themselves during the day?
How is it that the wind blows incessantly and sustains the living beings without taking rest even for a moment?
How is it that the rivers make gurgling sounds as they flow perennially?
(Telugu Poem)

The whole world, nay, even every individual is permeated by the pancha bhutas (five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and ether). What is prapancha (world)? Pra means vast and panchamu means permeated by the five elements. Therefore, prapancha means the vast space, permeated by the five elements. Wherever you see, you will find the effulgence of the five elements enveloping the vast world.

Embodiments of Love!

God is the source and sustenance for all creation. No one can question why God acts in a particular fashion. He is the Supreme Lord of the Universe, and He can act according to His Divine Will. The creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the Universe are all His Will. But whatever He does is only for the good of the world. For example, one cannot find a place or time without air; though air is not visible, one can experience it.

Every act in this world, the tiniest one, is happening as per the Divine Will. For

instance, a particular act of God may bring you some inconvenience or sorrow. That is at your individual level. But, in God's creation, there is nothing like sorrow. Whatever God does is for the welfare of humanity. Some people feel depressed and wail as to why God gave them troubles and sorrows. But, sorrows and difficulties are our own making. God does not differentiate or cause trouble to anyone. Sorrows and difficulties are only your feelings. Everything in God's creation is meant to provide happiness and convenience to the living beings. That is what I have been repeatedly emphasising.

Whether you are in sorrow or enjoying happiness, always think that everything is for your own good. One has to develop a firm conviction that whatever God does is for one's own good and not for putting one to trouble. Unable to realise this truth, man experiences all sorts of difficulties and sorrows. This is not the correct attitude. One has to strive to recognise the truth underlying God's creation. There are countless people in this world with various feelings. Also, there are several people striving to sharpen their intellect. But there are very few who strive to cultivate noble qualities. Without cultivating noble qualities, what is the use of intelligence alone? All ancient rishis (sages) had exhorted people to cultivate noble qualities.

It is a great mistake to consider oneself as very intelligent and well educated, merely by acquiring high degrees. Mere intelligence and acquisition of high degrees in education are of no use. One has to cultivate noble qualities along with education and intelligence. Intelligence without noble qualities is undesirable.

Today is the first day of the Navaratri celebrations which are held for nine days (Nava Rathrulu). All festivals are meant to remind mankind that they should cultivate noble qualities by engaging themselves in activities beneficial to one's own self and society. Whatever activity we undertake, we must analyse for ourselves whether our intention and resolve to do the same are good, and whether we would be able to develop noble qualities by performing such an act. Due to the effect of Kali Yuga (the age we are in),

man has been able to develop his intelligence in several areas by conscientious effort, but he is not making any effort to cultivate noble qualities. Man has lost confidence in himself. Though he is able to occupy high positions in worldly life with his intelligence, it is of no use without noble qualities. Therefore, the need of the hour is for man to deepen his nammakam (faith). Faith is like the two eyes to a man. Devoid of faith, man is blind. It is only when he has faith in himself, can he have faith in God.

Some people declare "I have no faith in God." This is a meaningless statement. If they have no faith in God, on whom else do they have faith? It is only when one develops faith in God that one can have faith in everything else. Therefore, one has to develop faith in God in the first instance. With faith in God, one can achieve success in all one's endeavours. One who has faith in God will be able to develop faith in every individual. Such a person will develop a firm conviction that God is immanent in every living being.

The Upanishads declare Isavasyam Idam Sarvam (the entire universe is permeated by God) and Easwara Sarva Bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings). God is immanent in every being as Nammakammu (faith). Therefore, one has to cultivate faith in God, as his first and foremost duty. All the Vedas, Upanishads, and scriptures emphasise this as duty of a man.

Today, man has faith in everything in the objective world. For example, when a news item appears in the newspaper that so and so died in Russia under such and such circumstances, we believe that news without an iota of doubt. How did we believe that news? Who gave this news to us? It is only through the newspaper. We are able to believe the newspapers, but we are unable to believe an experience born out of eternal truth and its practice in daily life. In order to develop firm faith in the eternal truth, we have to cultivate noble qualities. This is our foremost duty. By doing so, our faith in God also increases. Unfortunately, today we are setting aside our faith in God and believing in what others say. We thereby are entering the wrong path. We have to develop self-confidence first. Only then can we develop faith in every aspect of God's creation.

Dear Students! Devotees!

What is of utmost importance today is to develop faith in God. Man develops ego, believing that he knows everything in this world. This ego is, in fact, a sign of ignorance. Without having faith in God, if one says that he believes everything in this world, then such kind of faith is not based on solid foundation. Man today believes everything in this world, even that which he has not seen. But, he is not prepared to believe that which is right in front of his eyes, the manifestation of Divinity in ever so many ways. There is fire latent in the branches of a tree, which becomes patent when one branch rubs against the other and friction is generated. Can anyone deny the existence of fire in the branches of a tree? But why is man unable to recognise this truth (Divinity)? It is because of ego. Just as the fire born out of the branches of a tree destroys the tree itself, so also the ego born out of a human being destroys the very human being. Hence, man has to develop firm faith in the existence of God. Without this faith, man degenerates himself into a demon.

Students! Teachers! Patrons of education!

You should understand the true meaning of education. Education does not mean mere acquisition of bookish knowledge.

Can you call all those who know how to read and write educated?
Can one be called educated merely by acquiring degrees?
How can you attain the eternal knowledge
if you do not know your true Self?
(Telugu Poem)

You should make efforts to know your true identity. All your education will prove futile if you do not know who you really are. When you are seated here, you listen to the discourses in rapt attention. But, once you leave this place, you forget everything. You will lose faith in what you have heard here. This is

not expected of a human being. You should have total faith in the spiritual teachings, put them into practice and experience bliss.

Faith is the first and foremost quality that man inherits by birth. He develops faith in his mother in the first instance. His mother may scold or beat him, yet his faith in his mother remains firm. That is the greatness of the love of a mother. Man should develop as much faith in God as he has for his mother. But, unfortunately, he lacks such firm faith in God. Everyone wants to have the direct vision of God. Who is God? Where is He? It can be said that the sun is the direct manifestation of God since he gives us light and sustains our life. The sun-god bestows his love on all in the form of light. If you do not have faith in the light of love, your life will be filled with darkness.

Once a disciple asked his guru, "Where is God?" The guru replied that He was everywhere and was present in all beings. The disciple expressed doubt as to how it was possible for God to be present in all beings. The guru asked him to bring ten vessels and fill them with water. The reflection of the sun could be seen in all of them. Likewise, God is present in all beings. Vessels may vary, but the sun's reflection is one and the same in all. Hence, the sun is the Pratyaksha Paramatma (direct manifestation of Divinity).

However, there can be no reflection without water. Our physical body can be compared to a vessel and the vasanas (inborn tendencies) to water. If your thoughts and feelings are good, you can see the reflection of Divinity clearly. When your thoughts are impure and bad, you will not be able to see the reflection of Divinity. Mistake lies in your thoughts and not in the reflection. Likewise, you alone are responsible for your happiness or sorrow. Hence, cultivate noble and sacred feelings in the first instance. I often tell you that the physical body is like a water bubble and the mind is like a mad monkey. Therefore, do not repose your faith in the body or in the mind. You should have firm faith in your Self. It is from the Self that the body and the mind have originated.

Students!

When you have faith in your Self, you will not experience difficulties and sorrows. Therefore, you should at least have faith in the teachings of elders and follow them implicitly. The sun-god is only one, but he appears separately in different parts of the world. When the sun rises in America, it is time of sunset in India. The Indians will say that the sun is setting and at the same time the Americans will say that the sun is rising. There is no question of argument here. Time may vary, but both are correct from their own points of view.

As part of the Navaratri celebrations, people worship different forms of divinity. You should develop sacred feelings and experience divinity. What is the inner meaning of Navaratri celebrations? These nine nights represent nine planets. Each planet has its own significance. However, these planets are not outside, they are within. If your feelings are impure and unsacred, the result also will be the same. You are responsible for the good and bad you think and experience. They are not the products of outside world. They are the reaction, reflection, and resound of your inner being. Man faces the vicissitudes of life because he is bound by these three. But he forgets these three and tries to search for solutions to his problems. He thinks he is highly intelligent. In fact, that is not true intelligence. He lacks faith in Divinity. That is the real cause of his suffering. God is one. Likewise human beings are one though akara (forms) and acharana (behaviour) may vary. But due to his narrow-mindedness, man is unable to understand this unity.

When you eat a mango, you cannot get the belch of a cucumber. Likewise, whatever you experience is the result of your own thoughts and feelings. No outside force is responsible for it. Do not be carried away by the external influences. Follow the sacred feelings that originate from your heart. Navaratri celebrations are symbolic of the nine forms of energy. What we have to cultivate during this Navaratri is the feeling of oneness. Though there are nine forms of energy, the underlying truth in all of them is one and the same. That is the principle of Atma. It is all-pervasive. It is present not only in human beings, but in all living beings.

If you are walking toward the West when the sun is rising in the East, your

shadow will be moving ahead of you, much bigger than your size. As the sun rises gradually, your shadow becomes smaller. At noon, when the sun is right above your head, the shadow will be right under your feet. Likewise, when you develop equanimity, your ego will be subdued just like the shadow under your feet. First and foremost, you have to give up ego to understand the oneness of the Atma. Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti (God is one but the wise refer to Him by various names). Ekam Eva Adviteeyam Brahma (God is one without a second). There is only unity everywhere; multiplicity is your own imagination. Mistake lies in your vision, not in the creation. We should make efforts to understand the underlying principle of oneness. Firstly, develop faith in yourself. See only goodness in others. If you see bad in others, it is the reflection of your own feelings. Develop Atmabhimana (love for the Self) and Atma Shakti (will power). Exercise self control. Only through self control, can you achieve self satisfaction. Visualise unity in multiplicity.

Embodiments of Love!

You are the Ekatma Swarupas (embodiments of one principle of Atma). You have only one heart, not two. If you have two hearts, you have to be admitted in the hospital. Likewise, there is only one Atma. That is the ultimate truth. Hence, develop the feeling of oneness. If you follow the path of truth, you will find the manifestation of truth everywhere. There is only one principle of love in you. But you are dispersing it in diverse ways. You think that there are various forms of love. It is only your imagination.

Make efforts to understand the principle of spirituality. Have firm conviction that you are the embodiment of Atma and there is no second entity in this world. All worldly relationships such as mother, wife, children, are of your own making. It is only a temporary relationship but not the reality. You should not get deluded by such worldly relationship. Develop firm faith in your "real nation", i.e. the Atma. Do not believe in the world. Believe in yourself. Have firm conviction that God is everywhere. Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). But, you see duality because of your mistaken identity and

delusion.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is in you. It need not be acquired from outside. Worldly love is based on worldly relationship. Whomever you love, you love your own reflection. It is a mistake to think that you love someone else. You point to somebody and say, "He is my friend." But in fact, God alone is your true friend. He will never betray you. Sometimes, you may doubt your true friend, but He will never doubt you or forsake you. Your feelings may change according to time and situation, but God is changeless. He always has the feeling of oneness. Once you consider God as your true friend, everyone will be friendly toward you. Truly speaking, you have no enemies. There is none other than you in this world. When there is no second person, how can there be an enemy? All are like passing clouds. But you think they are permanent and repose your faith in them. Consequently, you are unable to have faith in God, who is pure and selfless. You are forgetting the Divine love and getting intoxicated with the "deep wine" of worldly love.

Embodiments of Love!

If you want to know God, imbibe the principle of oneness. When you have the feeling of oneness, you can see the direct manifestation of God. The sages of Vedic times adored the sun as the direct manifestation of God as described in the Gayatri Mantra. Consider God as your mother, father, friend and everything.

Twameva Mathascha Pitha Twameva,
Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva,
Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva
Twameva Sarvam Mama Deva Deva He alone is the father and mother,
friend and relation,
wisdom and wealth to every individual.

But people have forgotten God and are craving for fleeting pleasures. Nothing is permanent in this world. All your worldly relations are temporary. Your life itself is temporary. Such being the case, how can you consider someone as your permanent friend? There is only one permanent friend; He is God. If you want to experience true love, have full faith in God. God's love is steady. It never diminishes. You may undergo any amount of suffering, yet you belong to God. You are His and He is yours. No third person can come between you and God. It is only because of illusion that you think there is a third person. You say, "He is my classmate; he is my sportsmate." But none of them can come to your rescue. You have to look after yourself. You should have faith in yourself. Only then can you realise the truth.

Embodiments of Love!

Never forget love. Love is the form of God. Love is God. Live in love. Only then can you understand the reality. Do not go by what others say. Follow your conscience. Never lose faith in God under any circumstances. Sometimes even your parents may try to dissuade you from taking to Godward path. You should tell them that God means everything for you. He is your true friend. You love your mother because it is she who has given you birth and fostered you. You consider someone as your teacher because you learn your lessons from him. You treat so and so as your mother, father, teacher, etc., based on your relationship and experience. Truly speaking, all these relationships come and go just like moving pictures on a cinema screen. Do not be deluded by the pictures that appear on the screen. Have the picture of God imprinted on your heart. Develop strong conviction and consider Him as your sole refuge. Only then can you have the vision of God.

This morning, a Russian lady came to Me. During the course of conversation, she said, "Swami, I have a friend."

When I asked as to who he was, she took out her wallet and showed a small

photograph. Then I told her, "Mother, he is your husband, not your friend. Do not consider your husband as your friend or your friend as your husband."

She said, "Swami, this is what I have been doing all these years. Is it a mistake?"

I said, "Yes, it is a mistake, it certainly IS a mistake." Then I asked her when she had met him first. She said that she knew him for the last three years. I told her, "This type of relationship is temporary. God alone is your true friend. You may forget Him, but He will never forget you. He will be with you even after your death. Hence, treat God as your true friend. Ultimately, you will become one with Him."

Embodiments of Love!

There are many in this world who do not understand what true spirituality is and thereby forget the reality. God alone is your true friend. That is the reality. He is your mother, father, guru, etc. Develop such firm conviction. Then God will always take care of you. When you cultivate Ekatma Bhava, all divine qualities will manifest in you. You will be an ideal to the world. You will be free from suffering. You will have neither death nor any punishment. You will realise your true identity. If someone puts a question, "Who are you?" say with firm conviction, "I am I." Never identify yourself with the body. He who realises this truth is a blessed one. I will elaborate on this subject in the days to come.

Worldly gurus undergo change with the passage of time. God alone is changeless, and He alone is your true guru. Have total faith in God. Develop faith day by day. Only then can you be called a true manava (human being). Daivam manusha rupena (God incarnates in the form of a human being). Hence, consider yourself as divine. Declare with total conviction, "I am I." When you lead your life with such a sacred feeling, divinity will certainly manifest in you. Never be under the mistaken notion that God is elsewhere.

He is always in you. Your reflection is God's reflection. Your reaction is His reaction. Everything is basically divine in nature. It is God who makes you play your role in this cosmic drama. It is He who makes you sing, dance, etc. He is the cosmic play director. You may call Him by any name. But He is only one.

Embodiments of Love!

If you want to attain God, develop Ekatma Bhava. You will certainly be able to see and experience Him, everywhere.

(Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema mudita manase kaho".)

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html			

24. Divine Discourse

Date: 18 February 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

Embodiments of Love!

The glory of the ancient culture of Bharat (India) is beyond description. The glorious traditions of Bharat are a matter of pride not only for its residents but the entire world. However, with the passage of time and on account of the growing influence of the western culture, this great tradition is being forgotten. For example, the names of the years in the Hindu calendar, like Prabhava, Vibhava, Shukla, Pramoduta, and Prajotpatthi, have a profound significance. But people have forgotten these names and follow the western calendar consisting of January, February, etc.

[As Bhagavan was continuing with His discourse, He started showing signs of uneasiness as the emergence of the Atma Lingam was imminent. He sat down and signalled the students to start singing Bhajans. After a few moments, a golden lingam emerged from Bhagavan's mouth, and He held it aloft for everyone to see. Then Bhagavan retired to the interview room for a short while, where two more Lingams emerged. Thereafter, He returned to the dais and resumed His discourse.]

No danger can ever befall this body, whatever may happen. In fact, this body has just been relieved of a great burden. The body was not given proper food and nourishment for the last two months. During the process of Lingodhbhavam (the emergence of the lingam), the body, of course felt some strain. However, I assure you that you need not be worried about it. I have dedicated this body to you. It is your responsibility to take care of this body.

I could see that the students were very much anxious and greatly concerned about my well-being. Only I can understand the feelings of my students. In fact, my students are my life breath. The students are prepared to sacrifice their very life for the sake of Swami. I too am prepared to sacrifice my life for

their sake.

Dear children! I will protect you wherever you are. I am utilising all my time for your sake. My only aim is to see that you are always happy. No danger will ever befall this body. Be assured of this. Always remember God, wherever you are. Whatever work you may undertake, consider that as Swami's work. I will always look after your welfare. In fact, even your parents may not be able to understand and appreciate your feelings as well as I do. May you come up in life and attain exalted positions, my dear "bangaru" children!

Whatever has happened has happened, past is past. Suffering for the body is quite common. It just comes and goes like passing clouds. Therefore, from today, abandon all your worries and be happy. I bless you all that you may pass the examinations with flying colours. Why fear when I am here? I am always with you, I do not have any other residence, but for your heart. In fact, your heart is where I dwell.

You may all go now, have your dinner, and come back and join the bhajan singing throughout the night. I will come again during the night.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

25. Obey the Divine Command With Total Faith

Date: 19 October 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

Everyone has to face the consequences of their own karma.
Who has made the bats to hang from the branches of a tree
with their heads downwards?
It is their fate.
Likewise, nobody can escape from the consequences of karma.
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

Karma (destiny) has neither feet nor eyes nor mouth. But man cannot escape from it. That is why our ancients declared that one cannot escape the consequences of one's own actions. Karma does not conform to your likes and dislikes. Something happens not merely because of your desire, and similarly something is not averted because you do not desire it. Karma follows its own course. Your thoughts and desires cause the illusion that things happen because of your will.

The world is full of mystery and wonder. It is nothing but a manifestation of the five elements. It undergoes changes with the passage of time. Likewise, the physical body, which is also made up of five elements, is subject to changes. Only the Indweller is permanent.

Embodiments of Love!

It is not possible for anybody to go against the Will of God. The ways of God are beyond the grasp of human understanding. God can make things appear that do not exist in reality. Likewise, what appears to the eye may vanish in a trice by God's Will. How can anybody understand such mysterious

happenings?

It is not possible for anybody to protect the physical body forever. It remains as long as it is destined to be. Once its purpose is served, the body will perish. Nobody has any control over death. It is decided at the time of birth itself. The date of departure is written on the body when it comes into the world. It is not possible for man to comprehend the way the universe functions.

Each person's experience is unique. Why does the bat hang from the branch of a tree with its head downward? Nobody can explain this phenomenon. Who is responsible for such wonders and mysteries that we witness in this world? What each one has to do, when, where and how, all is predestined. Man has no control over it. Everything happens according to Divine Will and His command. It is the primary duty of man to obey the Divine command implicitly. Everything in this world, visible or imperceptible happens according to Divine Will.

One need not pay heed to what others say when it comes to obeying God's command. You have to obey the divine command in letter and spirit without adding any commas and full stops by yourself. Unfortunately, today nobody is making any effort to understand the mysteries of God's creation. Scientists boast of having unraveled the mysteries of creation, but they do not have true experience of the reality behind the phenomena. Each and every activity that takes place in this universe is full of wonder. When you observe carefully you will be able to perceive the unseen hand of God at work.

Embodiments of Love!

One should obey the divine command with total faith and without any disputation pro and contra. Markandeya was born as the result of a boon granted by Easwara to his parents. Easwara asked his parents whether they wanted a virtuous son with a short life span or a son not so virtuous but who

would live long. The parents opted for a virtuous son. Accordingly, Markandeya was born. He was one of good thought, good behaviour, and good conduct. Easwara informed his parents that he would live only for sixteen years. Nevertheless, the parents were overjoyed as they had been blessed with a virtuous son.

Years rolled by and Markandeya entered his sixteenth year. Remembering the words of Easwara, his parents became grief-stricken. His mother would often shed tears thinking of the imminent death of her son. Markandeya could not understand the cause of her grief and wondered why she was shedding tears. One day, he found his parents steeped in sorrow. On enquiry, they revealed that his death was imminent as per the Divine Will, and that was the cause of their sorrow.

Markandeya felt sorry that Easwara's Will was not revealed to him till then because of which he had wasted the precious time allotted to him. He did not want to waste time any longer. He had an early bath, went to the temple of Easwara, and started chanting the sacred Siva Panchakshari Mantra, Namah Sivaya, with all sincerity and devotion. He lost himself in the contemplation of Easwara. He did not expect any reward for his prayers. He considered it his primary duty to contemplate on God.

The following day was supposed to be the last day of his earthly sojourn. Hence, he remained in the temple. Since he had not returned home, His parents went to the temple and sat at its entrance. They were shedding tears, thinking of the impending end of Markandeya's life. As willed by the Lord, Markandeya left his mortal coil the moment he completed his sixteenth year. His parents were in a sea of sorrow. As Markandeya left his mortal body in the external world, his jiva (soul) reached Lord Siva in the divine world. The Lord was immensely pleased with the sincere devotion of Markandeya. He said, "Markandeya! Today marks the completion of your sixteenth year. You have come to Me in a happy frame of mind. You have bowed down to My Will with

implicit faith and obedience. I am pleased with your devotion."

As Easwara was speaking to Markandeya in this manner, Mother Parvati intervened and said, "Oh Lord! Why don't You send him back to his parents, since he has obeyed Your command implicitly." Easwara wanted Parvati also to accompany Him. Together they infused life into the body of Markandeya.

The parents' joy knew no bounds when they noticed some movement in Markandeya's body. He got up and said, "My dear mother and father, Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati have brought me back to life. I will stay with you as long as you want me. Let us entertain noble thoughts and undertake good deeds. I will discharge my duties as your son and give you happiness."

Accompanying his parents, Markandeya went home. The people of the village were struck with wonder when they came to know that Markandeya was brought back to life by Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati. Markandeya narrated to them in detail all that had happened in the divine world.

God responds to the prayers of devotees and comes to their rescue only when they have purity of heart. One with a pure heart can even alter the sankalpa (will) of God. The story of Markandeya bears ample testimony to this. Markandeya had no desires. He made sacred use of the time granted to him. It is the primary duty of devotees to cultivate noble thoughts and perform sacred actions. Markandeya remained a chiranjeevi (immortal), served his parents, and gave them immense happiness. In the normal course, God's Will cannot be altered. But, sometimes God does change His sankalpa in answer to the prayers of a devotee who is sincere and pure at heart. The devotee has the power to change the Will of God. Devotion does not mean mere vocal expression of prayers; one should have purity of heart.

Adi Sankara was born in Kerala during the 7th century A.D. and propagated the essence of all scriptures to mankind. But he left his body at an early age

of 32 years. Ramanujacharya was born in 11th century A.D. and propagated the efficacy of the Divine Name. That was the time when devotion to God was on the decline. It was because of Ramanujacharya's teachings that people developed devotion and a sense of surrender to God. Madhwacharya was born during 13th century A.D. and propagated the principle of dvaitha (dualism). Even He taught that the jiva (individual soul) and Deva (universal soul) are not different from each other in essence. However, the underlying principle in all the three systems of philosophy as propagated by Adi Sankara, Ramanujacharya, and Madhwacharya is one and the same. The same principle of Atma is present in all beings. It is referred to as Easwaratwa (divinity). The divine incarnations such as Rama and Krishna can be recognised by their divine forms. Every incarnation has a particular form. But Easwaratwa has no form. It represents the principle of truth that is present in all beings. It is responsible for srushti, sthiti, and laya (creation, sustenance, and dissolution).

Easwaratwa, which has no specific form, is symbolised in the form of a Linga. It is usually placed on a horizontal base, which is known as Panavatta. Do you know what it looks like? (At this, Bhagawan with a wave of His hand materialised a Linga with Panavatta.)

Lord Easwara exhorted Markandeya and his parents to sanctify their time in the contemplation of God. He materialised a Linga like this and gave it to Markandeya's parents. They sanctified their lives by worshipping the Linga. Linga represents the Atmic principle, which is present in all. It is not possible for anyone to understand or estimate the divine power. The principle of Atma is changeless. It can assume any form in accordance with the feelings of devotees. Linga is not something that man has made for worship. It is the direct manifestation of Divinity (Sakshat-akara). This truth was very well understood by Markandeya and his father Mrukanda, and hence they worshipped divinity in the form of a Linga.

Every living being comprises three aspects: sthula, sukshma, and karana (gross, subtle, and causal). The physical form represents the gross aspect.

The same principle of divinity is present in all three levels. Without thread, there can be no cloth. Without silver, there can be no plate. Without clay, pot cannot be made. Likewise, without Brahma (Divinity), there can be no world. Without the creator, there can be no creation. The creator can be compared to thread and the creation to cloth. The creator is the embodiment of gross, subtle, and causal aspects. When you contemplate on God, you should transcend the mind. By merely having threads, one cannot make cloth. They have to be interwoven. Likewise, both self-effort and divine grace are essential in order to achieve the desired result.

Sukshma sarira (subtle body) is the source from which our words and deeds originate. Our students are chanting the Vedas everyday. Each mantra is attributed to a particular form of divinity. It is necessary that one knows all the mantras. If one wants to purify one's thoughts and understand one's true Self, one should take Vedas as the basis. Unable to understand this truth, many students are behaving like thieves when it comes to chanting the Vedic mantras.

One who does something wrong and feigns ignorance is a thief. Likewise, one who has the ability to chant the Vedas but does not do so full-throated and wholeheartedly can also be called a thief. All students can chant the Vedas, but some of them are not joining others in chanting. They are not making proper use of whatever they have learnt. They are keeping to themselves all that they have learnt.

I am observing the students as they chant the Vedas. Having learnt the mantras, they are expected to chant them. But some of them are keeping silent. In a way, they are resorting to vidya choratwam and daiva droham (theft of knowledge and betrayal of God). In this manner, the educated are becoming traitors and betrayers. Only those who chant wholeheartedly whatever they have learnt are eligible for Sakshatkara (God-realisation).

When the students chant the mantras, ladies sitting on the other side also join them. They have every right to chant the Vedas. None can deny them their right. They feel inspired to chant the Vedas. when they see our students chant. There are many small children sitting here. Who has taught them the Vedas? They hear attentively while the senior students chant the mantras and learn them by heart. However, there are some educated persons who sit by the side of Veda-chanting boys and yet remain tight-lipped. I am observing them. What is the use of sitting with Veda group if they do not make efforts to learn and chant them? They are bigger thieves. They listen to Vedic chants but do not participate in them. One should listen and also chant the mantras in order to experience divinity.

The Vedas are the very form of God. There are many mantras to propitiate the pancha bhutas (five elements). The five elements are our very life-breath. They sustain our life. The world itself is a manifestation of the five elements. But people forget to express their gratitude to the five elements. What a sin it is! We fill our minds with unnecessary information and consequently fail to give due respect to the five elements.

Everyone should necessarily learn the Vedas, contemplate on them, and chant them wholeheartedly. There is no point in merely learning the Vedas if you do not chant them. There are some who chant the mantras when they are here but forget them when they go outside. You may go anywhere, but you should repeat the mantras at least in your mind. You should never become a vidya drohi (one who does not do justice to the knowledge acquired). A vidya drohi will become daiva drohi also and will ultimately miss the chance to become recipient of God's grace.

Students may commit mistakes without their knowledge. But once they realise their mistake they should not repeat it. Whatever mantras you hear today, you should be able to chant them tomorrow. When all people chant the mantras in unison and in perfect harmony, Brahman will manifest right in front of you. Our ancient sages and seers declared, Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adityavarnam Thamasa Parasthath (I have visualised that

Supreme Being, who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond thamas - the darkness of ignorance).

The sound of the Vedas, is highly sacred. It is extolled as sabda brahmamayi, characharamayi, jyotirmayi, vangmayi, nityanandamayi, paratparamayi, mayamayi, and sreemayi (embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion, and wealth). It is compulsory for everyone to learn the Vedas. If it is not possible, at least one should chant the Name of God.

Whatever Vedic mantras you learn, you should be able to chant them properly. Otherwise, you don't need to learn them at all! I have seen many boys, who learn the Vedas here but forget them when they go to Bangalore. They chant one or two mantras to satisfy the elders who visit that place. It is not for publicity but for your own benefit of experiencing bliss that you should chant the Vedas,.

The three aspects, namely, karma, upasana, and jnana (work, worship, and wisdom) may be compared to chanting, practising, and experiencing bliss. You should transcend vijnanamaya kosha (wisdom sheath) and enter anandamaya kosha (bliss sheath). Karma leads to upasana, which in turn leads to jnana (wisdom). Once you attain jnana, you will experience peace and bliss. Everything depends on karma.

You should not chant the mantras in a mechanical way just because others are chanting. You should assimilate and digest them. Why do you eat food? Is it to preserve it in the stomach? No. The food partaken should be digested and the essence should be supplied to all parts of the body. In the same manner, you should understand and assimilate the Vedic knowledge and derive strength from it. It should be expressed in your thoughts, words, and deeds. You should take part in the propagation of the Vedas and share your

joy with others.

People say God is all-pervasive. He is present everywhere in the form of five elements. Each element represents a form of divinity. All the five elements together constitute the form of the Atma. When you realise this truth, you will experience divine bliss.

Embodiments of Love! Students!

Whatever you have learnt here, share it with others. It is not enough if you share it with others, you too should put your knowledge into practice and derive benefit therefrom. We prepare many delicious items at home and serve them to the guests. Is it not necessary that we should also partake of them? Likewise, we should digest the Vedic knowledge we have acquired and also share it with others.

All types of knowledge have originated from the Vedas. That is why the Veda is extolled as sarva vijnana sampatti (the treasure chest of knowledge). But unfortunately, we are not making proper use of such a treasure. Share your knowledge to the extent you have acquired. Never forget what you have learnt. With sincere effort, you will certainly be able to attain Sakshatkara. How did Markandeya attain Sakshatkara? He repeated the Panchakshari mantra, forgetting himself. As a result, Lord Easwara appeared before him and showered His grace. Those of you who wish to have the vision of God should digest the Vedic wisdom you have acquired and share it with others.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

26. Who are you? I am I

Date: 20 October 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Avatar Day

Peace has become extinct! Truth has become scarce! Mind is the cause for both, Oh Valiant sons of Bharat! (Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Bharatiya (Indian) does not mean a person born in the country of Bharat alone. The culture of Bharat is the mother. The country of Bharat is the father. Bharatiya is one who has faith in and lives under the care of these parents.

Several noble souls have taken birth in Bharat, followed the great culture of this country, and set examples to others. Sri Sankaracharya is one such great personality who spread the culture of Bharat throughout the length and breadth of the country and earned eternal fame. Adi Sankara taught the philosophy of advaita (monism). Three centuries after him came Sri Ramanujacharya, who advocated the visishtadvaita (qualified monism) system of philosophy, which emphasised bhakti (devotion) and prapatthi (surrender) to God. Two centuries after Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Madhwacharya arrived on the scene and propagated the dvaita (dualism) system of philosophy emphasising the devotional path to the people vacillating between several systems of philosophy. However, the fundamental principle underlying all the three schools of philosophy is one and the same, that is, Atma Tattwa (Atmic principle).

The advaita (non-dualistic) philosophy of Sri Sankaracharya advocates the oneness of jiva (individual soul) and Brahman (cosmic soul). The visishtadvaita philosophy of Sri Ramanujacharya presupposes that jiva and Brahman are different. Sri Madhwacharya explained that there are, in fact,

three concepts, namely, dehatma bhava (body consciousness), jivatma bhava (individualised form of God) and Paramatma Bhava (the universalised soul or the Supreme self). Nobody need hold on to a particular school of thought or deride the others. The question of adhering to a particular school of philosophy depends upon the mental frame work of the individual. Sri Sankaracharya emphasised that though the cloth is of different varieties, the thread underlying the cloth is one and the same. "The cloth is made of a number of threads woven together," explained Sri Ramanujacharya. One has to recognise the underlying principle behind the three schools of philosophy, namely, the advaita, the visishtadvaita, and the dvaita.

Ornaments are many, gold is one;
Colours of the cows are many, milk is one;
Beings are many, the Indweller is one;
Nationalities are many, humanness is one.

Adi Sankara had a short life span of 32 years. Though the philosophy advocated by Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, and Sri Madhwacharya acquired different names, namely, advaita, visishtadvaita, and dvaita, the underlying nature of the three types is one, that is Atma Tattwa. The same can be explained with the example of gold forming the base for ornaments with different names and forms.

Not realising the fundamental unity between the three schools of philosophy, people adhering to the different schools of philosophy derided one another, which gave scope for a number of misconceptions in the world about the country of Bharat. In order to explain the truth Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma (one Atma dwells in all beings), Adi Sankara gave some examples. He took out an ornament and explained that the metal with which the ornament was made was gold, thus going into the fundamental principle. The same principle was explained in a different way by Sri Ramanujacharya who emphasised that

though gold forms the basis for the ornament, since it has assumed the form of a chain, it should be called a gold chain.

Sri Sankaracharya while advocating the advaita, philosophy quoted the Vedic dictum Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma (God is one without a second). Sri Ramanujacharya, however, did not agree with this view. His viewpoint was: how could there be a prathibimba (image) without a bimba (object). He thus explained the oneness of the object and the image, which he termed as visishtadvaita, (qualified non-dualism). Another example given in this context was the sugarcane juice. The juice is extracted from different varieties of sugar cane and a number of sweetmeats are made out of the juice. Though the juice is one, it has now assumed different forms. While Sri Sankaracharya emphasised the oneness of the sweet juice and the sugarcane, Sri Ramanujacharya dwelt upon the different forms the juice has assumed.

Thus, ever since the times of the three great acharyas (teachers) till today, there are a number of arguments and counter arguments between the three schools of philosophy. But, present day students do not have faith in any of these three schools of philosophy. They just brush aside these systems as a figment of imagination. Sugar made out of the sugar cane juice is the main ingredient for making various sweets. The sugar is sweet. Similarly, Brahman is the source and sustenance for the entire universe. Wherever you see, you will find manifestation of the Divine (Brahman) in ever so many forms. The forms change and are illusory in nature.

Brahman alone is the eternal, changeless principle. That is why Sri Sankaracharya has declared, Brahma sathyam jagat mithya (Brahman alone is real, the world is illusory). All the three great acharyas, namely, Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, and Sri Madhwacharya, propagated the same principle, that is, Atma Tattwa.

The Upanishads declare that the entire universe is permeated by the same Atmic principle. That truth is contained in the Upanishadic dicta, Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma (one Atma dwells in all beings), Easwarah sarva bhutanam (God is the Indweller of all beings), and Isavasyam idam sarvam (the entire universe is permeated by God).

The rain, the water that flows into the river and the sand in the river that sustains it - all are one and only one. Everything is Brahman. Since every object in this universe is Brahman, nothing can be disregarded or ignored. This principle of Brahman is called "divine" in the English language. But many ignorant or cynical persons take it as "deep wine" and take to imbibing intoxicating substances. Disregarding such perversion, we have to realise that the sweetness underlying Divinity is one only. This oneness in the great culture of Bharat has been propagated since ancient times. In keeping with this great tradition, consider everyone, whether it is an ant or an animal or a human being, as verily Brahman.

Some people may have a doubt in this context whether a human being and an animal can be equated. Yes, so far as the Atmic principle is concerned. However, the behavioural pattern of the animal is different from that of the human being. Considering this aspect, one may conclude that they are different but the underlying Jiva Tattwa is one and the same. On the basis of this Jiva Tattwa, you cannot differentiate at all between the living beings. Thus, Sarvam Brahmamayam Jagat (the entire universe is permeated by Brahman). This truth can be explained by a simple example. This is a white cloth and that is a saffron cloth. Though the colours are different, the cloth is one. The cloth may be of different colours and put to different uses, but the cloth is only one and the same. The cloth is the source. One has to recognise the oneness of the source. Once you recognise the source, all differences vanish in no time. Unfortunately, today, we are giving importance to the names and forms, forgetting the basis and source for all names and forms. As a result, we are undergoing innumerable difficulties and sorrows.

Adi Sankara has explained the advaitic principle beautifully in his famous Bhaja Govindam song thus:

Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam
Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane.

Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda,
the rules of grammar will not come to your rescue
when the end approaches.

If the end approaches, nothing can save you except the divine Name. Therefore, chant the divine Name. Thus, Sri Sankaracharya exhorted, awakened and taught the world.

Further explaining the sorrows and difficulties faced by man in his life's sojourn in this objective world and the need to seek refuge in the divine grace, Sri Sankaracharya composed the following stanza:

Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam
Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare
Kripayapare Pahi Murare.

Oh Lord!

I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death time and again;

I am experiencing the agony of staying in the mother's womb.
It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life.
Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.

One has to analyse, in this context, as to what is it that is subject to birth and death again and again. The deha (body) undergoes this cycle of birth and death, but the Atma is eternal. As long as the Atma remains in the body as the Indweller, there will be consciousness in the body. The moment the Atma leaves the body, it becomes jada (inert). This phenomenon is called death. Unable to realise this truth, man subjects himself to sorrow. Birth and death are only for the outer form, not for the Atma.

A short story in this context. There was once a philosopher-son, who was learning Vedas. By the time he completed his Vedic learning, his mother completed forty years of life. She left her mortal body in her 40th year. The son was deeply immersed in sorrow. Then, his guru called him and tried to counsel him explaining, "Whom do you consider as your mother? The body? No, this is not your mother. You are wailing over a dead body, which your mother has left. In fact, the body is right before you. Why should you have to weep? The chaitanya shakti (power of consciousness) has left the body. It means that chaitanya shakti represents your father and mother, not the forms and attachments to those forms. No doubt, it is true that relationship does exist with the physical form for sometime. But, thereafter the body ceases to exist. When you realise the truth, you will understand the futility of the relationship with the physical body."

The objects may be different, but the source and sustenance for the objects is only one. The same source assumes different names and forms. One should not develop dependence on the names and forms, which are subject to change. This simple truth based on the Mooladhara Tattwa has been explained by different people in different ways as high sounding philosophy.

This has given scope to some misconceptions to a certain extent. In fact, the underlying principle behind the advaita philosophy of Sri Sankaracharya and visishtadvaita philosophy of Sri Ramanujacharya is one and the same.

Embodiments of Love! Students!

Today, we are taking very lightly such a great and noble philosophy. Sri Sankaracharya's Philosophy is profound in nature and explains the great truth in simple and beautiful poetry. Any amount of explanation will be insufficient to bring out the underlying philosophy in full measure.

Sri Sankaracharya has written a great commentary (bhashya) on Bhagavad Gita also. In his commentary Gita, Adi Sankara has explained that there is advaita in dvaita and dvaita in advaita. Further, the visishtadvaita contains both advaita and dvaita concepts as well. All the three schools of philosophy, therefore, lead to the same goal, and their underlying meaning is, Brahma sathyam jaganmithya (Brahman alone is the truth and the world is illusory).

The whole world appears as containing innumerable names and forms. One should not be enmeshed with these names and forms. It is only when the names and forms are set aside and the underlying source is identified that it is possible to recognise the truth. And that truth is Tattwamasi (That Thou Art). That is Prajnanam Brahma (constant integrated awareness is Brahman). That awareness is Ayam Atma Brahma (This Self is Brahman). When you analyse the mahavakya Tattwamasi, it will lead you to the awareness "I am That" and "That I am". When you are able to realise this truth, you will find that the principle "I" underlies everything in the universe as the principle of unity. We have to recognise that "I" principle, which is universal. It is a futile exercise to get into arguments and counter-arguments over this matter and waste one's time. The only aspect you have to realise is "I am Brahman." When somebody questions you who you are, the proper answer would be "I am I", "I am the word, I am the form, and I am the name." This "I" represents and explains everything. When somebody questions who you are, do not

reply by quoting your name. The name represents the name given to the body. You are not the body. Hence reply "I am I." Everyone should strive to attain that state of unity.

The Vedantic concepts lead to endless arguments and counter-arguments. Do not enter into them. Always be under the awareness "I am I." This "I" principle is beyond names and forms. It represents Brahma Tattwa, which is one without a second entity.

When somebody enquires who you are, you reply, "I am I." Similarly, when you enquire somebody who he is, his reply would be "I am I." Thus, all are "I am I." It is only when you think "I am not I" that there will be several questions.

Dear students!

You have to finally make a firm resolve "I am I." You should not identify yourself with the body and say, "I am a child," "I am a young man," "I am an old man," etc. These differences relate to the age factor. What is the next stage after old age? Nobody knows. But, "I" principle exists in the child, youth and old age. This is the fundamental and changeless principle. Therefore, when somebody enquires who you are, you reply, "I am I." If he is unable to understand this principle, do not bother; you hold on to your principle. It is only when you develop such firm conviction that you will be able to achieve anything in life. The philosophical concepts can be explained in ever so many ways. They contain several meanings.

On the 20th October 1940, I made a declaration for the first time revealing my true identity thus:

Know that I am Sai in reality,
Cast off your worldly relationships,
Give up your efforts to restrain Me,

The worldly attachments can no longer bind Me,
None, however great he may be, can hold Me.
(Telugu poem)

Since I made this declaration on the 20th October, people celebrate this day in a big way. We should not give too much importance to the dates and try to celebrate them as birthday, Avatar Declaration Day, etc. Once, Rukmini, the consort of Lord Krishna, invited Him to her palace saying, "Swami! Today is my birthday. Please come for dinner."

Sathyabhama, another consort of Krishna, who was present on that occasion, was angry. She argued, "If today is your birthday, this is also the day on which I entered into the in-laws' house. Krishna tied the nuptial knot round my neck on this day. Therefore, He should visit my house only, on this day."

Thus, the day turned out to be a day of quarrel between the two consorts. Lord Krishna, however was prepared to visit both houses. He does not differentiate between them. Thus, one has to recognise the principle of unity in Divinity.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

27. Cultivate Good Habits To Command Respect In Society

Date: 21 October 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

Some people keep awake the whole night of Sivarathri by playing cards.

Can this be called Jagarana (vigil)?

If one abstains from food on account of quarrel with one's wife, can it be called fasting?

The fisherman goes on watching intently to trap the fish in the net. Can this be termed meditation?

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Several people play cards throughout the night in order to keep themselves awake on the holy night of Sivarathri. Once I enquired of an officer, "How did you spend your time last night?" He immediately got up and answered, "Swami! I spent the time very happily."

I further enquired what sort of happiness he derived. He replied, "Yesterday was Sivarathri. I played cards throughout the night and enjoyed very much. I did not have even a wink of sleep."

I questioned him again, "How can you derive the fruit of holy Sivarathri by spending your time playing cards throughout the night?" The officer gave a wonderful reply, "Since I was busy playing cards throughout the night and was therefore free from all worries; I thought I was happily spending time last night."

You might have observed the fishermen laying their nets in the pond and waiting with single-pointed attention hoping for some fish to fall in the net. Can you call their intense gaze as concentration? Can it lead to mukhti (liberation)? The understanding of concentration and meditation by man today can be compared to the fisherman's single-pointed effort to catch fish.

Another example: A person was heavily drunk and had lost his body-consciousness. Can you call it thanmayattwa (total identification with divinity)? One more example; a person quarrelled with his wife and abstained from food. Can you say he was on a ritual fast? Some people resort to such acts of thanmayattwa and concentration and live in a fool's paradise. One can imagine as to what extent man has degenerated himself taking to bad ways and distortions!

Did you ever analyse the nature of the human body? It consists of sweat, urine, excreta, bad odour, flesh, and blood. It is prone to decay and death ultimately. Every second, only bad matter and bad odour are generated in the body. What is there to be proud of such a decaying body? One has to realise the true nature of such an evanescent human body and make the best use of it. Do you know why God has given us the human body? Is it for indulging in evil acts and wasting the precious life? No, no. The body is given to us so that man should strive to attain Divinity, not for misusing it. You should realise for yourself to what sacred purposes it is to be used. From the time one gets up from the bed till he goes to bed in the night, man's time is spent in worldly pursuits. He does not have time to think of God even before he goes to bed.

The human body is a sacred instrument given by God and it has to be sanctified by contemplating on God at least one or two times a day. What kind of activities are to be undertaken so that man may derive happiness and joy? The most appropriate answer to this question would be that his senses should be engaged in constant contemplation of God. The eyes must always see good things. The ears must be engaged in hearing good things. The tongue must be made to speak always sweet and noble words. It should chant the divine name. Thus, every limb of the body must be put to proper

use and sanctified.

Dear students!

Normally, I do not like to speak about My physical self. However, I am revealing certain aspects of My daily routine with the hope that they will serve as guidelines for you. I wake up four times during night. Usually I get up from bed at 12 hours at midnight, brush My teeth, and also clean the tongue and mouth thoroughly. Again, I repeat the process at 1.30 a.m., 3 a.m. and 4.30 a.m. The boys who sleep in My room to attend to My needs during the night may find it inconvenient sometimes because their sleep is disturbed. However, I strictly adhere to this routine so that My tongue, mouth and teeth are always clean. I feel happy only when My tongue and mouth are clean. A clean tongue helps in maintaining purity of body and mind.

You might have observed Me talking to a number of people, every day. I will spend even 20 minutes instead of 10 minutes talking to those who keep a clean tongue and whose mouth does not emit bad odour. On the other hand, I do not talk to those with bad odour even for two minutes. During our sleep, bacteria get generated, and they stick to our tongue and teeth on all sides of the mouth. They have to be removed by proper brushing of the teeth and a thorough cleaning of the tongue and mouth. Only then can we be healthy and happy.

Apart from physical cleaning, our tongue must be engaged in speaking sacred and pure words. Following this principle, I am putting My tongue to proper use by engaging Myself in sacred activities. Only after I clean My body properly do I come out of My chamber. By the time I come out of My room, a boy looking after the kitchen brings the ragi gruel. I partake of the gruel and feel very happy and energetic. Except this ragi gruel, I do not take any other item during early morning. I do not have breakfast. After taking the gruel, I once again clean my mouth. Then, I drink some fresh water and come down.

Several people may be wondering as to what I have for My breakfast. Nothing; I have no taste for snacks at all! A glass of cool water is all that I like to have. Thereafter, I spend some time happily with devotees, giving darshan and talking to some; I also give interviews to selected people. I am always pure in body and mind. My words are pure, My thoughts are pure, and My acts are pure and sacred.

One important aspect to be borne in mind by people who are called for interview. While I enter the interview room with such a pure and sacred body, I notice that some people sitting there in the group are in the habit of smoking. Please be cautioned that I do not allow people smoking. I strongly disapprove the habit of smoking. Immediately I pick up such people and ask them to go out. The wife of a smoker may plead with Me, "Swami! He is my husband; if you send him out, what is there for me to represent to you?" I firmly reply, "Whether it is husband or son, whoever he may be, one should not enter My room with bad odour and the smell of cigarette. You tell him to go out, clean his mouth and come back. Then I shall speak to him." Such people will go out immediately, clean themselves, and come back in ten minutes. Then I speak to them endearingly.

Several people try to cover the bad odour emanating from their body, by using some perfume. There is a small story in the puranas that is relevant in this context. Goddess Parvati did great penance, hoping to marry Lord Easwara. She tried all sorts of methods to entice Easwara, i.e. putting on good dress, applying perfume, etc. But Easwara did not yield to her wishes. Then, she sought the help of Manmatha (Cupid) to wean Easwara to her side. Even then, Easwara did not budge an inch. On the contrary, he took Manmatha to task for trying to help Parvati. Immediately, Parvati realised her fault and regained her poise. She meditated on the Divine form of Lord Easwara, which is nitya (eternal), suddha (unsullied), buddha (enlightened), mukta (liberated), and nirmala swarupinam (embodiment of purity). She came back to her normal, natural and pure self. Easwara then turned His vision toward her and accepted her. They were married on an auspicious occasion with the consent of her parents.

A human being should always be natural and pure. He should not be artificial, wearing gaudy dress and applying perfumes and colours. This may be necessary to a certain extent. But of what use is it to apply perfumes when the body is full of bad odour? My body always emits natural effulgence and divine fragrance because I never entertain bad thoughts. "A sound mind in a sound body" is the principle I follow.

In order to teach such good habits to others, I always maintain My body and mind in a pure and unsullied condition. Sometimes, I wake up the boy sleeping in my room at 12 hours at midnight and again at 1 a.m. This may cause some inconvenience to the boys. They may feel a little inconvenience during that particular moment, but they soon forget the same and attend to Swami's needs. Thus, the body must always be kept in a clean and fit condition, since it is a sacred instrument provided by God. Since I give utmost importance for cleanliness of the body, others would also like to emulate Me. By following My good habits and moving along with Me, people command respect in society.

Markandeya was a great devotee of Lord Easwara. But, he had a short span of 16 years of life. Like any other boy of his age, he used to spend a lot of time in play. He was very happy in the company of other boys, unaware of his impending death. When his parents realised that he would be completing 16 years shortly, they felt very sad that he was nearing his end. They were immersed in sorrow and started shedding tears. Markandeya asked his parents, "Why are you crying?"

Realising the futility of concealing the information from their son any longer, they replied, "Son! Our relationship with your mortal body ends today. Lord Easwara granted you a short span of life of 16 years, which will come to an end today."

Markandeya felt very much disappointed since he spent all his time till then in

play, in the company of other boys. Realising that he had still a few more minutes of time, he took a bath and went to the temple of Easwara. There, he started chanting the Divine name of Easwara with a pure tongue. Meanwhile, it was time for sunrise. Easwara and Parvati were discussing among themselves the impending death of Markandeya. Parvati enquired from Easwara, "Swami! Markandeya's life is fast coming to an end. Why delay in saving his life? His parents are immersed in great sorrow."

Easwara then suggested that Parvati should enter the scene and play her role in prolonging the life of Markandeya. Parvati then lifted the child and made him to sit on her lap. Markandeya had the good fortune of sitting on the lap of the Divine Mother, which entitled him to win the grace of Lord Easwara. Easwara came there and blessed Markandeya that he shall be a chiranjeevi. Thus, he earned the grace of both the Divine Mother and Father.

In the meantime, Markandeya's parents arrived there to see what had happened to their son. Their joy knew no bounds when they found their son hale and healthy. They expressed their happiness thus: "Son! It is only due to your devotion and complete surrender to Lord Easwara that you are able to overcome death and earn the divine grace for becoming a chiranjeevi.. You protected yourself, we could not do anything in this regard."

God does not need anything from the devotee except devotion and complete surrender. He expects from a devotee a sacred body, sacred words, sacred vision, and selfless activity. When a devotee offers these things, God gives Himself up to that devotee. One's body, mind, and actions should always be pure, so that God is attracted towards him. It is not by the different forms of worship or other rituals that God's grace can be obtained. Even the mother expects the child to cultivate a pure heart. Frequently, I recite the following poem to remind man of the futility of struggling for merely filling one's belly:

Oh! Man!

You struggle hard for the sake of filling your belly;
You acquire many forms of knowledge in various fields.
Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness
you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk
in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth,
while forgetting God.

(Telugu poem)

I always sanctify My time by engaging Myself in activities beneficial to the society. Right from My childhood, I cultivated spartan habits and followed strict regimen. This I had already explained in a poem on an earlier occasion thus:

Get up early in the morning at the crowing of the cock,
Have a bath after your morning ablutions,
Wear a proper dress,
Eat properly and moderately,
Go to school and study diligently,
Earn a good name,
Don't move out when it is raining,
And never go near the ditches,
Take part in games,
Run and play.
If you abide by all these rules
You will have both health and wealth.

(Telugu poem)

In those days, people were not used to snacks. The cooked rice was soaked in buttermilk on the previous night and taken as breakfast next morning with a

little salt.

Several boys keep their study tables very unorganised, with the books strewn all over. They make it clumsy and dirty. But I used to keep my books always neat and tidy. Whatever I am relating today is based on My personal experience only.

In those days, very few boys were in a position to purchase new books when they were promoted to a higher class. Every four or five years, the textbooks were changed. I always used to keep My books neat. Hence, boys studying in the lower standard and promoted to the higher standard at the end of the academic year used to take My books.

During a particular year, a poor boy approached Me and asked for My books. I advised him to go and have a bath in the Chitravathi river and then come. He did accordingly. Then, I showed My books to him. In those days there was high syllabus even for lower classes, like history, geography, civics, etc. On seeing My books, he commented, "Raju! you do not seem to have touched your books even once. They appear brand new." The cost of My books totalled to twelve rupees, but the poor boy was not in a position to pay even that much.

I told him, "My dear! I am selected for the scout camp by our teacher. I have to purchase khaki dress and shoes. Besides, there are some other items of expenditure. I don't have money to incur that expenditure. Nor I would like to ask My parents. What I need at the moment is five rupees. Therefore, pay Me five rupees and take away the books."

The boy felt very happy. He immediately paid the amount. In those days, currency notes were very rare. Therefore, he brought the entire amount in small coins packed in a piece of cloth. It was tied in an old cloth, which gave way unable to bear the weight of the coins. The coins were strewn all over the

room, making a big sound. On hearing the sound, the lady of the house came there and enquired, "Where did you get all this money? Did you steal from my trunk?" So saying, she slapped Me.

The poor boy standing there explained to her, "Mother! I gave those coins to Raju toward the cost of his books which I purchased from him." She did not believe his words and took away the entire money.

The next day all My classmates were going to Cuddapah to participate in the scout camp. I was studying in Kamalapuram when this incident happened. I told My teacher that I would start the next morning and join the group there. Early in the morning I set out on My journey by walk. I walked a long distance and before I could join My colleagues, they had left for their breakfast. As for Myself, I did not have even a paisa in My pocket. What do I eat for My breakfast? I thought I would manage somehow without eating anything. I purposely avoided My classmates then, lest they may question Me whether I had breakfast. They were searching for Me.

There was a masonry tank nearby in which water was stored for cleaning the cows and buffaloes. I was feeling very tired, hungry and thirsty, having walked all the way. But I could not help. I washed My face with that dirty water and drank some. Then, I noticed that someone had left behind a packet of beedies (country cigarette) and a one anna coin on the tank there. The beedies were, of course, of no use to Me. Therefore, I threw them away. I took the one anna coin and converted it into four small coins (botlu or kanis). Four kanis in those days were equivalent to one anna.

As I was returning, I noticed a person sitting on the roadside playing cards spread over a cloth and inviting passersby to bet on a particular card. He would offer double the amount, if we were able to win. No doubt, this was a sort of gambling, which I would advise everyone to refrain from. But I was

completely helpless at that time. I therefore put one coin on different cards. Every time, I was winning the bet and getting double the amount I invested. Thus, I played the game till I could make sixteen annas (one rupee). Then I thought that was the end of the game and returned with the money already earned.

Since I was feeling hungry, I purchased three dosas with one bottu. In those days, dosas were available at the rate of one for a dammidi (1/3rd of a bottu). Thus, I managed with two bottus a day eating dosas. I joined the scout duty along with My friends. During the night, I kept the bundle of coins under My head and slept on the sandy floor. Since I was very much tired, I was lost in sound sleep. Meanwhile, someone noticed the bundle under My head and took them away when I turned to the other side. When I woke up the next day, I noticed that the cloth bundles containing money were stolen by somebody. I had no money to buy even one dosa. My classmates were very much dejected at My plight. They were in fact crying. They pleaded with me to eat at least one dosa, which they would buy for Me. But, I flatly refused. I told them that I was not hungry, since I did not like to avail Myself of others' help. Especially, I did not wish to touch others' money. So, I left that place.

Another incident happened during My childhood. Once My hand was swollen and it was giving Me a lot of pain. I did not reveal it to anybody. I tied a bandage Myself with a wet cloth. The next day, Seshama Raju's (Swami's elder brother) son died. He gave a telegram to Venkama Raju (Swami's father). Venkama Raju immediately rushed to see Seshama Raju. The Griham Abbayi (Venkama Raju) started from Puttaparthi and reached Bukkapatnam, and from there to Kamalapuram. By the time he reached Seshama Raju's house, all in the family was immersed in sorrow over the death of his son. I too had to pretend to be sorrowful, since I was beyond sorrow and joy.

The Griham Abbayi enquired from Me, why I had a bandage on My forearm. I tried to explain away very casually as if nothing had happened. I told him there was a slight pain in the joint and therefore I put the arm in bandage.

There was a lady belonging to the Vysya community in the neighbouring house, who used to make her living by preparing dosas and selling them. She tried to reason with Griham Abbayi, saying, "What! Venkama Raju! I know you are sufficiently well-off so as to get Raju educated at your place. Why should you put him to so much trouble by keeping him under the care of his elder brother at such a distant place? You do not know how much the boy is suffering here. He has to fetch drinking water from a distant place carrying two big pitchers with the help of a Kavadi on his shoulders, daily." Thus, she narrated several incidents where I had to undergo physical strain and suffering.

Griham Abbayi was deeply moved on hearing My plight and immediately called me and said, "My dear son! You start immediately and come along with me. Let us go back to Puttaparthi." All the family members loved Me. He therefore, lamented, "I never beat you till date. You are undergoing so much suffering here."

I tried to console him by saying, "No, No. What these people say is not true. No one here is putting Me to any trouble at all! If I come away with you now, there will be none to help in the domestic chores here. It is not proper for you to take Me away from this place right now. You may go and I will follow you later at an appropriate time." Thus, I never revealed the fact that the pain in My arm was due to the injuries inflicted on Me in Seshama Raju's house. I never had the habit of complaining against elders. I always tried to protect the dignity and honour of the family.

In those days, I was struggling very much due to paucity of funds for My education. Often times I had to manage with empty pockets. In the same village, there used to be a businessman by name Kotte Subbanna. He used to run a provision shop in which some Ayurvedic medicines were also sold. Once, a new Ayurvedic medicine by name "Bala Bhaskara" was put up for sale

in his shop. It was a new and very efficacious medicine. It could fetch him a good profit if popularised. He, therefore, requested Me to shoulder the responsibility of making propaganda for this new medicine. I agreed to his request, but asked for some more information about the medicine. Then I composed a song about the efficacy of the medicine and gathered a few children of My age to go round the nearby villages with placards in their hands and singing the song composed by Me. I led the team of boys. The song ran as follows:

There it is! There it is! Oh, children! come, come!
There is the medicine Bala Bhaskara;
Be it an upset stomach or a swollen leg;
Be it a joint pain or flatulence;
Be it any ailment, known or unknown;
Take this Bala Bhaskara for an instant cure!
If you wish to know where it is available,
There is the shop of Kotte Subbanna; It is in that shop that you can pick it up.
Come here boys! come here!
It is an excellent tonic
Prepared by the famous physician Gopalacharya himself,
Come here boys! come here!
(Telugu song)

By the time we completed our propaganda tour of the nearby villages, all the stock of medicines in Subbanna's shop was exhausted. He felt very happy. Then he called Me and expressed his happiness saying, "My dear Raju! Due to your efforts, all the stock of medicines in my shop was sold out in no time. I am grateful to you."

When Griham Abbayi requested Me to follow him to Puttaparthi, I told him that I could not go with him since Seshama Raju's family was in a sorrowful

state due to the loss of their son. "It is not proper for Me to leave them at this juncture. You please go to Puttaparthi. Later, I will join you, I said."

Griham Abbayi shed tears of joy for My sense of responsibility and noble feelings. He said, "Dear son! I had never come across small children explaining such noble thoughts to elders. How noble and great are your qualities! You are teaching me such great things. How sweet and wise your words are! Your nobility alone will protect you." Saying thus, he left for Puttaparthi.

However, ever since he reached Puttaparthi, he used to send messages daily requesting Me to go over there. He was remembering all those complaints made to him by our Vysya neighbour about My difficult life in Kamalapuram and was feeling very sorry for My plight. Meanwhile, a few more days passed. I had to sit for My examinations as well. So, I thought it would not be wise to get back to Puttaparthi at this juncture without attending the examinations. Moreover, I had My friends to be taken care of in the examinations.

We three were friends - Ramesh, Suresh, and Myself. We sat on the same bench in our classroom. Ramesh and Suresh used to sit on either side of Me. They were dull in education. I told them, "I will write the answer for the questions on your answer books. You just sit silently in the examination hall."

All the three of us went into the examination hall. Our roll numbers were quite afar from one another. Therefore, we had to sit at different places in the examination hall. There was no chance at all for us to communicate with each other. My friends were very unhappy and dejected. I conceived a plan to help them. First of all, I finished writing My answer sheets within no time. Then I took additional sheets and wrote the answers for the questions for both Ramesh and Suresh, in their own handwriting. Then, I kept all the three answer sheets on the table of the examiner.

The result of our examination was announced on the third day. In those days, the examination results were announced soon after the examination; not like the present day when it takes months together to announce the results. All the three of us passed in 1st class. Whatever answers were there in My answer sheets, the same were found in the answer sheets of the other two boys as well. But, none could accuse us of copying, since our roll numbers were very different and our seats distant from each other. Mine was number 6, whereas another boy's was 108. The third boy's roll number was still further away.

However, our teacher Mahboob Khan realised that I helped the other boys to perform well in the examinations. But he did not reveal that news to anyone. While we were coming out of the classroom, the teachers followed us and congratulated us for securing first class in the examination. They shed tears of joy. Thus, I made everyone, including my teachers and classmates, happy and returned to Puttaparthi. My friends Ramesh and Suresh expressed their wish to accompany Me to Puttaparthi. They, in fact, insisted on following Me. I advised them that, they could join Me if they so wished, but they had to leave Me in Puttaparthi and get back to their places. I used to advise, guide and correct My fellow students during My stay in the school. Never did I waste My time in school. I always endeavoured to sanctify it. I used to talk sweetly and softly with everyone.

By the time I reached Puttaparthi, people could notice that a strange ailment had taken over Me. I used to talk something to Myself. People around Me thought that I was mad. Several people offered several suggestions to get Me cured of this strange disease. At the end, all people unanimously decided that I should be taken to a bhootha vaidya (witch doctor) for curing Me of an alleged possession by a demon. That sorcerer got My hair shaven off and inflicted two deep cuts on My scalp in the form of an X. Then he poured lime juice on the bleeding cuts. It gave Me great pain and an unbearable burning sensation. But I did not give vent to My feelings and silently suffered all this torture. In fact, I was laughing at his foolish treatment.

Then, he decided to put Me to more suffering. He brought kalikam (a sort of poisonous substance) and put it in My eyes. Thus, he put Me to several kinds of torture. Venkamma (Swami's elder sister), who accompanied Me to this sorcerer's place, could not bear to see Me undergoing this suffering. She therefore ran to Griham Abbayi and pleaded with him, "Father! You don't put Sathya to this inhuman treatment. This man is inflicting great pain and injury on the boy. Enough of torture you take him away immediately to Puttaparthi."

I was brought back to Puttaparthi. From then on, I underwent occasional bouts of a "strange ailment". On Thursdays, I used to answer some questions and enquiries of people in the name of Baba.

Ever since that sorcerer shaved off My hair and put two deep cuts on My scalp, till today I have not had a haircut. Some people think that I trim My hair. No, never. My hair grows naturally. I am having this type of hairstyle for the last 70 years. The ensuing birthday is My 79th birthday.

Till today, I did not suffer from any disease. My teeth and eyesight are intact. Till a few years ago, those accompanying Me were, in fact, running to catch up with Me. I can still walk very fast, but the doctors put a condition that I should not. The reason being that I was operated sometime ago when I had a fall on the floor. They put a steel rod joining My hipbone and put sutures over it. That is why I was advised against My walking fast. Nevertheless, I have been able to attend to My daily routine. I do not give up any item of My daily activities. I am giving interviews to visitors. I am moving along the darshan lines, giving darshan to devotees. There is absolutely no hindrance to My daily activities. I have already spoken so long. There is a lot more to speak, if I wish. I have been maintaining My body all these years in a perfect shape. It is possible that I might have caused some trouble to some people in the process. But they do not mind. They do service to Me, even though I dissuade them.

Today is Durgashtami day. Tomorrow and the day after are Mahanavami and Vijayadasami festivals. I have a lot of work to do. I have to talk to the purohiths (priests) conducting the yajna. Besides, there are other important matters to be attended to. After finishing My work, I will again talk to you. Did I not tell you that students are My property? I care so much for them. If they are happy, I will also be happy. I have a piece of advice to you. Never give up namasmarama. Do constant namasmarama wherever you are.

(Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajana Bina ...")

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html>

28. Uphold The Dignity And Honour Of Bharat Matha (Mother India)

Date: 22 October 2004 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

The Lord of Kailasa has manifested His Divine form in front of your eyes, with the crescent moon adorning His head, the cool water of the Ganga flowing between the matted locks, with His radiant eye in the middle of the forehead and the purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a blackberry. He wears serpent bracelets and a snake belt, His entire body is smeared with vibhuti, His forehead is adorned with a kumkum dot, his ruddy lips glow with the juice of the betel, diamond-studded gold earrings dangle from His ears, and His whole swarthy body glows with divine
(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Every day, you have been listening to various speakers dwelling on the principle of *Easwara* (Divinity). Many people imagine that Easwara has a form with matted locks of hair and snakes adorning Him as ornaments. But this is not the true form of Easwara. Though He is all-pervasive, devotees, out of their imagination, attribute a form to Him with various types of ornaments.

There is a temperamental weakness among *Bharatiyas* (Indians) to bring down the various forms of God they adore and the idols they worship to the level of beggars. Truly speaking, there are no beggars and there cannot be a beggar in this sacred land of Bharat. To consider somebody inferior to you and imagine that they expect money from you is a sign of weakness. It is

because of such narrow-minded feeling that people from other countries consider India to be a poor country and that it is full of beggars. This is totally a misconception. Bharat has never been a poor country. Just because people are economically backward, they cannot be considered beggars. There are no beggars in this world. If someone seeks financial help or asks for food, they are treated as beggars. In fact, we are responsible for making somebody a beggar. We consider them to be inferior to us and ill-treat them. Bharat is a land of plenty and prosperity. You must realise that there are no beggars in this country and must conduct yourself accordingly. Some people bring down even God to the level of a beggar. When their desires are fulfilled, they eulogise God. They pray, "Oh God, I will offer You cash or in kind if You fulfil my desires."

God is not poor, and, hence, people created by Him cannot also be poor. It is man who makes beggars out of his fellowmen and ill-treats them. Such low and mean practices should be given up. Some people think that Lord Venkateswara is in need of money. They think He would do their work and fulfil their desires for the sake of money. In this manner, they bring Him down to the level of a beggar. It is a grave mistake.

God is not a beggar. You should consider Him as your father and mother. Cultivate love for God and your fellowmen. Never consider someone a beggar and ill-treat him. Extend help to those who are in distress. Develop love for God and fear of sin. Just because someone approaches you for help, do not consider him to be weak and inferior. Do not humiliate him. Your innate divinity will manifest before you when you develop love and respect towards all. Treat everybody as your brothers and sisters. Never consider anybody a beggar. It is a great mistake to think that you are the giver and someone else is the beneficiary.

Some businessmen try to get their work done by offering bribes to those in power. Offering or accepting a bribe is also a great sin. Asking for bribe is the same as begging for alms. We should not give room to such mean practices.

Since ancient times, Bharat has upheld moral and ethical values and has set an ideal to the rest of the world. Unfortunately, such values are forgotten today. Feed the hungry with love, but do not look down upon them as beggars. Begging should not be entertained or encouraged in this country. People may come to you and ask for food. It does not mean that they are beggars. You do not become superior to them just because you serve them food. Speak to them lovingly and satiate their hunger. But never insult them. Bharatians are putting their own country to disrepute by making their fellowmen beggars.

Bharat is not a poor country. Otherwise, how do we explain the invasion of so many foreign rulers in the past? Many foreign kings invaded this land and plundered the wealth of our country. The question of being rich or poor arises because one compares himself with another. If someone comes to your doorstep saying, Bhavati Bhiksham Dehi (mother, give alms), do not treat them like a beggar. Treat them like another human being and empathise with them. Their coming to you and asking for food does not make them inferior to you. Just because they have no money to feed themselves, they do not become paupers and you a millionaire.

If you want to uphold the reputation of the country, respect your fellowmen. First and foremost, develop love for your motherland. Feel proud that you are a Bharatiya (Indian). Realise that you are born in a sacred land, which is the birthplace of many noble souls. Yesterday you heard the ladies extolling Bharat as the land of the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita. You should always keep in mind the glory and grandeur of Bharat and conduct yourself accordingly. Only then are you eligible to be called a Bharatiya. Your actions should match your words. Merely extolling the glory of Bharat and conducting yourself in a mean manner is futile.

Forbearance is the real quality in this sacred land of Bharat.

The nectarous feeling in this country is the feeling toward one's mother.
(Telugu poem)

Consider Bharat as your own mother. Develop love and reverence toward her and uphold her dignity and honour. If you think your mother is poor, how can you consider yourself to be rich? Since ancient times, Bharat has conferred the wealth of knowledge to all through the sacred scriptures and epics. How can such a country be considered poor? Your physical mother may be poor but not your motherland.

This sacred land has attained the reputation of being the greatest among all nations. You should not show disrespect to such a great country by considering it poor and weak. The morality and integrity that we find in Bharat cannot be found in any other country. Bharat is like a treasure chest of gold. Having been born in such a land, where is the need to go in search of gold and silver? But, unfortunately, people show disrespect and disregard to such a land of gold. The educated should take a vow to revive the ancient glory of Bharat. But, sadly, even the educated are not able to realise the greatness of Bharat.

Today if we find beggars in the streets, it is because we have encouraged them by giving money. Never give money to beggars. If they are in need of food or clothes, you can certainly give them. But do not encourage the practice of begging.

Bharat has earned great name and fame among all nations. But people in position and power are bringing disrepute to the country by their corrupt practices. Nobody should indulge in the bad practice of giving or receiving bribe. Even the Government should be cautioned in this regard. They should find ways and means to stop this practice of bribing and begging. Beggars should not be given money. They should be provided with opportunities to become self-reliant. Extend all your help and cooperation to the less fortunate ones and help them to come up in life. It is not possible for all to be equal in

this world. There is bound to be inequality.

Today, people out of their selfishness and self-interest have brought down even God to the level of a beggar. When you go to a temple, the priest brings a plate before you expecting a few coins as *dakshina* (offering). People keep *dakshina* in the plate and receive prasadam from the priest. This practice of asking for *dakshina* also amounts to asking for alms. Let us not resort to such begging. Let us become rich in our thought, word, and deed. You may die for want of money, but never beg for money. The educated should teach a lesson to those who spend their time begging in the streets. When you come across a beggar, you should tell him, "My dear, you are the son of Bharat Matha (Mother India). Your mother is not poor, she is rich in all respects. Since ancient times, she has been taking care of all nations. Being her son, it is not proper on your part to resort to begging."

Do not keep coins in your pocket for giving to beggars. You may derive some satisfaction by doling out a few coins to beggars, but, in the process you are also bringing disrepute to your motherland. You should uphold the prestige and honour of your motherland. You should become an ideal and worthy son of Bharat. Be convinced that you are born to uphold the honour of your motherland. Otherwise, what is the use of your birth as her son?

You must have heard our students sing Ramakatha in which there is an incident wherein Lava and Kusha find their mother Sita in a sorrowful mood and then trying to console her. They ask her, "Mother, please let us know the cause of your sorrow. Of what use is our life if we are unable to wipe your tears? Do not underestimate us just because we are children. In fact, we are more powerful than Lord Rama. Hence, Oh mother! Do not shed tears. If you shed tears, the whole country will be ruined. Being your worthy sons, is it not our duty to remove your suffering and sorrow? We are ready to meet your interests and give you happiness even at the cost of our lives."

Unfortunately, today we do not find such ideal sons as Lava and Kusha. Today, people have become weak-minded. They lack the spirit of sacrifice.

Even the so-called great and rich people have not given up mean-mindedness. I feel it is they who are making beggars of their fellow human beings. One should never say "no" when it comes to helping others.

Once, a rich person went to a guru and requested him to grant him wisdom. His pockets were stuffed with bundles of currency notes. As he was seated there, the guru sent one of his disciples to a businessman's shop to get a five rupee note. After some time, the disciple returned, saying that the shop was closed. The guru sent him to another shop and again the disciple returned empty-handed. This went on for some time. But the rich man who was a witness to these happenings did not offer a five rupee note from his pocket. Then, the guru chided him, saying "Your pockets are full of currency notes, yet you did not have the heart to part with a five rupee note when I needed it most. How do you expect to attain wisdom without cultivating the spirit of sacrifice?" Immediately the businessman took out a five rupee note and offered it to the guru. The guru did not accept the note, saying one should perform acts of charity out of love and not out of compulsion.

When someone comes to your doorstep begging for food, you should invite him wholeheartedly into your verandah, give a sumptuous meal, and satisfy him. Everyone has an equal share in all that is available in this world. Today, people lack the spirit of sacrifice. They are experts in giving lectures on sacrifice but are not prepared to part with even a paisa from their pockets when it comes to practising what they preach. What is the use of preaching when you cannot translate it into action?

Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam
(Those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones).

You need not borrow money in order to serve others. Share with your

fellows whatever you have. This is how you should uphold the honour and dignity of Bharatiyas (Indians). Today, the reputation of the country has come down on account of people who have stooped to the level of beggars. It is because of the educated people that beggars are on the increase. What is the purpose of education? Is it to produce beggars? I am not in favour of such education.

One may acquire a high academic qualification such as M.A. and B.A. and attain exalted position,

One may amass wealth, perform acts of charity, and attain name and fame,

One may have physical strength and enjoy a long and healthy life,

One may be a great scholar studying and preaching the Vedas,

But none can equal a true devotee of the Lord.

(Telugu poem)

People lack strength and have become weak-minded because they lack devotion for God. They do not have love for their motherland. Consequently, they are bringing bad name to the country. You will be called a true and worthy son of Bharat only when you uphold the dignity and honour of Bharat Matha (Mother India). You may be a great scholar, but your scholarship is of no value if it is not used for protecting the honour of your country. If you go through the biographies of noble men like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, and Rabindranath Tagore, you will find that all of them exhorted people to give up mean-mindedness. You should proclaim with pride, "I am the son of Bharat." The boy who spoke earlier made a mention of this. If you want to be called a true son of Bharat, you should lead a life of sacrifice. If need arises you should be prepared even to forego your meal in order to feed the hungry.

The spirit of sacrifice demonstrated by Bharata in the Ramayana is unparalleled. When Rama went to the forest, Bharata was to be crowned as

king. But he went to the forest to entreat Rama to come back to Ayodhya and ascend the throne. Lakshmana, who was with Rama in the forest, observed the arrival of Bharata and his entourage from a distance. He became furious with the misconceived notion that Bharata was coming to wage a battle with Rama. In an angry tone, he said, "Mother Kaikeyi has sent us to the forest. Now, her son does not want us to live in peace even in the forest. That is why he is coming here with his army. If You permit me, I will teach him a fitting lesson."

Reacting to Lakshmana's outburst, Rama said, "Lakshmana, I think you have developed a desire for the throne of Ayodhya. Better, you go to Ayodhya and rule the kingdom. I will keep Bharata with Me in the forest. Bharata is one of sacrifice and character. His spirit of sacrifice is matchless. You have misunderstood his noble intention."

Bharata came there and fell at the feet of Rama. "My dear, how are the parents?" This was the first question that Rama asked Bharata. He did not enquire about His own mother Kausalya, but He asked about the well-being of Kaikeyi.

On hearing the name of Kaikeyi, Bharata became furious. "It is because of that wicked woman that you are forced to live in forest. The very mention of her name fills me with disgust. Please don't mention her name."

Rama put His hand on his shoulders and pacified him, saying, "Bharata, Mother Kaikeyi is a noble woman. It is because of her that My Name is glorified and spread far and wide. Do not go by the outward behaviour and talk ill of her. Her heart is filled with noble intentions."

After speaking to Bharata in this manner, Rama went straight to Mother Kaikeyi, fell at her feet and said, "Mother, by your blessings, I am fine here."

Do not worry about Me. Let Bharata be crowned as the king of Ayodhya. Teach him the codes of governance. After the completion of 14 years, I will come back to Ayodhya and see all of you. It is My duty to uphold the promise made by My father. It is not enough if one listens to the command of one's parents. One should strictly adhere to the rules and regulations laid down by the government and strive for the welfare and happiness of fellowmen. Only then can one be called an ideal citizen."

As denizens of the land of Rama's reign, we should lead our lives in accordance with His model. Rama's words made an indelible impression on the mind of Lakshmana. He fell at the feet of Rama and repented for his outburst. He said, "Brother, when I saw Bharata and his army from a distance, I was seething with anger. Now my mind rests in peace having known the truth and listening to Your soothing words." Rama advised him not to be carried away by the outward scenario but to turn inward and strive for experiencing bliss.

When Bharata started pleading with Rama to return to Ayodhya, Rama affectionately drew him close and said, "Bharata, no doubt your intentions are noble, but you should bear in mind the command of our father. You must follow your mother's advice. That is the only way you can please Me. Share your love with not only your friends and relatives but with one and all. Remember that *thyaga* (sacrifice) alone can bestow on you true *bhoga* (pleasure)."

Sage Vasishtha shed tears of joy listening to the words of Lord Rama. He said, "Rama, You are forced to live in the forest for no fault of Yours. But You have forgotten the injustice done to You. You are seeing only the good in others. We are really moved by Your magnanimity. However, we request You to establish *Ramarajya* (kingdom of Rama) in Ayodhya and give joy to all."

Rama smilingly replied, "Now it is Bharatarajya, not Ramarajya. Henceforth, it shall be called Bharatadesa (the land of Bharata)."

It is because of such noble men of sacrifice that Bharat has progressed and attained exalted position. No other country can match Bharat in terms of dignity, honour, and reputation. People of ancient Bharat led a life of sacrifice for the welfare of the country. There is no greater sacrifice than sacrificing for one's own nation. Greatness does not lie in performing acts of charity by spending crores of rupees. Your thoughts, words, and deeds should be suffused with love. You should make efforts to alleviate the suffering of your fellowmen. Love all as you love yourself. This is your dharma.

Dharma does not mean performing acts of charity alone. You should fill your heart with righteous feelings and give up selfishness and greed. Always keep the welfare of society in mind. Do not consider your fellowmen as "others". Share your love with all. Live in amity and develop unity. Only through love can you win the hearts of others and transform them. Hence, the need of the hour is to cultivate love and share it with others. Develop love for God and compassion toward those less fortunate than you. This is the essence of education.

Serve your parents and make them happy. What is the use of sharing your love with others when you are not concerned about the suffering of your mother at home? Your foremost duty is to love your parents and serve them. Then you can share your love with others. This was the teaching of Lord Rama to Bharata. He told him, "Bharata, there is no point in filling the treasury with money. You will earn a good name and win the heart of your subjects only when you utilise the money for the welfare of people."

Lakshmana and Satrughna were the sons of mother Sumitra. Lakshmana followed Rama, while Satrughna was always with Bharata. They served their elder brothers with utmost love and devotion. During times of difficulties, they stood by their elder brothers, gave them good counsel, and supported them in all respects. That was the purpose for which they were born to Sumitra. All this was a part of God's master-plan. Rama exhorted Bharata to give up hatred toward his mother and love her wholeheartedly. He told him that it

was all destined to happen and she was not to be blamed. Since Rama did not relent, after His resolve not to return to Ayodhya, Bharata prayed to Him to give at least His padukas (sandals) to be enthroned as His proxy.

The name of Sumitra does not find a place of prominence that it deserves in the Ramayana. She was a paragon of virtues and, true to her name, she was a good friend of all. The sacrifice made by Sumitra was greater compared to the sacrifice made by Kausalya. Some of the virtues of Sumitra were not to be found even in Kausalya and Kaikeyi.

Before leaving for the forest, Rama sought the blessings of Kausalya. Then He went to the residence of Sumitra. Rama prostrated before her and said, "Mother, I am very happy to obey father's command and go to the forest, but I feel sad to leave you and go. I pray to you to shower your love and blessings on Me. I do not require anything else." So saying, He offered His salutations to her again and again, took leave of her and left for the forest. Among the three queens, Sumitra was the noblest. Even Sage Vasishta and Sage Visvamitra extolled her noble qualities. We should accept others' greatness and not indulge in self glorification. In order to glorify others' greatness, sometimes we need to be modest and self effacing.

Students!

Never belittle others. Develop broad-mindedness and treat everybody with respect. Consider others as your own brothers. If a hungry person comes to you, welcome him with open arms and give him a sumptuous meal. Never consider someone a beggar or a poor person. Having been born in this sacred land of Bharat, one cannot be a beggar or a poor person. All are rich. When you consider someone a beggar, it is only the defect in your feeling that is reflected outside.

When Lord Rama lifted Siva's bow, Sita's joy knew no bounds. Her prayers were answered. Rama, being the embodiment of love and righteousness, had the power to lift not just one bow of Lord Siva but ten such bows.

The four brothers - Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrughna - and their consorts had perfect unity and harmony among themselves. They were like different parts of the orange fruit. One day, Sumitra peeled out the skin of an orange fruit. As she took out each part, she was saying, "This is Rama, this is Lakshmana, ..." She considered each part of the fruit to represent the four brothers and their wives. She was very happy to have such virtuous daughters-in-law like Sita, Urmila, Mandavi, and Srutakeerthi. The daughters-in-law also served their mothers-in-law with utmost love and care.

The four brothers and their wives always had a common mind. That is why the fame of Ramarajya spread far and wide. Having been born in this sacred land of Bharat, you should live like a true Bharatiya. Your heart should be filled with sweetness. Do not avoid those who need your help, on the contrary you should always wait for an opportunity to serve. This *thyaga bhava* (spirit of sacrifice) can alone confer on you true *bhoga* (happiness).

Today we are celebrating the sacred festival of Vijayadasami. People perform various rituals during the nine days of Navaratri festival. We should hope and pray that every day of our life should be as sacred as these nine days.

Let us all move together, let us all grow together,
Let us all stay united and share our knowledge,
Let us live together with friendship and without disharmony.
(Telugu poem)

Live in unity, make proper use of your intelligence, and give happiness to your parents. When you lead your lives in this manner, every day will be a day of festivity and celebration. The whole world will rejoice. I wish that you put into practice all that you have learnt during these nine days. Be always cheerful. Never put on a face as if in deep misery. I am happy that our boys

never put on a long face; they are always cheerful. From now onward, forget all differences and share your love with one and all. Serve all.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Rama Rama Rama Sita".

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2004/titles2004.html			

29. Divine Discourse

Date: **23 October 2004** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Dasara**

Please listen to the audio. Text not available yet, and will be added later.