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1. Nut and bolt

Date: 01 January 1971 / Location: Mumbai / Occasion: New Year

TODAY is an auspicious day, for the New Year is welcomed with great expectations and the old year is given a grand farewell, on this holy day. Every year, man has been bidding farewell to the old year and giving welcome to the new year; this has been going on since the history of man began. But, what is the net result? Only despair and distress, anxiety and insane fear! This is an occasion to inquire and discover why it has been so. Everyone seeks and strives to be at peace with himself and with society (the community in which he has to live) and find his fulfilment. He has tried to get this peace, by accumulating wealth, which gives him power over others and the ability to command the conveniences and comforts which will confer peace. He has sought to hoist himself to positions of authority and influence so that he can shape events suited to his aims and fancies. But, he has realised that both these paths are beset with fear, and the peace that he secures thereby is liable to quick and sometimes violent extinction.

How then can man achieve peace? Only through Love! Shanthi (peace) is the fruit of the tree of life; without it, the tree is a barren stump. It has no value or validity. The fruit is encased in a bitter skin, you must have noticed, so that the sweet juice may be preserved and guarded against marauders; you have to remove the skin, before tasting the sweetness within, and strengthening yourself. The thick rind is symbolic of the six evil passions that encase the loving heart of man: lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and hate. Those who can remove the rind and contact the sweetness within, through hard consistent discipline attain the peace we all desire; that peace is everlasting, unchanging, overwhelming.

Reason for insecurity stalking the land

Of what avail is a car, a bank deposit, a bungalow in a posh extension in this City? If you have all these but no love in your heart, the heart becomes a dark deserted temple, where the bats of lust and anger breed in everlasting night.

Such hearts are foul, diseased with terror and error. We have this vast gathering of the workers of the Kamani Organisations, in the various fields of Kamani enterprises. The Industrial, the Agricultural, the Mercantile, the Political and the Administrative - these are like the five vital airs that sustain activity in man. These five must not be at loggerheads; they must work in unison, prompted by love and mutual respect. Then only can the community have peace, security and happiness. If they do not understand each other and co-operate, or if any one of them strays away into a cross-road, disaster is inevitable. This co-operation is unfortunately not visible at the present time. Factional interests, on the other hand, are predominant and the competitive struggle is on, in all fields - in labour, politics, administration, commerce and agriculture! That is the reason why anxiety and insecurity stalk the land, both in rural and urban areas, and people have to go about their business, with death or disaster threatening them round every corner! An ominous uncertainty shadows them, at every turn. And, human thought turns to violence and revolution, as the obvious cure.

Duty is God; Work is Worship

But, that can never cure; it can only worsen the illness. Excitement blinds the reasoning faculty. Passion, violence, and cruelty create more problems, without solving any. These are now flooding the land as a deluge; persons who have no training and no sincere yearning to bear responsibility and discharge the obligations of office are raised to positions of authority. Ability as well as willingness to discharge duties and to bear burdens - these alone entitle men to hold authority over others. Duty is God; Work is Worship. The power that office confers has to be handled with that attitude of gratefulness and reverence. If this is remembered and practised by every worker, however placed, wherever placed, work will give happiness, contentment and peace, both to the person concerned and to the society of which he is a limb. The Kamanis erect transmission towers all over the country. It is only when each nut and bolt is fixed fast and firm, faithfully, that the towers can stand up to the rigorous test of wind and weather, isn't it? Who can say, how can we judge, whose share in the erection is more important and whose is less? The work of each is essential and valuable, so far as his share of the responsibility

extends. Having the skill and the willingness to carry out that share of the responsibility is his title to that position, in the common enterprise. You cannot declare one item of work as high and another item as low. That will only engender malice and hate. And it is not correct, either.

Each one must use his skill and intelligence

A man sees while going along a road, a ripe fruit, on a tree by the side. The mind craves for the fruit, but that by itself cannot fulfil that craving. The feet take him near the tree. But, that does not bring about the consummation. The trunk stoops, the hand picks up a stone, the shoulders throw the stone at the fruit, and the fruit falls on the ground. But that does not end the story. The fruit has to be picked up by the fingers, transferred into the mouth, the teeth have to bite into it, and masticate it well and the tongue has to take charge in order to make it reach the stomach. The eating part of the task is thus over. But, that does not end the story of the craving for the fruit. Since so many instruments cooperated in the fulfilment, gratitude has to be rendered to each of them. So, the stomach sends strength and satisfaction to every limb that shared in the adventure of securing the fruit and eating it - the eye, the feet, the hands, the fingers, the shoulder, the tongue, the teeth, the gullet. No one of them is neglected or discriminated against. Each limb must act effectively at the exact juncture to meet the duty entrusted to it and accepted by it, so that the body may live in health and in tip-top efficiency, alert with all its skills and potentialities. This is true also of the enterprises which man undertakes with others of his kind. Each one must resolve to use his skill and intelligence for the discharge of his obligations.

The more love is shared, the deeper it becomes

Man has not come into this world to strut about for a while on the stage, consuming food and gaily gallivanting. Man comes into the world so that he may bask in the Presence of God, through the exercise of love and the cultivation of love. The earth is a great enterprise, a busy factory, where the product is love. By means of Sadhana (spiritual practice), it is possible to produce love and export it to millions and millions of people, in need of it. The

more it is shared the deeper it becomes, the sweeter its taste, and the vaster the joy. By means of love, one can approach God and stay in his presence, for God is love, and when one lives in love, he is living in Go. If you deny Go angrily, you are drying up the strings of love in your heart. If you declaim that God is nowhere, you are installing night in your heart and making it ready for dark schemes and misdeeds.

Once upon a time, a monk wearing the ochre robe chanced to enter a village full of atheists; he fell in with a gang of defiant youth who challenged him to show them that the God whom he was adoring actually existed. He said, he can; but before doing so, he asked for a cup of milk. When the milk was placed before him, he did not drink it; but, sat, looking at it, long and silently, with increasing curiosity. The youth became impatient; their clamour became insistent. The monk told them, "Wait a minute, I am told that there is butter in milk; but, I must say, this cup does not have it, for, I do not see any of it, however hard I look into it!" The fellows laughed at his innocence and said, "Silly man! Don't rush into such absurd conclusions. Milk has butter in every drop; that is what makes it so nourishing. If you must see it as a separate concrete entity, you have to boil the milk, cool it, add sour curd, wait for some hours for it to curdle, then, churn it, and roll the butter that floats into a ball." "Ah," said the monk, "that makes my task of showing you God much easier! God is in every thing, being, atom of the Universe; it is because of this that they exist, and we can recognise them and enjoy them. To see Him as a concrete entity, you have to follow a prescribed procedure, earnestly, strictly and sincerely. Then, at the end of it all, you can experience His Grace and His Glory."

The Divine is everywhere, near and far

The nature we have around us and with us is the vesture of God. We have evidence of His Beauty, Goodness, Wisdom and Power, all around us, wherever we turn our eyes. But, the art of recognising Him is strange to us and so, we deny Him, and live on in darkness. We have all around us in the atmosphere the music emanating from all the broadcasting stations of the world, but they do not assail your ear at any time. You are not aware of any

station. But, if you have a receiver, and if you tune it to the correct wavelength, you can hear the matter broadcast from any particular station; if you fail to tune it correctly, you will get, instead of news, only nuisance! So too, the Divine is everywhere above, around, below, beside; near as well as far. For cognising it, you require not a yantra (machine) but a mantra (mystical formula, potent with psychological undertone). Dhyana (meditation) is the fixing of the exact location of the station in the band; love is the correct tuning in; realising the reality and the bliss it confers is the happy clear listening!

Work in the spirit of love; it leads you on to Worship, that is to say, work without any regard to the proportion of benefit you derive from it; work, since it is your duty; work, since you love to work, work since that is the way you can offer God the gratitude for the skills God has endowed upon you. This kind of work leads to wisdom. Wisdom means the recognition of the immanence of the Divine in every being.

Habits of discipline alone can ensure happiness

The relationship between the worker and the employer should be that between the heart and the body. Both are bound intimately with each other; they depend on each other for their very existence. The employer must take upon himself the role of the father and the employees must accept the role of the children, attached by love and gratitude to the father. Love and affection have to govern the relations between the two, not hatred or envy. If the anger and irreverence of a few are allowed to blind the rest, all will suffer. In the Community Hall inaugurated by Me just now, I want weekly or monthly bhajan (group singing of spirituals) sessions and sathsang (spiritually oriented) gatherings. Arrange some good Adhyathmic (spiritual) talk or discussions, on these occasions. I desire also that you should run a Bala Vihar for your children, where they will learn stories from the scriptures, the epics and the lives of saints belonging to all religions. Children must also be taught habits of cleanliness and mutual help and co-operation. They can also be taught to sing bhajan songs and enact little plays on themes selected from classics. They will also learn habits of discipline, for, these alone can ensure happiness,

individual and social. Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! I am happy to meet all of you. May the New Year grant you mental peace and may your life's ideal of self-realisation be fulfilled. May all comforts and full contentment be added unto you. That is my blessing.

The place has a subtle and powerful influence on the man. Markandeya held tight the Shiva-linga and so, Yama's noose bound both himself and Shiva; that was the reason the boy was saved.

The story teaches you to be ever in contact with God, for you do not know when the noose will be thrown.

Attach yourself to the Highest, call it by any name, conceive it in any form. But, remember, without Dharma you cannot attain it.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. Prahladahas for the present age

Date: **January 1971** / Location: **Mumbai**

IF I ask you, who you are, you may reply, "We are teachers," or some of you may even say, "We are students." But, both statements are not true! You are sadhakas (spiritual aspirants); that is the real fact. I am glad your sadhana is moving at a satisfactory pace. You have brought Me among you, as a result of your sincerity and enthusiasm. I am always specially interested in the service done to children and I must say, you have taught them good lessons, in a spirit of love. Some of you, I find, are a bit over-enthusiastic! You have taught the children stories that are too long, and made them cram the whole stuff. Do not tax their memory overmuch. Short stories, 20 to 25 lines long will be the best. Don't make them learn by rote, for, what they learn under pressure, because I am coming and a programme of story telling has to be arranged, will soon be forgotten. It will not transform the mind by soaking into it. The incidents and the morals they illustrate have to be imprinted on the heart;. They must learn not 'by heart,' but for and through the heart.

I find you are instructing them in bhajan, story telling and writing stories and essays. The stories they recite or write are culled from the epics and Upanishaths (scriptures of Supreme Reality). Good. But, instruct them in meditation too, for a short while, each day. Let that habit be inculcated even at this age. Five minutes of prayers and another five minutes of dhyan (meditation) will be a good exercise, whose taste itself will persuade the children to make it a habit. The tender mind has to be fed, with tenderness.

Story of Shabari's entry to the hermitage

Shabari had a very tender compassionate heart. How she came to Sage Mathanga and stayed at his hermitage is a very interesting story. Her marriage was arranged by her parents, and as was the custom among the Adhivasis (tribal folk), a goat was to be offered to the tribal Goddess, on the night previous to the ceremony, in order to win the Grace for the couple. When Shabari came to know about this slaughter, she wept, and fell at the

feet of her parents, praying them to save the goat. She asked, "How can our married life be happy, when the dying bleat of this goat is the prologue?" But, the father pushed her aside and proceeded with the cruel rite. That night, Shabari stole out of that den of torture, and hid herself in the depths of the jungle that was not far off. When day dawned, her parents as well as the groom's party were plunged in grief and anxiety; they combed the area, even where she was lying low amidst the thick bushes, and they went back, saying among themselves, "She could not have gone to the hermitage, for no woman would be given asylum there." She heard these words and so, she concluded that the hermitage was the safest place for her. She felt that some monk will take pity on her, and not send her back. Mathanga espied her and gave her permission to be in his habitation. He told her that God in the form of Sri Rama was coming to the hermitage some day, since he has been exiled into the forest for 14 years and He is eager to save the monks and seekers doing thapas (penance) in the forest from the ravages of the demonic enemies of peace! Rama, he said, was proceeding from one region to another, with His consort, Seetha and His brother, Lakshmana.

Shabari's heart became Rama's heart

From that day Shabari had no other thought than of Rama, no other desire than the desire to have the dharshan of Rama, the chance to touch His feet and the opportunity to speak with Him. Her heart was saturated with the Ramarasa (the sweet juice of the Rama principle). She had no other japam or dhyana (repetition of God's name or meditation) or spiritual exercise. She spent her time preparing for the visit of Rama to the hermitage; just as she cleaned the paths, she cleaned her heart, too. Pebbles and thorns disappeared from both, through her efforts. She walked through the undergrowth and removed overhanging creepers and briars, for she imagined Rama would not have combed His hair and it might get caught. She broke the lumps of earth, for she feared the tender soles of Seetha will be hurt when she walks over them. She gathered fruits and tubers from the jungle trees and plants and kept them by every day, for no one knew when Rama will arrive! And, she took no risks. She tasted every fruit, whether it was bitter, sour or sweet, so that Rama could eat the best. She smoothed the surface of

all stones that lay by the side of the tracks in the jungle for, she expected Rama, Lakshmana or Seetha to sit upon any one of them when they got tired of walking. She hoped that one of them would rest awhile on one of the rocks she had polished with great care. Thus her heart became Rama hrudhaya (Rama's heart)! The children of the Sathya Sai Bala Vihar must know the Sathya Sai that is residing in their hearts. Teachers also must take it as a puuja (ritual worship) of Sai Rama. How to reveal the Sai Ram residing in their hearts to the children? - that is the problem that must be directing your work. Sai Ram has to move about in the jungles of your heart; so, render the tracks wide, smooth, free from thorn and pebble.

Shabari's high level of sadhana

Shabari was so immersed in Rama that the ascetics lost all awareness of her sex; they allowed her to remain in the hermitage, after Mathanga related to them her high level of sadhana (spiritual practice). Mathanga also left his body and gave up his hermitage to Shabari, saying, you alone deserve to be here when Rama arrives. The sadhana that Shabari did to earn the bliss of serving Rama, you do, when you serve Sai Rama in these children. By this service, you realise the Self. People say that they are doing paropakara (good to others) and lokopakara (good to the world). Really speaking, this is an empty boast. Let us take it that you invite ten people for dinner; when the ten sit at table, you too sit as the eleventh, don't you? So, you too consume a share of the dinner. How then can you call it a dinner for others, an act of hospitality for others? When you do good to the world, you share in that good, and so you cannot say that you are serving others. It is self first and help next. When you carry out the duty you have undertaken to do, God will shower Grace!

You are both-teachers and students, remember; for, you teach these children and you learn from Me. You must not have the consciousness that; they are children belonging to others. Treat them as your own.

Make children take up some positive task

When you relate stories to the children, select such stories as have some reference to the background of the children's home life. Tell them stories which will implant in the mind genuine disgust for evil sights, evil entertainments, evil deeds and evil habits. Tell them how they must forget the wrong done to them by others and the good that they do to others. Make them take up some positive task and the negative attitudes will fall off. Good habits will drive out bad ones. A wicked man once went to a Guru (preceptor) for initiation into spiritual life. The Guru asked him to give up at least one of his bad habits; he gave up uttering falsehood. That night, when he went to the Royal palace to commit theft, he found on the terrace another person, who said, he too was a thief. He too announced that he was a thief and both broke into the treasury and divided among themselves the diamonds found there. The other person was none other than the king; he pretended to be a thief and he knew where the keys of the treasury were! While the diamonds were shared, the honest thief felt pity for the King of the realm who was losing his entire stock; he asked his companion to leave one diamond behind, in the safe. And, it was done. Next morning, when it was discovered that the treasury was looted, the Minister was sent by the King (who had acted as thief the previous night) to assess the loss. The Minister found the diamond, that had missed the eyes of the thieves. He quietly transferred it to his own pocket and reported at court that all the diamonds were gone!

One step in the right direction leads to another

The King had got from the honest thief his address, the previous night, while they parted company, with their separate bags. So he sent for him and when stood in court before the King, he confessed that all but one of the diamonds were stolen by him and his unknown associate. The diamond was discovered in the pocket of the Minister and the King dismissed him for the lie. The honest thief was appointed Minister, instead, and he gave up his other evil habits too and pleased his Guru, by his fame as a virtuous administrator. One evil habit, if acquired, will lead to a whole gang of them taking possession of the mind. There is a story for this too. You can tell the children this. A King once announced that he will honour with a big girl; any Brahmana who will agree to do any one of three evil things: (1) He must aver that the Vedas are

false, or (2) He must drink liquor, or (3) He must elope with another's wife. For a long time, no one within the seven seas came forward to do any one of these atrocious things. At last a poor Brahmana on the verge of starvation came into court and offered to drink liquor, an evil which he considered the least reprehensible of the three. But, as soon as he got drunk, he began to swear and in the excitement of intoxication, he shouted in the streets that the Vedas are a tissue of lies; he entered the house of his neighbour and assaulted the lady of the house, like the worst criminal of the land. One thing led to another, just as in the other story, one step in the right direction led to another.

Make yourselves holy by consecrated service

I know that you are telling the children fine moral stories that will impress on them, silently and spontaneously, the value of restraint and of love in dealing with nature and life. I know that your other responsibilities do not give you the chance to serve them as much as you desire. Train as many as you can, within the limits that now exist; the Samithi (Sai Organisation) cannot ask more from you.

This is no imposition from above; it is an inspiration from within. You are engaged in so many activities that do not lead to any good; you have to move in groups that you may not like; these

are inevitable under present conditions. So, make yourselves holy by this consecrated service.

This will bring you the saving Grace. By shaping these children in Divine Form you are helping their parents too to set their minds right; you are brightening and cleansing the homes of the pupils.

When that little boy recited the story of the Geetha, so feelingly, everyone was moved; when towards the end, he turned to Me and said, "Now, we have this Sai Krishna..." he was so overcome with Anandha (bliss) that he sobbed and shed tears of joy. Perhaps he had a vision of Krishna! So intense was his

faith and his sincerity. His heart was echoing every sentiment that his tongue was expressing. Children such as he are needed for our country at this juncture. You have read of Prahladha, Dhruva and other children filled with devotion to God; they lived in ages that have gone by. You have seen now that such children are here, in this age too; I am sure they will reform and transmute many Hiranyakashipus (unbelieving fathers) by their unflinching devotion and transparent dedication.

Do what God likes, not what you like

Arjuna announced at the commencement of the battle of Kurukshethra, 'I will not fight against these people.' Then, Krishna asked him, 'Won't you do what I like?' and he had to reply, 'Yes. Of course.' Then, the Lord told him, "Look here: I have come as man in order to reestablish Dharma (righteousness); yours is the Kshathriya Dharma; it casts on you the duty to fight against unrighteousness. You will be doing what I like if, according to the demands of Kshathriya Dharma, you fight, as first planned." Do what He likes, not what you like - that is the way to win the Grace of God. He likes you to revere all beings, not to injure or insult any being; he likes you when you do not bear in your heart the tiniest grudge against any being. The Balavihars run in schools, in the hours now given to them out of the school time table, are not as successful as those run by you in your home centres, I know; the School Vihars try to make the children successfully ride two horses at the same time - the regular curriculum and the Sathya Sai Ideals. You are doing your best, I know, and that is enough. Develop cordiality among yourselves, exchange experiences and share your ideas for improvements. This is an excellent opportunity for you to feel the bonds of the Sai family, where each teacher is a sister of the other.

3. Link by link

Date: **January 1971** / Location: **Mumbai**

I AM glad that the Office-bearers of the various units of the Organisation in Bombay have gathered here and are asking Me to tell them some words about sadhana (spiritual discipline). A life of sadhana involves the dedication of all acts to God, the offering of whatever one does or thinks or speaks at the Feet of God. You can do this only when you are aware always of the Presence of God, in and around you. Your awareness must not deviate for a moment from God. The mind must revolve round one centre, God. Your concentration must be strong and steady. You are now able to attain concentration when you walk, talk, write or cycle along. But, you say you are helpless when it is a question of concentrating on God. Why have you to struggle to acquire it? The reason is: you have no yearning, no fond attachment, no Love towards God. But, carry on with the endeavour. By means of continuous culture, it is possible to acquire it. The Geetha says, Shreyohi jnanam abhyasath. Abhyasa (practice) is the crux of the problem. Through that, victory can be won. Concentration can be mastered in dhyana (meditation) and this will lead to disinterestedness in the results of one's actions, for the actions are not one's own, but God's. The results too are not one's; they are God's. When you become detached from the fruits of your actions, though intent on action (offering to the Lord your skill and energy), then, you attain peace of mind, Prashanthi. If, however, you cultivate attachment to things of the world, and houses, bank balance and insignia of power, then, dhyana fails.

Follow the dictates of Divine Father in action

Sincere effort and actual activity entitle you to the Grace of God. When Jesus Christ entered the precincts of the Temple of Jerusalem, and found people sacrificing doves and other living beings to God, he released the birds and condemned the acts of blood. The priests and scholars resented his act and argued that the God in whom they had faith accepted the sacrifice and was propitiated thereby. They asked him for evidence of authority to interfere with the dictates of religion. Christ went on to tell them a parable. Once there was

a farmer who had two sons. He asked his first son to go out to the field so that he may watch the crops ready for harvest. The son refused to obey him. Thereupon he asked the second son, and he readily agreed. But, what really happened was, the second son later calculated the bother and the sleeplessness which the watching will bring to him; he did not go. The first son later repented for this refusal to do as bidden; he went and watched the crop.

Now, Christ asked, who among these two pleases the father more - the son who declared his assent by word of mouth and disobeyed in action or he who disobeyed by word of mouth but obeyed in action? You obey in words but disobey in action. My action reveals that I do acts which God has commanded. You are your own witness, whether you follow the dictates of the Divine Father. I have greater authority than you, for your action shows that you disobey whereas my action proves that I follow His commands.

Sadhana is a uniquely precious activity

You are Office-bearers and so, you have the responsibility to carry out in 'actual practice, in your own lives, the rules and restrictions and recommendations laid down by Me. I warn you against falling prey to exhibitionism and display; there are many who desire that' others must admire and applaud, and so, they do japam or sit in dhyana, where many will be-seeing them. Theirs is not the attitude of indifference, which says, "I don't care what they say, or who sees me or who does not." Their innermost craving is for people to notice them and publicise their spiritual attainments. They are eager for audiences and spectators! But, sadhana is a uniquely precious activity, which will be vulgarised by public gaze. Fish is sold in open shops, or in open daylight, by the side of public, thoroughfares. Diamonds are however sold in shops that admit only genuine purchasers and they are kept in strong underground vaults. Sadhana is more valuable than diamonds. It will wither in the open. This is the reason for sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) retiring into lonely mountain caves, or into solitary temples in inaccessible regions of the Himalayas, or in the depths of jungles. But, you need not imitate them; you can create enough privacy in your own home, screening off a portion of

some room. There you can sink into yourself and discover the Inner Reality as the Reality of the Universe Itself?. You need not be told that perfect amity between husband and wife is essential for domestic peace. When they are at loggerheads, it is not a home, but hell. In the body of man, the Atma (inner real Self) is the husband and the inclinations are the wives. Every act and word and thought must subserve the needs of the emancipation of the individual, by the recognition of the sovereignty of Atma. The Primal, Formless, Absolute wedded Desire and Mind was born. The mind wedded two wives, inner contemplation and outer activity. The first gave birth to five sons, sathya, dharma, shanthi, prema and ahimsa (truth, virtue, peace, love and non-violence), the five Pandava brothers. Mind was infatuated more with the second wife, and so, she gave birth to a 100, each one with a name indicative of badness and wickedness, the Kauravas. God was on the side of the Pandavs, and they won.

Cleanse your heart of the canker of ego

In the Geetha, you don't find the slightest fear in the make-up of the character of Arjuna, Krishna appreciated him and served him as the charioteer, because he was so solicitous of Dharma. Arjuna's most serious argument against the battle of Kurukshethra was that the slaughter of millions of warriors will lead to the widowing of women and depreciation of public morals as a result of their enforced celibacy. God has established, as the Vedas say, Brahmanas (representing the Divine face) to learn and teach the path to emancipation. Kshathriyas (warriors) are His shoulders for they establish and maintain peace so necessary for the good life. The Vaishyas (traders) are, it is said, the stomach of God; for, they provide the sustenance and the strength. The Suudhras (service people) are the feet, for they move about and carry the Divine Message from door to door, through precept and example. All the four castes are dedicated for the upkeep of Dharma. So, when Arjuna pleaded the cause of Dharma, the Lord was pleased, and He decided to remove the delusion of the dispirited hero.

Share wholeheartedly in all festivals

By dhyana you develop jnana (spiritual wisdom) and by japam (recitation of God's Name) you develop bhakthi (devotion) and by both, you cleanse your heart of the canker of ego. You can link yourselves with God, by a chain of love, through the recitation of the name, in silence and with full awareness of the meaning and its nuances. Each Sai Ram, Hare Krishna, Hare Ram, or Vitthal is a link; the more the links the longer the chain, the firmer the bond. But, each link has to be well forged out of well tempered steel. One false link, that is to say, the Name once uttered in sloth or slight, indifference or anger, resentment or rancour, will constitute a weak link and the bond will not bind!

Be careful that you do not cavil at another's faith. There is a road from each heart to the Source of all joy, namely, God. Each one will come in his own good time, at his own pace, through his own inner urge, along the path God will reveal to him as his own. You can have in your home, a shrine, where you can worship the Name and Form you desire to invest yourselves in! But, so far as your activities as a member of this Organisation are concerned, you must wholeheartedly share in all-festivals and functions that promote faith, devotion and dedication. Have love towards all Do not allow the weeds of pride and envy to hamper the harvest of peace. Do not monopolise the time in bhajan, by singing one song for six or ten minutes, repeating the same line often. Repeat each line twice and no more. Have only two speeds: one slow and the other fast. In this way, you can have in the hour of bhajan, more songs on more Forms, more tunes and more variety, giving more people the chance. Let Me tell you that, even if Naradha or Thumburu, the Divine Musical pair, sing if they croon the same monotonous tune, listeners will have to take refuge in Saridon tablets! Or, it may be Subbulakshmi or any other artist of this region, but headache is bound to result. When a namavali extols Shiva, the next one will have to be on Krishna, the next on Rama and so on. A person whose favourite form is Rama or Shiva will feel neglected if out of inadvertance, you stick to only one form. Let the atmosphere of bhajan be free from competitive conceit and fanaticism, That is My advice.

The spirit of sacrifice is the basic equipment of the sevak. Without the

inspiration of the sense of sacrifice, your seva will be hypocrisy, a hollow ritual. Inscribe it deep and clear on your heart.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4. Saline turned sweet

Date: **January 1971** / Location: **Mumbai** / Occasion: **Vaikunta Ekadasi**

WHAT a tragedy! Truth is treated as a foe; falsehood is the friend of man. Liquor is sold in a tavern, to which people trek miles; but milk is taken to their doorsteps, by vendors who cry hoarse, to draw the attention of the residents, but yet, they turn away with their ware unsold. What a reversal of values has man accomplished! On this sacred day called Vaikuntha Ekadhashi, one is reminded of this, because, festivals like this have been ordained in order to take stock of one's spiritual progress and to make man resolve to march forward, until the goal is reached. This is a thrice-blessed day, as the Thriveni is the confluence of three holy streams: Thursday, which is especially significant for Sai devotees, being Guru Var (the day of the Guru); the Akhanda bhajan (non-stop singing).which you concluded after twelve hours a few minutes ago; and the festival of Vaikuntha, for which you have gathered here. Vaikuntha means, without any trace of grief or pain; the place where perfect peace reigns, and there is no flutter of fear. Ekadhashi means the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight. The phases of the moon are numbered, and the day after the tenth, Dhashami, is referred to as the Ekadhashi! But the real meaning of Ekadhashi, the eleventh, is this. When the ten senses - the five senses of action and the five through which knowledge of the objective world is gained - are all coordinated and turned in the direction of God, the eleventh, then it becomes genuine Ekadhashi!

Man has to pay attention to 26 categories

This is also the meaning of the Namaskar, where you fold both palms together and hold them on your chest, near the heart region. The ten senses surrender to the person adored, with real sincerity in the heart! The caricatures of this reverential rites are today current in almost all circles. People are reluctant to follow tradition and so, they hold the palms as if they are trying to shield the rays of the Sun from their eyes (!) or vigorously shaking them defiantly at the face of the person who is sought to be honoured(!). This is a day on which one has to transcend the lower impulses

originating from the thamasik (inertia) and the rajasik (passionate activity) natures and, help the upsurge of Sathwik (pure) tendencies. Men engage in good Works, good thoughts, good speech - but, they do not pause to inquire the purpose, the goal. Man has to pay attention to 26 categories. The 5 senses of action (Karma-indhriyas); the 5 senses of knowledge (Jnana-indhriyas); the 5 vital airs (Prana); the 5 attributes of the elemental principle, smell (of prithvi or earth); taste (of water); light (of fire); touch (of air); sound (of sky); and the remaining four manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), chittha (differentiating memories) and ahamkara (the selfish ego). The jeevi (individual soul) the wave is the 25th; it has the 26th, the Param-atma (the Supreme Self or Reality) on one side and the 24 principles on the other. It has to illumine all the 24, and draw them all to the Reality, namely, the 26th category, the Paramatma. When they are illumined, they disappear, for they cannot survive light; they are but creatures that are the progeny of maya (delusion and illusion).

Know thyself, you know the world

When the 24 categories are analysed and known, nothing is gained. For, they belong to the realm of the relatively real, not the absolutely real. They are jagath (world), the moving, changing, the transitory, the untrue! The Vedas, Shasthras and Puranas have not mentioned anything about the origins and dissolutions of these, with any degree of certainty, because they are concerned more with the rescue operations of the I that is entangled in them and with validation that they are of no importance. Know thyself; you know the world, which is but a projection of thy mind; that is the lesson conveyed.

Measure the microcosm, you have measured the macrocosm. Know all about clay; you have known all about pots, pans, plates and cups. Know about the base, you have known about the superstructure. Know about water, you know about rain, cloud, steam, stream, river - all its modifications and manifestations. The same quantity of silver might be shaped into a plate today, a set of spoons tomorrow, a number of cups the day after. The forms get new names; the uses of each are different. When put to use or when silver remains as a silver 'lump' only, in the hands of every one that holds, it

or handles it, in the beginning or in the end, it and they are always silver. The core, the truth is ever One. In the murky, dusk of ignorance, it appears diverse, that is all for, then, you are led to distinguish and differentiate on the bases of name and form. There are two sets of rules which regulate human conduct: the one a-moral and the other moral. The a-moral is illustrated by the rule that you have to be at the airport at a particular hour, in order to board a plane. The moral rule is illustrated when the father's property is divided between the sons,, half for one and half for the other, equal share for both. From the point of view of dharma (righteousness), equality is seen as the basic principle. From the Athmic standpoint, all beings are equal.

The primary seed of knowledge

When one proceeds to attain the Athmic vision, one has to negate everything as Not this, until at the end of the journey, the Atma alone is cognised. It admits of no definition, no description, no designation, It is the end of enquiry, the summum bonum of all endeavour, the silence that swallows all speech. The primary seed of knowledge is "I am not the body." It contains three entities: I Body and Not. I is the atma, the Only truth. The idea I applies only to the eternal I, over which, the transient Is are superimposed by ignorance, born out of false identification. Then, we have the entity called, dheha (body). Dheha means that which will undergo destruction (dah: to burn). It means the five feet bundle of bone and muscle, nerve and brain, the senses, the vital airs, the mind that imagines (constructs images), the intellect that argues pros and cons, the chittha that revolves around the past impressions and choices and the ahamkara (ego) that urges outwards, the internal and external equipments of man, Dheha means not only these, It is composed of the five we elemental categories also: earth, water, fire, air and sky. It disintegrates finally into these five for, it is built up of those five. It is kith and kin, with these five; so, by dheha is meant all the regions of the five elements, desha (country), in fact!

Realisation cannot be won by book knowledge

The multifarious efflorescence of maya, the primal desire which proliferated into the Universe - all that is the permutation and combination of the five elements, to cognise which man has equipped himself with the nose (smell, earth attribute), tongue (taste, water attribute), eye (perceptible form, attribute of fire), skin (touch, attribute of air) and ear (sound, attribute of sky). So, the statement says, I am not the body, that is, it declares that Nature, the Universe, all created thin and beings, are not I, or Atma (the true Self), but, only appearances of I. Man can realise the goal either by picturing something that is different and distant, and praying to it, adoring it, worshipping it - such ways are useful only up to a limit, to purge the mind of low desires, sensual urges etc., - or by delving into oneself, to reach the truth. The realisation of the one cannot be won by means of advice, listening to talks and discourses, study of books or austerities. It worried even Naradha, who approached the sage, Sanathkumara, for the vision of the Infinite. With this decomposing body and the deteriorating intellect, man cannot experience and contain the boundless surge of bliss that accompanies the realisation that he is the absolute. The wisdom that comes of actual experience is as the rain drop., when compared with sea water which is saline and undrinkable book-knowledge or derived knowledge. Through the inter-action of the rays of the Sun, the salinity was removed and the water that floated into the sky became sweet and sustaining. Sadhana that turns the physical into the meta-physical is the solar action that confers potability.

Samadhi is a much misunderstood word

Deep sleep is often compared to samadhi, for, the senses, the mind, the reason, are all absent therein; only the ego is immersed in itself. It is in bliss, but, it is not aware of that bliss, for, waking alone gives that knowledge. So, what can grant Realisation is the awareness of the waking stage and the bliss of the sleeping stage. Concentrate on the point, where one is having these two: that is the moment of victory. Samadhi is a much misunderstood word. It is freely misapplied. All kinds of emotional upsurges, attacks of hysteria, nervous breakdowns, neurotic fits are now extolled and exalted as "Samadhi"! Mark the word! It says sama dhee, that is to say, balanced, unruffled intellect; that is, a discriminating reaction of equanimity, in the face

of heat and cold, grief and joy, pain and pleasure, rejection or rejoicing. One who has attained that stage, or realised that he is the One without a second, will be indifferent to fear or favour, to hate or love, to exalt or execrate. Where there is One, how can even thought arise. That is the Sama-dhee - the being, the awareness and the bliss.

5. Thirst and quest

Date: **January 1971** / Location: **Mumbai**

NA shreyo niyamam vina - "No progress without constraint!" Control heightens power; regulation puts it into the best use. As volunteers trained and eager to serve, where the chance opens up, you are like the young men who were growing up in the Rishikuls (hermitages of old), under the loving care of sages. (Now, these Rishikuls have lost the 'r' and are merely shikuls (transformed phonetically, into schools). Discipline comes to the rescue, during crisis, when the world flows towards you, as a dark flood of hate or derision, or when those in whom you put your trust shun contact and shy away. Without discipline, the mind of man is turned into a wild elephant in rut. You have to catch it young and train it so that its strength and skill can be useful to man and harmless to life around. At this period of life, when you are in the flush of youth with your physical, intellectual and mental equipment in perfect trim, you must resolve to keep it running on right; lines, and not injuring itself, or the operators. Discipline must be welcomed; it should not be enforced by an outside agency, like the samithi (organisation) or your parents or friends. It must be spontaneously sought after, and sincerely practised.

Prepare yourselves for serving others

This birth has been undertaken by you, for this very mission: the mission of crucifying the ego on the cross of compassion. An opportunity to be of some service to fellowmen comes to you as a gift from God. Serve with that sense of gratitude, for it is God who accepts it from you. Prepare yourselves for serving others, not only by learning the skills of first aid, the rules of the road, the technique of blood donation, the art of handling mikes and loudspeakers, wiring and fitting electric lines, etc., but, at the time when you are not actively engaged in some such activity, be busy with japam, dhyanam or nama smaranam, fill yourselves with God, lest you go dry and cruel.

Keep the mind busy with these, for once it strays into the by Lanes of the world, it will get infected with evil. Guard the tiny flame of sympathy with

suffering, from the gusts of cynicism and miserly greed. Service to others is the duty you owe to society, which has given you the culture you fed on the breath you live on the warmth you crave for, and the security you seek. Man is born helpless, and is laid on the lap of society. Society gives him a name and a form, a personality, an individuality, an armour of beliefs, a playground of doubts and diversions. Man is the only animal that knows it has to die, and that yearns to survive death or by pass the fangs of death.. **Man** alone has the strange thirst after the nectar, that confers immortality. That is his special task, his special quest, the quest for the Truth that emancipates. Understand the deep significance of service; it will lead to your becoming ideal leaders, who are in great need today, all over the world. You fulfil yourselves, by sharing; you empty yourselves by grabbing. Do not behave in such a way that people are wary of you be open, without harmful eyes, lascivious ears, false tongue, foul minds and pernicious hands. Your eyes give you away easily; look upon all without the guilt of lust or scandal; speak to all, of all with love blooming out of adoration; let your hands give never take what is not yours. Treat the distressed, the diseased, the old, the helpless, the child with great respect, and intelligent consideration.

"Do what will win the approval of Baba"

Lead simple lives; do not develop an attraction for high life, gaudy outlandish dress and manners; invite the reverential attention of those who need service. They will be kept away if you walk about swell, talk raucously, and begin pushing people around, with swagger and swearing. Test every gesture, every mannerism, every whim of yours, on this touchstone Will this win the approval of Baba? Here is a young man, whom I will call a good boy! Do you know why? Yesterday, when I moved among the thousands gathered in the pandhal, he was standing - a volunteer - on the outer fringe. I shook my little finger at him. This morning, when I went round the same place, he was at the same post of duty but, with his side burns removed! He knew what Baba disapproved, and he corrected himself immediately. I appreciate that. Side burns is a side issue; there are more serious misdemeanours, which you know I do not encourage. Be free from every one of them. When you recognise Me as the dweller in your heart, these will fall off, and you will walk on the path of

self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-satisfaction and self-realisation.

The Truth that is in all beings is also in you. Search for that; discover that unity; that source of courage, of love, of wisdom. You do not realise that it is He who digests the food that you consume, for, as He says, in the Geetha, I am the Vaishwanara - fire that is in the bodies of all beings and digests the four types of food they eat." That fire digests food, but, it is careful not to destroy the stomach itself!

He is the basis of all activity, though Himself unconcerned.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. Green across the door

Date: **January 1971** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Sankranthi**

SAGES who have designed the Hindhu Calendar have arranged the holy festivals for fostering mental stamina and emotional purity. The Makara Sankranthi (the Summer Equinox), when the Sun enters Capricorn, is laid down as the day when man dedicates his activities for the higher purpose of attaining Divinity, by following the Uttharayana (the Northward Path), the Nobler Path which the Sun Himself is seen to take from this day. The month of Dhanus is over, and that of Makara begins today. Dhanus means not only the bow but also the sugar cane, which is the bow of the God of love.

The harvest has come in now and every family has cooked this day the gift of God that has been stored in the granary. The children have chewed the sweet cane and are running about in glee. The cattle which toiled in the fields as companion, helpmate and slave of man are ruminating in the shade, enjoying their holiday from the yoke. The earth too is wearing a sari of yellow flowers, bedecked with spots of red, wherever ripe chilies cluster under green leaves. Nature is happy that man and all living beings can now turn Godward in thankfulness, and intensive contemplation of His handiwork. For six months now, it is dheva-yana - the season of pilgrimage. It is Utthama-yana (the superior path).

The message of the holy day of Sankranthi

The Geetha proclaims that he who dies in this half of the year dies in peace and plenty and so, rises to purer levels of spiritual attainments. Bheeshma, who was stricken by mortal arrows on the field of Kurukshethra, waited for this day which ushers in the holier half of the year, so that he may give his breath up, and merge in the Supersoul! This is a day of dedication! Not a day of diversion and dissipation. It is wrong to waste it in gambling, and feasting and catering to the lower instincts, it is not a holiday; it is in the strictest sense of the word, a holy day! Become whole, by wholesome deeds and thoughts; that is the message of the holy day. Mere spinning like a top, until

you can spin no longer, and then falling helpless and inert, is dreary devastating existence. The top has no faith in itself; it has to be handled and twirled by another. Be self-confident, that is to say, have confidence in your self; for, that self is Divine; it has in it all the strength, all the sweetness of the Atman (True Self), which is but a wave of the ocean of Param-atman (Supreme Reality). In order to ensure happiness and peace, administrators contrive five-year plans, and build bridges, dams, factories and schools. But, without the cleansing of the spirit, the strengthening of detachment, the promotion of compassion and kinship, economic progress promotes only hatred, faction and envy. Self-confidence, self-control and self-knowledge - these alone can lead man to peace and joy. Na shreyo niyamam vina - "No prosperity without control!" No progress without discipline, that is what the sages teach. On these holy days, he has to look back and forward, and orientate his route along the correct markings.

Mind is a bundle of desires and doubts

Belief in the Creator, the Designer, the Supporter and the Disintegrator is a necessary equipment for the pilgrim on earth. Fear of sin, love of God - these two endow man with peace and joy, save him from sorrow and grant him anandha (bliss). During deep sleep, one is not aware of time, space or causation. Only the I persists; the I that is sath-chith-anandha. But, during deep sleep the I is not aware of its anandha, not aware of itself. It is only after one awakens that one declares, I had a very pleasant sleep! During the dream stage, the mind is active, though the intelligence, the senses, are all dormant. The dream builds a bungalow in a few seconds, and you occupy it and live happily in it, until, in the dream, an earthquake brings it down on your heads, and you flee for sheer life! The entire story of construction, occupation and destruction was the reflection of mental aberration, its sankalpa (resolve). It is the seat of the ego and the ego plays all sorts of pranks with the mental stuff, during sleep, when the senses and reason are temporarily out of action. The mind is a bundle of resolutions and hesitations, of desires and doubts. When the basis of the ego is removed by spiritual effort heroically, directed towards this end, then all the drama of name and form drifts away into nothingness. The Sun draws the water up as steam, and

endows it with the name and form of 'cloud,' 'rain' and then as 'stream,' 'river,' 'flood' until it merges in the sea back again, losing all the manifoldness of name form caused by time, space and causation. Each one of you is the basis of truth, which a cloud of unreality fogs. This is to be discovered, each for himself, by himself.

Maya is like your shadow in the well

The seed struck in the soil sprouts and grows. It puts forth branches and leaves, and adorns itself with blossoms which attract bees; it develops fruits which are really offerings of sweetness and strength, to those who serve the tree, carrying the seeds ensconced within them, to far distances and scatter them again on the soil, so that they may get stuck and sprout, in another cycle of life and death! The seed is not inert; it is conscious, alive, active. The whole Universe is suffused with Divinity, Divinity that is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (sath-chith-anandha)! Existence as "seed-plant-tree," Consciousness which strives for expression and manifestation and unfoldment; and, Bliss, in that fulfilment. You are also sath-chith-anandha. Do not condemn your majesty bewailing, "I am unfortunate, I am despicable, I am downhearted." No. You are elated, you are enthroned, you are exalted. You are all this; but you are not aware of this, on account of maya (illusion). Maya is like your shadow in the well; if you do not peep into the well, it is not there! It is there, only whenever you peep into it ! The primal ignorance and the primal wisdom, are inherent, one in the other; the light of day darkens the stars, so that we cannot see them, though they are up above our heads! The darkness of night reveals the specks of light, which are the stars! Vibration, motion, light, darkness - all are inferring.

God knows what is good for individual souls

To adore Name and Form is against the basic teaching of Vedantha; for, one has to educate oneself into ignoring the evanescent, the temporary, the superficial. Unless one has discovered his identity with all, the identity of all with him, one cannot have the waveless calm, the steady flame. Thyagainaika amrithathwam anashuh; give up, give up the fancy for the fantastic objective

world, give up, until you reach the stage, when there is no "giver-gift-giving," when there is no "beginning-continuing-ending." Naradha learnt from the sage Sanathkumara that he can acquire Shanthi only when he knows that he is Shanthi and nothing else! A-shanthi (restlessness) is something that has possessed him, like a phobia which has no footing. Shake it off; exorcise it. He is free. It is the role that is tragic; not the actor. He has only to remind himself that it is a play and that he is playing the role of a tragic hero! This Naradha learnt and his equanimity was never again disturbed. This day, every home is swept clean, the floors are polished, the walls whitewashed and painted, and before every house, women draw auspicious designs in flour. They place in the middle of that design a lump of cow dung, and stick on that lump a big yellow flower of golden hue, of the sweet cucumber. Why the cow dung lump? It symbolises the cow, the Go which Gopala feeds and fends. Go (cow) also means, beings, souls, individuals. So that, Gopala is He who tends the souls, keeps them away from harm, encourages them to graze in peace, and drives them back into the sheds when evening falls on earth. Individual beings too are under the loving care of God, who knows what is good for them and saves from ruin. Thus, each trivial detail of the festival rites has a meaning, which can vibrate the participant, in its proper time.

Sathsang will keep you young and fresh, full and free

Again, this day, you are requested to eat sweet rice cooked in milk. That is the food called Sathwik (pure), which promotes elevated thoughts, mildness and humility. But, food does not end with what you take in through the mouth. What you take in through the eye, the ear, the nose, the skin, through your greed your hunger for excitement, your thirst for variegated experience of the objective world - all is food. And, every particle of it has to be Sathwik, so that your progress towards self-realisation may be quick and fruitful. You are really fortunate that you are able to drink through the ear the discourses on the glory of the Divine; Vedantha is the best and highest food which man can consume; it keeps your propensities pure, your body in perfect trim, your passions well controlled, your emotions clear and lucid, your thoughts simple and sincere. Sathsang (noble company), is more nutritious than fruits and nuts, milk or honey. It will keep you young and fresh, full and free, beyond the

disintegrating influence of time and space. These holy days are reminders of the discipline, which you have strayed away from. It is a grim world, from out of which you have to squeeze yourself out, into freedom and fulfilment. A train whistling past in full speed over the rails drawn by a giant locomotive cannot be stopped by a million hands; but by merely pressing a button, the driver can bring it to a halt! Installing that button, that mechanism in your mind that rolls along behind the senses is the purpose of sadhana ; installing and operating it. The knowledge that you are the architect of your fortune and that you can, by steady effort, rebuild it or foster it, that you are ever laying on or pulling down the structure of your career, will be a great inspiration, provided you welcome it.

Nothing ever happens without proper reason

It was the first night of Rama, Lakshmana and Seetha in the thick jungle into which they were exiled. Guha (the chieftain of the fisherman), who had rowed them across the Ganges was engaged in subdued conversation with Lakshmana, while Rama and Seetha were sleeping, on the river bed! Guha, was sunk in sorrow, that the inheritor of the empire should be cast on the sands under the sky; he cursed the Queen Kaikeyi (step mother of Rama) and her wicked. accomplices for contriving this heart breaking tragedy. But Lakshmana prayed that he halt his tirade. I too emitted fiery fury at the perpetrators of this tragedy. For, I did not then know the inner purpose of this chapter of Rama's history. He has come in this human form to destroy the evil brood of demons, and so, He has himself contrived this exile, to be free from imperial responsibilities until that aim is accomplished. What do we know, dear Guha, of the mysteries of God or even of man, who is but God in human attire? Or of any living being or non-living matter, for they are all the inscrutable Divine, appearing to our limited senses in the way they do, What their real nature is, how can we ever know, with these inefficient instruments of knowledge?

Nothing ever happens without proper reason, however accidental or mysterious, it might appear. The roots go deep and are out of sight. I was telling Hislop, in Bombay at Dharmakshethra, the same thing. The bridge

towards Lanka was being built over the straits, so that Rama and His army could, march across to the realm of the demon King Ravana, where. Seetha was interned. The valiant monkeys were plucking mountains and leaping vast distances in space with those peaks hoisted on their shoulders, so that they could be thrown into the sea to create a passage for Rama! The monkeys had formed a queue all the way from the Himalayas down to the southernmost point, where the bridge was fast coming up. When the causeway was completed, word went fast along the queue that no more hills are needed and each monkey placed on the ground, wherever it stood, the hill it had on its shoulder at the time.

Inanimate things too have emotions

One hill, however, did not sit quietly. It started bewailing its fate.! "Why was I removed from where I was and why am I now refused? Alas! I was elated that I was destined to serve a Divine purpose; I was overjoyed that the armies of Rama and Rama Himself will walk over me. Now, I am neither there, nor where I was!" It shed profuse tears. News reached Rama, and His compassion was great. He sent word that in His next; Avathar, when He will come again upon His mission in human form, He will certainly bless the sorrowing hill. This was the Govardhana Peak which Rama (as the boy Krishna) lifted on His finger and held aloft for full seven days, in order to save the cowherds of Gokul from the deluge of rain that Indhra dared inflict on them! I related this story to Hislop, when he asked Me whether inanimate things too had emotions and feelings of disappointment and despair. The occasion at Dharmakshethra was : I asked that about a hunted saris be brought, so that I could select some, for distribution to the women workers at Ananthapur who are helping build the Sathya Sai College there! I selected 96 and asked them to return 4 to the shop. I kept the 4 aside and the 96 were placed in my room. Later, when I passed the table on which the four discarded saris were kept (Hislop was standing by the side of that table), it was noticed that the cardboard box which contained the four was dripping tears! The saris were weeping (!) that they could not get appreciation from Me and were declared unfit. Yes! They had shed tears. You may ask whether this is ever possible. I answer, there is nothing in this world which has no heart, which is incapable

of feeling joy or grief! Only, you must have the eye to see, the ear to listen, the heart to respond!

Accept bravely whatever happens, fame or shame

This morning, when the Sun rose in the East, the Moon was just setting in the West, so that both the orbs could be seen at the time. The moon represents the mind and the sun, the intellect. Both must be balanced in a disciplined way; it should not be one or the other, emotion or intelligence, but, emotion held back by intelligence. Then, you will not be carried off your feet by gusts of fear or fury, fancy or frivolity. You will accept bravely whatever happens - fame or shame! Welcome every happening with a Yes. I always say Yes, Yes, Yes (S S S), whether it is praise or blame, ill or well.

You are in the see-saw, in two moods, anger, exultation, pride, self-condemnation, alternating joy and grief. Bheeshma, whom one should remember on this Uttharayana day, felt the bed of arrows on which he lay to be as cosy as a bed of roses! He had accepted it of his own choice and so, he felt no pain. I accepted the inflamed appendix of a devotee, as a consequence of the Love I bore him; and, so, though every one, including the doctors said, I must have excruciating pain, I did 'not feel it! Bheeshma said, Yes, to all that happened. It was the Will of the Go within, the God without, the God without whom nothing can ever happen.

Adore God offering Him your deeds, words, thoughts

The Sun takes the Northern Path from today; the higher path. So, the children too have to follow the footsteps of the Parent. In the North, the Himalayas welcome you into 'Un-affectedness' (achala), Purity (Hima, Snow) and Immaculate-ness (pure white, untarnished clarity), and coolness (perfect joy). Whenever the mind yearns for and pursues these four gains, it is on the Northern path leading to the Himalayas, the Abode of the Gods; it is following the Sun, the Splendour of the intelligence.

Resolve to take the first step towards the Indwelling God, now, this day. That

is the reason why people have hung mango leaves across their doors today, to welcome God into the home! But, your home is your heart, not the brick and mortar pile, where your body dwells. Hang the streamer of green across the door-sill of your heart. Enthroned the Divine there, and adore Him with all sincerity, offering Him your deeds, your words, your thoughts. You celebrate the Sankranti with a feast, where you prepare a dish, out of green gram, rice and jaggery. The gram-is Lord Vishnu, the rice is His consort (Sri or plenty and prosperity), and, the jaggery is the principle of Divine love. So, it is not that dish that marks the festival, it is the contemplation of the Divine that has to be established in the wayward mind.

Be like the lotus, unattached to the slush where it is born and the water in which it is bred; the merits and demerits earned in past births is the slush, where the jeevi (individual soul) is born. Maya or the enticing illusion called world is the water which sustains; but do not allow that enticement to affect you. Be above and beyond the earthly attachments like the lotus. Know that though you may be in it, you should not allow the world to get into you and affect your sense of values.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Love and serve

Date: **January 1971** / Location: **Anantapur**

THERE are many organisations in this country, established with the express purpose of promoting the welfare of the country, in the political, economic, educational, moral, and material fields. Many have social and religious affiliations, but, unless there is a spring of spiritual enthusiasm beneath the activity, a fervour fed by faith in God, they will be groping in the dark, holding in their hands lamps without flame. Light and Love, so essential for being really helpful to man, have to come from the recognition of spiritual kinship. I find that the Rotary Club has as its aim the service of others, mainly, the amelioration of poverty, the alleviation of disease and the promotion of education. I have visited a large number of Rotary Clubs and Lions Clubs in India and across the sea, in East Africa. I have noted that they have as members, enterprising individuals, experts, rich men, highly educated persons of various professions, like law, medicine, engineering, architecture, trade, etc. I find that you pay great attention to the cementing of friendship among yourselves, rather than expanding love outwards, to those who are hungry for it. You arrange dinner parties and picnics, where members are treated to costly feasts, more as a part of social convention, than to appease hunger. This is sheer exhibitionism and display. Instead, I would ask you to feed some hungry people, with the delicious dishes, people who have never had in their lives the joy of having eaten a full meal, not to speak of a rich meal.

Love grows with every gift of Love

The point of view is most often warped; the direction in which thought flows is, how much can I get out; of all this, what benefit can I derive from membership, how beneficial it will be for my status, profession, contacts. This has to be changed full circle. The problem should be framed as: "How much can I give my fellowmen through this membership? What can I contribute to the fulfilment of its ideals?" All are eager to take, none is earnest about giving. The reason is absence of Love, love that transcends caste, creed,

colour, and the fences erected: by man between man. Fill the heart with Love, and distribute that Love to all. Love grows with every gilt; of Love; the heart that pours out love is ever full. God is there as Love and you are only drawing on Him, when you are sharing love with others.

Expansion is love, is life. Contraction is death, is hate. Pray for the good of all, crave for the prosperity of all, not of one person or party, or nation. The craving for power if it afflicts any one person degenerates into a mania, and it brings in its wake, great confusion and calamity. Be servants, not masters. How can one be happy, putting another into the humiliation of attending to one's personal comforts - this is what I cannot understand. Try as much as possible to avoid this painful contingency.

How long can a nation subsist on alms?

The people of this country are suffering from poverty, disease, and want of proper education. Clubs such as this can render intelligent help, supplying food and medicine. I find that you are also providing wells in villages where there is at present no adequate supply of drinking water. Instead of duplicating services already being carried on by Governmental agencies, I shall be happy if you select areas where such agencies do not operate; as also, select activities that are specially yours, where your contribution will be thankfully appreciated. Bharath is now standing before the doorsteps of other nations with the begging bowl, for even the most essential day-to-day need of food! This is because, farmers concentrate on cash crops, rather than food crops. How long can a nation subsist; on alms? This nation has another series of food crops too, which have been neglected, in the rush for growing cash crops. They are the Upanishaths, the Geetha, the Bhagavatha. They have been neglected; man is not cultivating them and reaping the harvest of peace and joy that can fill his inner granary. Veda and Shasthra are the two eyes of Bharatha Matha (Mother India). Through neglect, her eyes are now as bad as gone. She is now struggling to see through American eyes or Russian eyes or Chinese eyes! See through the Self, the eyes that the Self activates; for, the Self knows best your utmost need.

In Clubs and similar Associations, the President or Chairman is the heart and the members constitute the body. The heart must pump enthusiasm and the body must transform it into useful activity. There must be wholehearted co-operation and faith. Doctor members must visit the slum areas once a week; they must be at the consulting centre, at the same time, every week. Be punctual and regular, sweet and courteous. If you talk with a smile, the tablet will act more efficiently.

Learn the ways of acquiring peace of mind

Lawyers can help the poor, by drafting documents according to rules; now, most of litigation is due to faulty drafting. They can also point out to the villagers and the poor how the various Governmental agencies are prepared to help them; they can instruct them about the methods of securing that help. Ignorance of the assistance offered is leading many grants to lapse, and many a good intention to evaporate into nothing. This length of cloth has such strength, because a large number of thin threads have joined systematically, with disciplined determination, into one new entity, called cloth. A single thread cannot stand the pull of an ant; but, many stranded together can hold back an elephant in rut! Indiscipline, factionalism and recrimination are the bane of all associations in this country. Every one is plotting for the promotion of his own interests, whether he deserves or not. Instead of inviting important persons to spin platitudes and their own pet prejudices, I suggest that you can well listen to spiritual discourses from learned and experienced people. They can give you the secret of equipoise, the ways of acquiring balance and peace of mind and the means of enjoying unadulterated bliss. I also desire that you should encourage the use by members of sathwik (pure) food and the avoidance of intoxicating drinks. It is demeaning the high role of man; it is pitiable to see a man under the influence of drink. Do not put tender minds on the path which leads to moral and physical tragedy. Drink milk or yogurt; eat fruits and nuts. They generate constructive, virtuous spiritual thoughts. I suggest that you start Bala Vihars (cultural centres for toddlers), and the very young. Provide them inspiration to understand and live by the culture of this ancient land. Schools are not at present eager or willing to do this. So children grow up, dehydrated, and torn

from the roots. They sing of Jack and Jill, not of Rama and Seetha. They know the robin and the raven, not the crow and the peacock. Children are moving about, like cars with no brakes. Boys and girls are growing up, resentful of constraint and treating elders with contempt. Demonstrate to the young the joy one can derive through service, let them learn the technique of timely service and be eager and ready to speed with service, wherever it is needed - in times of flood, fire, famine, and festivals where the sick and the old require special care. Money spent for training youth for this kind of loving service is well spent. Do not feel that I am a stranger, doling out advice. All are mine, those who serve and those who render service. I belong to all. Like flowers of many species and colours and fragrances, you have come together to make up a garland, for the adoration of God. Fulfil that great mission. That is my blessing to you today.

8. Forms of food

Date: **January 1971** / Location: **Hyderabad**

THE mind of man is not an organ that can be identified physiologically; it cannot be touched or operated on by doctors or surgeons. It is an intangible bundle of resolutions and hesitations; of wishes and wants; to pros and cons. It has as warp and woof of the wishes that man entertains with reference to outward objects and sensations. It easily rushes out after external pleasures and assumes the shapes of the things it seeks. It can also be turned back into searching for inner contentment and inner joy. That is why the mind is said to be the instrument for both bondage and liberation. Allow the senses to lead it outward; it binds. Allow the intelligence to prevail upon it to look inward for bliss; it liberates. The mind is the puppet of the food that is consumed by man. It is prompted one way or the other by the subtle pull of the food it is fed on. The quality of the food determines the direction of the desire that diverts the mental flow. That is why in the Geetha as well as in all scriptural texts, sathwik (pure) food is recommended for the upward seeking individual. Mind means desire, sankalpa (resolve), something sought for. When the Formless desired Form, the Universe arose; so, mind is the creative principle, the maya (illusion), that desired the very first desire, to be many. When it is now fed on rajas - passion and emotion, activity and adventure - it gallops into the world with the plunge of desire! It brings man deeper into the morass. When it is fed on thamasik (impure) food, which dulls, inebriates, blunts reason, and induces sloth, the mind is callous, inert and useless for uplifting man.

The three types of 'food' eaten by man

Sathwik food, according to some, consists in milk and fruits. But, it is much more; it; may not even be these. For, the calories that one takes in through the mouth are but a small part of the intake of man. The intake by the senses are part of the food that builds the individual. The sounds heard, the sights seen, the tactile impressions sought or suffered, the air breathed, the environment that presses for attention, appreciation and adoption - all these

are 'food.' They have considerable impact on the character and career of the individual. The quality of the food is determined by the vibrations that it is charged with, through the thought processes of the persons who handle it, prepare it and serve it. The 17th chapter of the Geetha clearly defines the nature and tastes of the three types of 'food' eaten by man: the food that promotes love, virtue, strength, happiness, and cordiality is Sathwik; that which inflames, arouses, intoxicates and heightens hunger and thirst is Rajasik; the food that depresses, disrupts, and causes disease is Thamasik. The company in which food is consumed, the place, the vessels in which it is cooked, the emotions that agitate the mind of the person who cooks it and serves it - all these have subtle influences on the nature and emotions of the persons who takes the final product in! It is because the sages of India realised this that they laid down many do's and don'ts for the process of eating, as-for the different stages of spiritual progress. Our thoughts trail off in directions determined by the sounds that fall upon the ear. When the sounds convey rebuke or praise, flattery or challenge, the thoughts too react correspondingly. When the sounds instil ideas of truth, beauty or goodness, the mind too seeks the silence of truth, the sweetness of beauty and harmony, the strength of goodness.

Nagarasankeerthan is the greatest disinfectant

I have directed that you should start this day with Nagarasankeerthan (street singing of spiritual hymns), for, it is the greatest disinfectant of the atmosphere of the individual, as well as the community. The puja (ritualistic worship) in the domestic shrine, the recitation of hymns, the bhajan (group singing of devotional songs) that you do, all send forth vibrations that purify and cleanse the atmosphere, and so, disinfect the 'food' that you consume. Pareekshith listened to stories of Divine Glory and so, he was hastened on the path of liberation, during the seven fateful days. So too the sight of temples, churches, mosques and houses surcharged with Divinity, of idols and sculptures depicting the mystery and majesty of God in His various Forms, of scenes that instil in your mind the littleness of man before the vastness of God's handiwork - these have a salutary effect on the formation of character, and the direction of habits and attitudes.

The senses have to be controlled, primarily because they pursue deleterious influences that harass man and lead him into ruin. Inner peace is lost when the senses feed man on inflaming wants and infructuous desires. For the sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) - and, who can escape being a sadhaka? - the intake must always be pure and blameless, sathwik. The sounds, the sights, the impressions, the ideas, the lessons, the contacts, the impacts - all must promote reverence, humility, balance, equanimity and simplicity. If the impressions are rajasik, the mind will get agitated, vengeful, fanatic and fearsome. If they are thamasik, the mind will not even be aroused into the awareness of its own innate handicaps. It is only the sathwik 'food' that will keep the mind on an even keel, fully concentrated on the Atma on which one must contemplate in order to attain peace.

When you are eager to place offerings before the Lord, let your offering be love, instead of transitory materials. Love is the very light of love; it is the only comprehensive Code of Conduct.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. Step by step

Date: 21 February 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

I AM glad your resolution to walk the 400 miles from your village, on the other side of the Western Ghats, to this place, in time for Shivarathri, has been fulfilled, a day earlier than expected. This was due to the bond of faith and prema (love) that made all the 25 of you into a well-knit group of pilgrim. It is also due to the rigorous discipline you imposed on yourselves, about food and sleep and rest. It was good that you decided to cook your own food all along; for the spiritual yearning and strength will be endangered by consuming all kinds of rajasik food (food which inflames emotions), or food prepared by rajasik (passionate) persons, or eaten in rajasik company (which arouses attachments)! You offered the food you prepared, to God before you ate and so, what you ate during the journey was consecrated I was with you throughout, from the very first step to the last. Some of you argued at Holenarasipur that the push cart in which you were bringing the provisions, vessels and personal luggage broke down only by coincidence, right in front of a workshop! But, that gave you a day of rest, which you badly needed. Fourteen days have been spent by you on the road, one was spent in rest while the cart was undergoing repairs. To cover 400 miles in 13 days, is indeed good going!

The Name of God is a great tonic

Your schedule of activity every day must have charged you with stamina. Perhaps you thought that you were only adhering to the Prasanthi Nilayam time-table, when you had bhajan twice a day Omkaram recitation at 4-30 A.M., and Nagarasankeerthan, as you walked through the streets (singing the glories of the Lord) of the village where you spent the night! But, the Name of God is a great tonic. Vitamin G gives strength to the legs to cover thirty miles a day! And, imagine how the villages through which you passed were not only thrilled, but also instructed by your bhajans and discourses to the groups that gathered round your camp! I was with you when some one turned you on to a new but longer route. I knew that some villages, lying away from the highway,

could get to know of Me through the bhajans and talks. Your manner of journey is nothing new. This was the style which your great grandfathers adopted, albeit helplessly, when they went to Kashi, Badhri, Thirupathi or Pandharpur. They moved along, as a Sathsang (good company), as a family, a brotherhood, showering along the pilgrim route inspiration, instruction, compassion, and charity. They went through the different linguistic regions of the land and they were welcomed and feted wherever they went. There were no provincial and linguistic barriers then. From Rameshwaram to Kedharnath, it was a land of One God with different Names. They ascended the peaks on which the temples were situated, shouting for their own encouragement, Hari bol, or Govindha. Over the seven hills of Thirupathi, it was Govindha, Govindha for every step, but, now, motorable roads have been laid to reach most of the shrines, and people ride up to the very doorstep, with scarcely any Govindha emerging from their lips; while getting down from the cars right in front of the shrine, they throw away the stump of the cigarette that they were smoking till then! I am glad, you came walking, with the name of God on your lips, even in these days, when you could have come in cars or omnibuses, right up to the Prasanthi Nilayam.

Activity is the very sine qua non of life

Shankaracharya, in the fifth century A.D., went on foot from Kanthi to Kashi, Badhri, Kashmir, Kedharnath, Kailash or Puri, Shringeri and Kaladi! And, he lived only until the age of thirty-two! Imagine the tremendous amount of work that he did, writing, expounding, propagating, establishing, organising, inspiring, teaching - all in about fourteen or fifteen years of active life! When you trudge towards a holy shrine, when your legs ache, you pray to the God who is leading you forward; your thoughts do not deviate from that high endeavour! You came, I know, reciting or reminding yourself of the Name, Sai Ram. I know that you spent 75 per cent of the time in Divine thoughts; 25 per cent you spent - didn't you? - on your personal worries - your homes, people there and their problems,, discussion on the distance yet to cover and. the distance already covered! Also, some suggestions about smoother and quicker movement! Be active, welcome activity, that is the message that God gives man, at birth. The breath teaches you Soham all the time, 'so' when it

goes in and 'ham,' when it is exhaled. Activity is the very sine qua non of life. You will have to select that activity which is conducive to your spiritual progress, judging the stage in which you are at present. There is no high and low, in the activity. The eye sees stars that are billions of miles away, but, they do not see the ears, which are a few finger-breadths afar! The eye must see, the ear must hear, the hand must hold. That is their Dharma (duty). Each must manage its own, his own Dharma.

Use your limbs as God willed them to be used

A plantain tree has a number of uses; the leaf is used to eat one's meal from; the flower is used to prepare a few dishes; the outer covers of the trunk can be used for binding and packing things as a good string-yielding substance; but, the main use of the tree is in the bunch of bananas! You take all the trouble of planting and growing the tree for the sake of the bananas, not the leaves, the strings, the inner soft core, or the flower. So too, the main use of this human body is the realisation of the reality! The rest is all incidental. Prahladha prayed, "Lord! I desire to adore you and offer flowers with both my hands!" You may say, O, the hands have so much else to do! But, though they may be used for a variety of operations, the chief purpose for which man has been endowed with them is to pray, to do puuja (ritualistic worship), to hold the Feet of the Lord. The ears are designed to hear the glory of God, the eyes to stand witness to its manifestations! The tongue may be used to talk scandal, or to flatter those in authority, but that is really misuse! Use it as God willed it to be used, for singing hymns of Divine Glory.

Like Seetha under the Ashoka tree, surrounded by ghastly demonesses who terrified her and held out threats of torture, but all the while immersed in the bliss derived from contemplation of Rama, the tongue moves about, with sharp teeth around, waiting for a chance to hurt and wound! The tongue has to speak out testimony for the majesty and mystery that is God; all other tasks are subordinate. The legs must take you to the temple of God; of what benefit is it if they take you to houses of vulgar entertainment or places where money is earned and lost, as in the race course?

Obstacles alone can toughen your character

You have put your legs to their legitimate use! Do you feel any pain now? Any tension in the muscles? No; you are filled with Anandha (bliss). All that bother was to get this Anandha. Is it for My sake that you underwent this Padhayathra (pilgrimage on foot)? No. It is for your own sake, for this chance of sitting around Me and listening to My words! Outside this room now, there are thousands waiting for a few words from Me; but, you have earned the chance, by the proper use of your limbs!

You told Me yesterday, "Swami! We have been coming to you since ten years; you have spoken to us often;. but, why is it we have not progressed a bit in our sadhana (spiritual practice) to earn peace and joy? Well. It is not enough if nice dishes are cooked and arranged in the kitchen. They have to be served on your plates, you have to eat them and more than all, digest them. So too, it is not enough if I speak and you hear! You have to recollect what I have said and treasure them in the cavity of your heart and ruminate over them and put them into daily practice! Some of you feel neglected by Me, when some disappointment or trouble comes upon you. You must welcome such obstacles, for, they alone can toughen your character and make your faith firmer. When you hang a picture on the nail driven into the wall, you shake the nail and find out whether it is firm enough, to bear the weight of the picture, don't you? So too, in order to prevent the picture of God from falling and getting broken into bits, the nail (Name of God) driven into the wall of the heart has to be shaken by means of a disaster or two! Suppose I ask one of you now to jump from the first floor, you should not hesitate and weigh the pros and cons, and slide away, for fear of injuring your feet! It is a method of shaking the nail to ascertain whether it is firm and steady. You must take it as a Leela (Divine sport) of Mine and jump; if you do so, no injury will happen! Or else, I would not ask you to do it!

Married life will not bar your way to Realisation

When you travel towards God, whoever objects has to be bypassed; Prahladha went against his father, Vibheeshana went against his brother,

Jamadhagni had to harm his own mother, Meera could not obey her husband; because, they stuck to the path of God and broke through all those who opposed them. Young men like you have the problem, I know, of being forced to marry against your will by parents who seek to hasten you into marital security. You have to win them over and get their approval as Shankara did when he wanted to enter the monastic order! But, let Me tell you that married life and being a grihastha (householder) will not bar your way to Realisation. Look upon the wife and the children as a sacred trust, and serve them in that spirit. Prepare yourselves for a celibate and spiritual discipline from the age of fifty; the five senses have to be mastered, by the time five decades of your life are over. The conclusion of six decades means that you have conquered the six foes of man: lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and hate. When you are seventy, you must have become ready to merge with the seven sages, the seven seas and the seven colours of the solar ray; that is to say, you must be far, far above mundane desires and ideals, and as near the point of mergence as possible, through sadhana.

God is the Power behind the wheel of life

Eighty must see you in line with the deities that preside over the eight cardinal points, more or less Divine, in attributes and characteristics. Ninety takes you, or rather should take you to the realm of the Nine Planets, into the realm of the Super. When man reaches the hundred mark, living out the ten decades, he must have mastered the ten senses, the five senses of action and the five senses of knowledge and become Wisdom incarnate, with no trace of action or the consequence thereof or the desire for it. He and the Absolute are One and Indivisible! But, all this is about the pahayathra of the pilgrimage of life. Let Me tell you now about your 400 mile yathra (journey)! Arjuna had the privilege of having Krishna as his charioteer during the battle of Kurukshethra. But, he did not realise that Krishna was his charioteer every moment of his life! You also must have thought that I was with you all through the 400 mile route! As if I have not been with you, before and since! Krishna commissioned the great bowman Arjuna to escort the women of the Yadhava clan to a safe place of refuge, when He decided to end His earthly career; on the way, some wild tribals attacked the convoy, and Arjuna rose to

destroy them, with the Gandiva (his famous bow and the divine arrow) he had won by severe austerity. But, the charioteer had gone; the strength had ebbed away! He had forgotten even the formulae for invoking the deities who directed the arrows! He could not even string the Gandiva bow, he had wielded in a hundred encounters with the mightiest heroes of the age] Then, he realised that Krishna was the power behind the wheel of His life, that without Him, he was a spent force. The tribals overpowered the group and kidnapped the women whose wailings pierced the heart of Arjuna!

So, be convinced that whatever achievement you make, is caused by the Grace of the Lord. Pray to the Lord for strength, wisdom, humility, detachment, light and love. With each step in the pilgrimage of life approach Divinity steadily and surely.

The plan and purpose of the ancient religions of India are to plant the seeds of Love in the human heart so that they may sprout into saplings of endurance, and blossom into tolerance, yielding ultimately the fruits of peace.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. Sappers and miners

Date: **February 1971** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam**

The very first gathering in the Prasanthi Nilayam heralding every Festival, is a meeting of members of the Sathya Sai Seva Dhal, from all parts of the country. When thousands come to this place, which to most of them is new and strange, full of unfamiliar experiences, it becomes the duty of young persons like you to serve them, in a spirit of dedication, so that they may feel they are lovingly looked after and treated as if they are brothers and sisters, come to their family home.

It is a sign of spiritual weakness to differentiate among them and select the poor or rich, the educated or the illiterate, the native or the foreigner. They are all aspirants and seekers, and so, they have to be welcomed and helped to participate and share in the joy which they have planned to experience here. Each of them is a repository of Anandha (Bliss), and that is the reason why they have the urge to taste it in a larger measure. Each one has Sai installed in his heart and so, is a brother, a kinsman. So do not pollute your acts of service with the poison of pride. Be humble that you have the sacred chance to use these days of your life in this noble task. There are nine stages of devotion, through which the seeker has to ascend, before he culminates in total surrender and mergence with his Divine ideal. Of these, the seventh stage is 'Service of the Feet of the Lord!' And you have the good fortune of being considered fit for that stage, now itself. The Lord's Feet are million; the feet that are rushing into this campus are those of the Lord. Serve them, so that you can move on into the two further stages and realise your goal.

Be looking all around for any chance of service

You are getting the great chance of partaking in a huge sathsang (holy company), from today! Thousands are coming to this place, prompted by keen desire to see, hear and contact Divinity, and for those who have kindred desires, the chance to move about in this Sea of Spirit is indeed a sign of Grace. This is the benefit of fairs and festivals held in holy places; the wave of

exhilaration, enthusiasm and exultation lifts men aloft into the rarefied air of Holy Beatitude. Two attainments mark out the Sevak, especially the Sathya Sai Sevak - absence of conceit and presence of love. Service to those needing help makes you the comrade of all, irrespective of other considerations. Be looking all around you, all the time, even beyond the horizon of your allotted tasks, for any extra chance to serve. An old man may be stranded in the hot sun, a paralytic may be casting his eyes for a chair, a child may be wailing for its parent, a mother may be clamouring for water to slake her thirst, another may be heart-broken for she has not got a vantage point from where she could see what is happening on the dais - watch for these, and run towards them, with a smile and a word of cheer! It may be that some one has swooned or fainted. Get the doctor or take the patient to the dispensary, with loving care, and with gentle alacrity, instilling courage and confidence. Let them go back to their places and say that not even their nearest kinsmen could have dealt with that situation as lovingly and as intelligently as you did. Have compassion, love, readiness to sacrifice personal comforts, and patience - then, you can be a successful Seva dhal member.

Examples are the best instructors

This means that you must be engaged in constant Namasmara (remembering God's Name) yourself, so that you remain a true servant of God while claiming to serve man, or rather, so that you may see in Man the God that is his real nature. If you have not acquired that vision, you will not find unity among these diverse representations of the Divine. You will get confused by the multiplicity.

Hold on to the Command; that is the genuine path of the bhaktha (devotee). Never doubt or hesitate. Even if you are posted to the canteen or the hospital, do not get downhearted, that you cannot get dharshan, all time. I have no such handicaps; you can have My dharshan, wherever you are. When you are engaged in dhyana (meditation), if you hear some groan by your side, rise and investigate; do not curse and neglect. You get much more spiritual benefit by this means, than by sticking on selfishly to your patch of carpet or deerskin! Have a tender and a sweet voice. Do not shout yourselves, while

reprimanding others for speaking aloud. Be examples for others, not simply castigators! Examples are the best instructors. Be deaf to the harsh words that others may in their ignorance use against you. They too will soften, if you explain to them the why and wherefore of the restrictions and regulations that are prescribed here, by Me. When you speak soft and sweet to a person who is angry with you, you will feel a surge of joy within you. And the repentance you evoke in him is the reward you get.

Be saturated with equal love to all

One more point. You should wear simple dress, and not swagger about in new fangled outlandish bush-shirts and drain-pipe pants. How can a simple villager ask for help from some one who does not appear to belong to his world? Your face, appearance, stance and apparel must infuse confidence exuding sympathy and humility, so that the distressed and disconsolate, the old and the decrepit might come to you gladly for assistance to solve their problems. This applies also to lady members of the Seva Dhal (Volunteer Service). They too can keep people away, by means of frightful hair-do's and repelling apparel. Above all, remember that you are members of the Sathya Sai Seva Dhal, 'sappers and miners' of the Sathya Sai Era. You have to be saturated with equal and universal love to all. You must be steady in adversity and in fortune. You must be skilled in the knowledge necessary for serving others, in an emergency. My name is Baba, B.A., B.A. I am a 'double graduate,' as you can see! What do those letters mean? B means Sath (Being); A means Chith (Awareness); the second B means Anandha (Bliss); and the second A means Atman. The entire word means that I am Sath-Chith-Anandha Atman! And, you too are Sath, Chith and Anandha Atman. Only, you are not aware of it, you have not discovered it and revealed it. Service in the spirit I have indicated is one of the ways through which you can make that discovery.

A volcano throws up its lava on the screen of the picture house; a dam bursts and the flood waters it had impounded roar along towards the sea, submerging vast states; but the screen is not burnt, nor does it get wet in

the least.

The screen is the truth; the film is an illusion, however realistic it was, however genuine the feelings it aroused.

Know this and so direct your life that this knowledge is the background of all your action,. Thus, you will have great peace and great joy.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. This and that

Date: February 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE Vedas prescribe forms of worship through rites and formulae for different Names and Forms of the single Godhead, so that people of different stages of growth and different standard of intellectual attainment can draw inspiration therefrom. The Unity of all the names and forms was, however, emphasised throughout. Each name and form when it was adored was described as All-powerful, All-knowing. All-pervasive, etc, so that worshippers may be led through every door to the self-same entity that subsumes all. But, the shortsightedness of man won over this largehearted view; the Names and Forms were taken as essentially distinct and each became the centre of a sect, creed, with all its divisive consequences. Thus, we have a multitude of warring factions, each swearing by its own favourite Form and Name, to the exclusion of all the rest - like Ganapathyas, Souras, Shaivas, Vaishnavas, Veerashaivas and Veeravaishnavas. The real harvest of Anandha for which the spiritual operations of rites and manthras (sacred formulae) were gone through has been neglected, while the weeds of calumny, cynicism and conflict have grown wild over the fields.

Prescription of the Geetha to lasting happiness

The evil influence of kama (lust) is at the bottom of this tragedy. The Geetha laid down that even the Vedas have to be transcended, whenever they seek to foster desires and cater to transient urges. It speaks in the same shloka that man must seek to become Atmavan (the possessor of soul) and the Athmic (spiritual) strength. Note the word! Atmavan! The Geetha asks you to be, not Balavan (possessor of physical prowess), not Dhanavan (possessor of a comfortable bank balance) but, Atmavan (having the prowess arising out of the awareness that you are the Atman, which can remain unaffected by fame or shame, grief or joy and all the buffetings of the dualities of the world). Another word in the same shloka is Nir-yogak-shema. Dwell for a while upon its meaning, too. It points the way to lasting happiness - never being concerned with the earning of happiness and the maintenance of happiness,

but, just being oneself! Being established in the Atman, never worried about how to be happy (for the Atman is ever Blissful), this is the prescription of the Geetha. Nir-dhwandho (without paying attention to the dual throng of grief-joy, pain-pleasure, etc.), nithya-sathwastho (ever fixed in the quality of equity), nir-yogakshema (unaffected by considerations of security and welfare), Atmavan (established in Athmic consciousness) that is how the Geetha lays down the path of liberation. In chapter 5, shloka 28, the Geetha says that the Muni (ascetic) who is eager to attain liberation must be the master of his senses, mind and intellect and he has also to give up raga (likes and dislikes and preferences), bhaya (fear, at something unpleasant or undesirable happening) and krodha (resentment, anger, at those who cause disappointment or grief or loss). Vigatha (free from) raga, bhaya, krodha, is the expression used. The shloka goes on to say that such a person is already liberated; he has nothing else to do!

Regulation of the senses purify the intellect

The prescription to scrutinise always the purity of the means, and not worry about the acquisition of the fruit of the activity; and the description of yoga as the stoppage of all modifications of consciousness - both emphasise the same advice of the Lord. The regulation and restriction of the senses purify the intellect, which then can boldly and quickly investigate into the real nature of the subject-object relationship, the I-other relationship, and discovering that all is I (the One), attains peace, prashanthi (unruffled peace). A single seed of kama (desire) if it gets stuck in the soil of the heart, is very difficult to dislodge. The thinnest shower of rain, a slight change in circumstance which promises to be favourable, will suddenly make it sprout and spread its tentacles. Kama can be suppressed and mastered only by Rama (attachment to God) and prema (love for all beings, prompting sacrifice of joys and comfort for others). Without a hold on Rama and prema, kama will upset your faith in standards of morality and righteousness. It will place before you all sorts of specious arguments to overcome the pangs of conscience and enslave reason and sense of duty. I am arranging every year during Dhashara a yajna (sacrifice), so that you may learn thereby the importance of Vedhic studies as well as the need to renounce what we falsely evaluate as precious,

and be for some days in the atmosphere of the ancient discipline, so that your emotions may be calmed and impulses domesticated. I am untouched by elation or sadness, or any of the consequences of activity. The ball of butter, floating on buttermilk, though it is in it, is not of it. My nature is unaffected by My movements and activities. I talk and walk among you, I arrange and direct, I advise and admonish, but I am away from any attachment. The Divine is so distinct and distinguished from the mortal and the bound. Train your minds to follow not the devious, but, the Divine path, of which I am revealing to you the trail.

The evil mind infects those who contact it

A clean uncontaminated mind is like a fully blossomed fragrant rose! It refreshes and pleases, whether it is on the wall or on the table, in the left hand or the right. It can rise and reach the Footstool of God in Heaven. But the evil mind stinks, and is avoided by kith and kin; it infects those who contact it. Waves move out from the mind in ever-widening circles and affect all those who draw near. Let your mind have no waves; let it be silent, level, calm, so that the Hamsa (the bird of purity with perfectly white plumes, the bird that can distinguish between right and wrong, accepting right and rejecting wrong, the bird that is the symbol of Soham. Sa (He)aham (I), Soham: the principle of the One, embracing He and I, I and the others, I and He becoming We, or even I) can sport thereon! Every gesture, word and activity of mine, however casual it may appear, is motivated to move you towards the fulfilment of your lives, and endow you with the Anandha (bliss) that your Atman (Self Reality) is.

Dive into the depth of silence to hear the Cosmic Om

You read the Ramayana or listen to expositions of the text by learned Pandiths; but, you spend no time trying to circulate through your activities the lessons the Ramayana teaches. 'Bagavutham' is how the illiterate pronounce the word, Bhagavatham! Bagavutham means, "Let us become good." Yes! that must be the spirit in which you must take up the Bhagavatham for study. Enter into the spirit of the narration and imbibe the

courage that restores the equilibrium of the mind. Then you can easily pace the path of Madhava (God) instead of the path of manava (human). Madhava means, the Master over maya (delusion due to ignorance) - Ma (maya, delusion); dhaya, master. Follow God and nothing can delude you, putting on the apparel of the real. Sound is of three kinds: Samanya, Varna and Mooka; Samanya (the common): the sound produced by things falling, or breaking apart or fusing, all the sounds of the objective world, of rain and thunder, of rivers gurgling, of volcanoes and earthquakes and the like, even the dropping of dew on a tender petal of rose, the sailing of a feather from a bird's wing through the air! The second kind is the sound of Varna (the spoken word): this carries a specific meaning and is armed with intention, to inform, or instruct or inspire. This is the flow of the heart-beat of one into the heart of another. The third kind is mooka (the sound of silence): when one dives into the depth of that silence, one hears oneself, the primeval Cosmic Om, the Pranava that emanates from the prana (the vital vibration) that fills the Universe. To hear that sound, one has to approach, as near as possible, the core of one's being. That is why the Upanishath calls itself so; it urges you to go near, delve deep, dive to the very floor of the lake. Upa means Near; Nishath means Sitting.

Go and sit near, so that you can hear the whisper of the Super Soul to-the soul. Om summarises the Vedas and their teachings. Om thath sath, says the Geetha. Thath (that) which Sath (is) is Om, the One. All this is Brahman, the One without a second. Thath is used to indicate that the objective world is taken by senses to be separate and afar; it means 'that', and 'that' is always far, and separate. Sath means 'is,' 'the is,' 'this!' When you recognise the Thath as 'is' or Sath, it becomes 'this, it is no longer object, it is subject, and the merging of object with subject manifests as the Om.

God is one for all, like Sun and Moon

Seeing difference is the bane of the undeveloped intellect. The One Sun is seen, adored, and acknowledged all over the world; you do not boast of an American Sun, an Ananthapur Sun or the Sun of Puttaparthi. He is for all. So too children all over the world play in the moonlight and welcome the Moon, the Moon which follows each of them wherever they roam! Since the Sun and

Moon are so far away in outer space, they receive the homage of all. God is so high, so far away that He is One for all. When you argue and quarrel over your God and mine and say He is many, you are only bringing Him down and insulting His Majesty. When you pay undue attention to differences, spasms of hatred, anger, malice and envy overwhelm you. Anger rushes blood to the brain; the temperature rises; the composition of the blood changes; toxins enter into it in such quantities that it injures the nerves, and make you old before your time. There was a mother who was feeding at her breast her tender baby. Suddenly she plunged into a violent quarrel with her neighbours, and forgot to keep her baby down, in the heat of vulgar oratory. The poor child drank the toxin-mixed milk of the mother and when the flames of anger subsided, the mother found that she had a corpse on her breast! Desire to which you are too fondly attached breeds anger and its nefarious brood. Discard it and you can have perpetual youth! The Anandha that the Atman can manifest will keep age and aging away! Rama learnt from Vasishta (it is part of the game of the Avathar to bestow on the preceptor Vasishta the merit of having taught the way of liberation) the method of conquering desire and he demonstrated by his equanimity that he could go into long exile, with as much exaltation as he could go towards the throne for his Coronation. 'Rama' means the Joy that comes of Love. He loved bird and beast, demon and sage, to prove to the world that God saves those who love His children.

12. Love, the sine qua non

Date: **February 1971** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam**

The rays of the morning Sun induce buds to blossom into fragrance and beauty; they prompt the Divine in you, today, to blossom into fragrance, purity and holy endeavour. Earth and sky take on a golden hue, reminding us of the Hiranya Garbha (Golden Womb) from which all creation emanated in the timeless past. This is a sacred day, according to the traditions of this land; it has been revered and celebrated since numberless centuries. But, at the present time, people are content to listen to the praise of the Day and repeating what they have heard, to others, in parrot chatter. What really matters, however, is the experience of the bliss that it is designed to confer. The intuitively ready have surely visualised that the vow of fasting and vigil prescribed for this festival will guarantee certain results. But, the genuine practitioners are few, and even they do not communicate their ecstasy to others; so, faith in the cultural calendar has declined, and the validity of vows is being questioned. People who go about this land will notice the large concourses that attend temples, that partake in bhajans and Namasankeerthan where the glory of God is sung with demonstrative enthusiasm that; mill around venerable personalities who preach and teach the ways of God, and they infer that this is a sacred land full of pious individuals, who tread the pilgrim path to Divinity. But, these are hollow rituals, empty exercises, exhibitionistic picnics or hikes; the pilgrims are more interested in shopping, both in the temple and the bazars, than in stopping the ungodly habits to which they are attached! They are unaware of the basic truth of God, nor are they anxious to earn that awareness, by the hard path of discipline.

Unwavering Love alone can win God's Grace

Without an intellectual grasp of the fundamentals of the Divine Principle, all vows, fasts and vigils are imitative, routine, mechanical activities that involve waste of time and energy. It is best that you impress upon yourself the need for this basic step on this Mahashivarathri, for, this rathri (night) is the night

that has to usher in the dawn of realisation. On this Mahashivarathri, you have to impress on your consciousness that Nature is alive, since God is life; that Nature appears ever-lasting, since God is eternal; Nature is but a reflection of God. He lends the colour of order, purpose, and activity to inert Nature. Without the motivator, Nature is helpless and powerless. Appearance is but a reflection of reality; Ishwara is but a reflection of Brahman, the intelligence behind the Awareness of all. Shivarathri inspires us to learn this basic Truth and shape our lives in the light of that illumination. The Grace of God cannot be won through the gymnastics of reason, the contortions of Yoga or the denials of asceticism. Love alone can win it, Love that needs no requital, Love that knows no bargaining, Love that is paid gladly, as tribute to the All-loving, Love that is unwavering. Love alone can overcome obstacles, however many and mighty. There is no strength more effective than purity, no bliss more satisfying than love, no joy more restoring 'than bhakthi (devotion), no triumph more praiseworthy than surrender.

Right living is the prescription of Vedantha

The achievement of anandha through prema (of the highest bliss through the highest love) - this is the teaching of Vedantha; Vedantha for which all seekers compliment the sages of this land. Vedantha is an often misunderstood school of philosophy. It does not mean the study of profound tomes, or the calculated breathing, through trained nostrils of measured quantities of air, or even eating as a dog does and sleeping as a jackal does, (wandering without any assured abode or source of sustenance) as the saying goes! Right living, balanced living, true living is the prescription of Vedantha. The fair face of Vedantha has been disfigured by fanatics and false interpreters. They sought manifold meanings behind the axioms of Vedantha and landed themselves amidst a medley of wrong meanings! They created confusion where clarity existed and so people lost faith in spiritual discipline itself. Vedantha is Love, the philosophical basis for that love.

Love should not be rationed, on the basis of caste, creed or economic status or intellectual attainment of the recipient. It should flow full and free, regardless of consequence, for, it is one's nature to love, to seek out the dry

dreary wastes which love can water and make fertile. Wherever there is a vacuum, in any heart, Love flows into it and is glad that it can fill the emptiness. It is never held back; it is offered in abundance, without guile or deceit; it does not wear the cloak of falsehood, flattery or fear. The tendrils of love aspire to cling only to the garments of God; it senses that God resides, in His Infinite Splendour, in every heart; so, it probes silently into the innermost recesses of all personalities around it to discover the seat of God, so that it may bloom therein. That is real bhakthi (devotion). When the tendril clings to worldly objects, it is bhukthi (gourmandism), not bhakthi (godwardness). It is the direction that is crucial.

Love ennobles the least and the lowest

When love is directed towards things that cater to the senses or bodily happiness, it will dry up when they fail or disappoint. When profit is loved, loss will undermine it. Discontent will sap its springs, when you love with the motive of worldly contentment. Even when ten million disappointments combine to distress you, never give up love; fix it on the source of love, the spring of love, the Supreme Goal of love, namely, God. Whatever the handicap, howsoever you are tempted to loosen the grip, hold on to God; there is always a calm, after the storm. A bout of hot weather invariably brings welcome showers. Love saturates all activities with joy and peace. Love ennobles the least and the lowest. Love your self for the God that it embodies; love others, for the God that is enshrined in them, that speaks and acts through them. This is the bedrock on which you can build the mansion of happiness, this recognition of the Divine, that motivates you from within. Thousands are here before Me now; you claim to be devotees, with hems full of love and devotion; you roll rosaries over your fingers, and roll the Name over your tongues; you indulge in breathing exercises or contortional feats, but, unless you revere all and worship all in the abandon of selfless love, you only insult the unique tradition of this land. Passion, agitation, anxiety - these degrade human nature. They are born out of hatred, greed, malice or envy, which love alone can counteract.

You become what you yourself feel

When you have here the very embodiment of love as your dearest treasure, why welcome into your hearts the waves of hatred, faction, fear and doubt? Why turn them into volcanoes of cruelty and wickedness, when they can smile as green valleys of fragrant flowers? When you Have fear in you, the reaction of fear greets you. When you have hatred in you, it resounds from all whom you come across. All around you echo the sentiments that you carry in your own heart! Yadh Bhavam thadh bhavathi - "You become what you yourself feel." Making or marring is the activity of your own mind. When you pronounce another person as vicious or bad, you are making a pronouncement on your own wickedness or vice. Your own impurity casts upon him that suspicion. No one can judge another, for, when another is judged, you are yourself condemned!

You may ask Me, how is it possible for a man to be wicked or vicious, when his body is the temple of God. His words may be harsh, his actions may be reprehensible, his behaviour may be revolting, but, he is nevertheless Divine! For, look upon him not as a body with a name and form, or a mind with emotions and feelings, or reason with resolutions and conclusions, but, as the Atman, the "Universal I" reflected as the "particular I", that I is as pure, peaceful, illumined and expansive as the I of which it is but a wave! Cultivate this attitude of observing everyone. Then, you can rid your mind of prejudices. The I in him and the I in you are identical, for, both derive existence, knowledge and bliss from the same "absolute I", the Paramatmam.

Wisdom is compassion at its highest

If your devotion does not stand by you when you seek to revere the reflections of God in the body-mirrors that move around you, when you peer into and prostrate before these images of God that parade before you, wherever you cast your eyes, how can you claim to be devoted to God, the Original of which these are but faint and faltering echoes? This is the sadhana (spiritual discipline) I prescribe for you. Without steady faith in this sadhana and sincere practice of this sadhana, if you simply group together, preparing and sharing Prasadhams (eatables placed as offerings to God) on every

conceivable occasion, or even singing and extolling God, I must say that your efforts are all in vain! Expand your hearts; enlarge your vision; enlarge the circle of kinship; take more and more of your fellow beings into the tabernacle of your hearts. And, adore them in loving worship. Wisdom is only compassion at its highest; for, through sympathy you enter the heart of another and understand him through and through, you go behind the veil of pretence and punditry, convention and custom; you go behind good manners and fashion that people put on to hide their agony and ignorance from the rest of the world. Finding the unity in this diversity of roles is true wisdom.

Have no other thought than God

You consider Shivarathri to be a great event, a sacred festival, because of the emergence of the Linga from this body. The Linga emerged this day from the embodied Shiva, and the Shasthra (ancient scriptures) say, Brahma and Vishnu who sought to measure its Glory could not succeed in their venture! Some superficial scholars say that Shiva was born this day, as if the Sath-Chith- Anandha swaruupa has either beginning or end! Some say that He started thapas (penance) today, and some others that today marks the conclusion of His thapas! Even this is due to attempt to drag Divinity down to human level, so that man can peer into the face of God and move as His servant or slave! The affinity should elevate both, not degrade the outer and the inner Divine. No low desire or vulgar ambition should be ascribed to Godhead by the meanness of man.

God is all-powerful; God is everywhere; God is all-knowing. To adore such a Formidable Limitless Principle, man spends a few minutes out of the 24 hours, and uses a minute before an idol or image or picture! It is indeed ridiculous, it is practically futile. Adore Him so long as you have breath, so long as you are conscious. Have no other thought than God, no other aim than knowing His command, no other activity than translating that command into action. That is what is meant by surrender. Render your self unto Him. When you intend going on a journey, you hand over the keys of your car to the chauffeur and sit in comfort and security in the back-seat, forgetting the possible troubles on the way. You have surrendered your life into the hands of that man, his

intelligence, alertness and skill. Some men do not fully surrender; they are too egoistic for that! They interrupt him every minute with tips, hints, and suggestions about driving; with questions and doubts regarding the condition of the car or the road! And, so, they confuse him and confound his confidence so much that they inflict accidents upon themselves! Be steady, have Faith, and reach the goal safe. Life is the car, your heart is the key. God is the sarathi (chauffeur). Surrender to Him and be rid of further bother. Travel safe and arrive happy.

You are atheist, if you have no Love in you

There are many who declare that they have surrendered to Me. They use the word, arpana. They have dedicated their thanu, mana, dhana (body, mind, wealth), their all, they proclaim! But, they still continue with their 'I did it,' 'I feel so,' 'I think so,' 'I like it,' 'I do not like it,' etc. The I raises its hood so that it may receive homage or praise! Now, it is a big lie to say that you have surrendered! It is sheer falsehood. The word arpana is a word that is just thrown about, without any value or purpose, to deceive people who do not dive into its authenticity. How can you surrender something over which you have no control? You are the slave of your mind, of your passions, of your prejudices; but, yet, you dare claim that you have surrendered your mind, your thoughts, your plans to God! While you are struggling to escape from the coils of the mind and the stranglehold of the passions, how can you dedicate them to Me? No. You need not boast of such bravery, such sacrifice, such devotion. I do not need or ask for such declaration. It is not enough if you believe that God is everywhere and at all times, and that you are yourself no different from Him. When you are God yourself, to whom are you to surrender what? Think over this deeply and attain to that realisation. Thousands of you have gathered here from all the corners of this world. You have put up with many discomforts, hardships, and inconveniences, in your struggle to earn Grace. It has been for each of you a lesson in love, tolerance, fortitude and patience. Your innate quality of love has enabled you to share in joy and peace. Love makes you all theists. You have to be labelled an atheist, if you have no love in you, however demonstrative your religiosity may be! If you believe that you can win the Grace of God by means of vows, fasts,, feasts

and recitation of hymns of praise, offering of flowers, etc., you are woefully mistaken. Love alone is the sine qua non.

The Geetha says, you must be adhweshtha sarva bhoothanam - " without hatred to all beings"; but, that is not enough. A wall has no hatred towards any being. But, is that the ideal? No. You must positively love all beings, actively love, actively engage yourself in acts of love. That alone wins the Grace you crave for.

13. Shivaraathri : its significance

Date: February 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

THE scriptures composed by the sages of Bharath are testaments of genuine experience; they are to be interpreted and observed in practice, after reverential study by persons who have clarified their intellects by rigorous disciplines. They can confer eternal Anandha (bliss) when they are thus utilised; but, scholastic or philological or grammatical inquirers which seek to comment and confuse can only lead to the neglect and loss of the precious content. They are ready to teach the Truth and lead the student towards the goal of Anandha; they are eager to grant immortality and save man from the dreary round of birth and death. Really speaking, children of Bharath are fortunate to have this invaluable heritage. The Vedas and Shasthras speak of this fortune; the sages extol this land on this score; the Upanishaths acclaim the people who have such gurus and guides; the achievements of generations of aspirants and seekers stand witness to this treasure and its worth. But, some blind cynics discard the treasure, and condemn it as something that draws men away into futility! One can only pity them from their lack of vision. Bharath is the name of a way of life, not an extent of land between the seas and the Himalayas. It is another name for tolerance and mutual love, which have made it a garden of multicoloured religions and philosophies, creeds and faiths.

Dharma means a lot of things, do's and don'ts

It is the land where the identity between man and God has been declared by persons who have attained that realisation. The individual is encased, while God is unbound; the individual believes himself bound, as having name and form, as the body and its appurtenances. The fire that is latent in the fuel can manifest only when it is lit by external fire. So too, the divinity of the intellect, the mind and the inner instruments of cognition can manifest only when the Atma is prompting and urging them. Otherwise, if they are prompted and urged by the senses, they will lead only to perdition and delusion. Every directive given in the scriptures on discipline is intended to help the sadhaka

(spiritual aspirant) to realise this identity and to derive the Anandha which recognition of this Unity confers. For example, take the exhortation in the Geetha shloka, which says, Sarva dharman parithyajya mam ekam sharanam vraja. What is the dharma that has to be given up? Are all duties and responsibilities to be discarded? Or, does Dharma here refer only to some of these? Dharma is an omnibus expression, which means a lot of things, attitudes, behaviour patterns and mores. It includes often mere rules, which are known as vidhi (fate) and nishedha (do's and don'ts). If you are anxious to catch a bus, board a plane or entrain for some place, you have to be at the stop or port or station before a particular time. That is a vidhi. When two brothers divide among themselves the possessions left by their father, they share half and half; this is Dharma, that is to say, right and proper, moral, approveable. Now, Dharma of this nature is laid down and observed, so that we get peace and content, so that sukha (happiness) may be promoted. It belongs to the relative world, the absolute has no concern with these relative advantages or benefits. It is in the realm of ajnana that sukha is desired and dhukkha (sorrow) is avoided.

Know that you are the ever full, ever blissfull

Kama (desire) is the urge for karma (action). It is regulated and modified by dharma (righteousness) so that happiness may be gained and sadness avoided. And, kama is the product or expression of ajnana. So, when the Geetha directs that all dharma be given up what is meant is that ajnana (ignorance which induces kama, the progenitor of karma which has to subserve Dharma) is to be conquered, and overcome. Acquire jnana (spiritual wisdom); know the truth of thyself. Then, you will be free from lust and hate, because you will know that you are the ever full, the ever blissful.

Imagine a person searching for things in a room. His eye falls on all the articles he wants to secure, but, he does not notice the person who searches! The seeker does not see himself! When you give up the search for objects, for things other than yourself, you see yourself and know yourself. When the dhraishta (seer) is seen, the dhrishya (seen) is negated; when the dhrishya is seen, the dhraishta is ignored! Tideman said just now that in the very first

meeting he had with Me, I told him that I am God. In fact, every one is God, limiting himself into this particular name and form in which he is encased! If you believe yourself to be the label that is now affixed on you, and call yourself by the name that others have given you, you can never know your reality and have unshakeable joy. This is the lesson that Vedantha teaches. Each one is "Sathyam jnanam anantham Brahma (Truth, Total Knowledge and Infinity is Brahman)." But, sunk in the morass of ajnana which multiplies endlessly the desires that haunt the mind, man forgets the core of his being. Every one must get convinced that he is the Atman, not the body which is its material residence. To instruct you about this is the special purpose of the festival of Mahashivarathri.

Linga is the symbol of the beginningless and endless

People ask, "Why does Swami produce the Lingam (Formless Form of God) from within himself on this day?" But, let Me tell you, it is impossible for you to understand the attributes of the Divine and to measure its potentialities, or, to gauge the significance of the manifestation of Divinity. It is agamya (unreachable) and agochara (un-understandable, mysterious). Therefore, in order to bear witness to the fact that the Divinity is amidst you, it becomes necessary to express this attribute. Or else, the atmosphere of hatred, greed, cruelty, violence and irreverence will overwhelm the good, the humble and the pious. The Linga is just a symbol, a sign, an illustration, of the beginningless, the endless, the limitless- - for it has no limbs, no face, no feet, no front or back, no beginning or end. Its shape is like the picture one imagines the Nirakara (Formless) to be. As a matter of fact, linga means - leeyathe (that in which all forms and names merge) and gamyathe (that towards which all names and forms are proceeding, to attain fulfilment). It is the fittest symbol of the All-pervasive, the All-knowing, the All-powerful. Everything is subsumed in it; everything starts from it; from the Lingam arises Jangam (Universe), from the Jangam arises sangam (association, attachment, activity) and as a result of the sangam, one realises the lingam (attributeless Atma). Thus, the circle is completed - from the beginningless to the Beginningless. This is the lesson that Lingobdhavam (emergence of the Linga) teaches. The lingashareera (the physical body) that is inhabited by the Atma

is but a vesture worn for this particular sojourn! Many a vesture has this soul worn, though its reality is eternal!

The lesson that Ramayana teaches

People have not imprinted on their hearts the lessons that the ancient Hindhu scriptures and epics seek to teach. I have been, for example, asked often, why some persons who have associated themselves with Prasanthi Nilayam for years leave off and do not appear again! The reply is evident for those who have studied the Ramayana well. After ten or twelve years of 'devotion' suddenly these people take a turn for the worse and stray away; as the Shastras say, "When the accumulated merit gets spent, they slip into the depth of mortality." Seetha is the daughter of earth, of Prakrithi (Nature), seeking the eternal comradeship of Purusha. She weds the Purusha, the Lord come as Rama. When Rama agrees to go into exile and proceeds to the forest for a stay of fourteen long years, Seetha too gives up all the luxuries she was accustomed to; she braves the perils of jungle life, for the sake of being in the presence of Rama. She renounced desire from her heart for the sole goal of Rama. Thirteen years she spent with the Lord, in perfect bliss, as a consequence of the sacrifice she dared to make. Then, quite suddenly, desire sprouted in her mind, and carried her away, far away from the Lord! She saw a golden deer, and she coveted it! She who had renounced huge treasures of gold and diamond was attracted by a fantasy and this led to the agonising separation. So too, for those long attached to Me, there arises some desire - for lands, jobs, family life, fame, position, possessions - and they move away! But Seetha repented for her mistake, and her mind suffered extreme anguish at the separation. She called on her Lord to redeem her, calling out in contrition, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, with every breath. And, finally, Rama Himself moved towards her and restored Himself to the devotee! So too, if you are agonisingly repentant and aware of the loss and anxious to rejoin, craving for the presence, this Sairam too will move towards you and grant you Grace.

14. Life-long bhajan

Date: February 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

THROUGHOUT last night you have sung bhajans (devotional songs) and kept vigil, as part of the Shivarathri celebrations. This arathi (waving of lights before an image) marks the end of that bhajan sessions; but only of the outer congregational vocal part, not of the inner solitary silent bhajan that must be the very breath of your existence. The Vedanta persuades you to investigate the function of the senses and of the mind which is activated by their capacity to reflect the Atma within. All the inner instruments of knowledge and the inner witness in man are promoters of the highest wisdom, though they are misused in ignorance to confound and ruin man's progress. Those who are aware of their being only the indestructible Atma, encased in temporary sheaths, in a ramshackle dwelling house bearing a name and presenting a form, they are unaffected by anything that happens to the sheath or house. Prahladha was such a one. However inhuman the torture they inflicted on him, he was calm and unruffled; for he was established in the Narayana (God in man), that was his genuine Truth. It took Arjuna a long time to realise this. In fact, it was only after the Ascension of Lord Krishna that it was brought home to him, in a dramatic form. Krishna, while rolling up the curtain of the Avatar's drama, had asked him to take the women, children and some old men of the Yadava clan orphaned by his departure to the safety of Hasthinapura, away from Dwaraka which had been swallowed by the sea.

The mind hides the Prompter and the Power within

Arjuna led the disconsolate community through lands infested by wild tribes. He was confident that the bow which had won him the Kurukshethra battle against the array of gigantic heroes would ensure safely and success. But, when some barbarian hordes fell upon the Yadava remnants, Arjuna sought to string his bow and fix an arrow upon it - in vain! He could not recall the formula which could send the arrow on its mortal mission. He had to witness the debacle, the kidnapping of the women whom he had vowed to guard! When Krishna had finished His Mission, He too had ended Arjuna's mission;

there was no more breath in him too. Krishna was his life, his might, his archery, his mastery, his heroism, his all. That truth was made patent to Arjuna by the shame of defeat, not by the paeon of victory! The mind plays many tricks with you, the chief of which is to foster the ego and hide the prompter and the power within. You must have heard of an accountant in the Court of the King of Death, Chithraguptha, by name. He maintains a register of the good and the bad done by each living being, and on death, he brings the books to the court and strikes the balance between debit and credit. Yama, the King then metes out the punishment that can expiate and educate. This Chithraguptha has his office in the mind of man all the time, awake, alert. The word means 'the secret picture'; what he does is to 'picture' all the secret promptings that blossom into activity; he notes the warning signals as well as the occasions when those signals were ignored or wantonly disregarded. You must see that the warning of the Divine against the merely human, or even the bestial inclinations are heeded.

Bhajan encourages man to dive into himself

Bhajan is one of the processes by which you can train the mind to expand into eternal values. Teach the mind to revel in the glory and majesty of God, wean it away from petty horizons of pleasure. That is all that bhajan or puja (acts of worship) or vratha (vows such as fasting, pilgrimage) can do. Bhajan induces in you a desire for experiencing the truth, to glimpse the beauty that is God, to taste the bliss that is the Self. It encourages man to dive into himself and be genuinely his real Self. Once that search is desired, the path is easy. One has only to be reminded that he is divine, for the malady is his divinity is being thrust out of recognition.

Chaithanya once had very high fever, the temperature rising to 105° to 106°. He refused to administer upon himself any drug other than what the Shastras has prescribed. He asked for the dust of the feet of a Brahmana, water consecrated by washing his feet! They could only get hold of a Brahmana who was not following correctly the disciplines laid down for that high caste, which entrusted with heavy responsibilities like leading the community along the spiritual path to self-realisation. But, Chaithanya asked

that they need not be very strict in scrutinising his credentials, for, a Brahmana is holy, however fallen he may be. He belongs to a line which has soaked itself through many lives in Vedhic lore and sadhana. However rickety a cow has become, milk can be got only from her. She has to be fed, fostered, fondled and revered. Thus, Chaithanya reminded the Brahmana of his great role in society and encouraged them to live up to the high expectations that history has fastened about them. Man too has come for a great destiny, on a sacred mission, endowed with special skills and tendencies to help him on; but, he fritters these precious gifts and crawls on earth from birth to death, worse than any animal. Exercises like bhajan elevate the mind and exhort the individual to seek and find the source of eternal joy that lies within him.

Grace is not something that is given or taken

When I directed that groups of people belonging to our Samithi should go along the streets in the early hours of the morning singing the glory of God (Nagarasankeertan) as summarised in the Names with which they are identified, some ask me, "Is this also included in bhakti (devotion to the Lord)? Should we sing aloud in company while on the streets?" The question arises from false conceit. Bhajan which is part of Nagarasankeertan gladdens the singer and showers joy to those who listen; it cleanses and purifies the atmosphere by its vital vibrations. It inspires and instructs; it calls and comforts. Hold fast to the God you believe in, despite trials and tests, the ups and downs of life. This day is the New Moon Day, when the moon starts growing into fullness, but, as soon as he has come full circle, he starts waning, until he almost disappears and the earth is plunged-in darkness. Yet, all is not lost. The thin curve grows steadily into the full moon again. Fortune too is like the moon. Nothing can be fixed or fragile forever in this fickle world born out of the fancy of the Lord. The Lord is eternal, absolute, unchanging. My Name is Truth, I am the Truth, and since I am in every one of you, you too are everlasting Truth. Do not doubt this and descend into distress. Strive to be endowed with the unwavering eye, the unhesitating mind.

Call out the Lord who is within your heart

Now, you will all be given Prasadam (eatables offered to God) and so, sit silently in rows. Of course, I mean by Prasadam the cooked offerings that are given this day at the conclusion of the bhajan. Prasadam also means Grace which flows from God when He is propitiated. My Grace is ever with you; it is not something that is given or taken; it is given always and accepted by the Consciousness that is aware of its significance. Win the Grace of your own subconscious so that it may accept the Grace of God which is ever available. God does not deny anyone. It is only you who deny God. When the gift is proffered, you have to do only one little act, so that you may earn it - you have to extend your hand to receive it. That is the Grace of the subconscious. Win it by teaching it the value of the Grace of God. My Grace is showered wherever you are through My infinite Love, without even calculating or measuring the readiness of your subconscious to receive it and benefit by it. The Grace itself will confer on you the faith and the strength, the wisdom and the joy. I am in your heart all the time, whether you know it or not. Draupadi called out for the Lord of Dwaraka, Sri Krishna, when she was cruelly insulted by the wicked cousins of her husbands, and so, the Lord responded after a little delay. He had to go to Dwaraka and come from there to Hasthinapura where she was! He told her that she could have got Him in the fraction of a second, had she called out, 'O dweller in my heart,' for He dwells there too, as everywhere else! The Mahashivarathri festival is over; but, the message of the day is yet to fructify in your behaviour, conduct, thinking and activity. Do not rest content with a night-long bhajan. Make it a life-long bhajan of adoration, of pilgrimage to the Lord within.

The poor are rich in devotion to God; Kunthi prayed that her difficulties may continue, for they keep the Lord ever in her mind. Riches are a great handicap in the path of spiritual progress. So, though you may be rich, do not cultivate attachment to the bank account or to the mansions, cars and comforts you command. Have them as if they are given to you on trust by the Lord.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

15. He and He alone

Date: February 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE Vedanthic teaching that jeeva and Brahman are one, is the true wisdom. Without proceeding towards it, man is cutting himself off from the unfailing spring of Anandha (bliss), light and peace. Without it, he sees the many, he is afraid of the many, he is confused with the many; he loves and hates, he craves and is spurned; he posits one theory and condemns another. In fact, he is caught in the coils of moha (delusion). When moha is conquered, man is aware of the truth and he is free.

Kurukshethra is the field of food, for kuru means food. Food indicates all that is taken in, through the gullet or the nostrils or the senses. This ahara or anna (food) is what determines the nature of the impulses, emotions and passions. These have to be directed along proper channels, and sublimated to serve the goal of liberation from fear and grief. The kshethra (field or body) must thus be transmuted into the Dharma-kshethra, the purified area of virtue and vairagya (detachment from worldly desires). Then, the charioteer will take charge, and man gets liberated, the body becomes Brahma-kshethra (field of Universal Soul). That is the life-story of a self-realised person.

Sadhana is essential to overcome faulty vision

The self-realised person is merged in Athmic Bliss; he is not bothered by external happenings; he has the world of inner peace all to himself. If you follow such a person and pray for guidance, he will not be interested in you. Then, we have the Mahapurusha (the high-souled or noble person). He has not reached the goal yet; he is well on the way; he knows the road only as far as he has trekked; so, he is unable to give full guidance to the aspirant. The Avathara-purusha, however, has come solely to save mankind, and so, He is aware of the pilgrim, the path and the goal. He is the Master of creation and He is fully conscious of his power. He knows the past, the present and future of all. He leads and liberates. The mind is the source of delusion; it deludes and binds. If the mind is subjected to the intellect then it disintegrates and

disappears, leaving the field dear for the illumination that reveals, that "we and they are but He or It." As long as the world is seen as manifold, sadhana, to overcome the faulty vision is essential. In the deep sleep stage, the senses do not work; one is immersed in the I consciousness only; that is to say, one is in Samadhi, (the state of bliss). Only, one is not aware of it, at the time. There is just a trace of ignorance. During the waking stage, there is knowledge, but no Anandha (bliss). In deep sleep, there is Anandha, but, no knowledge. That is why it is said, liberation is attained the moment one is able to fix himself at the point where there is the experience of both jagrath and sushupthi (waking and deep sleep).

"When you love Me, you love all"

Love is the word which indicates the striving to realise the falsehood of the many and the reality of the One. Love identifies; hate separates. Love transposes the Self on to another and the two think, speak and act as one. When love takes in more and more within its fold, more and more entities are rendered as One. When you love Me, you love all; for, you begin to feel and know and experience that I am in all. By means of dhyana (meditation), you can realise that I am the resident in all hearts, the urge, the motive, the guide, the goal. Yearn for that vision, that awareness and make it your priceless possession. Then, you have what you often ask Me for - sakshatkara (Direct Vision of Reality). Your love has to be as pure and as free from the taint of ego as mine so that it can merge in Me. Of course, it is hard sadhana. The mind is too much with you, now. One has to negate and deny, deprive oneself of many expectancies, dive deep into oneself, swim upstream against the current of generations of attachment to worldly things, including the body which one bears. The gopees (Cowherd girls) were so filled with the highest type of love that they saw and experienced the Krishna Principle in every speck of dust and blade of green that they saw. Love of Krishna makes the whole world Krishna. The denial of everything else is the method of visualising Krishna in all. There is only One, the integer I. When it is repeated once again, we have two. The manifold creation is only He, and He and He, repeated so often. Dust and blade, drop and spot - each is He, He and He alone. And, you are no exception, you are also He. The realisation of this

truth, this identity, this mergence, this is Sakshathkara.

The Shasthras say:

have faith in the doctor, so that you may get cured of illness; have faith in the manthra (holy formula) with which the preceptor initiates you, for then alone can your sadhana be fruitful; have faith in the sacredness of the temple, for then alone is your pilgrimage profitable;

have faith in the astrologer's predictions, for, without it, why bother yourselves with him and his abracadabra?

Have faith in the Guru, for then alone will your steps be steady and firm, on the path to self-realisation.

Faith in the Guru should bring faith in the Atma (true Self), or else, the Guru is a handicap.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16. Mind'irs, not mandhirs

Date: **March 1971** / Location: **Brindavan**

EACH one of you is designated a District President; you have to guide and help the Bhajana Mandalis (Spiritual Singing Groups), Mahila Vibhags, Bala Vihars (Women and Children Sections), Study Circles, Seva Samithis, Seva Dhals (Service Groups and Centres), that are established with your approval and watch whether they are working smoothly, with the ideals laid down in Swami's Messages always in view, and within the limitations, rules and regulations laid down by the conferences under Swami's guidance and with Swami's blessings. Of course, you have to watch over yourselves and see whether you yourself are having those ideals in view and whether you yourself are following the rules and regulations and disciplinary limitations laid down from year to year, in the conferences. There are many who come forward when there is a call for social service; but, most of them crave for publicity, seeking cameramen whenever they help others and very disappointed when they are not mentioned in newspapers! Such men push themselves forward, and climb into positions of authority, just to parade their importance before the public. They forget that service is worship, that each act of service is a flower placed at the feet of the Lord, and that, if the act is tainted with ego, it is as if the flower is infested with slimy insect pests! Who will contaminate the feet with such foul offering? Have no egotism while you serve the people of your district. Be guides in their spiritual struggle. Nourish faith in God in the area; upon that faith, you can build any type of spiritual organisation. Trees that grow by the side of canals will flourish, thick with foliage and fruits. So too, Bhajana Mandalis and other units of this Organisation will flourish, when faith in the Divine feeds the roots.

Do not indulge in exhibitionistic display

Emphasise simplicity and sincerity, more than pomp and show. Make the mind, the shrine. Have mind'irs, not mandhirs! Discourage the building of mandhirs and halls; try to utilise the temples and halls that already exist. Let the temples that are fast being depleted of pilgrims become once again

centres of spiritual vibration. Decorations and detonations tend to draw the mind away from the essential; people indulge in these things more to show themselves off and impress their importance on the public. During the festivals and celebrations, or even in daily life, people should not indulge in exhibitionistic display. If money comes into the picture, it becomes ugly and low.

You must insist on the observance of the rules of the Organisation, for, they are laid down out of love, not to tyrannise. They are bunds erected on the river banks in order to direct the flood waters safe to the sea. Guide the devotees, taking it as a divine duty. Stir well the sugar of God in the tasteless water of worldly affairs, and it becomes drinkable. Have faith that it is adoration of Swami that you are doing, through the work allotted to you; then, it becomes sadhana (spiritual practice) through which you can win Grace. There is a Telugu proverb which characterises elders thus: 'Peddhalu kadhu; gaddhalu' - "They have no culture; they are vultures." They soar high, only to espy carrion. If only elders are genuinely anxious to serve people, (instead of merely talking about service) the world would have entered the Golden Age long ago.

The daily activity of dedicated service

One practical way in which the spirit of service can be inculcated is this! Tell this to the Mandalis in your districts. Every day, when the lady of the house measures the rice for preparing lunch or dinner, let her place a handful in a separate pot, kept for the purpose, with the words, 'For God;' at the end of the week, let her cook that rice separately and give it to as many poor people as the quantity justifies. That will be a daily act of dedicatory service. Pay special attention to Balavihar children and the classes being held for them. It is very valuable work, since it supplements the school and gives them what they don't get from the curriculum. It is the Balavihar that shapes them into the children of Bharatha Matha. The heritage of India has to be handed over to the children by the mothers of the land. Discipline and the exercise of authority must be there, but, modified by love. Without a certain amount of restraint and some use of authority (to press good things on unwilling minds),

no progress can be made. The child has to be persuaded much against its will to eat rice and curry, when it has to be familiarised with them. The sick man has to be reprimanded, if he refuses the drug that can cure him. Why, you, too, have to impose on your own selves a rather rigorous routine of discipline, so far as sadhana is concerned. You must have noticed that, in Prasanthi Nilayam, you find during festivals and special occasions, the same faces appearing again and again. First they came with a bag of prayers for worldly advancement. When they listened to My discourses and conversation year after year, they have come out of the coils of material desires and have now only one desire: to win mental peace, through a course of strict sadhana! So, they come again and again, to draw inspiration and win instruction for spiritual success. Let Me tell you what the first steps in sadhana are: Practise silence. Then, you can more easily recognise the galloping of the mind behind worldly happiness. Restrain its movements; turn it inside, into the calm lake of bliss that lies deep in the heart! Get over fear, by establishing your mind in the One, for, fear can arise only when there is another. An inquirer from the United States asked Me recently, 'How can faith become firm?' I answered, 'When the Truth is known, faith is rendered firm.' When the truth is known that it is a rope, faith in its harmlessness is made firm, and fear that it is a snake disappears. Let people know the Truth'; they will then grow in faith and the faith will endow them with great energy and enthusiasm. The rest will follow, and Dharma (righteousness) can flourish in this land' as well as in the world.

17. Liberation from bondage

Date: **March 1971**

MANY a sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) has gone through long and arduous disciplines in order to win his dearest ambition of entering the kingdom where there is no bondage; he has recited the Name or meditated on the Form or denied the senses. There are others who have ventured with Reason as their sole guide, into the realms of the inner consciousness and discovered that liberation consists in realising the reality that is behind all the transient and manifold phenomena. But, the experiences of these heroic men and women are discarded as the vapourings of crazy individuals, by those who live on the flimsy surface of the first of the five sheaths of human personality, the Annamaya kosha (physical sheath). They identify the body as themselves and do not delve behind the falsehood into the realm of Truth. Such cynics who condemn the Vedanthic approach to the problems of living are not rare even in the land that gave birth to Vedantha! The reason behind their attitude is - they do not grasp the fact that Vedantha reveals only the genuine history of each one of them. It but seeks to hold before every one the true picture of himself, devoid of deficiencies or exaggerations. Moksha (liberation) is no special and exclusive heaven into which one has to earn admission; it is not a special status or acquisition or possession. It is just the removal of the false notion that we are bound and limited by the body, the senses, the intellect, the mind, the ego and other fancies. What exactly is the bond which one has to free himself from? The bonds have been forged by fear and anxiety, produced by desire which holds one in its grip. Fundamentally, fear arises because you feel there is before you, another, a second! If there is no second, whom can one fear? The first person is the seer, the I; the second is "all other beings and things," which are seen, observed, Nature.

Renunciation confers immortality

The objective world is the illusion caused by ignorance, which makes one ignore the One that is only apparent as Many. Ignorance causes the identification with the Mine. So, when some one attached to us dies, we feel

broken-hearted, whereas, when some one who is not in the circle of kith or kin dies, we are not affected at all. It is the sense of I and Mine that causes grief and fear. That is why the Upanishaths proclaim that renunciation alone confers immortality, freedom, fulfilment.

The highest wisdom is the awareness of the unity, the One, which is all this. In fact, there is no two, there is only One Brahman. You realise this when you are in deep sleep, when all thought, feeling, emotion, passion, attachment, knowledge cease - only the I remaining, and the happiness of being only the I. But, the Anandha is not known at the time of sleep! It is only after waking that you declare I enjoyed fine sleep. If only you were aware of the Anandha, sleep will be samadhi, for, it is Anandha unalloyed. So also, in the waking stage, you have knowledge, but, no Anandha.

If you can experience the knowledge of the waking stage and the Anandha of the sleeping stage, both at the same time and to the full, that is Moksha. That is true liberation. Then you have consciousness, knowledge and bliss, unalloyed; you are Sath-Chith-Anandha itself, pure and simple.

The fruit of the tree of love is jnana

You must watch for the moment when the wakeful stage passes into the sleeping stage and concentrate on that moment purifying it of all the agitations and thought which mar the wisdom and the Anandha. Of course it is difficult in the beginning! When you are at the wheel of your car, driving along, far into the night, there comes a fateful moment when you slip into sleep, from the awareness of awakening! There is nothing that you cannot gain by practice. You have learnt the highly complicated and strange skills of walking erect, of writing scripts and reading them and interpreting them, all by practice, haven't you? This is the way of acquiring and experiencing, the jnana (spiritual wisdom) which alone can grant liberation from fear and grief. From the seed of love, springs the sprout of devotion to the Lord. The devotee sees everything as the manifestation of the Glory of God, every act as His handiwork, every word as His voice; he offers every thought, word and deed inspired and prompted by Him to Him. Thus for Him, the world is but He, He is

the world. There is no second. So, the fruit of the tree of love is jnana. The sweetness in that fruit is Anandha and the fruit contains once again the seed of love from which the sapling put forth its leaves. In the vishwa-virat-swaruupa (Cosmic Form of God) which Krishna allowed Arjuna to witness, Arjuna found himself, as well as his brothers and cousins.

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

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18. The new year dress

Date: 27 March 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ugadi

New Year must usher in a new step in spiritual discipline. The old must be rung out; the new must be rung in! How do we celebrate the New Year Day? We sweep, we clean, we remove the cobwebs, we whitewash the walls, we hang up festoons and greens, floral garlands and croton leaves; we wear new dresses, we feast on new types of dishes. For one day, we feel fresh and renovated. At this time of the year, Nature too puts on a new garb of green; every tree is gay with flowers. The green carpet on the earth is speckled with multicoloured floral dots! In this festival of renewal, man alone continues with his old prejudices and tendencies, outworn habits and moth-eaten principles. Should not he too brush the cobwebs from his mind? Should he not get rid of opinions and motives which tarnish and demean? The word Yugadhi means the Day of the Inauguration of the Yuga (Age). The spiritual discipline for each Age has been prescribed by the scriptures; for the Kritha (First Age), it is dhyana (meditation); for the Thretha, the second, it is dharma (righteousness); for the Dwapara, the third, it is archana (ritual worship) and for the present age, the Kali, it is Namasmara, the remembrance of the Name of God. So, on the Yugadhi Day, you must resolve to accept it and practise it to the utmost. This involves giving up all habits that interfere with the constant remembrance of God.

Without grief, there is no relish in joy

As a matter of fact, life is a series of acceptances and rejections, of attachments and detachments, of joys and griefs, benefits and losses. This year itself has got a rather forbidding, foreboding Name: Virodhikrithi, meaning, the year of making enemies! Do not have any apprehensions; the only foes you will be meeting will be the evil habits and meaningless pursuits that you are giving up!

Take-everything that happens to you as the Gift of Grace. Of course, on your path, you must act with all the skill and devotion you are capable of. Do this

with as much sincerity as you worship God. Then, leave the result to the All-powerful, All-knowing, All-merciful God. Let whatever ensues ensue! Why do you hold yourself responsible? He prompted it, He got it done, through you; He will give whatever result He feels He must! Without grief, there is no relish in joy! The orange has a bitter rind, the bitterness guards the sweet juice from marauders; you cannot have a sweet sugary rind, for the sweet fruit, for, then, it will be consumed entirely by all and sundry, then and there! The urge of the fruit is to travel far, so that the seeds may grow into trees in open spaces in the distance and not under the shade of the parent tree. The tree desires its progeny to spread far and wide. So, if the rind is bitter, the eater will take it with him and travel some distance, while removing it and start scattering the seeds only many paces away! You cannot keep gold safe in a gold box! You must have a steel almirah, for it! The gift of joy comes packed in the rind of grief. Do not pray God to give you only joy; that will be foolish. Pray for the fortitude to realise that grief and joy are but the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

Effort needed to win the Grace of God

Today in every home, the priest reads the New Year's calendar, called the Panchangam (almanac), of the five limbs. Which are these five limbs. Not as is usually understood, the position of the Sun, Moon, stars, etc. But, the five senses of man - which yield him the knowledge he gathers through sound, touch, sight, taste and smell! They have to be pure, so that the knowledge can be truly genuine. The hour and the moment have to be auspicious, so that auspiciousness may result. Hence, the careful study of the calendar is prescribed. The planets cannot prevail over the Grace of God, which is the most potent influence to guard and guide man. Thyagaraja sang that Rama's Grace can counteract the evil effect of the worst conjunction of stars! People resort to vows and rites, hoping to ward off the evil that stars may bring about! But, no effort is made to win the Grace of God. The pomp and the paraphernalia of puuja are merely superficial; they do not confer lasting benefits; at best, they prevent you from using that much of time and money in harmful ways! It is the 'why' of these rites that matters, not so much the 'how.' The why has to be the realisation of the reality of the individual, which

is also the reality of the Universal! Be devoted to the Universal; be eager to become That. When you pray to God for a job, or a son, or a prize, you are devoted, not to God, but to the job, to the son and to the prize. Pray to God for God; love, because it is your nature to love, because you know nothing else, because you cannot act otherwise than love. Expand your Self, take in all! Grow in Love. That is the new dress you have to wear and shine in, this day.

Grief is caused, as joy is caused, by the attachment of the senses to objects; once you know that you are not the senses or the mind, but He who operates the senses and wields the mind, you cross the bounds of pleasure and pain.

Separate yourself from the grief; you are the President of your Realm. The senses and the mind, with all the attendant impulses, desires, attitudes, etc., are your servants, instruments that have to carry out your orders.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. The Raamaayana family

Date: 03 April 1971 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Rama Navami

THE Ramayana is the very life-blood of the Bharatheeyas. Down to a few years ago, it was difficult to find throughout the length and breadth of India a village without a temple for the worship of Rama, a home where a picture of Rama was not adored, or a tongue whereon the name Rama did not dance. The entire country was saturated with the fragrance of Rama. Such a fortunate land has degenerated in recent times into a region fouled from top to bottom with the contagion of kama (lust). Seek to be filled with Rama; you will be saved. Seek, on the other hand, to be fouled by kama; you will be damned. In the Thretha Age of human history, the Formless, Attributeless Principle of Existence- Knowledge-Bliss was so overcome with compassion that It assumed the human form, as the very embodiment of Dharma (Rama vigrahavan Dharmah), manifested various examples for man of correct righteous conduct, re-established the supremacy of Dharma and its inherent might, and merged again in the Absolute, from which It had appeared. The Vedas describe the Divine entity as Madhava: Ma meaning maya and dhaya meaning Lord. That is to say, He is the Master of all that is born and therefore dies, changes and therefore, false! Life and death are a part of maya (delusion), of which He is sovereign. So, all who are bound by this dual chain have to be loyal to God, and pay homage to Him and obey His order. That is the path to happiness. But, the agent of maya that is in the human, namely, the mind, does not usually help him in this endeavour. It runs after the shadow, the reflection, the unsubstantial glitter, and discards the gold. It runs through the senses into the outer world and neglects the call of reason for discriminating analysis and renunciation. Man is thus everywhere living a life of shame, far below the level that he can well attain and enjoy.

Tread the path of truth laid down by Rama

To meet a person living on the tenth floor, you have to go up nine floors. To experience the joy of being with Madhava (God), you have to rise to that purity, that love, that truth, that peace. Become full of compassion; love all;

serve all; do your duty sincerely and with joy; be good, do good, and thus deserve God. Rama will be pleased when you tread the path of truth, for, that is the path laid down by Him. A cursory reading of the Ramayana will give you only the husk; the kernel can reveal itself only when you reflect over each word and incident. Indian culture has always encouraged this reflection on the meanings of symbols, parables, and names. It is stated, "Dhasharatha had four sons: Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Sathrughna." Well. Who is the Dhasharatha? Which kingdom was he ruling over? If in some City called Ayodhya, there was once a ruler named Dhasharatha and he had a son called Rama, how are we related to that episode? Why should we celebrate that event, at this distance of time and space?

No one can escape living with the three gunas

Go a little deep into the story and you will realise that Dhasharatha is not the ruler of a far off land, that his capital city is not on the map of Northern India, and that the four brothers are not people who lived and passed away! Ayodhya means a city that is unconquerable, into which the enemy cannot penetrate, an impregnable fortress. It represents the Atma, the heart where the Lord resides, which is proof against temptations, the subtle foes of passion and emotion, impulse and instinct. And Dhasharatha? The person who has as his ratha (chariot) the ten entities namely, the body with the five senses of action and the five senses of knowledge! He married three brides, this individual, who is the symbol of all individuals. Now, though each married man may have a wife with a physical existence of her own, he has also wedded to him, inseparable from him, till death 'do separate,' three attributes: Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas, the three natures - balanced, passionate and dull. The three queens represent these Gunas - Koushalya, the Sathwik (balanced) Guna, Sumithra, the Rajas (the passionate, active) and Kaikeyi, the Thamasik (ignorant, indiscriminating) No one can escape living with these three gunas, and experiencing the varied reactions which that contact involves. In due course, the yearning arose in the mind that it must have a Master whom it can obey and revere. The agony became so acute that the transcendent divine actualised itself in Grace that took the form of payasam (rice pudding), brought by a messenger of God from the sacrificial

fire. That gift of Grace was shared by the three gunas (qualities) and four sons were born, representing dharma, artha, kama and moksha (virtue, wealth, desire fulfilment and liberation), the four prime ends of man. Rama the eldest is dharma and the other three stand for the rest. You will have to sacrifice a great deal, if dharma must be born in your heart. That is why Dhasharatha had to do the Puthrakameshtiyaga (a great sacrifice for obtaining sons). The Divine is the very embodiment of dharma and it is only by means of dharma that He can be worshipped. And Dharma is a garland of the flowers of holy deeds, holy words, holy thoughts. Earn the reputation; of being good, serviceable and efficient in doing good. Children who do not render their parents happy, by such good conduct are remembered by their mothers only through the pain they gave them at birth.

Make every act reflect the Divine splendour

At the present time, every one is moaning that they have lost peace, security and happiness. There is a loud clamour from all the quarters. But, no one seeks to discover why this tragedy has taken place. The reason is this: what has to be done is not being done; what has to be observed is not being observed. There is no co-ordination between what is said and what is done. Hypocrisy is rampant in the homes, the villages, in the offices, the council-halls of the nation. It is raised to high positions even in the spiritual field. Those who turn beads with God's name on their lips are engaged in ungodly pursuits. With the Bhagavath Geetha in their hands, they talk scandal and hatch evil plots. With rosaries on their fingers, they fume at servants, losing temper on the slightest pretext. This is no vow, no discipline of the spirit! The Bhaktha who poses to be sincere has to exercise constant vigilance and practise the discipline of being ever in the Divine Presence. God who is now dormant in your consciousness has to be recognised and made resurgent so that every act of yours will reflect the Divine Splendour. Vyaktha means patent; the individual man is called vyakthi in Samskrith; for, he has to make patent the latent Divine.

Consider the ideal examples Ramayana provides

When you have achieved the consciousness that God is in you, with you, for you, that awareness must re-shape every thought, word, and deed, and make you wish good, speak good, and do good. Men who have ostensibly dedicated themselves to the religious discipline are only playactors strutting on the stage of the world. Others wear their devotion very thin; the smallest trouble or disappointment turns them against faith in God. But, real devotion has to withstand whatever misfortune may bring. Just consider the series of ideal examples that the Ramayana provides: the family of Rama is itself an invaluable gallery of Supreme Dharma. When a son is as loyal as Rama, accepting even exile as his father's will and gladly walking into the forest as gladly as he moved towards the throne for his coronation, he will be the ideal son indeed. Consider how that great lady, Seetha, revered her husband as her Lord and God, and herself persuaded him to take her with Him into exile in the forest, braving all the deprivations in her desire to be by his side. If all wives were so steadfast and loyal and loving as Seetha, India will certainly be full of happy homes resounding with hearty joy of contentment. Every door will be green with festoons. As for brothers, who can equal Lakshmana or Bharatha? His mother had secured the throne of the vast empire for him, but Bharatha spurned it, since it belonged, as of right, to the eldest of the brothers. Everyone is struggling to secure positions of authority, by hook or crook. But, here is a man who gave up what was very correctly won for him by his own mother from his own father, gave it up so that the person to whom it morally belonged, might return from exile to receive it and enjoy the status and power! And, Lakshmana, how he forsook food and sleep, in order to stand guard over his brother and sister-in-law, in the thickest jungle; how he surrendered his will fully and gladly at the feet of his brother!

Grand examples of renunciation

The women? When Lakshmana went to his mother, Sumithra, to take her blessings before accompanying Rama into exile, she did not argue, "Why should you go? Your father has not asked you to leave. Stay on and be happy in the palace and make me and your newly wedded bride happy." She said, "Son! Do not imagine that you are leaving for the forest and that we are remaining in the city of Ayodhya. Without Rama, this city is the jungle; with

Him the jungle is Ayodhya." What did Urmila, the young wife, tell her Lord Lakshmana? She did not plead for permission to accompany her husband as Seetha did and for very good reason. She said, If i come, you will not be able to pay undivided attention to the service of Rama and Seetha. I shall remain here awaiting your arrival after 14 years!" What a grand example of renunciation, this! If, in each family, we have such sons, mothers, brothers and wives, the land will have no anxiety or sorrow. It will be resplendent with joy and peace.

The worst action is to do the opposite of what you preach: to deny by the hand what you dole out of your mouth.

If you cannot act up to your declarations, keep quiet; do not go about advising and advertise that you are hypocrite?.

Do not preach dharma (virtue) while decrying it in deed. Dharma is steady, unchanging, it can never decline.

What happens is: those who have to practise dharma decline in faith and steadfastness.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20. Beside, behind, before

Date: April 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) must have as his objective the state of mental preparation, for the realisation of Godhead at any moment. That is to say, his heart must be cleansed of despair, free from hesitation and doubt, and open to the waves of bliss that surge in from all sides, in God's Universe. Love brings the waves in, ever expansive as they are! Follow the directives, with faith and sincerity. That will help you to realise the purpose of life. Since every act has its appropriate reaction, beware of evil intentions, wicked words, acts that harm others and therefore harm you, and so live that you revere all as moving temples of the Divine. Narasamma, who passed away recently is a good example for you. She was a pure devotee. She came to Parthi, 30 years ago; and once having come, she never turned back to Madras, with any longing for her home, her belongings or her kith and kin! She was friendly with all and put up gladly with all sorts of people. I used to reprimand her often, "Narasamma, Why do you welcome all these people into your room and allow them to disturb the sadhana and silence you need?" But, her heart was large and it was difficult to restrain her. She spent all these years, happily here; and, now she has settled here, as her eternal home. I wrote a letter to her from Goa, I did not write to any one else from there. I wrote only to her. I wrote, "Narasamma, I am with you, beside, before, behind; and I am guarding you as the lids guard the eye. Do not be worried in the least, that I am not there. Since your body is getting weaker and weaker, be ready for any eventuality. Avoid thoughts of the body, be ever full of thoughts of God. Carry on in that manner." When the body gets over-ripe, it rots; when it rots, it is thrown away. Her body became ripe, over-ripe and it even suffered due to over-ripeness. So, it had to be disposed away. But, her seva and sadhana - these do survive.

Tread the path of goodness & achieve good results

Perhaps you wondered why I did not come to give her dharshan (audience), even though she was praying for it so long! Her fortune was not this kind of

dhharshan, standing before you, as I do now. But, I certainly stuck to my promise to her, that I shall give dhharshan to her, during her last moments. I came, I stood before her, I gave her the blessing prasadh (consecrated gift), I asked her to put into her mouth the vibhuuthi (sacred ash) I created and gave her; and, some persons round her bed at the time came to know about it. For they asked Narasamma, "What is it you are putting into your mouth?" and Narasamma told them, "Swami came just now and gave me Vibhuuthi prasadam." Until the last breath she was fully conscious. Narasamma died at seven minutes past eleven in the morning here at Prasanthi Nilayam, and there at Whitefield, I mentioned to Peddhabottu (who has come there and is staying there), at seven minutes past eleven, "Your Narasamma has gone!" Her nature, her heart that corresponded with her nature, her achievement which was characteristic of her heart and its purity - all bore fruit. It is difficult to understand the beauty of such a life and to find analogies by which one can explain it. The path depends on the principle, they say. Follow good principles, you are led along to the good fruits. So, tread the path of goodness and achieve good results. That is my advice.

Falsehood looks easy and profitable; but, it binds you and pushes you into perdition. Purify your feelings and impulses; do not worry that others are not doing similarly.

Each man carries his destiny in his own hands. You will not be bound, because others are not freed. You should strive for your salvation, at your own pace, from where you started when you were born into this chance.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

21. Good and bad

Date: April 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE body is the temple where God dwells within, and is installed in the heart. But, it is not enough if you go on repeating this very pleasing axiom and pretend that you have joined the ranks of the good. To make that statement is a great responsibility. For, you must behave every moment, as if you are aware of the God within. The priest in the temple first cleans the altar, then he scrubs and polishes the vessels used for worship, and then, he pours water sanctified by ! Manthras in order to cleanse the idol, and finally, he offers adoration through flowers and fragrance, reciting the meaningful Names of God. You have also to cleanse the senses, the instruments of action and knowledge and remove all the blemishes of bad habits, bad tendencies, feelings and thoughts. Render yourselves pure, steady and unselfish. Then only can you deserve the chance of worshipping the God within. Until then, the temple will be a ruins, infested with bats that revel in the darkness. Vyakthi is used to refer to the individual man, not without a certain degree of appropriateness. The Samskrith word means, "he who has made manifest the Divinity in him" - that is the answer. That which was unmanifested due to the heavy overlay of sadhana, and the a-vyaktha has become vyaktha. He who has achieved this is the vyakthi, not each and every single human. Keep the mirror of the heart untainted by kama (desire), and its chief attendant krodha (anger); then, the God within clearly shines therein.

Throw your inclination on the side of the good

As soon as you rise from bed in the morning, examine for a few moments your thoughts, plans, habits and attitudes to others, which are about to pounce on you and decide the shape of things to come, throughout the day. Identify in the motley crowd the vicious, the wicked, the evil, the harmful, the one that are born in anger, that breed on greed and assert that you are not willing to be led by them. Throw your inclination on the side of the good, the constructive, to renounce, and rise up a purer, stronger and happier man than when you went to bed. That is the real sadhana, not simply spending a few

minutes, watching your breath, or wandering homeless and living on alms.

There is a belief that is strongly held and justified by many that good deeds and bad will cancel out and it is only the balance that one has to suffer the consequences of. That is to say, the consequences of sin can be diminished by the consequences of acts of merit, done by the same person; ten sins and eleven meritorious acts mean that the balance is favourable to the doer! But, this system of accounting does not hold good in the spiritual field. The consequences are there, but, they do not cancel out. It is like this: a man scatters seeds of thorn plants as well as of fruit trees. Both grow together, and both have to be endured. They sprout distinctly and as ruled by their own innate dharma. You may have in an orchard of 1000 fruit trees one thorn bush, but, that will not turn into a fruit tree, by association with the rest. What has to be done is to pull out and destroy the bush. Identify it as thorny and harmful; and, then, by discrimination, pull it out by the roots. By the roots - for, when the rains come, the tree will sprout again, if the slightest trace of life is in it.

Be vigilant about your steps

Only very few are now able to spot out the thorny bushes and uproot them; so, they have to suffer the thorns, even while they are enjoying the fruits. Reap the mixed harvest, you must, if you do not take note in time. As I said at the beginning of this discourse, the tragedy is: Man seeks to avoid the progeny of sin, with pleasure; he seeks to earn the fruits of meritorious deeds, but, is not inclined to follow the meritorious path! Be vigilant about your steps. Do they lead you along the road that will take you to the goal you have in view? Or do they turn away from it? How can you reach the east, when your steps lead west? Many persons ask me, "Swami! when can I realise the Truth? Please grant me, self-realisation." My reply is, you will be liberated the moment the 'I' goes; do not ask for 'my' liberation. 'My' liberation. The I should go. The I and mine should go. That is itself liberation. This I has been created, protected and grown by your own ignorance. A baby has no I or mine. It easily gives up anything from its grasp; the I hardens with the increase of intelligence, and it does not part with a doll or toy. Do not allow

the role of the separate I to damage the springs of love and sacrifice, in your heart.

In order to escape the nefarious influence of this ego, cleanse the heart with constant contemplation of God, His Glory, His Leelas, His Beauty, His amazing attributes. Contemplate the vast, so that your heart too might overstep its limits and become vast. Bhooma (the Vast), that alone confers Joy. Another directive I give is: Be more concerned with your own progress, your own correction than with the good and evil of others. There is time enough to worry about the good of others, after you have become good, yourself. But, try as far as you can, to give Anandha (happiness) to others; desist from causing pain to others.

The way to realise the unity of all

You must feel the pain of others as your own; you must be happy when others are happy. That is the way to realise the unity of all. Above all, be vigilant; for, the fruits of Sadhana may be destroyed by negligence. When the rains come, the earth is again green, for the seeds of grass are underground, though you thought the land was dry and fallow. Sathsang, Sathkarma (good company, good deeds) - these have to be kept up, all through life. Deepavali (Festival of Lights) celebrates the destruction by Krishna of Narakasura, King of Prakjyothishapura. Narakasura means the demon who has with every act of his, taking a step towards hell. It symbolises ignorant and evilminded men. And, which is their pura (habitation)? It is called, Prak-jyothisha! Prak means the First, the Initial. Jyothi means Light; and sha means forgetting, ignoring. The city which has forgotten or is ignoring the Primal Light, the body where man lives which has neglected the Atma which is the Primordial Source of Light, Jnana (Intelligence), that is the Prak-jyothi-sha-Pura, over which the Naraka (Hell)-ward marching Demon ruled. And, Krishna saved him, by destroying his demonic tendencies and showing him the Light.

You are proud that you have written the name of Sai ten million times; you

talk about it whenever you get the chance, so that others may admire your faith and fortitude.

But, it is not the millions that count; it is the purity of mind that results from genuine concentration on the name.

Your Sadhana must avoid becoming like drawing water from a well in a cane basket! You get no water however often you may dip and pull the basket up. Each vice is a hole in the bucket. Keep the heart pure, keep it whole.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22. Be and Be Blessed

Date: May 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

ACTIVITY is the keynote of the Universe; by activity, all beings are born, by activity, they maintain themselves, and through that activity they: perish. Constant breathing, inhaling and exhaling, keeps the body temperature even and comfortable. The One that is beyond all activity assumed the forms of the five basic elemental materials - sky, earth, air, fire and water - in order to act and activate. To be active, yet, to be always aware that it is all mere acting, is the secret of happiness. That is the Dharma (virtue) which must regulate and sanctify the karma. The achievements of technology which have taken man to the moon are also events in the Cosmic Drama, where the principle performers are only working out His Plan; identification with the adventure and its success or failure will make the performers proud or depressed - states which would not help inner peace and joy. The secret of good karma is, do karma as an act of Worship, a dedicatory rite offered to the source of all energy and intelligence. And, never take the consequence to heart. By this means, one can approximate to the Divine Principle, which is beyond activity.

That Divine Principle is the very core of man. Becoming aware of this Truth is the goal of life; it is source of strength which is unfailing and irresistible. Close your eyes, you feel there is no one else here, though there are thousands. If you suffer from cataract or worse still, if you are blind, you cannot know the truth. So, too, the Divine is here, before you, behind you, inside you, outside you; the intelligence through which you can recognise It is also with you; but, you are either blind, or diseased with defective vision or worse still, wilfully inclined to close your eyes!

Search for the unreal is the root of all fear

You have a bird in your very hand; but, you are wasting your time and energy conspiring to catch the bird hiding in the bush; the notes that make you believe there is a bird in the bush are, you do not know, only the echoes of the notes from the throat of the bird in your own hand! The Guru reveals the

Truth and makes you free from the travail and the trial, the search for the bird in the bush. In a flash, you know, and the Knowledge is Bliss. Why crave for the non-existent? Why ignore the 'existent'? That is to say, the Sath? It is the search for the unreal that is the root of all the fear, the sorrow, the sickness of humanity. Learn, while you can, the key which will open the door of escape.

Have all around you the curtain of 'Namajapam' (the vibrant, vigilant repetition of the Name of God, and recapitulation of His Glory); then, unhealthy yearnings for self-aggrandizement will not pester and poison you. Namajapam will not allow you to ignore the essential hollowness of worldly affairs and the essential absurdity of getting too involved in it; you behave as if you ate the designer of your destiny; you are only a wave, formed on the breast of the ocean by storm and surge.

When his dearly loved son, a stripling of sixteen summers, Abhimanyu, was surrounded and cut to pieces by the Kaurava cousins who trapped him in a labyrinth, Arjuna gave vent to his anguish before his eldest brother, Dharmaraja, the consistent follower of righteousness. He placed on him the entire blame for the death of his son; indeed, he said that they could have avoided exile, poverty, infamy, dishonour, disgrace and all the elaborate preparations for the war of vengeance had he been cleverer and more adaptable. Dharmaraja sat quiet and silent during the shower of invective. He knew that Arjuna himself, in his cooler moments, will recall the Geetha teaching, that every single happening is His handiwork, that no one is killed or no one kills, if only you know the Truth, that everyone is a puppet in His hands.

Seva fulfils the aims of all paths to God

The quickest and easiest way by which one can realise the basic absurdity of attachment is the path of Seva. Pour out Love, whether it is returned or not, whether it results in success or not. Let Love be ever translated into Seva, into beneficial acts, sweet words of consolation, comfort and courage, and thoughts of sympathy and compassion. I do not declare that other paths like Bhakthi or Jnana are of no use. Worship of God in temples and shrines has its

place in sanctifying time and sublimating the instincts and impulses. Inquiry into reality has its use in clearing the fog of doubt. But, activity in the shape of Seva (selfless service) charged with Love fulfils the aims of all paths to Godhead. Sarvathah pani padham, sarvathokshi shiro mukham, says the Geetha. "All hands are His, all feet, all eyes and all faces and mouths are His" He works through all hands, He walks through all feet, He sees through each eye. He eats and speaks through every mouth. Everything is He. Every step is His, every look, every speech, every act is His. That is the lesson that Seva instils. Pray in agony, "Lord! Have you no ears?" and His Ear will be listening. Pray, "Lord! Let me fall at Thy Lotus Feet!" and the Feet will present themselves before you. They are at; all places, at all times. Your call compels the manifestation, that is all.

Attach more value to the kernel, not the husk

When you get a parcel by post, what do you do? You remove the packing and take out the article sent, don't you? Take away the packing and secure the thing of value. You say, "For me peace is required." Remove the packing on both sides of the thing you really want - 'For me' on one side (indicative of egoism) and is required on the other (indicative of desire, want, sense of incompleteness). Don't have egoism and desire; you have Peace! It is the packaging that hinders the securing of the Reality. You attach more value to the husk, not the kernel. A certain village had a few philanthropic people who provided it with a drinking water well, an overhead tank and a distributory system of pipes and taps. They were so pleased with it and so proud of their possession that they decided to invite the Governor of the State to inaugurate the system, by opening one of the taps, on an auspicious day and moment, selected by astrologers. The Governor graciously agreed. The philanthropists were elated; they fitted a length of gold pipe, and had a golden tap made for the occasion. Festoons and flags were hung on the pavilion put up around the tap. Bands of musicians with their complicated and costly instruments were hired from the metropolis. Pandiths (scholars) were gathered from various Pathasalas (traditional schools) to recite Vedhic Hymns as the water would start to flow.

Connect the act of service with love in the heart

There was no dearth of V.I.Ps, that morning; hundreds of cars streamed into the tiny hamlet. The great moment came; the Governor solemnly approached the golden tap. He gave it the right kind of twist; but, no water flowed! The Vedhic recitation rose to the skies; There was no trickle, not even a drop or the sign of one! Everyone wondered why. The well was full, the pump worked well; the tank was not leaky. The golden pipe was there, with the golden tap. What was really the fault, they asked each other. At last someone discovered that the golden pipe had not been connected with the regular supply system; it had not been screwed in. Have you connected your act of service with the reservoir of Love in the heart? Are you doing it with God-consciousness? Or is it merely a superficial ceremonial routine act, done for publicity or personal pride? Really, the power that man holds in himself is unsurpassed; no other created being has it. For he is the living image of God, the precious casket enshrining the Divine Itself. If you are weak, grief-stricken and ignorant, the fault is yours; do not blame others: you have not tapped the spring of God within you. This is the sin,-the turning of the blind eye to this patent fact. Diagnose the faults in the eye, and have the blind spots or the cataract cured. You can do it, by prayer or by resorting to a Guru. There are three stages in this process of awareness: Jijnasa, Mumukshu and Aroodha - Inquiry, Yearning and Attainment. (1) The period of study, (2) the period of being employed in a job, when what is studied is applied in practice, and (3) the period of life when one lives without care on a well-deserved pension - these can be compared to the three stages mentioned above.

Worldly loss or profit are playthings of a day

You may have a picture or two of the Form of God you like; "O Lord," you may cry before the picture and prostrate before it, in humility and contrition. It helps to ensure peace of mind. But, do not pray for paltry gains, or petty-vengeances against others! Such prayers will take you away from Grace; your faith will suffer set-backs. Worldly loss and profit are playthings of a day; they are like baubles with which you sport in dreams; when you awake, they are gone! When you are awake into knowledge and awareness of the God in you,

they melt away from your consciousness. Why bother with gaining them or losing them? All are of one essence; let this truth be established in your heart. Then there can be no faction, no fear, no fanatic attachment to someone. For want of this vision, we have at present cliques in every family at **cross** purposes over every matter! The Ramayana and the Mahabharatha hold forth examples of avoiding such situations and establishing Dharma in the home, the village and the nation. Wives like Seetha, husbands like Rama, brothers like Lakshmana and Bharatha, Arjuna and Bheema are delineated therein. Do not try to avoid contact with others or with external nature. Develop a wider, a universal, outlook. Look upon external nature as the vestment of God; it is the expression of the Will of God, it is the manifestation of His glory, His power, His might, His majesty. See these in every blade of grass, in every floral petal, every slice of fruit. Learn lessons from the river, the mountains, the star and the sky.

The message of the seers of India

Through this worshipful attitude to man and beast, plant and stone, you must remove the veils of Thamas (ignorance), Rajas (passion) and even Sathwa (goodness) and achieve equanimity - the stage where judgement itself is given up. Then, you become aware of your own Self, behind and beyond the three veils. Yanna bharathi, thanna bharath, says the scripture. "Where there is no Vidhya, there is no Bharath." Intelligence is the sign of the true son of India; he yearns to discriminate between the Real and the Unreal through purified and clarified intelligence. Discriminate and decide; dive and declare the depth; eat and judge the taste. That has been the message of the seers of India. Mere axioms without the chance to prove their value to oneself were not thrown at the pupils by the ancient preceptors. The pupil was told then that Divinity was dancing in every cell of his; that he can therefore be fearless. Meet hatred with your innate Prema (Love); meet grief with innate Joy; meet anger with the shield of Shanthi (Inner Peace). You are bound to win. Loka is Lokesh: "the Universe is the Universal Principle" manifested in multifarious particulars. Man is Madhava (God) in miniature. The human body has been acquired as a gift in return for the meritorious lives spent by you in the past. The nature of man is genuinely Divine, in the past, present and

future, for ever. There was never a time when it was not.

To plead that one has no time for spiritual Sadhana of this type is sheer sloth, sheer cowardice; for, it is an endeavour that can co-exist with other activities and even fertilise those activities into fruition. There is nothing to be gained, except awareness of what already is. Simply BE; that is the state of Bliss, of Peace and Truth and Love.

Do not grieve, nor be the cause of grief. The very embodiment of Anandha (God) is in you, as in others, as in all else. In spite of a multiplicity of containers, the contained is the same. That is the principle of Sath, Chith and Anandha (Being, Awareness, Bliss). The minutest atom, the mightiest star - both are basically one. All are, in truth, Brahman, Divine.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

23. The two poles

Date: **May 1971** / Location: **Mumbai**

THIS was to be a gathering exclusively for Office Bearers of the Units of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in Maharashtra; but, what have we to confer only among ourselves? The Organisation is designed to promote the welfare and progress of all and so, I am glad devotees and volunteers are also participating. You must be clear about the objectives of the Organisation of which your unit is a limb; for, without having the goal clear in the mind, how can the journey end in success? Whatever you do - reading, writing, meditating, doing Bhajan (group singing), going on pilgrimage - can be valid and worthwhile, only if you have the objective clearly in view. You must know why certain things have to be done, and why certain other things have to be avoided. Imagine you are on a journey to, say Prasanthi Nilayam. En route, you have to change trains at Guntakal, from the broad gauge line to the metre gauge line, isn't it? You wish to take a little rest and you go to a Travellers Bungalow. The man in charge asks you. Whence do you come? Where do you wish to go?" Now, if you have forgotten the answers to these universal queries, how awkward will it be! You can neither go forward, nor, return! You are now an individual, contained in this body or that; you are moving every moment towards your home, the place where you came from, the Atma, the Param-atma (The Supersoul of which your own soul is but a spark). The Upanishaths ask the questions, Whence, Whither, Who, Why; and, when you pine for the answers, they teach you the solutions and advise you to practise the disciplines for experiencing the answers and their truth yourselves.

God acknowledges His devotee as His friend

Know whence and whither, both. The letter must have the address of the person from whom it has come, so that it could be returned to the sender, in case of need; it must, of course, have the address of the person to whom it is to be delivered for, else, why write at all? Now, since the letter, that is, 'your life,' is not aware of whence and whither, it rots in the post box only, or

perhaps, it might reach the Dead Letter Office! Why waste lives like that? Learn from the Guru, and move forward, from the box to bliss. Everyone has the basic urge to imbibe the immortality from which he has fallen off! Some, like flies flit from fair to foul, are swooped for their pains! They are avoided **as** disease carriers; they do not give ease to those that contact them; they only tease and torment. Others are like bees, seeking only honey from fragrant flowers, and fructifying, them in return for the sweetness they derive. Every being has a latent, basic urge to know the Supreme Self, the Paramatma. Some persons boast that they are devotees of God, that God has blessed them in such and such ways that God's Grace has helped them thus and thus; do not give ear to these ego centred pretenders. You become a devotee when God has acknowledged your devotion. The ego is the greatest obstacle in the way of such acceptance. God has said, You madh bhakthah sa me priyah: "He who is my devotee is my friend!" Why has God mentioned both 'devotee' and 'friend'? The devotee reveres God, he fears God, and so, cannot be quite close to Him. A friend is most close to Him. But, if one is only a friend and not a devotee, there is the danger that he might take liberties with Him, which might not be pardoned. Freedom must not turn into licence!

Everyone has to guard land, faith and wife

Bheeshma was a mighty warrior; he was famous for the grandeur and glory that he won, through both detachment and Divine Grace. In the vicinity of his kingdom, Bheeshma once had to encounter a person called Gadha-dhara. This man had undergone severe austerity and received from God as a reward for pleasing Him, an invincible discus Chakra (wheel) so people hailed him as Chakradhara (the wielder of the Divine Wheel-weapon)! The fellow had become so insolent and wicked that he wrote a most insulting missive to Bheeshma, on the death of Shanthanu, Bheeshma's Father. Chakradhara wrote, "Either send the widowed queen to my palace zenana or, meet me in battle!" Who could tolerate such insults and keep quiet? It is said that everyone has to guard Dharani (land), Dharma (faith) and Dharmapathni (wife). Bheeshma said to himself, "What is my life worth, if I cannot avenge this insult, if I cannot save my mother's honour?" But, the Brahmanas of the court advised him that he should engage himself in combat with Chakradhara

only after ten days; for, during the ten-day-period after the death of his father, he had ceremonial pollution and during that period, he should not handle the divine missiles he had with him. He could not utter then, the holy manthras which can activate them. "Finish the religious rites to appease the departed soul of your father and then, destroy the foe in battle," they advised. Bheeshma realised the propriety of their counsel and sent a message to Chakradhara, inviting him for the fray ten days later!

Skill reinforced by Divine Grace can work wonders

But, Chakradhara could not delay that long; he was itching for victory; he directed his newly won weapon at Bheeshma! But, a wonderful thing happened! That Chakra which had come from the hand of God would not harm a son who was doing his scriptural duty, performing the Vedhic rites for the manes! It rotated in the sky for ten days, waiting for the funeral-pollution period to end! When one is devoted to his duty, one is surrounded by such powerful protecting influences that no injurious force dare approach. That is the way Grace operates. Personal skill when reinforced by Divine Grace, can work wonders, as happened when the horde of monkeys successfully built a bridge across the sea to Lanka.

One has to go through the act of expiation

A study of the lives of the great men of past ages in Bharath will reveal that they were candid enough and brave enough to confess their sins before everyone. They were also willing and ready to accept punishment for the sin committed. They sought to know what the Prayachittha (expiation of sin) was - the means of purifying and cleansing the erring mind. They went through the process with a sense of contrition and contentment. The Horse that was let loose and allowed to wander through whatever realm it willed, a preliminary to the Ashwamedha yaga "(Horse-sacrifice) resolved upon by the Pandava brothers, was being guarded by Arjuna, who followed it at a certain distance. When the horse passed through Manipur (ruled by Babhruvahana, his own son born, of Chithrangada), the King held it captive in his stables! Arjuna marched towards the City; when Babhruvahana heard of his arrival

and knew that he was his father, he went forward with all his courtiers, kinsmen and priests to give him the welcome due to the father. But, Arjuna invited him for combat; he said, "Having stopped the horse, you must fight and not cringe before its guardian. Earn it on the field of battle; do not be a blot on the fair name of Kshathriya!" His mother too urged him not to shirk his duty, whoever be the guardian of the horse or whatever his kinship with him. When the call of war is heard, no Kshathriya should creep back, she asserted. So Babhruvahana went back and fought so valiantly with his own father that Arjuna was overwhelmed by the rain of sharp arrows. He fell dead on the ground, between the two armies! Babhruvahana was plunged in agony. At that moment, a divine nymph, Uluupi by name, came upon the scene, and consoled the son "Do not grieve! This is but the play of Fate. It is written that Arjuna should suffer death at the hands of his son, as an act of expiation for his mis-deeds. Now, touch him and he will rise up alive!" This was done and Arjuna regained consciousness. The two entered the City happily and were welcomed by Chithrangadha. Arjuna himself had asked for this calamity, in order to cleanse his mind. During the battle of Kurukshethra, he had killed his own guru and grandfather, Bheeshma, and repented pathetically for that: sin. He had invoked, a punishment on himself for the wrong - "To redeem me from this sin, may I die at the hands of my own son!" Constant cleansing of the heart is essential, so that the spiritual journey might be smooth and without accidents.

Serve your family as a duty

You are all nuts, bolts and screws. If even the tiniest screw thinks, "I am just a small screw; what does it matter if I am not cent per cent efficient?" a fatal accident can easily happen! Do not neglect your duty wherever it lies. Have self-control, so that: the senses may not run amuck. Serve your family as a duty, not with more attachment than is due. Frogs croak all round the tank, sitting in hundreds along the shore, when the tank is full; when it goes dry, not a single one is seen! Kinsmen crowd in when you are in affluence; when your riches are drained by misfortune, you are left severely alone! There is the story of a rich man, who was being led away on death to the world beyond. He pleaded with his angelic escort that he may be allowed to halt a

while, and turn back once. They allowed him to do so; he turned and had a good look, then, he said, "Well, now I am ready; lead me on!" The messengers were surprised at his strange willingness to accompany them; they asked him what had happened to make him so resigned and determined. He said, "I amassed vast wealth through sin and crime; I fed and fostered a large brood of friends and kinsmen. I looked back to see whether at least one among them is now following me, eager to help in my sorrowful plight! Not a single one is worried about me. I shall now walk forward to wherever you take me." God is the truest friend. A sage has described the spiritual family, which will never hurt you with such ingratitude. Truth is the father; Love is the mother. Knowledge is the son; Peace is the daughter. Devotees are brothers; Yogees are the friends. Cultivate this type of family; you can be happy in their midst.

Bliss obliterates all worries and anxieties

Sathya Sai Seva Samithis have been formed, to enable you to achieve peace and joy. They are not to be used for advertisement of myself or yourself. Some people ask. "Why rules and regulations in a spiritual organisation?" How can progress be achieved without disciplining the mind? Regulation, strict regulation, is essential up to a certain stage of individual development. The aeroplane runs on wheels for some length on the ground, before it takes off into the air. You may ask, "Why wheels for air-plane?" So too, when you reach a certain height in spiritual sadhana, rules and regulations can be folded up, as the pilot folds up the wheels when up in the air. While serving others through the Samithi, do not forget to do some Sadhana for your own advancement. Paraseva (service of others) is the negative pole; Atma-seva (service to oneself) is the positive pole; and when they meet, the Flash of Anandha (Bliss) emanates. Bliss obliterates all worries, all fears, and all anxiety. March on to that consummation, through Sadhana and Seva. That is my Blessing to each of you.

God does not reside in the head; He is Hridhayavasi, the dweller in the heart. Keep the heart cool, pure and soft - as the moonlight is on the Guru

Poornima Day. For this, your mind has to be cleansed by the mind only. Just as you shape an iron sickle or axe with an iron hammer, the mind is the shaper and shaped, both.

The power behind the mind which helps it to shape it well, is Faith in God. That is why it is declared that one must have faith in God, holy places, the scriptures, the manthra, the soothsayer, the drug and the teacher. Cultivate that Faith and everything else will be added unto you.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

24. You are all I

Date: **May 1971** / Location: **Dharwar**

YOU must live in conformity with the basic ideals of our Organisation. The Seva to which this Organisation invites you is the very first step in the growth of the Spirit. Seva is the manifestation of your willingness to work, irrespective of reward; for, work is dedicated as worship. That attitude robs egoism of its sting and instils in the mind the Divinity inherent in all creation. Faith in God is the very taproot of all spiritual activity, either through this Organisation or otherwise.

There shall be a system and an order in the Organisation - every unit has to follow the All India pattern. No State can arrange things in its own way. Mysore, Kerala, Gujarat, all States have to keep before them the same pattern, and not venture on separate individual types of units. Every unit must respect and follow the rules and regulations laid down at the All India Conference, from year to year.

This Conference is just a chance for you to move a day or two in good company, and charge your batteries, for further stages of the journey to God. When one is added to one, it becomes two; when one is placed by the side of another one, it reads as eleven! That is the measure of Sathsang, the companion-ship of the wise and the good. All these petty ones must end up in that ONE. That is the ultimate goal, the journey's end. The Vedas direct man through karma (activity) into upasana (worship) and finally into jnana (the wisdom that breaks the shackles).

When you surrender, give yourself fully

The leaders in each unit, that is to say, the President, Vice-President, the Secretaries and others, must themselves walk aright and be right. They must all join the Nagarasankeerthan, the choral singing along the roads of the village or the town in the early dawn. If the rich and the influential sit at home and ask the rest to go and take part in the sankeerthan, we do not need them

as Presidents or Office-bearers. No unit must depend on such people, however rich they happen to be. Money comes and goes; but mortality, once come, grows! Try to break the coconut, with the fibre on! It is an impossible task. You have to take out the shelled nut from inside the packing fibre; then, if you hit at the shell, the kernel becomes available for use. Remove the fibrous cover, sensual desires, so that you can get at the kernel of spiritual joy. Many of you declare even before Me that you have surrendered everything to My Will; this is mere verbiage. Your mind is not your own! You are its plaything, tossed about, as it fancies and frolics! How then can you claim to have given it over to Me? You have to give yourself, fully over, when you surrender. Nothing should be held back. And, what is it that you can call your own, which you can give Me? Your offering of homage is but pouring back into the Kaveri river the waters of the Kaveri! There is nothing creditable in that. The weighing machine on which you stand and exult that you have put on ten pounds since the last weighing in, laughs at your exultation{ It chuckles within itself, 'Yes! When death overtakes you, you will be ten pounds heavier for the undertakers!' You have come into the World, which is a Dharmakshethra, abode of righteousness; so be righteous.

Practise what you direct others to do

Your destiny is not achieving the peak pleasure, but climbing the peak of Bliss. Dhaya (compassion) and dharma (morality) will take you higher and higher, until the summit. So, practise these qualities even in your smallest acts, to the best of your capacity. You cannot always oblige; but can you not talk, obligingly? You can; but, you don't! The tongue has the extra power to harm and hurt; so, you must exercise extra control over it. Do not pain anyone through your words; spread Love; be full of Love, If you cannot love man, how can you hope to love God?

Develop indifference towards accumulation of wealth or power. Dhritharashtra held on to his kingdom and his hundred sons; finally, he had to lose his throne and live on in misery as the lone survivor of the dynastic holocaust! Once there was a big quarrel between Lakshmi, the Consort of God Narayana, and the Goddess of Wealth and Jnana (knowledge)-which was the

Intellect of Narayana; they began to argue that each was superior to the other. Wealth was more useful, said Lakshmi; without knowledge, wealth is a danger, said the Intellect. But Narayana intervened and said both are either good or bad, according to the use man puts them to! Use the office you hold in the Units to the best advantage, namely, to overcome your ego, to inspire others in the Godward path and to relieve distress. Don't go through the routine of bhajan, dhyana and Nagarasankeerthan, because you have to; or, because someone else will usurp your Office, if you do not stick on. Share it with others, act from the depths of your hearts. Do not indulge in mere talking. Practise what you direct others to do, asserting that it is beneficial.

When motives are purer knowledge will be pure

Merge in God, submerge your mind in Divine activity; 'leeyathe gamyathe ithi lingah': "that in which all merge, that to which all proceed is Linga. " God is called 'chittha chora' (the thief who steals hearts); when you know that he does so because he likes hearts, it is your duty to keep the hearts dean, so that He will be more pleased at His booty. That 'thief' is your only well wisher. The rest are interested in what you leave behind when you die; they search for your 'will' and 'insurance papers!'.

Youth, wealth, reputation, status, authority - all are subject to quick ups and downs. There was one young man who wasted much of his father's income and lived through College a number of years, as an M.S.M. student! That is to say, failing in the March Examinations, appearing again for the September Examinations, again appearing in March - M.S.M. for short! At last, out of sheer disgust at his consistent feeble-mindedness, the University gave him a degree and got rid of him! When proposals for his marriage were mooted, he insisted that the bride must be a degree holder, a graduate! And a graduate she was! He reclined on an easy chair and sang, "My life is entirely happy now." He asked his wife "Get me a cup of hot coffee!"; but, she replied, "I am as much a graduate as you are; why should I alone prepare the cup of coffee? Come into the kitchen and make your coffee for yourself." Then, he sang another tune, "My life is entire darkness, Oh." When everything goes well, it is heaven when things go awry, it is hell! The same event is heaven today, hell

tomorrow. Until your hunger is appeased, food is desirable; when it is appeased, food is a nuisance! When motives are pure, knowledge will be pure; when knowledge is pure, liberation is ensured.

Expansion is Love, contraction is Death

For example, consider the feeding of the poor, which many units are now doing. You arrange the feeding, once a year, on the Annual Day of your Unit; but; is that enough? Does it solve the problem? Do they eat but one meal a year? They have to eat, as you do, many times a day. So, let Me ask you: Instead of feeding hundreds one day in the year, let the housewife keep aside every day, when she takes out rice for cooking the food for the family, a handful, saying, "This is for the offering that Swami accepts," and at the end of the week, feed at home three or four hungry people with that 'offered' rice. This is the real Anna-Samidh arpana - "offering food as fuel in the holy fire of hunger." Old clothes can be collected and given to the poor, when new clothes are not available or not within your means. Children outgrow their clothes soon, keep them by and give them to the children in the poorer areas. Expansion is Love; contraction is Death! The Sathya Sai Organisation and its units must not collect money or material from those outside the membership. Fund collection is as much opposed to this movement as fire is to water. If you yield on this point, spiritual advance will perish. Let only members contribute; do not ask all and sundry, or anyone who is not a member of the Samithi (unit). In Mysore State there are some who distribute amrith, vibhuuthi (holy ash) and other articles announcing that they are showering from my pictures at their places; they do this free for some weeks, and later, they start begging for money, like any common mendicant! This is sin, to ask so and also to give so. Devotees should keep far away from such places and persons.

Avoid pomp, exhibition and boasting

Visualise God in your hearts; why, go to such place or outside yourselves to see Him? In some other places, they announce that I make Myself present and communicate through writings on rangoli powder etc.! I do not do such

things, if I come at all to any place. I come directly, so that you see Me. I do not speak or answer through another person or another medium! Carry on Namasmaran, japa, bhajan (remembrance, repetition and singing of God's name) in your own home; there is no special call for you to come to this place or that. Wherever you are, whatever name you like, whatever Forum pleases you, I bless you, if your heart is pure. Avoid pomp, exhibition, boasting; be simple, sincere and sweet. Cleanse your home of falsehood, hypocrisy and cruelty and then proceed to start Balavikas (Children's Club). Or else, the children will catch "infection!" Do not import into the Sathya Sai Organisation political faction-mongering, group-formation, scandal-spreading, and vote catching, in order to win positions of authority or oust others from them. Do not create splits and parties among the devotees in order to establish yourselves over others! Even when you are slandered, you should not lose balance. Put up with slander and scandalising talks. Anger is the chief enemy of Sadhana, as Vishwamithra discovered. One attack of anger exhausts three months of health and efficiency. Before encountering Jarasandha in open battle, Krishna enraged him nine times; time after time, getting nearly caught and escaping from his hold; these bouts of rage so weakened him that, when the final bout took place, he could be easily overpowered!

Be vigilant everywhere, at all times

Contentment is heaven; grief is hell; anger is the foe; calmness is the armour; compassion is the comrade. You repeat Shanthi three times, don't you? It is to encourage peace in the human, godly and natural milieu in which you have to live; also to develop peace, in the body, mind and intellect!

There is no visible Master for those who are part of Organisations run in the name of Rama or Krishna; but, in this Organisation the Master is here, available for help, advice and direction. You cannot behave in accordance with your whims and wishes here. You have to be vigilant everywhere and at all times. Discard the ego and serve. Don't go about with extended hand, and humiliate yourselves. Ask Me, when you need any help. Extend your hand only for Grace from God. Ask Grace as of right, not in a grovelling style. Ask, as the child asks the father; feel that God is nearest and dearest. You are the

reflections, the images; I am the bimba (object), the Object so reflected. Can there be any question of difference between the object and its images? You are all I. I am all you. I know I am the Atma; you believe you are the body! You are sugar dolls; I am the sugar. Revere any Name; the reverence reaches Me, for, I answer to all Names. Denigrate any individual; it affects Me; for all individuals are expressions of My Will.

Detachment, Faith and Love - these are the pillars on which Shanthi rests. Of these, faith is crucial. For without it, Sadhana is an empty rite. Detachment alone can make sadhana effective, and Love leads quickly to God.

Faith feeds the agony of separation from God; detachment canalises it along the path of God; Love lights the way. God will grant you what you need and deserve; there is no need to ask, no reason to grumble. Be content. Nothing can happen against His Will.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

25. Who am I?

Date: **May 1971** / Location: **Dharwar**

BEING a human is itself a great piece of good fortune; and, getting born in India, with its precious heritage of spiritual discipline is a blessing for which you must feel grateful indeed! Four items of enquiry have been emphasised for ages by the sages of India, who built up the heritage of which you are proud today. They are: Dheham, Naham, Koham and Soham. First, the Body where you dwell, in which you are encased. It is called, meaningfully, dheham, that is to say, that which is combustible, liable to be burnt. How can anyone feel attachment to such a transient tinsel? It is subject to growth and decay; it is the harbour of worms and viruses, of foulness and illness. It is subject to impulses and the impact of passion and emotion. It is the seat of disease and unrest; of fancy and fantasy and fear. It calls on you enticingly to invest yourselves wholly in its care and cure. It entangles you so much in its coils that you forget you are its master, as you are the master of the car in which you ride to office or the home to which you return from office.

When you delve deep into the transience of the dheham you get well rooted in the next idea: Naham, I am not the Body, which I had mistakenly taken to be me! Naham means, Not-I. The dheham is naham, the Body is Not-I. I am the owner, the temporary user, occupier of this instrument or bundle of instruments; that is all.

Man is a spark of the Divine

People keep on asking others, "Who are you? What is your Name? Where are you from? Whither are you bound?" - but, they seldom ask these questions of themselves or try to discover answers to these mysteries! When you get that thirst, you are in the Koham stage. Koham means, "Who am I?" "I am a highly evolved ape," say some. "I am a conglomerate of chemicals," say others. "I am a contraption with a limited life, I begin at birth and end at death," say some. "I am. an eternal entity, and this is but one sojourn of mine here on earth," say others. 'I' is a false limitation imposed by ignorance; "I am a wave

of the ocean and so I am the Ocean itself," declare others! These last announce that the I is Soham, 'I am He.' He, meaning the eternal, Universal Absolute, the Brahman, the Boundless, Beginningless, Endless entity. When that axiom is meditated upon and made one's own deepest experience, man has the highest Bliss, the Bliss of merging into the Atman from which he felt long he had been displaced. Man is a spark of the Divine; he must manifest in every activity of him, the Divine. Activity is his lot; he cannot exist without the physical activity of breathing, or the mental activity of thought. With every breath, he must inhale the experience of Soham; with every thought, he must express and experience his Divine affiliation. God is Love; Love is the Divinest quality that man can cultivate and confer on himself. Be born in Love, die in Love; live in Love. That is to say, emerge from God and merge in God; be the wave on the Ocean of Love. You should not die; you should merge and fulfil yourself. That is the destiny, that is the destination. You are not limited by any name; a baby has no name stuck on to it when it is born. The name is a label fixed later, for the sake of social convenience. But, you start identifying yourself with the label! You answer giving your name, when you are asked, Who? The name separates; it distinguishes; it announces the divisive characteristics of language, religion, caste, race, etc. Go beyond the name to the individual, beyond the individual to the God who is installed in the heart. Then, kinship is cognised and Love streams forth! Spend the years of life, the wherewithal you earn or possess, in the service of others who are in distress. Love grows on such service. Service is the sincerest form of adoration of God.

Get beyond the horizon of body, mind & intellect

When man moves away from his moorings, hate spreads far and wide. In the past ages (the Kritha, Thretha and Dwapara Ages), the fumes of hatred poisoned human relations off and on; but, at no time were they so insidious and so infiltrating as now. Now, the evil has contaminated relations in the family, the village, the community, the school, the State, the nation and the international organisations. In no field of human activity is it absent! When the members of the same family are engaged in faction, how can the nation be free from it and how can national affairs be conducted in the spirit of tolerance and mutual cooperation? It is wrong to spend the days in the prison

of dualities, the see-saw of grief and joy, pain and pleasure, success and defeat. Get beyond the horizon of body, mind and intellect, and be One with the Vastness. Brahman means the Vast, the expanse without horizons.

God is the inner Truth of all, content of every body

Peace is what everyone seeks; but, it can never be secured from the outside world. Alexander had no peace; Mohammed of Ghazni had no peace. The millionaires are harassed by fear and anxiety. Accumulation of riches or power cannot endow peace. Peace can come only from the fountain of peace, within. An old woman dropped her needle, while mending a tear in her saree. She had poor eyesight; so, she could not locate the needle in the pail where she sat. So, she went under the street light on the road and looked searchingly on the patch of light; some boys returning from school saw her plight and offered to help. They asked her what she had dropped and what she was searching for. She replied, "I dropped my needle in the pail of my hut; but, it is dark there! I am half blind. There is some little light here; I can see better. Therefore, I am searching for it here!" The boys laughed and told her, "Grannie! How can you get your needle back from here? Search for it where you have lost it!" You have lost peace, vision and wisdom in the region of the self; how can you get them back, if you seek for them, in the world, which can be contacted only by the senses? Search where you have lost them; in your heart! There you will recover them; for, they are only attributes of the Divine, which is installed there. God is the inner Truth of all; He is latent, in this vast assembly. He is patent in this Universe, which is His vesture. You talk fluently about this; but, your actions are not moulded by that inspiration. The food on the plate must reach the stomach; its calories must reach every limb and organ in the body. So too, the sense of the Divine must be infused into every word, deed and thought. You may have a chalice of ambrosia by your side; you may know its composition, fragrance, colour, density, etc.; but, unless you place a spoonful or a drop on your tongue, you have not fulfilled the purpose of winning it. Go is the content of every body that you see around you; but you do not make any effort to know Him!

Each country is but a room in the mansion of God

Serve others with reverence - that is the easiest and best method to cognise the Divine content in each. Since all are His forms, His sparks, His children, feel that kinship with every community; pray for the welfare and prosperity of all mankind, whatever the political boundaries which might shut them from one another. Until recently, there was no Pakistan. It is a creature of political strategy, of human weakness, or foible. Do not think of them as anything but artificial arrangements; let not your love be curtailed. Pray that tolerance and understanding shall prevail and that love and cooperation hold sway, more and more among mankind, whatever appellation may be - Russian, Chinese, Pakistani, Indian or American. Each country is but a room in the mansion of God. Small minds select narrow roads; expand your mental vision and take to the broad road of helpfulness, compassion and service.

Pain and grief toughen your moral fibre

Sadhakas (aspirants) of Self-realisation are like mansions; they have to lay brick, and raise the wall higher and higher. That is the upward vision. Others are akin to well-diggers; they get lower and lower; that is the downward vision. Be like the spire, piercing the sky. Shower Anandha on others; lead them along the godly way; be an example in sincerity and earnestness. Partake in Bhajan and Namaskankeerthan (singing of God's Names); share in the singing loudly and with enthusiasm. Some ask Me, "Why should we sing aloud? Isn't it enough if we feel it in the silence of the mind?" I know all this is mere dry Vedantha! They are prepared to advise others in the Samithi, but, are unwilling to practise the advice themselves! Two friends were remarkable for their sloth; one of them had to catch a train at 3 A.M. So, he asked his friend to wake him up at 2.30 A.M. itself, for he had no faith in himself. The friend was even more of a sloth! He wanted that he should be awakened by his friend at 2.15 A.M. so that he could wake the same fellow at 2.30! How can anything be accomplished by such men? Develop a calm unruffled serenity of mind. Welcome pain and grief, for they toughen the moral fibre, they reveal hidden sources of courage and hardihood. They appear to affect your career; but, the real 'you' is unaffected. The real 'you' is the 'I' that wakes, dreams and sleeps. While asleep, you are unaware whether you are a

man, a bird, a beast or a tree!

Curious assortment of family members of Shiva

Here, at Dharwar and Hubli, we have a large number of Shivabhakthas, devoted to the Shiva aspect of Divinity. Shiva is the supreme exemplar of serenity! Shiva, according to the Puranas has a curious assortment of family members. Yet, each one is so calm and without agitation, that the Divine Family exists in peace and concord. Shiva has snakes on His arms, round His neck, on His head, around His waist! One of his sons, Kumara rides on a peacock, which attacks snakes; another rides on a mouse, which the snakes feed on! One son has the head of the elephant, which whets the appetite of the Lion, which is the vehicle used by Dhurga, the Consort of Shiva, who is so inseparable that she is the left half of the body of Shiva Himself. Nor is the Lion friendly by nature to the Bull, which the Lord Shiva Himself has as His vehicle! Shiva has Fire on the Central Point of His Brow, and Water, the river (Ganga) on His head, incompatibles both! Imagine how loving, how co-operative the various components have to be, to render life in Kailash smooth and happy!

It all depends on the mind and its proper discipline. The weapon of Love will disarm every opponent. Love begets Love; it will be reflected back, it will have only Love as reaction, Shout 'Love'; the echo from the other person's heart will also be 'Love'. Walk on the path of righteousness, dharma. That is what all appreciate. Dharma means morality, the control of passions and emotions and directing them along beneficial channels. If you have no greed or hatred, you will get good sleep, also. There is no need to swallow sleeping tablets! Now, life has become artificial, there is no art or heart in life! It has become mere 'fishlal' type of life - for, consider how fish stinks, though all its life is spent in water!

Better to be mad for God, than be mad for money

Wake up every day, to the singing of the Glory of God for if God does not exist, what is it that exists? Live every day, in that joy, with that inspiration as

your companion. Some Samithis have reported that they are beginning Nagara-sankeerthan one day in the week, or two days in the month! This is no sincere Sadhana. What do you lose, how much of ancestral property you have to sell(!), if you have Nagarasankeerthan every morning? Have it every day, immerse yourself in that discipline and imbibe the bliss. Do not fear people who call you mad! When you know and when your heart tells you that it is a joyful experience, carry on, in spite of calumny and criticism. It is far better to be mad for god than be mad for money, or wife and children. If only more people suffer from this madness, the world will be a much happier place! Thyagenaike Amrruthathwam Anashuh: "It is by renunciation alone that immortality can be experienced!" Renounce the petty pleasures and tread the path towards the Supreme Anandha which is God. You say, "enjoy"; but, it is when you "end joy", that you can really enjoy. These petty joys must end; the pursuit of tawdry tinsel should stop; then, the mind will fix itself on the highest joy. I find here a vast ocean of piety and spiritual aspiration. When there are such large numbers of seekers in Dharwar, why is the city overclouded with anxiety and dread? Carry to every door the name of God and let the clouds be illumined by Love and Reverence. Let every street in the towns, every village in the State, ring with the adoration of the Almighty, every sunrise sing of Rama, Ishwara, Shankara or Krishna - any Name is effective, provided it is suffused with the Divine Essence Love. Branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and fruits may appear to be different in colour, feel, taste, smell, etc., but, all are products of the earth, drawing sustenance from the soil and the Sun. Live together in love; live in peace; live in service. I bless that you succeed in this noble endeavour.

You come to Prasanthi Nilayam, as cars come to a workshop. You must go out with a new paint, with all the damaged and loose bolts and nuts replaced, with the engine cleaned and reconditioned, every part spick and span, beautiful, trouble free, in perfect trim, ready to speed on the journey that lies ahead. Every bad habit has to be replaced by a good one, no trace of vice must be allowed to persist, the heart must be drained of all egoism. This is the fruit of this pilgrimage that

you must acquire. Let this be your resolution.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

26. Raajas as Raajarishis

Date: **June 1971** / Location: **Anantapur**

YOU call your association, the Rayalaseema Rajula Sangham. What is a Sangham? Sangham must not instill an idea of separateness from others; on the other hand, it must emphasise the necessity of inter-dependence, inter-dependence of something like the limbs of an organism, each doing its share in the common task. The Vedas declare that the four castes have four complementary functions, like the head, the hands, the thighs and the feet; the safety and security, the strength and efficiency of one depends on those of the other three! Each caste is in charge of some beneficial task and ideal. It is dedicated to some useful way of life, which is essential for society as a whole; each has rights as well as obligations. The rights are based on and are proportionate to the discharge of the obligations. If the ideal is neglected, the caste lowers itself-, if it is discharged, it raises itself to the level of the higher ideal. Every caste has the obligation to promote the spiritual progress of its components, through the fullest use of all facilities available.

In past ages, the Rajas were not merely rulers, but, they raised themselves to the stage of Rajarishis (royal sages), by incessant yearning, systematic austerity and steady faith. They were Kshathriyas (fighters for righteousness), devoted to the protection of the country and its culture, the prevention of any possible invasion by which the culture will be endangered. They had such sensitive hearts they sought relief in renunciation, as Gauthama Buddha did; or, in enquiry as Janaka did; or, in the sweet simple ways of bhakthi, as Ambarisha did. Today, neither the love of culture nor the love of God has maintained its ancient level of strength; the inroads of alien ways and culture have damaged the ideals of every caste.

Pray to God to help you realise Him

People argue that religions and the system of communities and castes have to go; but, so long as man has variegated aptitudes and skills, and capacity to learn and grow, they are inevitable. You cannot abolish faith in God, or in the

mystery and might of the Unseen. You cannot also abolish distinctions and differences, castes and communities. What can be destroyed, what needs to be destroyed, is the hatred between these natural groups. You can have an association of the Raja (warrior) caste or community, but, don't run it in a spirit of hostility. Use the association to pool resources for advancement of the boys and girls of the community. That is a good reason for the formation of your Sangham. The Divine has in its vision all mankind; it cannot be bound by the limits of one caste or one creed. This Avathar (Divine Incarnation) might have taken birth in a particular community, but it has come for the weak, the diseased, the distressed, the downtrodden, the devoted, the divinely oriented, among all mankind. You describe yourself wrongly as A-natha (without-a-guardian)! For, to guard you and foster you, there is God, He is ever ready to respond to prayer, to virtue, to goodness. God is the only A-natha, for He has no natha (guardian). He is the guardian of the Universe! No one can control Him or command Him or claim to guide Him] Every being who is handicapped by hunger has the right to ask God for food! He has inflicted hunger; so, it is His duty, His pleasure to provide the food, which can assuage it! So, you have also the right to pray that He helps you realise Him. That is the vidhya (education), which you must encourage among yourselves. The schools today aim at making children fit for factory, farm or office; they get the skill for clinging to jobs. But, they are not taught to till their hearts, to face the fact of misery and grief, to take up the office of the servant of God or of a pilgrim on the Godward path. In the hostels for students that you are proposing to establish, encourage activities through which love, compassion and the spirit of service are cultivated. That alone can justify the labour and sacrifice of the workers on behalf of this association.

Have this so inscribed on your heart - the axiom that "serving others is meritorious, that harming others or remaining unaffected and idle while others suffer, is sin."

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



27. The seeds of a University

Date: **08 July 1971** / Location: **Anantapur** / Occasion: **Inauguration of the College and Hostel Building**

BHAARATH is the land that won renown in continents across the seas for her heroic achievements in the material as well as spiritual fields, that swept away the mighty cohorts of her imperial conquerors, that is the nursery of famous scholars and investigators into the mysterious realms of the mind, that is upholding high traditions of music, dance, painting, sculpture and architecture that have their roots in the ancient days of adventure and achievement; this is the heritage that the sons and daughters of this country have to feed and foster. This is no weakling's task. It requires a generation of mothers, like Kaushalya who brought up Rama, Seetha who fostered the charming twins, Lava and Kusha, Tharabai who filled the heart of Shivaji with the earnestness and enthusiasm of epic heroes, and a Putthalibai who shaped a Gandhiji out of her hesitant and honest son.

These mothers took the children on their laps and through song and lullabies, through gesture and good stories, while feeding and rocking them to sleep, they poured into the precious vessels of their hearts the nectar of the Vedas, the Upanishaths and the various Yogas of Bharath. They charged them with power and charted the road to eternal joy and peace. Ma (mother) was the first word the children uttered and the last that man gasps. She teaches the first steps for the child's unsure feet, and she sets it on the long journey towards Liberation.

The process of education has become a trade

This Day we are inaugurating the new buildings for the College dedicated to this purpose of having such mas (mothers) for the revival of the Dharma, which Bharath and the world so urgently need today. Today, all departments of life are reverberating with the raucous noise of anxiety and fear, uncertainty and insecurity. The main purpose of life is the acquisition of Anandha, and the sharing of that Anandha with others. This has gone under;

and a vast new number of desires, quite unrelated to the chief aim of the Vyakthi (individual) who has to make his Divinity patent, is emerging, like lava from the subterranean fire! The Guru warns and waylays; but, his words are not heeded. Man loathes the law and loves the lie; he gives ear to evil and invites iniquities on himself! Education does not seem to improve his plight in any manner, or to any extent. The schools and colleges, once revered by the entire population as Temples of Saraswathi, the Goddess of Learning, as a means of attaining the supreme state of self-realisation, have degenerated into temples for the Goddess of Wealth! For securing admission into the schools and colleges, money is demanded; contributions are sought. For the payment of a sum, the required attendance at classes will be certified as having been secured. A "pass" in the examination can also often be manipulated with the help of the purse. As a result of this decline in morality, discipline is reduced to shambles, character is devalued and the process of education has become a trade. As Shrimathi Saraswathi Girl said, degrees and diplomas have become worth while because they entitle you for jobs. They are begging bowls, with which you can clamour outside the doors of offices and factories.

Make the home that children love to cherish

Shrimathi Giri said that the misery of some unemployed women is more pitiable than that of their brothers. This situation has arisen because the real significance of education has been missed by the educated, educators and educatees! Education must strengthen the springs of Anandha, Prema and Shanthi (Bliss, Love and Peace) that are inherent in the heart; these should not be dried in the dusty years of study. Man is in essence a fountain of eternal joy, peace, love and devotion. Cultivate these, by precept, example and exercise, during the formative years. Then, the educated will have security and sweetness as long as they live. Of course livelihood has to be earned; but, when, as happens now, both husband and wife attend office away from home, children grow on the laps of ayahs (nurse maids) and the shoulders of servants, learning their language and manners. The father and mother become casual strangers. When the food they eat is not prepared by loving hands and served with affectionate smiles, the savour disappears and

the vibrations are often vile. The mother, as a teacher, attends school leaving off her natural role as a teacher of her own children! This is indeed a tragedy! The house where such parents live can never become the home that children love to cherish in memory. The securing of jobs cannot be allowed to overshadow the real purpose of education. Women have to cultivate the qualities of sacrifice and detachment, of virtue and wide vision, so that they can lovingly transform their mates and children into seekers and sadhaks, on the way to success. At present, Colleges are infected by anxiety and perplexity, discontent and illdiscipline, irreverence and futility; they have lost the status of temples of learning, where youth is shaped into self-reliant, contented and enterprising heroes; when I identified these defects, deficiencies and dangers, which are rampant in the country, I resolved upon this College in Rayalaseema, at Ananthapur.

Gurukula atmosphere should be fostered

I am never satisfied with the declaration of intentions. I must taste the Anandha (bliss) of putting them into action! I express my Love through every act, every intention of mine. More than floods of eloquence in praise of that intention and millions of words written in elaboration of the theme, I insist, by my own example, on immediate and complete fulfilment. This will be a Gurukul - a place where teachers and taught will grow together in love and wisdom, as close to the ideas of the hermitages of the past as possible under present conditions. Today is Guru-var, Thursday; it is also Guru-pournima, the Day set apart for adoration of the Guru (the Preceptor). It was mentioned just now that this must prove to be the nucleus of a Women's University - but, I am not enamoured of that prospect; I will be happy only when the Gurukula atmosphere is fostered and maintained, uncontaminated. Women must emerge from this College armed with deep-rooted virtue and firm faith in the ideals of woman-hood, laid down in our sacred texts. Then only can they, as mothers, mould their children as bright, beautiful, virtuous, strong citizens of the world. This is the only way out of the horror in which the world is simmering.

India should regain the status as preceptor of mankind

Now, the education that is being given in schools for girls and in women's colleges helps only to make them 'desirable wives', not 'desirable mothers.' The role of the mother which is the natural, native and inescapable role is neglected; the subsidiary short-lived scintillation is given prominence. I am glad that the Hostel Building was inaugurated today by Shrimathi Saraswathi Giri, who provides the ideal I desire to hold forth before the girl-students who will be residing and studying in the Hostel, now and later in the coming years. The words she spoke about the dangers of imitating alien cultures, and the validity of the ancient mores of this land have to be remembered by them, as an inspiration. If those words are treasured and acted upon, India can regain the status she long held as the preceptor of mankind. India shone for centuries as the Karmabhoomi (land of sanctified activity) where each activity of man was ennobled by high purpose and the sense of dedication. She was therefore acclaimed as Yoga-bhoomi, the land where the people yearned for communion with God; she was revered as the Thyaga-bhoomi, where the ideal of the mendicant monk, the naked fakir, the simple monarch counselled by the sage, was placed before the people through precept and example. At the present time, it is being forged into a Bhoga-bhoomi, the land of skyscrapers, airconditioning and tinned foods, an imitative, insurgent, indisciplined mass of humanity, pulled from its roots and transplanted in other soils. This is an insult to our past, a defiance of history. It is a sacrilege on the sanctity of time, the holiness of the human body and on the consecration which each activity can well become.

Peace is the most priceless possession of man

The seed has been planted today; it has to sprout and spread as a tree, heavy with fruits. It has to confer security and sustenance to all. Shrimathi Saraswathi Giri said that, while she is happy that this great institution has come up in the town which is the place of her birth, she can get undiminished happiness only when all those who are poor are enabled to get food, clothing and housing. Of course, these are basic requirements for man; but let me ask, do people who have these - even a surfeit of them - enjoy mental peace? Are they free from anxiety, fear, malice and hate? Peace is the most priceless

possession of man. It is the sign of a virtuous character, a willingness for service, a readiness to renounce, a calm spirit of resignation, an awareness of the evanescence of material wealth, of the cool agitationless lake of joy in the heart. You are all broiling in the Sun and I do not desire to cause further suffering; we shall gather again in the evening when I can speak to you at greater length on Guru Pournami and its meaning.

There are people who go about declaring that there is no God, because they are not able to see Him. They say that they have searched in space, on the way to the moon, and even on the moon but there was no sign of the Almighty. Can you, do you assert, that there are no roots for trees, that nothing feeds them or upholds them, from below? God feeds, sustains, holds firm - unseen. He can be seen by those who make the effort, along the lines laid down for the purpose, by those who have succeeded in experiencing Him. God is, as butter in milk, visible when concretised by sadhana (spiritual striving).

God is the great Unseen, the vast Unknowable. Though you do not see the roots or know how far or how wide or deep they are clutching the earth, you pour water round that trunk, so that it may reach them, is it not? You expect that when the roots contact the water, the tree will yield fruit.

Recognise, similarly, that there is God, as the very basis of Creation; pray to Him, and He will shower fruit.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

28. Radiate rays of Love

Date: July 1971 / Location: Anantapur

DIVYAATHMASWARUUPULAARA! (embodiments of Divine Self!) This morning, you all shared in the exultation of the inauguration of the College Buildings, with endless Anandha, boundless enthusiasm and hearts overflowing with gratitude and hope. Generally speaking, such functions everywhere are filled with three undesirable things: praise of oneself, condemnation of others and purposeless dry talk. But, what has to be said and sought in order to achieve better living and firmer joy is to be found in the sphere of the spirit. That alone can silently and steadily reform, from within, the evils that encompass the individual and society. When we speak of society or community, we calculate numbers only; we picture groups of people, brought together by some thin filaments of affinity. But, pay attention to the word used in Samskrith for society. We call it Samaja; the syllable sama means same, equal, undifferentiated - that is the key to its meaning. People imbued with a sense of sameness, a sense of oneness, a feeling that each is but an image, a reflection of the same Divine Principle, they alone are entitled to be called a Samaja, not others. It is the realisation of the One, which thought It blossoms into the many, does not lose its Uniqueness, because the many are but appearances, unreal impositions of name and form on the Real - this is the Adhwaitha experience. Samaja prompts in the mind these subtle influences that lead to the adhwaitha goal. I-ness comes of the delusion of separateness; I-ness melts away, when the light of Reality dawns.

Enter boldly into the realm of fearless enquiry

In the word Guru, Gu indicates the darkness of the I-ness, (the separateness, the illusion of Many on the basis of the One, of the snake over the rope or garland on the ground in the dusk). Ru, the second syllable means the removal of the illusion, the illumination that reveals the Brahman (rope) which put on the snake-cloak and caused fear and anxiety. When the real Guru reveals, the many merge in the one; when there is but One, how can fear enter? What is there to desire and acquire? On this Guru-pournami, reflect on

these truths and decide to enter boldly into the realm of fearless inquiry. What can the possession of canvas and paint do, if an artist with vision is not moved to paint? What can the chisel and a lump of marble do with no image formed in the heart of a devoted sculptor? That vision and that image are the sparks of the Divine. You are all 'the Divine' packed in human skin and bone, the Atma encased in the evanescent flesh. Know this and you become fearless, happy without limit. Get rid of the ego- enclosure in which you now feel you are shut in; then, you are liberated from the non-existent prison(!) which now enfolds you as hard as existent one! This is the higher wisdom, the knowledge of the spirit; the lower one is that which adheres to the mind, which cleanses the mind and calms its agitations, which is earned by japa, dhyana, namasankeerthan (repetition of holy Names or sacred formula, meditation and singing of God's Names) and such other meritorious activities. I must tell you, however, that Seva (voluntary service) is a process through which the lower wisdom, and after that, even higher wisdom can be gained.

Investigate and discover your limitless core

Seva can instil more intensely than any other activity, the sense of the basic ONE. In fact, 'the service rendered by the Seva dhal (voluntary service group) members not only from Andhra but from all over the country is something that I do not want to describe before you for, I will not be content with a mere description. There can be no higher thapas (austerity) than this, nothing more rewarding. Seva opens the eyes of man to the comprehensive unity of creation. When you open the lids, you see the world, the stars, the galaxies that are far out in the depths of space. When you close them, the scene disappears; there is only gloom, emptiness. The eye reveals Him as the Universe, as Vastness, as Magnificence, as Order, as Beauty, as Power, as Vishwa-Viratswaruupa (Cosmic Divine Form)! It is as one picture that it appears; it is as one picture that it disappears! Dhrishti is srishthi. As you envision, so it becomes the nethra (eye) is the Shasthra (the Scripture that illumines). When you are aware only of your joys and sorrows, you are blind to the joys and sorrows of others; your eyes are closed! You are apart; the others are afar. There is no ONE. Disparate entities drift in the fog, frightened by every stump and shadow. Samajaseva means serving the sama (the ONE

that makes the many same). Education is essential, if man must be inspired by this high ideal of Seva as Sadhana (spiritual striving). Not the acquisition of information or skills, but the sublimation of impulses, emotions, and passions, the mastery of the wayward mind, the grounding of the individual in the eternal atma (divine reality). You must be encouraged to investigate into your own reality and discover your limitless core. Do not entangle yourselves in the relatively real; anchor your life on the Absolute. That is the education needed. It will make you one with the Lord of the Universe. You draw all the Love, Power and Wisdom therefrom. Unless you attain motherhood, you cannot plumb the depths of maternal affection; unless you become Divine, you cannot know the supreme ecstasy of God.

Be conscious that the body is your temporary abode

There is a standard with which everything has to be judged, some fixed, established, quantum which it must seek to achieve, if it must justify itself. Pramana, it is called; pra means already laid down; mana means measure. What is the measure of man, already laid down? How has he to live, so that he does not demean his status? He has to be conscious all the time that his body and its equipment is his temporary abode; he is the eternal Divine, the atma, apparently encaged in the physical cage, as the moon is apparently sunk in the pot of water! Glimpses of this Truth will be vouchsafed to the pupils of this college - glimpses which will urge them on to further sadhana which will reveal its fullness. This College will contribute to the happiness and welfare of the nation, because mothers akin to the mothers famous in the epics and puranas will transform the hearts of their children into heavens of peace and joy. The ideals we have set before ourselves will be translated into action, sincerely and swiftly. The Vedas declare that the mother and the father have to be revered as Divine; they must consider the children too as Divine, and foster the blooming of that Divine Principle. Whether one is doing it sincerely or not can be left to each one's conscience. You are the best judge of your sincerity. The mother's is the first face that the child sees; ma is the first syllable that its lips utter; it is also the last. The agony of the mother at the loss of a child is something that is inconsolable.

Be concerned with acquisition of equanimity

When Abhimanyu, the sixteen-year old son of Arjuna and Subhadhra was entrapped in a maze and slaughtered by the vengeful warriors of the Kaurava camp, Arjuna broke into tears and bewailed the loss. "Why should I battle for an empire, when the son who is to inherit the glory is gone?" he asked himself. He cursed, the war which killed the very beneficiaries of victory. Subhadhra, the mother, called to mind that in the Thretha Yuga, when Rama ruled, no single mother was afflicted with this agony over a son who died when his parents were alive! She lamented the calamity of the Yuga and said, the shadow of the Kali Yuga had already darkened the Dwapara Yuga, which was drawing to a close! But, it is wrong to ascribe to what is called the Time-spirit, the Yuga- dharma, the evils emanating from human weakness and wickedness. The duty that each one owes to himself is to clear the heart of fear and grief, to fill it with Love and Dedication. You have no concern with the chronological divisions of Yugas; you have to be concerned with the psychological levels that you attain. You are most concerned with the acquisition of equanimity and Prashanthi, that is all that matters. So, look upon all and everything as images of the One, namely, God. Every one, everything is His image. In Thamas, it is reflected as matter. In Rajas, it is reflected as Life. In Sathwa it is reflected as Divine. Feel thus; think thus; act thus. Then there is no greed, no lust, no hate, no malice. Doff this cloak of human-ness and shine in the splendour of the Divine which is your reality. See every one as Divine, not as the human roles they are playing.

Make service as worship of the Divine around you

In the eleventh year of their exile, when the four younger brothers had gone to collect alms, Dhroupadhi was silting at the feet of the eldest, Dharmaraja and with tears flowing in cascades down her cheeks, she massaged his tired limbs. When asked the reason why, she replied, "You are now lamenting that the brothers who have gone for alms have not returned, for, you are hungry! I remembered the days when we as monarchs of this kingdom, fed sumptuously every day thousands of Brahmins, sages, monks, scholars, students and mendicants! And, now we pine for a mouthful for ourselves!"

Just then Bheema entered and was moved into violent anger at her anguish, for which he blamed Dharmaraja, whose adherence to Right had reduced them to this plight. But Dharmaraja said, "Brother! Since we stuck to Dharma, we have the Lord as our guardian and guide. The Kauravas follow Adharma (injustice), and their doom is written in blood; the Devil may hold hopes before their eyes, but, none can save them from perdition." Without the strength that righteous behaviour gives, physical might or even the might of weaponry is nought. Bheema had physical might; he could pulverise mountains. Arjuna had the most dreadful bow of the age and an array of Divine arrows. But, both had to be directed and controlled by the dictates of Dharma, so that the Lord might bless them with victory. The easiest and the most fruitful expression of Dharma today consists in Seva, service as worship of the Divine around you. Dedicate all your skill, talents, wealth and scholarship to the living embodiments of Divinity that are around you. That is the Dharmashakthi (Power of righteousness) which can draw Grace upon you.

Aims of the women's college

I have come upon a mission, and the first and foremost task in the fulfilment of that mission is the revival of the Veda and Vedhic rituals, along with an appreciation of their inner significance. The next step is the lighting of such Lamps, to spread illumination into all the nooks where darkness has taken refuge. This College is not founded, as some of you are guessing, to promote financial considerations; nor is it intended as an instrument for publicity. It will be an example, an inspiration, a beacon, a pioneer, a lesson for educationists, for all those who have the future of humanity in their hands. The usual answer to the question, 'Why College' education?' is, "To help secure jobs." The answer to the question, "Why this college?" is, "To sweeten the hearts of the future mothers of this land with humility, faith, discrimination and fear of evil. To light the path they tread towards truth and virtue."

An educated woman must herself run the home

The learning of Sanskrit is crucial for this generation. That is the key to the

treasure of Bharatheeya Culture which is the heritage of the children of this land. The world is in great hunger for this nectar of immortality, and you must not neglect this rich patrimony. Again, I will insist that the educated woman must herself run the home, and shoulder all the burden of nursing and nourishing the members of the family. The Anandha that can be derived by unselfish scattering of Love is a rare elevating experience. It is a very valuable Sadhana. A third need is that the ideal of Seva must be inculcated in the hearts of the students and they must acquire not only the enthusiasm to serve but they must earn proficiency in the ways of helpfulness. During the last seven or ten days, the volunteers from Hyderabad (they had come on some earlier occasions too) and those from West and East Godhavari Districts, from Krishna and Guntur Districts, from Orissa, Gujarat, Punjab and Bengal, as well as from Mysore, Kerala, Assam and other parts of India, as well as from across the seas, from East Africa and America, gave of themselves fully and sincerely, and exhausted themselves in hard continuous work both night and day, so that this vast area which was rubble all over, and very uneven at that, became, at dawn today, the smooth, level, soft maidhan (meeting grounds), where hundreds of thousands could sit in comfort. The Love that they translated into service is indeed beyond the power of words to describe. This noon, since it was already late and you were all boiling in the Sun, I could not dwell on this Love and give expression to My joy. But, now I can mention it with joy.

Every being is surcharged with God's Bliss

The Universe is seen; it can be learnt about; it can be experienced and enjoyed. But, God is unseen. He has to be inferred through His handiwork. So, too, society to which social service is rendered, cannot be seen as such. We can contact only individuals. But, through the individual you infer the immanence of the Divine. All are actors on the world stage, in His Play. Every atom is surcharged with His Power, His Might, His Glory. Every being is surcharged with His Bliss, His Beauty, His Goodness. Do not claim that you are using some skill or force which is specially yours; it has come out of His Grace, His Compassion. People retire into solitude and attempt to contact God; but, solitude is best used for discovering and curing defects of character

and conduct. To contact God, one has to open his eyes and serve brother man. He is the God Incarnate one can worship and adore to his heart's content. The greatest joy springs from the utmost sacrifice. That is the utmost bhoga (enjoyment), though it is called thyaga (sacrifice). It is the utmost fulfilment. Giving is gaining. It leads to the utmost yoga (identification with the Divine). This manner of gaining bhoga, is the best; all the rest becomes not gaining, but grieving (roga). And, Seva is to be offered, not here only, or on special occasions like this; but, where ever you are, whenever you realise the need, to the extent of your capacity and ability. Feel that God has given the chance, the inclination, the ability - that is the crux of the Sadhana.

Have no ego, discard desire, you are liberated

This day is Guru Pournami, when many offer special puuja to the Guru (worship of the preceptor) who has initiated them into spiritual life, with the grant of some manthra (sacred syllable) or some vow. To adore the preceptor who has shown the path of liberation, you need not wait for the arrival of this particular day. You need not watch the calendar at all; be ever grateful. The guru has directed the vision inside, the goal is in you, the path leads you to yourself, the I that shines unknown in you, as well as in all. Knowing it is liberation from the bondage of the body and the chain of birth and death which the body drags along with it. People come to Me and pray, "Swami! Naku rooksham kavali" (For me - moksha (liberation) is wanted). Consider for a moment that statement of thirst. A parcel you get through post is covered top and bottom, with the gift inside the two; you remove the packaging material from top and bottom to get at the thing you really value most; moksha (the gift you value) is packed between two ideas - 'for me,' and 'is wanted' - the idea of EGO and the idea of DESIRE. So, all I have to tell you is, "Remove the packing, and take the gift, MOKSHA. Have no ego, discard desire, you are liberated!" The Guru asks you to repeat a manthra; but the manthra cannot grant you the final beatitude, It will discipline the mind, control its vagaries, and strengthen faith. But, unless you see God in all, unless your mind is made a mirror reflecting the image of God that every one and every thing is, you are not entitled to the release you claim.

Wrestle with your Own errors in solitude

When the pot has a leak, tiny as a needle prick, the water drains out whole. When the heart is full of faith and strength, of light and love, a prick-leak caused by anger, or malice, envy, or pride is so damaging that the precious wealth is spent away quick and fast! Resolve this day in the Presence that you have so ardently wished for, not to be swayed by these low desires and insidious foes; never be moved by fame or blame, by praise or persecution. When the crows see the kokil (nightingale), they pursue it and try to wound it with their envious beaks. Good men are the targets for the malignity of the small. Have your own errors and evils hidden so that you can tackle with them in solitude; do not inflict them on others. Wrestle with them, and overwhelm them in the silence of Sadhana. Deal with others only beneficially and in joyful co-operation. Look at Lord Shiva. The poison which will ruin the world ruthlessly, He has hidden in His throat! The Moon that can shower cool calm comfort, He wears on His Head, for all the worlds to benefit from! That is a lesson for you. Why render others miserable, because you are too weak to suppress the bandits your heart has welcomed? We have in this country, as well as in others, many institutions and organisations devoted to spiritual uplift of man; but, they are all caught up in the politics of competition for prestige and power, and in the game of personal aggrandizement. Wherever you turn, you meet Sanyasins, Yogis, Gurus and Babas - varieties of the same theme, clamouring for clientele, wheedling for funds, parading for protocol! No one seems to have delved into the relativity of things. No one seems to have dived for the pearls at the bottom and secured them. All are on the surface of things, afraid to lose their identities, once they have the light revealed. We require spiritual guides who are free from conceit and pride, hate and greed; guides who have travelled the whole length of the journey.

In religious field, hypocrisy is high treason

I know there are many of you who argue and discuss how and in what manner these structures came to be built so grandly. If you have known Me through and through, there will be no such argument at all. You will know that this is but an insignificant product of My power. I have done this, only as an

example, for, unless those who lead are themselves active and earnest, to bend and bear the burden, those who are encouraged to follow will lose heart and miss the way. Religious leaders have a greater responsibility in this respect; for, it is a field where hypocrisy is high treason. People fly high, only to cast their eyes on a wider circle, searching for sustenance, as vultures do! The eye belies what the wings proclaim. Others, I know, have questioned, why I had requested the President of India, Shrimathi Saraswati Giri, the Governor of Mysore, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, the Education Minister of Andhra Pradesh, and the Vice-Chancellor of the Venkateshwara University to share the Anandha (joy) of this occasion. They hold positions which are sources of influence over many and it is necessary to draw their attention to this resurgence of spiritual education. They themselves have to be put into touch with the activities that are crucial to the revival of the culture of this land. That is the reason why I am inviting these dignitaries to attend and share in the joy of the proceedings. My aim is to plant transformation in the hearts of all, whether they hold high positions or not. All are dear to Me and all are important in My eyes. By having recourse to all means, the mission of establishing Prashanthi has to be achieved. That is My task.

The happy confluence of three Gurus

Having an open heart, do not relish the narrow path of restricted love; love all, do not develop prejudices against men in power or position. They too are our kith and kin; we all sail together. Be convinced of one truth about Me: Swami will never lay his hand on a task without proper reason, and without some profound effect that will flow therefrom. Today, we have the happy confluence of three gu's: it is Guru-var (the day of the week is known as the Day of the Preceptor or Guru). The second refers to Adhi-Guru (Primary Preceptor) - the Full Moon of this month, which occurs today is revered as specially sacred to the memory of Vedavyasa, the collator of the Vedas, the author of Brahmasuuthras (aphorisms on Supreme Reality), the great poet who composed the epic known as the Fifth Veda, the Mahabharatha, and the author of the renowned scripture of Bhakthi (devotion), called the Srimad Bhagavatha. The third Gu refers to this Guru-kula-ashram, this college with

the new (but ancient) outlook, of reviving the master-disciple, sanctified by centuries of spiritual

effort and experience. These three gu's are reminders of the three-pronged bilva (wood-apple tree) leaf, which is placed in reverence while adoring Shiva, symbolising the three Gunas (qualities), the three prongs of time (past, present, future) held as a spear by Shiva, and the three attributes which man has to overcome, the Thamas, Rajas and Sathwa (inertia, passion and equanimity).

Learn to speak what you feel, act what you speak

The greatest contribution of Vyasa in the realm of Bhakthi, which adores Go with an identifying label of a name, as man can appreciate and apprehend only Name and Form. Fire has no form; it takes on the form of the article it burns or fills, a ball of iron, a crooked rope, etc. Water has no form; it takes the form of the vessel which contains it. Air has no form; it fills a ball and assumes that form. So too, the athmic (divine) principle. The body is the ball filled with the air of Divinity; it is kicked in play, by six players on one side (the six foes: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, Pride, and Hate) and six on the other (the six friends, Truth, Right, Peace, Love, Compassion and Fortitude). The goal-posts are on each side, and the ball is hit so that it passes through them, the Dharma vidhya (Moral attainment) and Brahma vidhya (Spiritual attainment). Those who hit it so, can claim victory. Or else, their kick results in an 'out'! Learn to speak what you feel, act what you speak; do not allow them to be at cross purposes.

Man with feelings of a demon, fuming with hate, engaged in fighting, holds Peace Conferences! And, prides himself on his plans for peace! Transform the heart into a tabernacle of Peace; then, conferences to deceive oneself and others become unnecessary. What can mere talk achieve?

Right will be restored and evil put down

Have constructive thoughts, consoling words, compassionate acts. Be on the

look out for eyes filled with tears, hearts heaving in sigh. I am sure My words will give you the strength of elephants when you need it to carry through tasks of service. I know they have; each one of you is the witness of the truth of this fact; I am the witness of all that you did and achieved. I don't need any one to report; to Me; you don't need any one to measure the Anandha you had. When the Non-gazetted officers of the Andhra Pradesh struck work for more than a month and a half, the hospitals did not have attenders and helpers in the wards; the Seva dhal members of Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam and other places were moved by the distress of the in-patients left: helpless in the hospital beds; they served them with great love and even adoration.

No service was too low or mean; every emergency was immediately noticed and attended to. They need not be sorry that during those days, they had no time to sit for dhyana or do japa or even to go out on Nagarasankeerthan (meditation or recitation or group singing of God's names)! Why? You can have the Name on the lips, when you sweep the streets, or lift a corpse on to the morgue, or when you walk towards or away from the area of distress. People may dub you mad! But, be elated that you are not affected by the insanity they suffer from. Not only Bharath, but the whole world is today in the throes of anxiety and fear. But, I assure you that very soon the dark clouds shall be scattered and you will witness a happy era all over the world. Right will be restored and evil put down. Your duty is to yearn for the attainment of the consciousness of the One, behind all this apparent multiplicity. Be centres of love, compassion, service, mutual tolerance, and be happy, very very happy. That is the blessing I shower on you, this Guru Poornima (the full-moon day dedicated to the Preceptor).

Shiva is described as having three eyes, eyes that see the Past, the Present and the Future.

The elephant skin which forms His cloak is a symbol of the bestial primitive traits which His Grace destroys. In fact, He tears them to pieces, skin them, and they become totally ineffective. His Four Faces symbolise Shantham

(Equanimity), Roudhram (Terror), Mangalam (Grace) and Uthsaham (elevating energy). While adoring the Lingam on this Lingodhbhava Day, Maha Shiva- rathri, you must contemplate on these truths of Shiva that the Linga represents.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

29. Constant Divine Communion

Date: July 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THERE is no illness worse than desire; no foe fiercer than attachment; no fire so ravenous as anger; no ally so reliable as wisdom. In the ancient *ashrams* (monasteries) of India, the Master took the pupil by the hand and, by precept and example, he removed the wild weeds and planted the seeds of virtue and equanimity, which grew into love and wisdom. There man became aware of his fundamental Divinity and drew unfailing *Ananda* (bliss) from that awareness. But now, taking delight in dubious designs and tortuous trials, man is fast shaping himself into a demon! The mind is the conspirator, who has brought about this calamity. If man yields to the mind and its vagaries, and the mind is enslaved to the senses and their fancies man cannot escape, calamity.

The mind prompts man to seek *sukha* (happiness), and avoid *dhukha* (misery); it creates the distinction and deludes the activity; it pushes forward and pulls back, tossing man back and forth, throughout his life. The idea of happiness, which is often only another form of comfort, arises in the mind and gets concretised as objects shaped by the hands and brains of man, like the aeroplane, the radio, and even the bomb that devastates and delights the mind saturated with hate.

Ideas, desires, cravings, yearnings - these get concretised and so, the world is only the product of the mind. In fact, the Universe is itself the manifestation of the Divine Mind, which willed,

Ekoham bahusyam: "I am one, let me become many!"

The Universe arose in the Mind of God, it sprouted and spread there, and since then, the mind has become potent and permeating. For each of you, it

is the mind that colours the world. If it is pure, the *jagath* (world) is congenial; if it is unclean, the world is replete with jeopardy. The sages of Bharath laid down a series of exercises and disciplines, in order to de-contaminate the mind, so that it may turn away from the senses towards the *buddhi* (intellect). These are included in the comprehensive path, *dhyana* (meditation).

Meditation should be a continuous process, not a fad

Dhyana is, according to many exponents, the performance for a few minutes when man tries to assume a certain posture, and controlling the ingress and egress of breath, endeavours to fix attention on an image or ideal, to the exclusion of everything else. During meditation, people feel elated, have exaltation of a kind, experience joy and peace; but when the period is over they lapse into the normal routine of scandal, envy, faction and fear. So, dhyana has become a fad, a routine, a pastime or habit, a drug or tonic, instead of the very sustenance of the spirit. It should not be taken up and left off, at stated hours of the day; it must be a continuous process, filling the personality with sweetness Divine.

The mind must be rid of bitterness, and be charged with the nectar of Universal love. That love must reveal to you that the *jeeva* (individual) is only *Deva* (God), clothed in that garment. You too are not this temporary vesture that you have worn, but, the ancient bodiless Divine!

The limits of time and space which make you declare that you were born in one particular year and that your native place is some dot on the map of the world are also artificial and temporary and incidental; they are not fundamental. The wants that the mind spins out endlessly can never be over; they are like the digits, which can be added ad infinitum, and with each addition, the total load increases! When you are in the coils of *kama* (desire), you cannot come to *Rama* (God). The study of sacred books, the counsel of sages, the company of the wise - these are barren when you do not transmute them into awareness and Ananda! Pour the mind into the mould of God, His Glory, His Majesty, His Beauty. The mind-stuff is rendered an instrument of liberation, from being a shackle that binds.

Desires are often momentary urges

When you come to Me weighted with wants, prayers for boons and materialistic wishes, you stand the risk of losing faith and losing your moorings; for, that faith is frail. Develop the love that asks for no return; build faith on that basis. Thereby, you can rescue yourselves' from the duality of exaltation and despair. The path of love knows no ups and downs; it is smooth and level, straight and safe; it leads you to the throne of the King of Kings, installed in your heart! Nothing can delay your journey, or devise obstacles to stop you. Desires? What is their nature? When a cat kills your pet parrot, you are enraged; when it kills a mouse, you are pleased. Though the behaviour of the cat is same, you desired one and disliked the other, as a result of your attachment! Desires are decided by personal prejudices and fancies. They also pall when fulfilled and are often momentary urges, clamouring for immediate satisfaction. After a full meal, food becomes uninteresting, if not positively repellent! Once satiated, the thing desired becomes disgusting!

Gateway to God's glory lies open everywhere

There are two attitudes of mind: the separative attitude and the unity attitude! In the grip of the separate "community" idea, you cling to some as friends and keep away from others. This attitude cannot win the Grace of the One. He who sees unity wins the Grace of the One. And, one spark of that Grace destroys in the conflagration it causes the fame and blame, the joy and grief, that the world heaps on the head. Do not worry about temporary trifles, and tribulations. Do not exaggerate the inconveniences they cause. Bear them with courage, and a smile. Aim at the highest goal; hunt the royal tiger, not the foul fox! Even if you fail to bag the tiger, there is a grandeur in being foiled. In the case of the fox, what glory is there when you finally bring its corpse home?

Why become too considerate about the body, too concerned about the state of health, too worried about material possessions? Be concerned to acquire as

support the embodiment of truth! Be anxious to win the status of immortality! Struggle for Eternal Verity, though the victory may be distant and difficult. To realise that Verity, you have the opportunity and the invitation, everywhere. The gateway to that Glory lies open everywhere. Open your eyes, and witness His Compassion, His Majesty, His Beauty, spread before you; sitting in meditation for three hours, you are not able to concentrate on these attributes of God for even three seconds! You get pain in the back, your legs ache, you have to change posture a dozen times an hour! But, before you, above your head in the sky, under your feet the handiwork of the Almighty calls on you to adore His artistry.

Invest yourself fully in meditation

Why spend all that time trying to achieve control of the mind? Practise another *sadhana* - the sadhana of seeing the Divine all around you! Believe that the Atma in you is the same Atma that activates everyone else, and makes him live and love, wail and hail. Dhyana is not a limited liability concern! There are no bounds for your share in it. It is a full time endeavour; invest yourself fully in it. Then you get a plentiful harvest of returns. You become aware that you are a *Hari-mandir* (a temple of God), that your limbs are the holy vessels that are consecrated for service therein, that your deeds are the fruits, your thoughts the flowers, your words the music, with which the worship is consummated every moment. Offer yourself as the heart of faith. Then, whomsoever you contact, will shine before you as God Himself. The words - social, cultural, spiritual, moral - all indicate only facets of this vision. Social service or consciousness is but the expression of this ever-present Divine in all members of the human community. What is culture, except the culture of the mind to reap this harvest? The spirit, when it blossoms, finds kindred spirits everywhere. And, as for morality, its highest expression is truth, and the truth is unity!

All activity originates from a common source, God

When you speak with the tongue or see with the eye, or plan with the brain, who is it that speaks, sees, judges and decides? It is the One intelligence, the

One that, like a current, works in and through all men and materials, God. When you are immersed in bhajan, note how the One is activating you! Your tongue pronounces the words in the tune designed for them; your palms beat the time, slow or fast; your head sways in unison with the sentiments that the words express; your mind is gushing Ananda, at the magnificence of the pictures that the song evokes! So too, a dancer is articulating harmony and melody through every gesture and movement of muscle and limb.

But, all the activity originates from a common source, God, who is resident as President in the heart. When He is ignored, neglected, or denied, there is no joy for you or through you for others. You are either *Thamasik* - dull, inert - or *Rajasik* (passionate, fanatic) - but, not *Sathwik* (pure) balanced, serene!

God is all. He is all forms, His is all names. There is no place where He is not; no moment when He is not! (Even the devil has the syllable dev to indicate his affinity). Thunder is God's message; the rain is his grace. Let no second pass without awareness of God; let no event lapse without reminding you that He is the artificer! You have an image or picture, in the room you have set apart for worshipping God. You light a lamp before it! You say, "I have lit the lamp;" but, is it you really? Who endowed the oil, the wick and the lamp, the property of producing a flame together? Who moved you to revere the picture in this form? Who was it that placed the lamp, lit it and bowed before the picture? It is all God, God, God. There is none else, nothing else, for the man who knows and feels.

Live in the consciousness of Rama & His message of Truth

This morning, someone asked Me, when I called him in and gave him the chance to speak to Me, "Baba! The world is fast forgetting the potency of the Name of God. People do not have it on their tongues; they do not sustain themselves by its sweetness and sanctity. Bless me and bless a plan that I have, to make them ever conscious of the precious treasure that they are missing. I propose to print posters, blazing in colour, with the Name 'Rama' and paste them on all available walls, pillars and vantage points, so that the eye may warn and waken the mind of man."

I told him that his posters will be smothered by the loud lascivious announcements and ads of film makers and exhibitors, and they will soon give place to the scrawls and scribbles of hate. Nor is your plan worthwhile, I told him. Paste the poster on your heart, I advised him. "Reform yourselves, live in the consciousness of Rama and the message of dharma which He lived out in His earthly career. That is enough publicity, enough prompting. That is the best that you can do to promote loyalty to the name," I said. For, people will know how it has changed you into a more joyous, peaceful individual and wonder how it was possible. Realising the how, they will start revering the name, like you. Do not get tied up with symbols in stone or metal; raise yourselves to the higher stages of realisation. Do not get entangled in rituals and ceremonials.

Fill your heart with God, not with 'you'

Ego plays all kinds of tricks, in order to get unholy pleasure. During the construction of the bridge to Lanka to take the army across, Hanuman heaved a boulder on the raging waves of the sea, as part of the bridge! It floated! Rama heaved another; it sank! Hanuman's ego was tickled, naturally. He laughed in derision; at that very moment, his boulder sank! And, the boulder that Rama had thrown, rose from the bottom of the sea and floated! Hanuman's ego was pricked into nothingness. That was the purpose for which Rama had willed that his boulder should sink!

Yearn to fill your heart with Him, not with 'you.' Your yearning must be warm, so warm that it can be called *thapas* (heat). Become hot earnest! Now it is only lukewarm longing, a surface activity. Examine yourselves how far you have filled your heart with Him. Measure the heights you have reached with the yardstick of virtue, serenity, fortitude and equanimity. You now become easy victims of lust, anger, malice, envy and the rest of that evil brood, for, the atmosphere of the heart is polluted by ego fumes.

The knowledge derived through the mind utilising the senses is always "incomplete, incoherent;" but, the knowledge that is earned through the *buddhi* (intellect) illumined by the *Atma* (divine Self), is full free-ing, and

revealing the Truth. The first is termed *Mano jnana* and the second, *Atma jnana*. *Mano jnana* informs that you are distinct from others, that God is at Kailash, Thirupathi or Kashi or Prasanthi Nilayam, that the God at Kailash or Kashi or Prasanthi Nilayam is different one from the other! But, names, forms and temples are only for the kindergarten stage. You print the picture of a head or a net or a wave, and have underneath the words, thala (head, in Telugu) or vala (net, in Telugu) or ala (wave, in Telugu), so that the child may learn the letters quicker, while pronouncing the name of the picture which the word represents. Once the letters are learnt, the picture can be dispensed with. The *kshara* (temporary picture) can be given up when the *Akshara* (permanent letter) is learnt. The picture is only a crutch. The transient is only an illustration of the truth that it reflects.

Accommodate all forms of God in your heart

The *kshara* can be rubbed off the blackboard, when the *Akshara* is fixed in the mind. The brick and mortar structure where God is taken to be, can be, rubbed off the mind board, once the presence of God is experienced. When you change your *puja* (worship) room in your house, it does not mean that God too shifted from one room to another, that he is no longer where He was and that He has been brought over to a new place! He is not a piece of furniture that you can transfer hither and thither! He is here, there, everywhere, inside and out, above, below, around. Accommodate all forms of God in your heart; do not exclude some and welcome others: Bear with those who adore Him in another form through another name and acclaim Him in another language.

There was once a heavy downpour of rain in a small village. A lonely monk was caught unawares and he ran helter-skelter seeking some shelter from the hard-hitting drops and the chilly wind. He found a short length of dry floor, on the raised verandah of a house, the inmates of which were fast asleep behind closed doors. Being a yogi with no weight on his mind, he fell asleep soon, and was lost within himself. Very soon, another forlorn man, who also had no shelter, espied the verandah and came on to it. The yogi woke up and finding another claimant for the space sat up and said, there is sitting room for two;

come, we shall sit the night through!" Within a few minutes, another desperate man arrived and he had to be accommodated. The two who were sitting agreed that there was standing room for three! They decided to stand until dawn; that is the spirit of tolerance that has to be cultivate, by the children of God, towards brothers in distress. God is love; so, you must become love, in order to merge in Him. He is beauty; so, be beauty, with no ugliness in you. Then, you can be one with Him, He is compassion, be compassionate. Water mixes easily with water, not with oil. Oil mixes with oil only.

Devotees should cultivate the spirit of tolerance

God is sweetness; His words are sweet, His sight is sweet; He sounds sweet; He is sweeter than sweetness itself. But, when your tongue is afflicted with illness, He will be bitter. Cure the illness, by cultivating love to all. There is no need to take refuge in a forest or in solitude. You cannot give up activity. You have to move along the line to which you are attuned; you cannot lead a life of renunciation, on the spur of the moment; it requires long years of preparation.

Once Arjuna was seen by a monk, walking listlessly in the forest looking for something. The monk asked why, and Arjuna replied, "I am searching for roots and tubers that are edible, for, my brother is certain to be invited to a game of dice as soon as this exile is over and since he is certain to wager us once again and lose, we are destined for another long spell in the forest; so, it is better to accustom oneself to sparse and saintly *sathwik* (wholesome) food now itself." Then the monk said, "No, you are a kshathriya, born and bred for war on wickedness and evil; how can you throw off all that tendency for dedication. Besides, why *sanyas* (mendicancy) to discover that your real core is *Madhava* (God)? It is God that agitates you, admonishes you, administers you! A minute's introspection must convince you of this truth." Know that you are but an instrument; what can you prepare for? It is all His Will, His plan.

Know that you are but an instrument of God's Will

Sathatham yoginah - always a yogi!

Be calm, unruffled, serene; unaffected by good fortune or bad, for you are a puppet making motions and contortions according to the pulls He gives to the strings! Be pleasant in speech and manner; do not inflict injury or insult on others nor be affected any adverse act or remark by others. Be happy that everyone and everything is so ordained by God. It is His play, His sport! Also be eager to confer consolation and courage; be anxious to be of help. Watch for the chance, snatch each opportunity to expand yourself by sympathy, to enlarge the horizon of love, by understanding and prayer. Don't keep another at arm's length, saying, "My God is different from yours" or "My God is opposed to yours." It can never be so. *Paramatma*, the name for God does not mean, a stranger God, but, the Supreme God! Who can vouchsafe for the correctness of the picture which you now worship as the picture of Rama or Krishna? The poet described and the painter delineated; but, both relied on their imagination, rather than actual authentic vision.

Who can set limits to the freedom of God?

A shepherd boy heard a Brahmana discourse on God and describe Him as a dark blue being of human form, riding a white eagle. He prayed for many days continuously giving up food and drink, that God must come down where he was tending the fold and partake of his gruel. At last on the tenth day, when he threatened to put himself to death (for he had become desperate) God came in the form of an old man. And, demanded the gruel. The old man declared that he was God, but, the shepherd would not accept the credential! He did not see the dark blue complexion or the white eagle! He refused to share the gruel with Him, unless the Brahmana certified that the visitor was genuinely God. The Brahmana was brought post haste, but, what could he say? He had only expounded from books, written by equally blind persons and from pictures drawn by equally audacious painters! Who can set limits to the freedom of God, to assume any Form He likes or, any Form that the devotee

likes? For the shepherd, God was valid, vital and very near; for the Brahmana who expounded the texts, He was a mystery; a distant possibility, an image lined by fancy.

Be convinced that God can and will appear in any form and so all forms are His. Don't refuse to recognise Divinity in the form you dislike or did not expect! He can appear as a fox, as a dog, as a beggar, any form. When you call on God, whatever form appears, treat it as God. Thotapuri taught Ramakrishna that Mother Kali was Vishwaswarupini, the all-comprehensive form of the formless energy that pervades the Universe, and not the eight-armed occupant of the shrine at Dhakshineswar, the form that was appearing between his brows, whenever he tried to delve into himself and discover the unity behind all the multiple manifestations! She was One without a second. With no name or form or body or sex or age, beyond time, space, causation. She was all forms and so, of no form; she was all attributes and so, beyond the attributeful. She was saguna as well as nirguna, the nirguna being the base on which the saguna was conceived.

Emerge from meditation more charged with love

We divide the one into two, and play the game of duality; positing one half as giver and the other as receiver, one as the seer and the other as the seen, one as subject and the other as object. We say,

Sarvam Brahma Mayam - "All is Brahma!"

As if there is an All, which is to be identified with another thing called Brahma. Sarvam and Brahma are One, not two! That is why we say, *Ad waittha* (Not-two), in spite of the appearance as two. In deep sleep, you are one with yourself, though at the time you have no Chith and no Ananda.

The realisation that you are not two but One will endow you with the

awareness and the bliss. To earn that consciousness of not-two, love alone is the path. Prema, means seva, which means sadhana, which means expansion, self-enlargement, reaching out to the very horizon of being and becoming! - until all is I. **Prema** (love) must grow with every moment of sadhana. It must sweeten every word, deed and thought of yours. Emerge from dhyana as a person more charged with love! Emerge from bhajan with a greater measure of love! Return from Nagarasankeerthan with a firmer conviction that everything is surcharged with the same Divinity that is behind all your activity. I find now that these have become mere routine procedures, a matter of schedules, time-tables and attendance registers and reports! The thrill, the exhilaration, the enthusiasm are absent; the singing starts like a wail, without strength and joy.

Bhajan must spread goodwill and love

The "O Bhagavan song" is a very weak, meek song to begin bhajan with. You do not put any spirit into it and so it falls flat on the ear. Do not have it from this day; begin with a vigorous song on Ganesha, instead. Also, have the song for arathi (waving the lights), both morning and evening and during all occasions of arathi, Jai Jagadeesha Hare - and give up the Pavana Purusha, which is a much mutilated Kannada song, which has lost its meaning and appeal as a result of a number of emendations and interpolations from other linguistic regions! When you sing without the thrill of ecstasy I do not derive any joy, nor does the I (that resides in everyone of you) get it.

Bhajan must spread good-will, love, ecstasy; it must cleanse the polluted atmosphere; it must invite all to share in the joy and peace. The Nagarasankeerthan must be inspiring, radiating devotion and love. The Ananda, I derive from bhajan, I do not get from anything else. That is the reason why I am emphasising these points. Be sincere, feel in your hearts what you are singing by your voice. The motion will express itself through the raga and thala it chooses. You need not worry about the raga being appropriate or the thala being accurate. When Rama is prompting you to sing, the raga and the thala can never be wrong. Rama is the pen, Rama is the thought, Rama is the word, Rama is the style, Rama is the composition. How

then can error creep in?

Shravan is the first stage of spiritual progress

Fill every moment with energy, enthusiasm and effort. The epics teach you how to succeed in this. The Mahabharatha describes how, when every other of the hundred Kauravas died, the eldest Dhuryodhana was challenged by Bheema to meet him in a duel; when at last, he fell on the ground, Bheema struck his head with his foot in order to add insult to injury. Dhuryodhana's pride was hurt; a Kshathriya such as he could not pass that insult by. He retorted, even when he was dying, "Do not exult that you have done some big heroic act by trampling on my head! In a few seconds, dogs and vultures will be doing that act. It does not require a hero to plant his foot on a dying man! You dared not do this when I was capable of hitting back, you coward!" That kind of awareness of one's potentialities and quick response to all happenings must be present in you, too. Heroism gushed out his lips even when he was passing away!

Today is the first day of Shravan month. Shravan is the month when the Vedic studies are considered most fruitful, for, Vedas are *Shruthi* (the heard), coming to man through *Shravan* (hearing from the Guru). Shravan is the very first stage of spiritual progress. So, it is a good day for inaugurating spiritual study and practice. Shravan leads ultimately to *Atmanivedana*, surrender of the individual to the Universal. I bless you that you may achieve that goal.

30. Live in Love

Date: August 1971 / Location: Ananthapur

WITHIN thirty days of the inauguration of the Women's College building in this town, I am glad I am laying the foundation today for this Kalyana Mantap (Festival Hall). Joy and grief come upon mankind, often without advance notice! Ananthapur has had the college as well as this festival hall, as surprises. That is indeed worthy good fortune. The mind decides and shapes things according to the decision. It manipulates external objects until the desired achievement is concretised. When the decisions are good, good is the resultant; when they are bad, bad happens. When love is the lever that operates the mind, only good can result. That is why I always emphasise the role of love.

Live in love; love is life. Without loving or being loved, no being can exist on the earth. Love sustains, love strengthens, love is the urge behind all adventure, all sacrifice, all success. I have come to restore love among mankind, to cleanse of narrowness, and restrictive attitudes. That is the main task, in the revival of Dharma (morality). It is not enough, to talk about the prime importance of love in the task of human rehabilitation. One must set the example, in actual practice. This Hall is a symbol of that love resulting in joy for this town. When words, deeds and thoughts emanate from hems filled with love - pure, untarnished, such as, love for God and for man as the image of God - all who contact you, will feel elated. If you love your atma and not your body, you will realise that the same Atma is the core of every being and you will start; loving every being as much as you do yourselves. This is real self-realisation. This is the truth; that is to say, a fact that can never be denied or deviated from, during the passage of time. Someone mentioned now that the results of the final examinations held by the University are commendable, since more than seventy per cent of the students who appeared from the college at Ananthapur have passed with credit! Good, but, what I will be glad over, is quite another thing! I look forward to cent per cent success in the examination which assesses character, virtue, sweetness of speech and behaviour, reverence towards elders and the culture of this land. I

wish that the pupils of this college live so fully in love that the homes where they were born and bred, and the homes which they enter on marriage, and the homes they themselves establish - all will be happy, on account of them. No one of them should feel dishonoured, through their behaviour. All must shine as splendid examples of joy and contentment, devotion and dedication.

31. Raso vai sah

Date: **August 1971** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam**

IT is a great pity that, in this land, which discovered the Divinity of Man and the means by which he can regain that Divinity, which is having a continuous stream of saints and sages who remind man of his grand role as a pilgrim towards God, men have allowed the teaching to decline and the practice to fade! Hearts saturated with this honeyed wisdom have become chalices of poison! Hate has hardened them, greed has sharpened them, pride has polluted them. Once again, man has to be made aware of the spring of joy within him, so that he may be happy and unagitated by anxiety. Human ideals have degenerated so much that man has become incapable of appreciating the beauty, wisdom and power of Avathars (divine advents)! They do not yearn for the intuitive experience of the glory and majesty of which they are themselves parts. They do not lose themselves in the stream of joy that flows from the contemplation of the limitless, beginningless power that is God. This day which you are celebrating as the Birthday of Krishna can best be used for re-dedicating your lives to the attainment of that joy.

Universe, God's creation, cannot but be sweet

Krishna has three separate meanings - the word, that is: (1) Karsh is one root from which the name is derived. It means, "that which attracts"; Krishna attracts hearts to Himself, by His sportive pastimes, miraculous victories over the forces of evil, his charming conversation, His wisdom, His personal beauty. (2) The word is also related to the root, Krish, to cultivate, as a field, for growing crops. The word means, he who removes the weeds from the heart of man, and sows seeds of faith, courage and joy. (3) It is related to the root, Krish, meaning something above and beyond the three attributes and the three eras, and na, means, Sath-chith-anandha. The leelas (divine plays) and mahimas (miracle powers) of Krishna through which He attracts the Love of Mankind, cultivates the harvest of joy in the hearts of His devotees and makes them aware of His being Existence-Knowledge-Bliss are described in the Bhagavatha. Dr. Balasubrahmanyam said now that if you follow my

directions, it is as good as putting the Geetha into practice. Arun Kumar Dutt said, that you are all lucky since you have seen many manifestations of My power. But, they are manifested because they have to be, not for exhibiting attainments, nor for drawing clientele. They manifest when needed by the exercise of Will, as naturally, as spontaneously as any other physical act. I am the truth of truth, I guide towards truth, I manifest truth and when men realise truth, they realise Me. Raso vai sah - "He is sweetness". So, the jagath (the Universe), which is His creation cannot but be sweet for those who recognise it as His handiwork. The jagath has to be used to instruct you on the glory and the power of God, so that you may seek Him and reach Him. There are four stages in the journey towards this goal; each one is called a loka, a region which you reach. The first is A-vidhya loka (the region of ignorance and delusion) from which you start, prompted by the chain of grief and pain it inflicts on you. The second is the Vidhyaloka, where you penetrate into the Vijnanamayakosha (the intellectual plane) and are able to distinguish between the true and false, the kernel and the husk. The third is the Anandhaloka, where you are immersed in bliss, at the glimpse of the eternal source of power and peace. And, lastly, you have the Go-loka, where the Go-pala reigns, and all the go's (jeevas, sparks from the Divine), waves of the Premasagara (the ocean of love) are one in ecstasy and enlightenment!

Soak your emotions in compassion to attain God

Unless you have love, you cannot claim kinship with the votaries of God; mere ritualistic exactitude or pompous adoration, or loud acciamation will not entitle you to enter the portals of Go-loka! They are as tin and trash before the treasure-chest of love. Love is the bridge which helps passage from birth to death to deathlessness, from death to birthlessness. When you rise from the jeeva-sense to the Dheva-sense (human-ness to God-ness), then, there is no more birth or death. Liberation happens when you love every being so intensely that you are aware of only ONE. Soak your heart in love, soak your acts in righteousness, soak your emotions in compassion; then you attain God soonest.

Krishna was the servant of even cows and calves!

Now, most people are nearest the temple; but, farthest from God. For, there is no genuineness in the manipulations of the limbs or emotions or impulses or activities during worship. You say, Krishnarpan (dedication to Krishna); but, really, the dedication which the mind performs is to thrishna (desire)! Or it may be dedication to wife or children! It is seldom done to Krishna! God is everywhere at all times; he accomplishes everything. He accomplishes the minor feat of assuming the human form and growing up among men as one of themselves right in their midst, in order to win them over to the path of truth. He gives man the chance to savour His sweetness and glimpse His glory. He acts despite the absence of any compulsion, so that man may be led to do likewise.

The Sage Vyasa happened to pass by when Krishna was washing the horses of Arjuna's chariot in the water of the Yamuna; he shed a tear, contemplating the duty that the Lord had imposed on Himself in order to guide man aright. Krishna played the role of servant to Arjuna, so that: man may know how to serve and thereby rise to sovereignty! Krishna was the servant of even cows and calves! When just a boy, His mother proposed to have shoes for His tiny feet, lest the hard thorny ground of the pasture might injure His lotus feet. Krishna would have none of it; He replied, "I go daily behind the cows and calves to the distant pasture, in order to tend them; I am their servant. How can the servant; go shod before his masters, when they are not shod, himself wearing shoes?"

Krishna's breath was Love, His behaviour compassion

The cattle were so loyal and loving towards Krishna, because of this intimate bond. When Krishna was invited by Kamsa to Mathura and Akruura, the messenger from Mathura took him in his chariot to that City, the cows and the frisking calves too shed tears at the separation! The beasts had such sincere Krishna-thrishna! Only man has strayed away into the wilderness of ego-infested evils! Every other animal is still treading its allotted path! God takes human form, in order to fill man with gratitude and joy; man sees the power, the wisdom and the beauty of God - -the Sathyam, Shivam and Sundharam -

and the vision gives him a tormenting thirst for truth, goodness and beauty.

Krishna dealt with the world as with a sitar, pulling its heart-strings to arouse the melody of comradeship, heroism, love, affection, compassion and conviction. But of these, the two emotions of love and compassion were characteristically His and his own. His breath was love! His behaviour, compassion! Adore Him, placing a garland of tears around His neck; washing His feet with tears, springing from joy at the contemplation of His love! That very worship will endow you with the Wisdom that sages seek, the Bliss that the books extol! Grow in love, meditating on the embodiment of love, called Krishna. When the heart has not melted and softened to the cry of distress, the spasm of pain, the groan of the hungry, when the fountain of love therein is blocked with the tinsels of pride, Krishna will not play the flute in your ear. You may be a master in the service of Krishna; but, without the key of love you cannot gain entrance to the Go-loka where He resides! You may be in Prasanthi Nilayam since years, claiming to be with Swami and near Him; but, without cultivating love expressed in service you cannot know Me.

World is the splendour of God, His reflection

There was a pupil once, who prided himself on his ancestors and his master; they were great Pandiths (scholars), renowned over the entire realm. His preceptor asked him one day, whether he could answer any question he might ask. The pupil was stung to the quick! He said, "Why this hesitation? Ask, and it will be answered! I come from a Somayaji family; my father is a celebrated savant. I have been learning at your feet for years! Don't I know the answers to all questions." "What is the meaning of the word, Lavana?" the Guru asked. The pupil laughed and said, "O, you surprise me, with this absurdly simple question! Don't I know? Lavana means - cowdung." Well; lavana is a word that is in daily currency in every household and everyone knows, it means 'common salt'! Even this, the conceited disciple had not learnt. This is very much like what some long-standing 'devotees' know about Me! Unless you brighten your vision with Love, you cannot see the Truth. Love helps you to see God in everyone, everyone as Divine. The Jagath is not false, it is not a trap; it is the splendour of God, His reflection. He reflected and the

Jagath happened! it is His own substance, manifesting as multiplicity, as latent or potent energy or matter. When activity is in accordance with awareness and awareness is befogged or belittled, dried up or deluded, then, Dharma is descendent, and the Avathar (divine incarnation) appears among men! People tell Me that mankind is on the brink of destruction, that the forces of hypocrisy and hate are prevailing fast in all the continents, and that anxiety and fear are stalking the streets of every city and village of the world; there is no need to tell Me this, for, I have come precisely for this very reason. When the world is on the verge of chaos, the Avathar comes to still the storm raging in the hearts of men. Prashanthi (the higher peace, the calming **of** perturbations) will be stabilised soon; the demonic deviations from the straight Divine Path will be corrected. Dharma will be revived and re-vitalised, in every human community.

Infect yourselves with madness for Krishna

You celebrate the Birthday of Krishna, of Rama and of Sai; but, they have no birth, they do not age; they appear and disappear, like the Sun rising and setting, because you roll and rotate; they are steady and ever-present! They appear so, so that you might realise the Unlimited and forget in that ecstasy the limited to which you are shackled! Do not derive contentment simply adoring pictures and images,, and reading or reciting hymns or songs of praise. Move on to the higher stage of Seva activity, and then, to the highest stage of Anandha, which is Go-loka! Know your Reality and the reality of all beings as revealed to you; that very instant you become Radha and since Radha is Krishna and Krishna is Radha, you enter and merge in the Krishnathathwa (the Krishna Principle), the Divine Truth. Whoever adores Krishna unintermittently, without any other thought or feeling to perturb him, is Radha. See with the eyes of Love; hear with the ears of Love; work with the hands of Love; think thoughts of Love; feel Love in every nerve. The God of Love, Krishna, will come to you on the wave of Love and fill your hearts with Himself!

Do not cage Him in a picture-frame; do not confine Him in an idol. He is all forms. His is all names. He is the Reality of all beings. Infect yourselves with

madness for Him, instead of for the World. Some one has written a song about Me, saying that I cure madness and confer madness, that I wipe tears and cause tears to flow! Yes; madness for visualising God is any way preferable to the madness after riches and reputation.

Power of love can bind the world

Shed tears of Anandha (divine happiness), not tears of grief. Yearn for the Love that will bring you the Love of God, Prema. I have no power mightier than that. I might change earth into sky or sky into earth, but, that power is nothing before the power of Love that can bind the world and rule the world. Love; do not hate or harm. Even mosquitoes can pride themselves on the capacity to injure and harm, and cause disease! Bugs can do likewise; so, if you feel proud of the skill to harm, you are only demeaning yourselves. Love and serve; that is the Sadhana (spiritual striving) that will reward you best. Celebrating festivals like this has been prescribed by the sages, since they encourage you to ponder over the fundamentals of spiritual progress. A young tree grows better and faster, when the soil around the roots is raked up now and then, so that air and solar rays can penetrate the source of its strength and vitalise it. I bless that you will have the constant contemplation of the Lord and that your minds will taste the sweetness of the Divine without intermission.

You sit in meditation for ten minutes, after the evening Bhajan (devotional chanting) sessions; so far, so good.

But, let Me ask, when you rise after the ten minutes and move about, do you see every one in a clearer light, as endowed with Divinity? If not Dhyana is a waste of time.

Do you love more, do you talk less, do you serve others more earnestly? These are the signs of success in Dhyana.

Your progress must be authenticated by your character and behaviour. Dhyana must transmute your attitude towards beings and things; else it is a hoax.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

32. Stoop to Serve

Date: 24 August 1971 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ganesh Chaturthi

VINAYAKA Chaturthi is the name of the festival celebrated today, all over the country, from the Himalayas to the Cape, and also wherever people of this country owing allegiance to its culture live. Vinayaka or Ganesha or Ganapathi or Vighneshwara - all indicate the elephant- God, who is popular among young and old, and who is worshipped as the very first deity, before regularly beginning any ceremony or samskar, any yaga or yajna, any vow or fast or pilgrimage. He is the Lord of the Ganas or Divine Forces, inside and outside the human body; He is the Lord, who masters and overwhelms vighna (obstacle), however imminent or eminent. This is the natural effect of the fact that Ganapathi is the God of Intelligence, Vidhya or Buddhi (learning or intellect).

Ganapathi is a God revered in Tantric (ritualistic) lore, and also, by various Vedic mantras. The elephant is proverbially the most intelligent among the mammals and it is vegetarian, indicating its sathvik (balanced or pure) nature. Ganapathi has the head of the elephant, for, it indicates the Intelligence through which obstacles in the path of achievement, secular as well as spiritual, can be overcome.

There is a popular verse, used on most occasions when Ganapathi is invoked. It mentions various attributes of this God : Suklambaradharam (wearing white vesture) is the first, this is the symbol of purity, for, ambara means also the sky, the akasha of the heart. Ganapathi is pure, having universal love and compassion. Vishnum is the second attribute, ascribed to Him. Vishnu means that He is present everywhere, at all times. Shashivarnam is the third adjective, used. Of the complexion of ash or Vibhuuthi; that is to say, glowing with spiritual splendour, with the majesty of spiritual attainments, achievements and potentialities. These are also called Vibhuuthis, for, in the Geetha, we find Krishna saying, wherever you see Power, Glory, Majesty (vibhuuthi), know that it is Mine!

Ganesha is OM personified

Ganesha is bathed in His Divine Glory; that is the significance of the attribute, shashivarnam. Chathur-bhuja (Four-handed) is the next denotation. This means that apart from two visible hands, He has two invisible hands, that are available for the two divine uses of (1) Blessing the devotee, and (2) Guarding him from danger. The last of the descriptive word is: Prasannavadhanam (of graceful countenance). The countenance depicts the inner calm, happiness and balance, inner grace and mercy, the consciousness of strength and sovereignty. Without intelligent discrimination, no skill or strength can be profitably used. One must know how fire, for example, or the electric current, has to be used and how far one can deal with it as an instrument for our needs. The senses of man are also like fire; they have to be kept under constant vigil and control.

No worship can succeed unless the heart is pure and the senses are mastered. Ganesha is the God who helps overcome obstacles; but, He will create obstacles when good endeavour is obstructed by bad influences; He will clear the path for the sincere Sadhaka (spiritual aspirant). He is Prasannavadhanam (of beneficial looks) when you pray to Him for good ends; but, He will not be that, when you seek His help for nefarious stratagems! He is Pranava-swaruupa, the Om personified; so, He is auspiciousness itself. When God is adored and man is injured, there can be no auspiciousness in such deeds. Man is God encased in human form; he is the Divine in that form and with that name. If the anu (paise) is neglected, how can the ghana (whole) be gained? If the paisa is discarded, how can the rupee be gained? It all begins with a single paisa; another added to it makes two, and ninety-eight again make the lump, a rupee! Man is the one; start, revering him; then, you can gain the Grace of the invisible God; neglect the visible paisa, you lose the invisible rupee!

The basic defect of man is greed, uncontrolled desire

Man loses his status of human-ness, through acts that shame even the beasts. He does not strive towards revealing and manifesting his latent

divinity! There is not as big a failing as this sliding back into the animal from which he rose! If he keeps on with his human attributes and capacities, that will deserve congratulation enough. A formidable list can be made of the inadequacies and defects of man, but, the basic defect is 'greed', 'uncontrolled desire' - always clamouring for more, as a result of the ceaseless prompting of the senses! Ravana destroyed himself afflicted by greed. The very Gods were his chamberlains; such was the dread his austerity' invoked, such was the reward for his Sadhana! But, he was not content. The flames of lust rose as fast: as they were fed. Dhritarashtra, the father of the Kauravas, was enamoured of the greedy plans of his sons, and so he lost all of them, without a survivor, in the field of battle, though their number was a hundred!

Let your heart pant for God

While moving through the dense jungle called 'life on earth', in the thick darkness of Ajnana (Ignorance) of the place you have come from and the place to which you should go, and even of your own real identity, six dacoits - lust, anger, greed, attachment, egoism, hate - pounce on you, and you can overwhelm them and save yourself, only by means of the light shed by Jnana (spiritual wisdom) and wielding the weapon of Bhakthi or Dedicated Living. The Light of Wisdom can shine bright and far, only when Love, pure Love, Love that does not demand any requital, is firm in the heart. He who loves, for the sake of some requital, or for being loved in return, is a coolie, with his eye glued to the wages. You are really loving only yourself; for, there is only You in everyone. Soham, He is I. Whoever you injure, it is you that suffers; whoever you cheat, it is you who are cheated. If you do not do your duty, to the best of your ability and intelligence, and to the full satisfaction of your own conscience, you are cheating yourself. I have known that lecturers in the Colleges have to take lecture only for eight classes of one hour each, per week! And, they do not put the rest of the hours to any beneficial use, either! Service, the utilisation of time and skill to the uplift of society - that is the highest form of adoration which God will reward with Grace. You get the actual experience of Sath-Chith- Anandha through service, for, through service, you conquer egoism and convince yourselves of the unity that

underlies creation. Everyone, be he an office bearer or not, must gird up his loins and stoop for work. The body must be sanctified through Karma (good action) and the mind through Dhyana (meditation); in all parts of the country, these units must uphold the ideals and practise them, so that they become inspiring examples for the people. Bhajan must be a felt experience. Do not sing with one eye on the song that makes the effect on the listeners, and the other, on the effect it makes on God. Let your heart pant for God; then, the raga (musical tune) and thala (musical beat) will automatically be pleasant and correct. Sincerity will blot out all errors in raga and thala ! Do not allow even one vice like the vice of conceit to enter and ensconce itself in your heart. All the water in a well becomes undrinkable even if one frog is dead and its corpse floats on it. A hundred live frogs will not render it unpotable; but, a single dead one will! Life has to be lived, through the channel marked out by embankments that slow the. raging flood and direct it into useful fields. Na shreyo niyamam vina - "No progress without rules and restrictions." Blessed are they who obey the commandments for, they will be rewarded.

33. Society, the Reality

Date: October 1971

WHEREVER men gather with a purpose into a society, there you perceive the Divine - the Sath, Chith and Anandha (Being, Awareness and Bliss)! A personality has arisen; a clearer flash of reason is evident; a deeper joy fills the hearts. Immerse yourselves in them. This is real spiritual endeavour; not pining in solitude or revelling in the breaking of bonds with others of your kind, priding on your independence! Be with others; in others; for others. Be with all, for all, in all.

But, nevertheless, be unattached, be the unfailing source of Love. Therein lies success in spiritual endeavour, the triumph of spiritual discipline. Thus is the Sai in you manifested; thus is the world fostered; Sai within; thus is the heart purified enough to install. There are questions raised: Of what relation is society and social ties with spirit and its glory? Of what relation is the spirit and its glory with society and its tangles and trickeries? Such questions arise from erring minds.

Spiritual endeavour must aim at individual illumination, social betterment and the divinisation of the human community. This is extremely urgent and essential. While in society, the divinity inherent in man can blossom more quickly, more widely, more fragrantly. You recognise the world, but, not God who is immanent in it! So too, you see the individual but, not the corpus that is immanent in society.

All beings form the Universal Body of One God

Of course, Society is not another concrete composite collective body! It is the expansion and expression of the Divine in each of its components, denotable and enjoyable as One. Society is the awareness of this cognisable Divinity. So, the one should not flee from the many; the individual is not harmed by society. The one should rather see the many in a new light - the light which reveals that society is but God, who activates and prompts the composite

whole. The one is rendered fuller by association with the many: he gains by losing himself in the many! All men are kith and kin, one family, one aspiration, one attempt at one acquisition. They are all equally Divine, all form the Universal Body of the One God. All are heirs to the Anandha that this awareness can give. Of course, Society does not happen when people gather by chance, or get together with no common goal of good. The many-faceted skills and intelligences that are contributed by the many must flow pure and clear, untarnished by egoistic desires along the channel of the spirit; then, they will feed the roots of truth and goodness; they will ensure peace, for, all ideas, of high and low will disappear. This is the criterion for a stable strong sweet society; not, mere numbers. Be conscious of the God in each and in all; then, inner equality will impress each so indelibly that the awareness will stay undisturbed. Shanthi (Peace) will reign in each and all.

Understand the Atma or God which is your core; that will establish Shanthi in you and you can share that Shanthi with others What can you give others, if your hearts are empty?

Feel that you are a true limb of society

Do you intend to be in society? Do you crave to serve it and be served by it? Then, seek the God in all; see the same in all. Yearn to worship that Clod by self-less service. That alone makes you a true limb of society. If you feel separate, distinct, outside and beyond society, you will run after name and fame, you will be enslaved by hate and partiality, and ruined in the end. So, east out those evil attitudes; feel that you are giving society what is its due, offering God His own gift of skill and intelligence. Vow to serve, to dedicate. Cultivate Love; society is the reflection of the God you adore, the God whose nature is Anandha. Transform yourself into Love, and become Anandha.

Adore society as the Divine Body; that is the Truth, the eternal Vision.

Life is a market. In life, giving and taking, bargaining and speculating, is a

part of the game.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

34. Where and why

Date: 22 December 1971 / Location: Chennai

The glory of Bharath which has illumined for centuries the hearts of humanity is awaiting the surgence of the Sai Movement, through proper presentation and practical application by you, to have an even more brilliant future in the coming years. As the spark that causes the fire, as the driver in the engine drawing a long line of coaches along, as the designer and operator of a system of automatic lights, this Sai is here creating and fostering the world, and all its various communities, living and non-living. You have gathered here as office-bearers of the units of the Sathya Sai Organisation, activating the villages and towns of this land. I am happy to be with you. You all know that this gathering has a special significance: last week, you and all those connected with the Organisation were afraid that this Conference might not meet at all, for, this country was invaded by enemies and we were in the midst of a conflict. But, today, fear and anxiety have gone and there is this atmosphere of Anandha around you. This Conference was decided upon by Sai, it is a Sai-nirnaya. Nothing can interrupt the realisation of that resolution. Last November, on the 23rd, the day when this Body took birth, I announced, as you know, that Bharath will not suffer from any calamity or distress. Therefore, when the conflict with Pakistan came about, you began doubting whether that announcement was contradicted by events. There were some who drew conclusions and started arguing according to their own notions. But, you should not count what happened until a few days ago as "war." It was only the last chapter of a conflict in existence since years, and which grew in dimensions during the last eight months. It has little to do with India; it was a struggle of one part of Pakistan with another.

People of Bharath will never inflict injury on others

This civil war in Pakistan forced millions of terror-stricken people to seek refuge in India; they prayed in their agony that we should help them. And, true to our traditions and our Dharma (moral code), we sacrificed a great deal and gave them food and shelter, and sent them back to their homes, after

ensuring that they could be safe there and live in peace. The people of Bharath have never entertained any desire to expand their territory, or to inflict injury on other nationalities. They will never develop such desire hereafter also. This is the land of the Hindhus. Him means himsa (violence, injury). Dhu means dhuur (far away from). Hindhu means, therefore, free from any desire to be violent, to cause injury or harm. This country is incapable of aggressive intentions on others. The people of Bangladesh who underwent countless tortures and travails were welcomed, treated with sympathy and care, and taken back to their homes and settled on the land which they had run away from. That is the sacred service that India did; it was no offensive against Pakistan. And, it all stopped well before this Conference.

There are still a few who are bothered with anxiety since Bhutto has become the leader of that country, and his intentions are not friendly. You need not entertain any fears on that score. It is inevitable that Pakistan might harbour some resentment at their defeat; but, that resentment cannot grow into anger sufficient to induce them to fall upon India again.

Purity of thought, word and deed is needed

Embodiments of the Divine! The welfare of the world depends on the welfare of Society; the welfare of Society depends on the welfare of the individuals who comprise it. The individual by his thoughts, words and deeds develops or undermines the welfare of Society, and thus affects the World. When the world has space and prosperity, the individual can have freedom from fear, and positive joy. Without that Anandha, one cannot grasp the Brahman-Principle (unitive absolute), which is unsullied, immeasurable Anandha Itself. Thri-karana-shuddhi is prescribed by the sages as essential for tasting the Anandha of the Universal Absolute. That expression means, the purity of thought, word and deed. This purity is needed even for efficient working of the Organisation, in which you are working. In fact, it is important at all levels of human efforts. But, at the present time, there is no evidence of this purity anywhere. They play false to their professions, talking peace and fanning the flames of war.

Our Organisation must strive to correct this hypocrisy, and teach by precept and example, the straight path of sincerity and harmony. This Conference calls on scientists who are blind (though possessing eyesight) to open their eyes of wisdom, and see things whole, see things deeper than ever before. Man has become so insane that he limps though his legs are good, he is mad though his mind is sound, deaf though his ears are efficient enough; it has become urgent to warn him of this absurdity, and infuse some sanity into his behaviour. This Conference calls on him 'to awake into the higher reality.

Service of man is service offered to God

The many in the One - that is the real nature of Society. All for One, One for All, This has become a slogan rather than a fact. If it is realised in fact, you will find that it is the design of Nature that it should be so, and that it is a sign of advanced culture too. This Conference calls upon all to share their resources, power, skill and achievements with the rest. For, manava seva (the service of man) is really Madhava seva (service offered to God). There are various societies rendering social service nowadays, but, the service does not warm the heart; it is done as a cold routine affair, or as a showy performance, with a great deal of expensive hullabaloo! These societies have reduced the land to its present deplorable condition. The inclinations of the mind, the implications of speech, and the indications of deeds have to be co-ordinated and harmonised. That is the test of the success of our Organisation; that is the surest means of achieving it. Identify the Group with which you work as your own self. Do not allow this to be a copybook maxim, but try to put it into daily practice. Through the group you can earn Samastha-samarasa-sanubhuuthi, that is to say, "awareness of, and empathy with the feelings of one and all." That is the spring of unalloyed Bliss. We have at present persons who pride themselves on their encyclopaedic scholarship and technical skill; they claim to know the innermost secrets of Nature; they fly into outer Space and even land on the Moon. But, ask them, whether they have Anandha and can stay in Anandha, they will reply that they have yet to experience it. If they know everything worth knowing, why have they missed this? It is clear they are suffering under some delusion.

All are activated by one Divine Force

You, or at least the Andhras among you, would have heard or read about the pupils of Paramanandaguru. Ten of them crossed a river, wading to the other bank. In order to find out whether all had arrived safe, one fellow counted the rest and declared there were only nine. Each of the ten counted the rest and everyone agreed there were only nine survivors. One of them had definitely been drowned. So, the ten started wailing aloud in their bereavement, and a passerby was drawn to the group in sympathy. He saw there were ten, all right. The mistake was - the man who counted left: himself out; he ignored himself, in counting the rest. This is the mistake everyone of these encyclopaedic intellects commit; they count everyone except themselves; they know everything except the workings of their own minds, and the methods by which they can attain inner calm. So, you must know who you are, and then, if necessary, try to know about other persons and objects. Now it is all topsyturvy. Just as all these, all the Organisational units, are being activated by One Divine Force, all are activated by One Principle. Resolve to identify it and experience it; then, the purpose of the Organisation is served, Use the unique characteristics of man - discrimination, wisdom, detachment - Viveka, Vijnana and Vairagya - and drive at that Realisation. To put it even more plainly, you will derive Anandha only if you succeed in doing three exercises.

(1) Forget the thing that has to be forgotten: Forget the objective world, ignore it, it is Asath, only relatively real, not absolutely Real. Forget the Asath. Remember the first statement in the Prayer. Asatho ma sadh gamaya - Lead me from the unreal to the Real. (2) Give up that which has to be given up. The Jeevabhava which is Darkness has to be given up, in order to attain Light which is the Dhevabhava. You are not the body; you are not just an individual, not just a chance spark or a stray drop. You are a part of the Divine, a fraction of the Fire, a wave of the Ocean. This is the second statement in the Vedhic prayer - Thamaso ma jyothir gamaya - Lead me from darkness into Light. (3) You must reach the place which you have to reach, that is, Brahmathathwa. Brahma means, expanse, limitless presence; you have to pass beyond the limit to the limitless. Limit is death; beyond it,

unaffected by it, is Immortality. So the prayer cited above adds as the third statement. Mruthyor ma amrutham gamaya - Lead me from death to Immortality.

Dharma is acting according to Truth

Do not accept the half-truth that you are a part of the objective world; hold fast to the Truth that you are Divine in essence. Your form makes you declare you are human; but, really, you are Divine. Sathyam vadha - Utter Truth, is the Vedhic injunction. And this is the Truth. And, the injunction continues, Dharmam chara. Dharma is acting according to the Truth you have known. You have heard Pandiths expounding most elaborately the axiom, "Brahma Sathyam, jagath mithya" - "Brahman alone is real, the World that is the result of a creative act, that is undergoing transformations and that will meet with disintegration, is just an appearance on the basis of that Reality." You might hear such discourses from Pandiths and scholars from this platform too. But, observe how tenaciously these very persons are attached to this illusory world! They voice the Truth, but, deny It by their deeds. Jagath sathyam, they announce by their deeds, Brahma mithya, they appear to aver, when we watch their way of life! This is really a matter for merciless ridicule! Our Organisation must apply the touchstone of practice to any precept that the members might voice forth or profess. That is My desire. The Organisation has been established, not for publicizing any person or creed, or to provide berths for some ambitious individuals, from which they can exercise authority over others. It is as a means of Sadhana that the Organisation is to be understood. Take it in that attitude. Do not consider the rules as restrictions imposed by Me or as shackles on your freedom of action. They are devised to help you and others in the Sadhana you have entered upon. Two guide-lines, peculiar to this Organisation you should not neglect: (1) Act and then advise; practise first, precept second. Unless you yourself avoid the evil habits, and the undesirable practices, don't talk against them. (2) The rules, regulations, that we have laid down for the Organisation and its Units, have to be observed, scrupulously, down to the smallest dot and dash.

If you miss a rule, the unit becomes weaker

Now, however, most of the Units do not strictly follow these rules, they appear in the lists as Samithis and Units, but, in actual working, they do not deserve the place. Consider work through the Organisation as your very process of living. That work is the food on which you live. If you miss a meal, you become weak; if you miss a rule, the Unit becomes weaker. Not merely the office-bearers, but, any one of the members, if he fails to observe any one of the rules and regulations, he is weakening the Organisation and bringing it into disrepute. Members together form the Units. Its strength, its utility, its expansion, its efficacy, depend on disciplined obedience to rules. Faith in the discipline, marked out by the rules, is as the heart to the various limbs of the Organisation. Lack of discipline is the root cause of the disorder and discord that are undermining almost all the various types of association of men, from the simplest to the most complex.

Besides these, there are certain matters I have to tell specially to the Executives and the Officebearers, matters they have to implant in their hearts: Followers of all faiths can join our Organisations; there should be no opposition to their entry; on the other hand, they must be welcomed with sincerity and looked upon as brothers and sisters. No ill-feeling should be allowed upon as brothers and sisters. No ill-feeling should be allowed to sprout in your minds against, say Pakistanis or Muslims, or Americans, as a consequence of the passing phases of history. Motivated by anger against some one, to injure and insult the innocent, is bestial behaviour. No one connected with our Organisation should participate in or encourage such reprehensible behaviour.

You must respect every individual who resides in Bharath as a Bharatheeya and love every such person. This is an Organisation dedicated to the promotion of Universal Love. Start pouring out Love to all the members of your Unit, and gradually, expand that Love to include all mankind and even the lower creatures. It is an insane idea to perform worship of God, as if He is distinct and different from creation. Do not believe that God will be pleased if He is so marked out, separated and set apart.

Carry on the activities without any trace of negligence

Love the God that is in all men, worship Him, offer Him what you can, dedicate to Him the Anandha that you have. Do your daily duty with the Anandha you fill your worship with. Be glad you have a duty to fulfil, a role to play in the dharma He is directing! Others have other roles. Others have their exits and entrances, their words to utter at the appropriate times, their gestures, their actions to go through. They are as earnest in their roles as you are in yours. Don't try to impose your roles on them! Office bearers should resolve to carry on the activities of their Units on the lines laid down, without trace of negligence. From now, the usual practice of meeting once a year in Conference, passing a few resolutions with great furore, and casting them aside that very day, will not be of any avail. Only those units of the Organisation are authentic, wherein the office-bearers practise and experience spiritual Anandha, through adherence to the lines laid down here. The rest are mere nominal; they burden the lists with their names, and should be immediately removed. Enough for us, if there remain one or two where practice and preaching are correct and sincere. Quality is accepted; quantity is of no consequence.

A place in the Samithi is for constant sadhana

The District Presidents and the State Presidents have read reports of the activities of the Organisation in their areas; they also send them to Me, off and on. They contain routine activities of a demonstrative nature, but, few items that elevate and enthuse. They mention 'poor feeding' (a word they are not ashamed to use), visits to hospitals, bhajans 'in jails, nagara sankeerthan, etc. For whose sake were these done? Not for the sake of the poor, or the patients or the prisoners, but remember, for your own sake! You take food for your own sake, you take medicine to cure your own illness, don't you? You serve, for the sake of deriving Anandha, for the sake of realising your kinship with others, for approaching nearer and nearer to God who is in all, for your own mental and spiritual health and efficiency. Be convinced of that. You join the Samithi, you share in its activities, for your own sake; not for the sake of Sathya Sai or the Samithi started in that name. If you feel that you can earn

fame or name, or social status, or some other type of gain by entering this Organisation, there is no place for you in it. This is a place for Sadhana, constant, vigilant Sadhana (spiritual striving).

Those who have some thing specially important, some new and fruitful programme that they have adopted and found beneficent, they may now come forward to report on them. Why use the little time that we can spare to listen to routine reports and common items, which are observed everywhere? We must pay attention now more to the investigation into the causes for our not being able to achieve the success desired; you are welcome to elucidate the problem with your own suggestions, for, this is a gathering called together to develop Anandha and accord. Where' have you failed and why? - think of these two problems. Then this Conference shall pay special attention to two fields of activity: Health and Education. I desire that more attention must be paid by you in the coming year to these two fields of service. A sound body is the essential requisite for a sound mind and a sound mind ensures a sound body. Health and education are intertwined fields. Engage your thoughts in these directions and make this gathering fruitful.

You can bolt your doors and windows against thieves, but, who can bolt the door against Death? The thieves - lust, anger, greed attachment, pride and hate - are honoured as welcome guests and the real well wishers like tranquillity and humility are shown the door.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

35. The Royal Road

Date: 23 December 1971 / Location: Chennai

THE resolutions made at this Conference, the rules and regulations flamed here for the Units of the Organisation, must be taken by you as the Royal Road to the Divine Presence. They render the journey smooth and quick. As children of Bharath, you have to foster the ideals of its ancient culture guarding it by the discipline these rules prescribe. So far, as a result of mental and intellectual weakness, you are finding it impossible to adhere to those ideals and to observe the vow and restrictions that they impose. Though we have been laying down many rules, and restrictions and guidelines during the last five years for the proper working of the Units, and emphasising their importance, they have been more misused than made-use-of for the betterment of the Organisation.

As a result of misuse, you find yourselves helpless in cleansing the blemishes in your own minds and eradicating the evils rampant in society. The brightness of the sky is hidden by a thick fog; so too, the fog of evil and vice darkens the heart and breeds atheism and other diseases. This has made you forget the very purpose of your existence, as well as of the Organisation, which has been established to help you. Take note of this while yet you may. Some men enter into even Adhyathmic (spiritual) Organisations and secure places of importance there, with various ambitions and plans. They believe, often sincerely, that their own plans are the best and their methods are the best, spiritually. Many might do this on account of sheer ignorance of the purpose and plan of the Sathya Sai Organisation, which they enter. But, ignorance is no excuse!

Atma has no birth or death, nor it grows or weakens

The nature of electricity is still a mystery; but man has devised a thousand ways of benefitting by it. Electricity is found everywhere, in nature; but, it can be collected, stored and utilised only through certain contrivances designed by man. The spiritual Atma Shakthi (inner divine power) that is also

everywhere is stored in a body and passed through the thin wires or nerves, it illumines and directs activity. These activities have to be oriented towards Anandha, and not attachments to temporary pleasures. The Life Principle that flows as intelligence through every cell and nerve is also a reflection of the Atma. That which is born has also to die; coming implies going. That which has no birth has no death either. The Atma has no birth, no death, nor can you say, it spreads or grows, or weakens. It has no history, it is, that is all that can be said about it. It is ever Intelligence, ever Bliss. There is the urge to desire a thing; that is named Ichcha Shakthi - but, it too is a derivative of the Atma Shakthi, the Divine that is your core. Realise it as such and do not demean it by desiring deleterious objects.

Desire, so sublimated, is the basis of Prema (Love). It is the fruit of the tree of God-ward directed Ichcha shakthi. The fruit has the bitter rind (Maya) and the hard seeds (the cognition of distinctions); these have to be discarded, and the sweetness tasted. That sweet juice is the Anandha the Atma confers. Of course there are a few fortunate individuals who imbibe the juice itself, without the labour of peeling off the rind and picking out the seeds. Prahladha was of this kind - unaffected by Maya or by the folly of 'awareness of distinctions'. From his very birth, he knew only the sweetness of the Name of the Lord, of the juice of the fruit from the Tree of Love.

Each one of you has to pass through three stages

No boy can join college, the moment he steps into school. Several stages have to be reached and got over - the Primary, the Middle, the Secondary, the Higher Secondary, and the Intermediate; so too, we have in the spiritual path, the stages of Work, Worship, Wisdom and finally, Sacrifice. Sacrifice is when the ripe fruit falls from the tree, sacrificing its affection and attachment, weaning itself away from its support and sustenance. Work is for the physical level; worship for the mental and wisdom for spiritual. You have to pass through the three stages, each one of you.

When I say you, there are three you's!

The one you think you are - namely, the body, the physical person;
the one others think you are, the mental you, your passions, emotions,
impulses, attitudes, beliefs, feelings;
and the one you really are, namely, the Atma, the Spirit, the real Reality of
your Personality.

Now, you must examine whether the Unit for which you are responsible is in the primary stage or any higher stage. Judging from the fact that this is the fifth year, we can assert that the Organisation is now in the Middle School stage - a stage during which discipline has to be vigilantly observed, so that the High School and College stages might prove beneficial. The larger the number of storeys you wish to erect, the deeper the foundation has to be laid. You are planning to construct the supremely majestic tower of Atma-Realisation, and therefore, great attention has to be paid to the provision of a solid foundation of faith and discipline, of dedication and surrender. Examine your own activities in these Units and judge for yourselves, whether such a foundation is being laid therein.

Follow the path laid down by saints

Man has increased his capacity of construction and destruction a million-fold, by means of yantras (machines) he has put together. An atom bomb causes destruction which several armies cannot accomplish. So too in the spiritual field, the latent forces in man can achieve the stupendous task of piercing the mystery of the Universe, through the mantras he had discovered. Mantra means 'potent formula'. Man makes yantras; mantra makes man! The maker of yantras is called a scientist; the knower of mantra is called a saint. When you follow the path laid down by the saints you can be sure of success, for, they have laid it with the purest of intentions, and with the noblest of ideals. The Lord is neither in Heaven, nor in Kailash or Vaikuntha or Swarg. To believe that He is manifest only in one place or location and to journey thither is a superstition much to be deplored. He is everywhere, in

every one, at all times. He is the witness of all, in all. He is the energy that fills space and time, and He is the energy that manifests as causation. The Organisation must implant this Truth in the minds of the members and spread this Truth, without fear and fumble. It must reveal man to himself, as a visible, moving embodiment of Divinity, in whom God shines, through whom God beckons. God is to be worshipped in and through man. This is the message that you have to put into daily practice. This is the main plank of the programme you have to carry out. You should not import the tactics and tricks of political power-hunting into the Units. Nor should there be any trace of dislike or distrust, on the score of nationality, language, caste, economic status, scholarship, age or sex. Revere the Atma and derive atma-anandha (spiritual bliss) through Love.

God is the origin of all languages

Why attach false values to these exterior symbols? Why develop prejudice for the reason that a man was born on the other side of a political boundary, or calls on God in another language? God is the origin of all languages. Boundaries shift and are subject to revision, resettlement, and change. Twenty years ago, when some one from Bombay asked a farmer of Puttaparthi, where he belonged to, he got the reply, 'I am from Madras State.' But, Madras State has since broken into Andhra State, and Tamil Nadu, so that the Andhras and the Tamils have started developing antagonistic loyalties and a new narrow ideal. These are man-made differences, and should not interfere with Godward activities. God has made the Universe as one single home for one single family. Each State is but an apartment in that mansion. Members of the Organisation must extend Love and Respect to persons belonging to any State, any religion, any caste or community, and speaking any language. To give you a small example: It happened just a week ago. A few years ago, in 1965, both Bangladesh and Pakistan (they were both one State then) invaded India; recently, Bangladesh sought refuge with India, since Pakistan decided to hold it down by terrorising the people! The people of Bharath did not in the least remember the enmity of the people of Bangladesh in the past against them in their hour of mortal distress. They welcomed them with brotherly Love, and helped them with food, shelter and

clothing, and saved millions of them from extinction.

Love ignores logics, Seva respects no syllogism

One can understand the spirit of renunciation and the depth of tolerance that is inherent in Indian noble response. Whoever is afflicted with calamity, at whatever time under whatever conditions, your heart must react without delay in sympathy shown in some practical manner. No one should be condemned as trash; even a little stick can serve as a tooth-pick! God has not made any man, wholly bad or wholly good; your likes and dislikes are inducing you to label them as such. Office-bearers of the Organisation, strive to establish yourselves more firmly in your own Truth, and strive to demonstrate in your behaviour that you are aware of the Truth that all men are sparks of the same Divine-Spirit. I consider Seva (service) as the most important activity of the Samithis, for it is the highest Sadhana. Do not entangle yourselves in pros and cons, in arguments for and against, whether this way or that, they are the consequence of wrong or perverted scholarship. Love ignores logics; Seva respects no syllogism. Try to observe the rules that have been framed through Love, to channelise the Love that you are required to cultivate. I have said this so often that all of you know my mind already -

"Start the Day with Love.
Spend the Day with Love.
Fill the Day with Love.
End the Day with Love.
That is the Way of God."

The Samithi is the heart and units are the limbs

First, it has been decided that the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi will hereafter be the key unit, of the Organisation. Units like Sathya Sai Sathsang, the Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, the Sathya Sai Study Circle, the Sathya Sai Bhajana Mandali,

and the Sathya Sai Seva Dhal will be subordinate to the Samithi, and supervised by it. The Samithi is the heart, and the units are the limbs. The limbs cannot act independently, as if they are a law unto themselves. During the Third All India Conference, the Mahila Vibhag (the Unit in charge of women's activities) was separated from the men's sections; but, they were not affiliated and placed under the guidance of the Samithis concerned. Of course, the Vibhag can have its own Chairman and Secretary, but both have to follow the advice and suggestions of the Chairman of the Seva Samithi, and the rules laid down for the Samithi. Each town shall have a single Samithi (organisation and unit); it shall not have more than one. It may have within its jurisdiction a hundred Bhajan Mandalis or a hundred groups engaged in various other activities. But, there shall be only one Samithi.

Limits and activities of the Samithi

Bal Vikas (child progress section) and Seva Dhal - these are only limbs of the Samithi. But, Bal Vikas, we have decided, will be the special activity of the Mahila Vibhag alone. For, women can in a unique way, deal with children lovingly, affectionately, intelligently, and enthusiastically. The Bal Vikas shall take in children in the age group of 5 to 12. From the age of 12 up to 18, children shall be in the Junior Seva Dhal. From 18 till 30, they will serve in the Seva Dhal, and after 30 they are entitled to become members of the Seva Samithis, especially those who evince dedication and a high sense of service. When the Bal Vikas movement spreads, and children are ready to join High Schools, High Schools can be opened to receive them and continue their education on lines in tune with the ideals of the Organisation, and with the establishment of Sathya Sai colleges, the process will be completed entirely under Sathya Sai auspices. Thus, the resurgent culture of Bharath will be built on strong foundations. Men teachers can run Bal Vikas classes; but, they can have only boys as pupils.

Another course of action that was decided upon today is this: You all know that books are being written by all kinds of people in all manners of style and content, urged by all types of fancy, mostly with an eye on personal profit. But, hereafter, this shall stop: no book shall be published on Sai Literature as

suits the fancy of the writer or the publisher. There is a Registered Body named the Shri Sathya Sai Education Foundation. The manuscript has to be submitted to the Foundation, and published through the Foundation in the manner approved by them. For, books transform or deform the faculties of man. Many write books with no relevance or experience, relying solely on their imagination and so, people are left in the wilderness, unable to separate fact from fiction, truth from falsehood.

Flow of information must be unbroken and steady

Again in almost all the languages of India and in English, we have a number of periodicals, under different names - Shanthi, Prashanthi, Sudha, Sanathana Sarathi, etc. - causing confusion and complications. So, we shall have only a single monthly magazine in each language called everywhere, Sanathana Sarathi. From now on, it will not be possible for these periodicals to be published according to the will and pleasure of people. If they are left as they are, there is likelihood of lowering of standards and even financial loss for the parties, and consequent distress. So, it has been decided to place the Sanathana Sarathi of each linguistic area, on sound footing, both financially and in the range and authority of content. Another important matter: The Organisation is not yet organised effectively! Reports of activities from the Units do not reach the Samithi, the Samithis are not reporting to the District Presidents and they in turn fail to inform the State Presidents, who are unable to present a full picture of the activities of the State to Me. The flow of information from below and of instruction and inspiration from above must be unbroken and steady. Adherence to these rules will strengthen the Organisation, which has as its aim the fostering of Bharatheeya culture as the example for the whole of humanity. This Organisation believes that the Atma in each is the Atma in all and that the God that each worships is the God that all worship. You cannot insist that in the Bhajans only songs on Sathya Sai should be sung! Fanaticism of that kind I very much dislike and condemn. For, all names and all forms denote Me only! You betray your ignorance of My truth when you stick to any one of My names and avoid the rest. When you have identified the Atma principle and experienced its Glory, you pass beyond the realm of rules; but, until then, limits and lines of conduct have to be

honoured.

Use of the symbols of the Organisation

The State Presidents have to pay immediate attention to this further point. In some States, peoples have started publicising the manifestations of My Power, and converting themselves into propagandists with a view to making a profit out of the transaction. There are some Units doing this type of business, still existing inside the Organisation. You must decide to dissociate these Units from the Organisation. Using our Name, many collect donations and contributions; so, those who are not aware of the norms of this Organisation are being misled and deceived. Efforts must be made to remove from the Organisation any one, however rich, however renowned as a scholar, however influential and important in society, if he transgresses the rules of Organisation. This must be done as soon as the transgression is known. In Kerala and in Mysore States, this has to be done without delay and without compunction. The symbol of the Organisation is "the Harmony of Religions, the Unity of all Faiths, the Acceptance of all Approaches." I find that this symbol is now being indiscriminately used in badges, letter heads, wedding cards, etc. and it is also being adapted and changed according to individual fancy by the users. This is creating confusion; for, there is no one identifiable symbol for the units of the Organisation or for the Sathya Sai Seva Dhal, etc. You must resolve to adopt the same design for letter heads used in official correspondence, the same symbol for badges all over the country. If you travel along the royal road of faith and discipline, you can reach the Royal Palace which you long to enter.

Understand the basic similarities of various religions

Four stages are mentioned in the spiritual progress: Salokya (being in the Palace), Sameepya (being in the immediate Presence), Saruupya (being privileged to be clothed with a share of regal authority) and Sayujya (becoming King oneself). In the Bible, Christ is said to have announced first, that he was Messenger from God, later, that he was the Son of God, and finally, that "I and My Father are One." Then, there is the further declaration

of Identity with the Holy Ghost, too. In the Quoran too, similar ideas are propounded. The Sathya Sai Organisation has to seek out chances of studying and substantiating these basic similarities and promote love and mutual co-operation.

These rules we are laying down might appear to some of you as knife-thrusts or hammer-strokes; but, they are meant to heal, and to weld. Bow to them and observe them in action sincerely - your path will be soft and smooth, like a path strewn with floral petals. I bless you that you adhere to them and receive the benefits of discipline and devotion.

See all as but expressions of the same God, as appearances on the same screen,
as bulbs lit by the same current, though of manifold colours and wattage.

Feel that you and they are able to talk and walk, think and act because of the God within.

Differences that strike you while you cast your eyes are illusory;

you have not yet developed the vision that makes you apprehend the unity which is the truth of all the seeming diversity, that is all!

The fault is in you, not the world. The world is One; but, each takes it to mean what pleases him most!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

36. Heroic adventure

Date: **November 1971** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam**

GOD gave this body so that you may use it to sanctify Time, through beneficial acts. Of course, man is ever anxious that he should get contentment and joy, as soon as possible with as little exertion as possible. But, he places more confidence on material comforts and material possessions, hoping that they can yield joy and content. There is no effort by him to ensure being born in good circumstances and surroundings. Goodness is natural to man; it is his nature, when it is untarnished. But, man relishes the tarnish, not the pure core. Falsehood with all its enticements is liked more than truth which wears simple clothes only. Consider this: Milk and curds are sold in the streets by vendors who shout about the excellence of their ware, but, no one runs to open the door, call them in and purchase the health-giving nectar! Toddy and arrack (home brewed liquors) are sold far from the village bounds; but, yet, people tramp the distance to where they are available, pay the price with no bargaining and consume the poisonous stuff, which robs them of all dignity! This is the tragedy! Good counsel though given with love is seldom listened to. Bad talk attracts people so much that they walk miles to listen to scandal and abuse!

Man yields to senses instead of challenging them

The essential nature of man is Divinity; his strength is that of the unconquerable spirit. But, this hero has reduced himself to a zero, and is grovelling in fear and falsehood! To achieve his nefarious plans, man is demonstrating courage and confidence. Once his mind is set on vengeance or crime, man becomes a fierce animal, ready to inflict wanton cruelties. Or the heroism is channelled into mountain climbing, deep sea diving or walking on space, or other adventurous acts.

But, the most heroic adventure of all, the conquest of the senses and of their pulls is yet beyond him. When the senses challenge him he yields, instead of challenging them in return and overpowering them. Consider only the

masters of their own impulses and passions as Heroes! And, no other.

Look at Valmeeki. He was a brave dacoit; he was an intrepid highway robber, dreaded by all who journeyed on that road. One day, the Seven Sages happened to pass along that fateful road; they revealed to him how wicked his actions were, and painted before his mind's eye the horrors he was becoming heir to, as a result. They told him that those who now enjoyed the fruits of his robbery will not be sharers of those horrors, for, he alone was the culprit and he alone will have to suffer the punishment.

That was enough to open his eyes; he left off his evil pursuit and forsook family, profession and wealth. He retired into the jungle and plunged into the severest austerities. He became a New Hero, the hero of a new type of adventure. He became a great sage, honoured by posterity as the First Poet, the author of the Ramayana. He gave up toddy and arrack, that is to say, the senses and their intoxicating poisons; he developed a taste for milk and curds, the Sathwik (pure) virtues, mastery over himself, the victory that confers the highest and the purest Joy.

Make your heart soft; then, success is quick in sadhana Talk soft, talk sweet, talk only of God - that is the process of softening the subsoil.

Develop compassion, sympathy; engage in service, understand the agony of poverty, disease, distress and despair; share both tears and cheers with others.

That is the way to soften the heart, and help sadhana to succeed.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

37. Bhajan as saadhana

Date: January 1972

THE Scriptures lay down Bhajan (group devotional singing), Namasmaran (Remembering God's Name) and Sankeerthan (devotional music) as the Sadhanas (spiritual practices) of this Age. Bhajan is the process of singing your prayers to God, praising His glory and compassion, and pleading that He may fill you with His Grace. Dr. Hislop has as a result of many years of research, declared that prayer has a highly curative effect on the body and mind of man. That is the result of constant Bhajan and recital of the Name. Every Unit of the Organisation is enjoined to arrange for Nagarasankeerthan (moving choirs) to go around the streets, in the early hours of the day, Bhajan every evening and morning, for this very reason. But, Bhajan should not be gone through, as a painful necessity; it has to be a thrilling experience, which must leave the participants full of pure energy and elevated enthusiasm. But, this does not happen now. Either it is too mechanical or it is a medium for some people to exhibit their talents. The Bhajans are sung to parade one's compositions and these are sung during the group sittings, as if they are rehearsed there. The others are not able to follow; so they allow their minds to wander. Sing familiar Bhajans, so that all can share in the Anandha. Also, pay attention to the tune, the meaning, the variety, the voice, the raga, the thal (the tune and the beat) and other fine points of the Bhajans. If your voice is not pleasant or sweet, keep quiet; that is the best service you can do.

Do not cause discontent, discord and disharmony, insisting on singing, because you are an office-bearer, or something! The Bhajans must be sweet to the ear, arousing pictures of the glory and grandeur of Godhead, in the mind of the singers and listeners; they must refer to various Names and Forms of God, so that the Bhajan Sessions might fill every one with ecstasy. Bhajan is a Sadhana for all who share in it; that is why it is prescribed, for every Unit.

Advice should come out of personal experience

Youth is often found fault with by elders today, that they have lost reverence, humility, and piety that they ridicule temples, religious services and all signs of adoration or devotion directed towards God. They do not learn the art of meditation or sense-control, but cater to the most trivial whims, without regard to their harmful effects. All this is due to the hypocrisy of the elders. Those who teach them or preach to them about the rules of morality and religion, are patently breaking those very rules. They lead such atrociously wrong lives; but, they admonish, advise, and harangue, without the slightest twinge of conscience. This is easily discovered by the sharp-eyed young men and women. How then can they revere the parent or teacher, the elder or leader, the writer or the speaker, who sets about the task of 'educating' the rising generation? Let advice come out of personal experience; otherwise, keep mum! The very fact that you are happy and contented, while having faith in God, will induce others to develop faith; that is the best method of preaching.

You desire to drink a sweet drink, but instead of sugar, you drop salt into the cup, imagining salt to be sugar. That is the state of man, today. He craves for peace, but, does not know how to attain it.

The means he adopts do not lead him to the anticipated end. So, all the thirst and craving are just a pose; it is a fashionable slogan, and nothing more.

Man must be sincere; his word must be in conformity with his feeling; his action must be in conformity with his word. Resolve on this practice, at least from today. Do not be false to yourself

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

38. Give and gain

Date: February 1972 / Location: Bengaluru

For a world pursuing ever-receding happiness and peace and, as a consequence, blinded by the fog of disappointment and disease, the Divine is the Pillar of Light, that indicates the path to progress. Man has inherited this Realm of Work, this world which is but a vast factory, where he himself is fashioned from manhood to Godhood, if only he applies his energy and skill, diligently to the transformation. Man must work, every moment of his life; he cannot avoid this burden. His very existence depends upon action, exertion, work. And, work results in either good or bad, big or small, powerful or paltry. So, man has to be active on the right lines, in order to avoid evil and pain. That is the duty he owes to himself. There may be differences among men, in physical strength, financial status, intellectual acumen but, all are equal in the eye of God; all have the right and the potentiality to achieve the goal of merging in Him. Note that everyone, from the beggar to the billionaire, is prompted by the urge to achieve Anandha, supreme bliss, based on inner peace, unaffected by ups and downs. Every activity however elementary or earth-shaking, is subservient to this ideal. This Bliss Divine is not manufactured by any company, nor available in any shop. It is not something that can be earned from outside, and added to the sum of one's possessions. It has to sprout and grow from within, and fostered and treasured within.

The individual cannot thrive in isolation

Take the case of the contentment and pleasure that food imparts. A hungry man may hold bundles of currency notes in his grasp, or even plenty of eatables; but, unless he consumes the eatables or converts the currency into consumable food and eats them, and they become parts of him, no sense of satisfaction, can arise. Similarly, bliss too is an inner experience, an elevating exhilarating inner calm. It cannot be gained by the accumulation of impediments like cars and houses, land and gold, stocks and shares. How can a cash-box appease hunger or a pass book give peace? Anandha is the goal that all seek, either individually or through social activity. Man is a social

being, for, he can use society to urge him on towards the goal; society hands over to him the know-how; it gives him the training. It is not a haphazard group which gives him facilities for sensual pleasure; it should not be conceived in that light. Its purpose is much nobler. It is not an instrument for promoting his pursuit of power, authority or personal advance. Pleasure, pride, dominance, food - these ideals man shares with the bird and the beast. But, he is endowed with intelligence, discrimination, a sense of right, the skill to store knowledge in language and transmit it to subsequent generations. He knows that the security and stability of society is his own security and stability. The individual cannot thrive in isolation. This is the basis of the Vedic prayer,

Loka samasthas sukhino bhavanthu - "May all worlds be happy."

Man has to contribute his best, for the happiness of others, so that he may be happy.

Renunciation makes life worthwhile

And, what is the best he can contribute? Each has his particular duty, task, role as an individual and as a member of the society to which he belongs. Do that duty, carry on that task, play that role, as best as you can; that is how one can fulfil himself. The body tingles with health only when every limb, muscle, nerve, and artery and cell does its duty efficiently and well. So too, a factory or a society or a workshop can be happy, healthy, only when each worker or individual does his duty or functions well. But, it has become difficult nowadays to discover any one who is aware of his duty as a unit of the organisation or society to which he belongs or to the country or nation or to the world. Unless one develops virtue, uses skill, intelligence and discrimination in the most beneficial manner, directs his physical might with restraint, his life is wasted in bitterness and grief of others. The Vedas declare:

Na karmana, na prajaya dhanena, thyagenaike amruthathwamanashuh
"Not by acts, nor by riches, nor by progeny, but, only by renunciation alone
can immortality be gained."

Renunciation, detachment; sacrifice, giving up - this alone can ensure the highest Realisation, Eternal Bliss. Renunciation is the Law of Life. That is why life is worthwhile and a source of happiness. You have to exhale what you inhale, eliminate what you have consumed, the blood that comes in at one point has to be immediately passed on to the adjacent point; it cannot be retained when it is received, for that would result in a boil, or some other serious illness. It is the same, in the social, economic, political and spiritual fields. This lesson that everything will be added into the person who gives up everything was taught in India since ages. Hence, India shone as the Thyaga bhuumi, the Yoga bhuumi and the Karma bhuumi - the land of renunciation, the land of self-control and the land of uplifting activity. When the thyaga (renunciation) way of life was neglected, it has slid into the roga (illness) way of life, a life full of weeping and wailing, of clamour for food at other people's doors.

Udhyoga without yoga will be a handicap

How can thyaga develop without Yoga, the control of the agitations of desire, in the mind? You may have airconditioning, but without the conditioning of the mind, how can there be peace? You may control prices, production of steel or cloth, the distribution of food-grains, and a number of other things and processes; but unless you have mind control, the rest are barren exercises. Mind control is more heroic and beneficial than any other system of control. A running train cannot be stopped, even if thousands hang on to it and pull it back but a tiny button in the engine, when it is pressed by the driver can bring it to a halt. So too, the mind, if controlled can bring to a halt, all the various functions which are sought to be controlled. Now, enormous time and money are wasted to achieve unessential targets, but, the most

important target, namely, mind control is being neglected. Yoga is the name for that system of control. Now, Yoga is neglected; Udh-yoga (job) is being sought after. Udh-yoga without yoga will be a handicap, a hindrance.

This is the reason why an insidious disease is now spreading fast - strikes! Strikes everywhere for everything by everybody - from the cooks in the kitchen to the custodians of law and order! The interests of the owner and the workers, the employer and the employees are intertwined; one cannot thrive without the other; they have to be of each other. Problems and tangles are bound to arise; both parties have the right and duty to solve them by mutual consultations and adjustments.

Faith has to be cultivated, first and foremost

The owner is the heart of the organisation; those who work in it, in the various fields of activity necessary to carry out its objectives are the limbs. The heart has to keep the limbs active; the limbs have to sustain the heart. Only these two are kin; only they are involved in the endeavour; the co-ordination is between these two, no third part; can set the problems aright. It is best to solve problems mutually, in love and with understanding. The welfare of both should not be hampered by ignorance or emotion. The secrets of individual and social peace have been discovered in this land of Bharath long ago. They have been put in practice for ages. It is a pity that in this very land, we have quarrels, fights, factions between individuals, villages, cities, communities and states. This is assuming the proportions of an earthquake, for, it is now a universal feature, affecting even the foundations of the human community.

Faith has to be cultivated, first and foremost. It has to be nurtured in love; love is fostered by shanthi (equanimity). Shanthi can be got only when there is full reliance on God, complete surrender to the Divine Will.

If virtue is lost, it is lost for ever

The Peace of the World depends on peace and amity between nations; the peace of nations depends upon the peace between the concomitant units, the

villages, the families and finally, the individuals of each family. So, every individual has a responsibility to love others, have faith in them, and revere them as sparks of the Divine. Every man has to cultivate the virtues of tolerance, forbearance and brotherliness. If one loses wealth, he may regain it, by some ruse or other. If he loses health, some doctor might prescribe a tonic to win it; back. If one loses status and authority, he may by sheer pluck gain them back. If virtue is lost, it is lost for ever; nothing can restore the pristine purity. So one has to be ever vigilant and never slacken. The greatest of the virtues is Love. Love is the basis of character. You may have all other desirable things in plenty; but, if you have no character, that is to say, virtue, which is all strung on Love you can have no genuine peace. Money comes and goes! But, morality? It comes and grows! Morality has to be grown in the heart by feeding it with Love, then only we can have justice, security, law and order. If love declines among the people, nations will weaken and mankind will perish.

Duty is God, Work is Worship

Love is the spring wheel of a factory. One has to work along with hundreds of others, with different temperaments, so one has to learn forbearance and equanimity. One has to create an atmosphere of tranquility around oneself. No one should be looked upon with envy, malice or hatred. Tranquility can be promoted, if each one does his duty, faithfully and efficiently; that is the highest Sadhana also. Duty is God; Work is Worship. When you do your duty to the best of your ability and skill, and to the best advantage of the organisation of which you are a limb, you have worshipped God and He will certainly be pleased. Your life is amidst yantras (machines); when you convert your work into worship, the atmosphere will be one of mantras (formulae of praise of God), and not of yantras!

It is indeed a matter for surprise that the Kamanis have ventured to start this enterprise, at a time when complicated problems are filling the industrial as well as other worlds. It is a bold adventurous step. The Kamanis rely, more than anything else, on Divine Grace. That is the reason why I am here, inaugurating this factory, and giving you this message. This is real worship -

the provision of livelihood for thousands of people through this enterprise. They are prepared to start even more factories, since they have firm faith in Divine Grace, which is sure to bless all such attempts.

When man is not gainfully employed in congenial jobs, his mind wanders into devious ways and unsocial activities. When enough work is given to the mind and body, health and happiness and social security are sure to be found. One feels that life is not in vain. The Kamanis are very good employers. All the Kamani Brothers are living together in the same household in mutual love and hearty co-operation. It is a very happy home. I can assert that it is an ideal home, because I have observed them constantly for long. The family consists of a fairly large number of members; everyone is interested in spiritual practices and is engaged in some Sadhana or other, in the search for Anandha. This factory run by them will reflect the same love and mutual co-operation among the workers and the Kamanis, for this is an extension of the same unit. By maintaining this atmosphere, they can give joy to you, and you can give joy to them.

I desire that you have, in this factory, some kind of Sathsang (devotional gathering), every week, when you can focus thoughts on the glory of God. You can meet every Sunday, at about 4.30 in the evening and engage yourselves in Bhajan (group devotional singing), or listen to some musical discourse, or some lecture on spiritual subjects or saintly personages. This will also keep you away from vulgar films, card games and other debilitating pursuits. Methods of recreation that weaken physical or mental strength have to be avoided. Re-create them, by making the mind dwell on the Divine.

Peace and prosperity cannot drop down from the sky; they have to be striven for and acquired by sincere effort, dedicated to God, with intense and pure devotion; they have to be won by the cultivation of love, humility and reverence. Let the ideal Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God guide you and lead you from success to success.

39. Thou and That

Date: 16 March 1972 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Ugadi

EVERYONE engaged in teaching or learning or administering this institution where these three processes are carried on must try to know for what purpose they should be done and how best they can be done. After years of steady and impartial research, the sages of India have said that education has as its goal the realization of the Atma (divine Self) and the manifestation of its inherent attributes of Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being, awareness and bliss). Apart from instincts, impulses, emotions and passions which man shares with the beasts, he has some unique attributes like the urge to renounce and to serve, to attach himself to Truth, and to cultivate the qualities of tolerance, and forbearance. The Sathya Sai Colleges are endeavouring to encourage the manifestation of those and related traits of the higher character, and thereby to re-establish the spiritual renown of India. The very endeavour gives these young men a sense of joy and happy enthusiasm. You heard Satish of the Second year B.Com. class speak from his heart on the equanimity, peace and calm that the practice of the Sadhana of the constant Presence of God has given him. The Anandha the boys have will certainly inspire their parents, their kith and kin and others. The youth of India will turn towards the path leading to Anandha with as much alacrity (or even more) as they are now evincing in moving along the path leading to anxiety, fear and destruction. Therefore, there is no room for despondency. When these students become teachers, the number who can voyage happily on an even keel through the turbulent sea of life will increase. Injustice, untruth, unrighteousness will all be recognised as disgraceful, demeaning Social evils, instead of being tolerated as necessary evils. Truth, Justice, Love and Peace shall soon return to earth.

The first step in the life-long pilgrimage

The reorganisation of education is one of the many means towards this end. The Foundation Stone for the College Buildings that was laid now by the Governor of Mysore State is a step in this process, during which Colleges

engaged in preparing the new generation, on proper lines will come up in every State of India. This Day is celebrated as Yugadhi (Telugu New Year day); the beginning of a New era. Every Era or span of time is called Yuga. The first Yuga according to the Puranas was Kritha, when Truth reigned supreme. Next the Thretha Age or Yuga appeared - when the ideals of Righteous Living were upheld. In the Dwapara Yuga that followed, the cleansing and sharpening of the intellect (Jnanadheva thu Kaivalyam) in order to realize the Reality was propagated as the means to save mankind. In this Kali Yuga, the paths of devotion, of righteous deeds and of the acquisition of wisdom are all declared equally effective, so that people of different dispositions and temperaments can have the fortunate chance of the Truth being revealed to them.

Education must open these paths before the children. When the child is first initiated into the alphabet, this ceremony is called Akshara-abhyasa - Practice of the indestructible! Kshara is the material, objective, created, seen, experienced. A-kshara is the non-material, subjective, creator, witness, experiencer. The letter A is the first step in this life-long pilgrimage to the source of life, Light and Love, the Divine, the Truth. It is a pilgrimage that ends when the emerged is merged in that from which it has emerged, when Thou realize that it is That, when Thwam knows that it is Thath. The stow of billions of births and deaths is summarised in the three words Thath Thwam Asi.

The true Guru is Thath (That) and he reveals to Thwam (Thou), the fact of Asi (art). The true pupil is he Thwam thirsty for Tath and anxious to acquire the Asi wisdom.

Love is no merchandise; do not bargain about its cost. Let it flow clear from the heart, as a stream of Truth, a river of wisdom. Let it not emanate from the head, nor from the tongue. Let it emerge, full and free, from the heart. This is the highest duty, the noblest Godliness.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

40. The toughest armour

Date: **March 1972** / Location: **Kamaani Auditorium, New Delhi**

INDIA has, at present, a great responsibility. She has to preserve in its pristine purity the culture she has inherited from the hoary past. This is a duty she owes to the world. That culture enshrines the highest human values and the most valid of keys to the understanding of human destiny. She must also spread these teachings among all mankind, in order that the cause of Truth and Universal Harmony and Peace be promoted. And, the teachings have to be lived and practised and experienced by every Indian, so that they may be listened to with faith by those for whom they are intended. Mere propaganda, without the proof of practical application discernible in the propagandist will bear no fruit. So everyone must study the elements of this Culture and live the ideals laid down therein; that is the best means of spreading it. In other countries, there is a composite culture, a certain uniformity of faith, and only a few religions of a kindred nature claiming the obeisance of the people. But, in India, we see the co-existence and even the co-operation of many faiths, many traditions and many culture-traits. India is a beautiful garden, where multicoloured beds of flowers add charm and fragrance to life. Every citizen of India has the privilege and pleasure of guarding and tending this lovely garden of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love.

Indians have to cherish the memory of their martyrs

How did this country become the source of this great message of Truth? A long line of heroes and martyrs struggled to set the example and elevate the ideal; they suffered untold misery and had often to sacrifice their all, including their lives, in their struggle. But, they won in the end and it is that heritage and memory that you have to cherish and foster. King Harischandhra willingly faced a series of tribulations and tortures in his single-pointed pursuit of Truth. The Pandavas exiled themselves into the forest for thirteen years and bore extreme penury and dishonour, in their determination to uphold Truth. Sri Rama was the very embodiment of Truth and Morality. From time immemorial, this country has made truth and righteous conduct the

foundations of its culture. Every act and movement - material, moral, administrative and adhyathmic (spiritual) - has been tested and evaluated on the touchstone of Truth and Morality. Here, no person can be honoured as great unless he is also good. Truth and Dharma (Right Conduct) are the most effective armour for us. Other countries rely on atom bombs and hydrogen bombs; for us, these two shields are enough. Some of you know, I believe, the story of Pandavas. Dharmaraja (born of Dharma) was the eldest brother. He had on either side of him, the brothers Bheema and Arjuna. On either side of Bheema and Arjuna, stood the two other brothers, Nakula and Sahadheva. Arjuna was the embodiment of the clear sharp intellect and Bheema was the symbol of physical might and heroism. The lesson conveyed by this picture of the brothers is: when Dharma or Righteousness is supported on either side by Intellectual Might and Physical Valour, success is assured. Only, the two, namely, intellect and courage must obey the dictates of Dharma and not decry it; or disregard its directives.

When there is Peace there will be Divinity

India stands forth among the nations of the world as Dharmaraja, with her loyalty and steady faith in peace and mutual cooperation for noble ends. America is the Arjuna, ready with her weapons of incalculable destructive power. Russia is the Bheema, with her formidable might. India's strength lies in her adherence to Dharma. All other countries whose strength lies only in their fire-power can earn victory only when they surrender ultimately to the force of Righteousness. If we safeguard Dharma, Dharma in its turn will safeguard us. Dharma is the life-hood of Prema. Where there is Love, there will be Peace. Where there is Peace, there will be Divinity. And, where there is Divinity, there will be Bliss. These are eternal truths; but, Indians themselves are losing faith in them and they have started ridiculing them and refusing to practise them. Such persons are insulting their own mother; mother, and mother-country have to be revered equally, according to the scriptures. You honour the mother by obeying her and fulfilling her wishes, you honour mother-country by paying heed to the age-long traditions and hoary ideals that have stood the test of time. No one honours a renegade. He condemns himself by denying his country. Do not therefore get involved' with borrowed

ideologies, imported fashions or attitudes or apparels, and exciting notions of social behaviour. Youth, today, are ruined by this fascination for the false. Borrowed ideas cannot fit into the pattern of our culture. Sanathana Dharma is the culture that has grown on this soil and best suited for maintaining peace and joy, in human communities. You cannot shine in borrowed feathers, for long. They can give I only temporary delight. So, do not distort or disfigure your culture by imitation or neglect.

Man's innate nature is to revel in the Divine

Resolve, before it is too late, to weed out the wrong and strange notions and fashions. Entertain the belief that God exists in every living being. All people **are** your people and all your people are God's people. When someone hurts you, or abuses you, mitigate the anger by the knowledge that 'you and he' are both one, in God. When your teeth bite your tongue, you do not punish your teeth; both tongue and teeth are yours, and both are equally loved by you. In the environment of Prema, there will always be peace and harmony. Regard God as Love, Living Love. In many instances, this Love is hidden by the fog of anger, greed or lust. Discard these temporary formations and associations and control the evil influence of these passions. Then only can you feel and express genuine Love. Love must be regulated and directed by intelligence and discrimination. Or else, it may cause even injury and defeat. When a person saw a fish struggling on a river bank because the waters receded leaving it high and dry, he sympathised with its plight and brought it home wrapped in his handkerchief. He found it struggling even when he put it to bed; so, he gave it a few teaspoonfuls of hot coffee. The poor fish could not survive such ignorant kindness! It died. If only he had put it back into river, it could have lived happily; even if you put it in the bowl studded with gems, it would be miserable. So too, it is man's innate nature to revel in the Divine; so, if you keep man in the world and pour material gains and comforts on him, he will still pine for God whom he knows to be the fountain-head of happiness.

Attachments make you lose your freedom

Suppose all of you who are in this hall now do not know or remember where

you have .come from and where you have to go after this function. There will be utter confusion and panic; if you do not know who you are, where you came from and which is your destination, there will be fear, anxiety, anger and greed among you. Who is the real resident of this body? You are the positive aspect that is activating the negative aspect, the body. The life-breath repeats Soham every time you breathe. It means, I am He, I am God. What a profound authentic declaration, the breath is making, every moment of your life, while waking, dreaming or in deep sleep, whether you listen to it or not! If this simple lesson, this truth of our truth, which is being dinned all the 24 hours of the day does not alert you or inform you of your real task, how can you understand your Reality by the mere study of books?

Three aspects to the Atma concept

Recognise the string that passes through every flower to make this one garland. When you see the flowers, the string is not seen; it is however the thing that holds them together. You can make from the silver cup you have, a plate or a casket or an idol. Names and Forms change but, silver they all are and will continue to be. Call out for Rama, or Krishna; they both come before you and announce "I am Rama, I am Krishna." But, who is this 'I' that is common to both Rama and Krishna? That common factor is the Atma (spirit or divinity), as the Indian sages have declared. There are three aspects to this Atma concept. What you think you are, is the Dheha Atma, the Body Personality; what others think you are, is the individualised self, the Jeevatma; and what you really are, is the Universal Soul, without limitations of Name and Form, the Param-atma. Attachments make you lose your freedom. You can move freely, when you are not encumbered with burdens. Less luggage, more comfort, is a slogan for the journey of life. Reduce desires, loosen attachments; you win your freedom. The end of wisdom is freedom; the end of education is character; the end of culture is perfection; the end of knowledge is Love. Self-confidence is the basis of faith in God also. People who do not know who they are and who have no confidence in their own strength and power assert that there is no God. But, how can they declare that the God in whom you believe and who exists for you does not exist? They are free to assert that God does not exist for them; but, that assertion cannot

make God Himself non-existent! There is a story about a Hindhi Pandith in Banaras. He used to pray for five minutes every morning and for five minutes every evening, thus spending ten minutes a day in meditation on God. His colleagues laughed at him for wasting ten precious minutes on this silly wasteful habit. He replied, "Sirs! If really there is no God, I concede that ten minutes of my time are being wasted each day; but, if God exists, imagine, you are wasting 24 hours each day, without recognising Him and praying to Him! I feel that I am using these ten minutes in something .in which I have full faith. I am deriving great joy therefrom." ' Do not try to find fault with others; search, rather, for your own. I direct you to implant three ideals in your hearts: (1) Do not forget God; (2) Do not put faith in the world you see around you; it is changing every second and does not last; (13) Do not be afraid. You are the imperishable Atma that knows no fear. I want you also to banish two ideas from your hearts: (1) Forget the harm that anyone has done to you, and (2) Forget the good that you have done to others. Above all, develop Prema. Love all religions and all nations. Recognise and accept all religions as paths leading men to the same destination. All of them teach love and compassion, humility and forbearance. I bless all of you and ask you to promote love, sympathy and compassion towards all beings; God is present in everyone of them; and it is your duty to revere God in each of them.

41. My People

Date: April 1972 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

BHAKTHI (Devotion) has been defined as, "Sa Para Anurakthih Esware" - "It is supreme single-pointed intense attachment to the Lord." Such attachment can be evinced even by animals, as the legends, about Shiva at Kalahasthi and of the elephant that worshipped Him there, describe. Young lads are capable of it, as the story of Dhuruva demonstrates. Women have proved that they are capable of cultivating that attachment, as Dhroupadhi did. The Moon has no inherent light of its own; the stars are sources of enormous quantities of light. But, starlight is so hazy and indistinct that it is as bad as non-existent, whereas, the Moon with borrowed light is able to help man much more and to brighten his nights with a delighting quantum of light. The secret is the nearness of the Moon to the source of light, the Sun, and to those who need it, namely, mankind on earth. The stars are too far off from either, to be of any service. And, of what use is all that brilliance if what they can offer is just a twinkle? The sky is studded with a billion stars but the illumination they shed is infinitesimal! God is more than a billion Suns but, if you are far away from Him, you cannot have either the warmth or the light. Of course, with God it is not special distance that counts; one has to endear himself to God. That is the process of Bhakthi.

Recognise the authority of God over all

But as a result of worldly needs and sensual greeds, man endeavours to curry the favour of all sorts and types of men, demeaning himself with low tricks and vulgar praise! Lokavancha (worldly desires) takes you away from Lokesha (the Lord of all the Worlds). Learn a lesson from the stream. It rushes to the hollows, never to the heights. Bend before the lowly, the humble, the godly, the good; don't bend before the proud, the promoters of hate and greed. Those who have God in their hearts will always be self-effacing, not self-aggrandizing. If a man's head is heavy with ego, he will suffer from aches; he cannot sustain himself on Anandha (bliss). Never yearn for authority over others; recognise the authority of God over all. Be immersed in Anandha, and

in Love.

Man weakens himself, believing three impostors: Nama, Roopa and Guna. When he says that his name is such and such and when he answers 'Here I am' when that name is called, he is impostor number one. When he describes himself as ill or well, weak or strong, poor or rich, he is impostor number two! When he is depressed because he suffers loss or pain, and excited because he secured profit, he is impostor number three! He has no name; he has all the names that God has! He has no phases; his body has them; but he is not the body. His car may be out of order; his house may be crumbling; but he is unaffected. Loss or gain, pain and pleasure, the entire dual throng is delusion caused by the play of fancy of fact.

Three knowledges to disperse the delusions

These delusions have to be dispersed by the acquisition of three knowledges and the consequent mental attitudes: Adhibhuutham, concerning all perishable things including the body and its appurtenances, that is to say, the Jeeva; Adhidhaiva, concerning the Divine forces that prompt action the directions of space, ruling the ear; the Air, ruling the sense of touch; the Sun, presiding over the eye; the deity of the waters, Varuna, ruling over the tongue; the Ashwin Twins, ruling over the nose; Fire, presiding over speech; Indhra, over the hands; Upendhra over the feet; Mithra, over the alimentary system; Prajapathi, over the generative; Chandhra or the Moon, presiding over the mind; in short, the Ishwara or Saguna (formful) aspect of God with various contributory attributes promoting man's progress here and hereafter; and lastly, the Adhiatma, concerning the Atma (spirit) that is the individualised being, the Universal eternal Atma itself.

The Adhi-bhuutham or Jeeva-consciousness binds one with the shackles of I and Mine. The Ishwara-consciousness or the awareness of the attributes of God which energise and activate one's functions limits the Supreme into a particularised entity. When the Adhi-athama is achieved, delusion or Moha disappears and you attain Moha-Kshaya (lost-delusion) - Liberation. Arjuna acknowledges with gratitude towards the end of the Geetha dialogue,

Nashtho Mohah (my delusion is lost), Smrthir labdhah (I have regained the memory). He had forgotten that he was the Atma; he remembered it and was liberated from the prison he had built around himself.

Man loses joy and peace by his own craving

There was a rich man, a confirmed miser, who sought to hide his hoard in a place where no one could lay his hands on it. He decided to keep it inside a snake-hole. Poor fellow, he did not realise that if his gold was safe from others, it was inaccessible for him too! Man loses joy, his peace, his freedom by his own cleverness and craving. He devises stratagems in order to escape being entrapped by others but he is trapped, nevertheless, by his own tactics to catch blind-folded in a dark room the black cat which is not there! That is life, for most men. They won't believe wise men when they warn or convey correct information. Do not look upon the objective world as something to be exploited; it is something to be adopted and appreciated. Then, you can derive the maximum Anandha out of the contact! At Delhi, lakhs of people were pouring in at all hours of the day and night, and clamouring for Dharshan (audience). Unless one group got Dharshan and moved on, there was no room for the next group pressing behind them to move forward. So, I got upon the terrace and gave them Anandha. Truck-loads of people from Jullundher, Meerut, Patiala and even places however farther off were arriving on all the days I stayed. They were all drawn by the Anandha that Dharshan confers.

Ganga of spirituality can never be polluted

When every moment of stay in Delhi was thus packed with the sharing of Anandha, Gulzarilal Nandha, President of the All- India Sadhu Samaj, wanted to take Me to Kurukshethra. I told him, "How could I leave the thick flood of people pouring out their hearts in anguish, "Sai Baba! Dharshan Der!" (Sai Baba! Give us Dharshan!) and come with you to Kurukshethra? They will feel I have deserted them." But, he insisted so sincerely and argued so selflessly that I yielded to go, during the hot hours of the day, when I had some respite at Delhi from the pressure of the prayerful crowds.

There I found a large assembly of over three lakhs of people. Among them were many Sanyasins; the ochre robe was predominant all around. I had a surge of Anandha, standing before that happy gathering, on ground that was familiar to Me, as a field for corrective teaching! I said that Sanyasins (those who have renounced worldly desires) have a unique role in Society. The colour of their robes must indicate the colourlessness within. I warned them against the corrupting influence of politics and of institutionalism. They should not sacrifice their freedom, their simplicity and their role as vigilant witnesses to the wiles of pomp and pageantry. I described the political pressures that are undermining the spiritual culture of India in the name of secularism. I assured them that the Ganga of Sprirituality emerging from the Himalayan ranges of Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi and Prema can never be polluted by political tactics. For millennia, the lives of generations of Indians have been saturated in God; they have toiled for God; they have been fostered by God; God is the root; the bed-rock, the very breath of the millions of India. No one can dry it up, or blast it or deny it.

Be aware at all times of the God within

The truth about the individual, the Universe and God discovered by dedicated delving and announced through universal compassion can never be tarnished or argued away. Ambassador Keating of America told Me: "I cannot grasp the full import of Indian Culture through the study of books, nor can I vouchsafe the authenticity of the scriptures of this land. But, when I see in the Capital City of India in the Seventies of the twentieth century a phenomenon like this - five lakhs of ardent men and women milling around to get a heartening glimpse of this five-foot personality, I feel I can hear the heartbeats of this ancient people." When a person is sleeping on a cot in a room at night, and thick darkness prevails, you try to wake him up in order to talk with him. You grope around and when you touch a chair or shelf or book, you say to yourself, "Not this! Not this." At last, when you touch one toot, you are thrilled; you know, "This is He." "Once you have contacted God, get confirmed in Faith and by adhering to His Commands, attach yourselves to Him closer and closer," I told the gathering at Kurukshethra.

I advised the Sanyasins to give up anger, greed and envy; to eschew factionalism and pomp; to be aware at all times of the God within and the God without and so behave that all may be inspired to follow the spiritual path. I explained to them that without purity of consciousness, wisdom cannot dawn in the heart. We went to Meerut one evening, a place historically important during the days of British rule and **even** a big cantonment of the army. It was here that the British suffered their first reverse in days of the Mutiny. They now want a Sathya Sai College there! The gathering there was so huge and so thickly packed at the Assembly Place that cars could not proceed, nor could we, by foot. When we thought of returning, there was such weeping and wailing that I appeared on the dias, while they were wondering where I was and whether I had left; I gave them joy, singing a few Namavalis.

In the Divine Path, there is no chance of failure

I am telling you this, because it is a forecast of what you can expect in the coming days. I have been declaring since six or seven years that the day when millions will gather to benefit from the Avathar (divine incarnation) is fast coming; I am advising you to garner and treasure all the Grace and all the Bliss you can, while you may, so that you can sustain yourselves ruminating on the sweetness of the memories and the experience. If you live on the level of the body and the individual, you will be entangled in food, fun and frolic, in ease, envy and pride. Forget it, ignore it, overcome it - you will have peace, joy and calm. In the Divine Path, there is no chance of failure; it is the Path of Love. We are having a Summer Camp for College Students at Brindavan in May - the entire month. The Chairman of the University Grants Commission, who has written a voluminous report on College Education, told at Delhi that his long cherished dream is now coming true, that what the Government cannot do, Bhagavan is making a reality. We have a number of scholars and Pandiths coming to speak on various subjects to the students. Of course, all subjects are spiritual, there is nothing beyond the realm of the spirit. Even matter is spirit, basically. I desire that you should share your Anandha with others and you should hold forth, in your daily life, conversation and activity, ideals which they can emulate and follow. There will be no shortage or hesitation in My giving Anandha to you; any shortage or

hesitation will only be in your accepting what is offered. Be vigilant that you do not miss the least part of the Bliss.

Desire discolours the intelligence; it perverts judgement; it sharpens the appetites of the senses. It lends a false lure to the objective world. When desire disappears or is concentrated on God, Intelligence is self-luminous, it shines in its pristine splendour, and that splendour reveals the God within and without. That is the real Atma Sakshatkara (Realisation of the Self).

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

42. Tonic for youth

Date: May 1972 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1972

MANIFESTATIONS of the Divine Atma (Spirit). You are here before Me, resplendent with the inspiration you have imbibed from this atmosphere of peace and self-control, the vision you have gained about your own reality, the sense of mission you have cultivated, the resolutions you have invested yourselves into, and the invigorating contact you had during these thirty days with teachers who are sincere guides of youth. You have been taught the elements of yoga (spiritual communion) and dhyana (meditation), the essential unity of all the different paths of Selfrealisation, the correctives necessary for a life of peace and joy in this technological world. Tomorrow, when you leave for your homes, I am sure your hearts will-be hankering for God, though your bodies journey towards your native villages. I am glad at this; for the treasure of devotion is more precious than gold, silver and property. These cannot grant mental peace or lasting joy. Virtue is the real treasure chest; sterling character is the universally accepted 'sterling'. The realisation that you are a wave of the Ocean of Bliss is the richest possession. You are witnessing the plight of the princes of India; it demonstrates that power, authority, status, sovereignty are all but flashes in the pan. Rains fill the tanks to the brim, and for a brief span of time, hordes of frogs croak around the shores acclaiming the glory and the wealth. Let the tank go dry one day, as it must; no single frog will stay to croak allegiance or praise. Fame and affluence are as unsteady as the homage of the frog. Glory is won, when you discover your Self and revel in its Divinity.

Education must result in discovery of the Self

Consider how well educated, how powerful, how strong physically, how heroic, were the epic personages, Ravana, Hiranyakashipu, Hiranyaksha, Dhuryodhana. Each of them had all these in ample measure; but the absence of virtue, of the yearning to be righteous, of adherence to Dharma (moral code) - that flaw led to irreparable ruin. Prior to the confrontation on the field of battle, Dhuryodhana as well as his rival the Pandava Prince Arjuna

hastened to Lord Krishna seeking aid. Krishna allowed them to choose for themselves. He placed before them two items of aid: the Army that would be an addition to one's militant potential, and Himself, the Divine Guide and Guardian, who would not be useful for the actual fighting in the battle. Dhuryodhana chose the army; he preferred quantity, manpower. Arjuna chose quality, God-power. Krishna was for him as valuable an acquisition as the conquest of the entire world.

The individual must instal himself in a chariot with the wheels of Thyaga (Detachment) and Sathya (Truth); the Lord will then accept the position of Charioteer; He will hold the reins (mind) and direct the horses (the senses) straight and safe over the road (the path of salvation through Self-realisation).

Only practice and experience can give intelligence

Atmavidhya (science of the Self) by which one can become aware of the Infinite Eternal Absolute Self has to be pursued by everyone. Education must result in this discovery, or else it does not deserve the name. The process by which one gets skill to eke out his livelihood, or to exploit nature and his brethren cannot be education, in the real sense. Books only fill the brain with second-hand stuff; practice, experience, feeling, doing with one's own hand - these give insight and intelligence. Swotting is just waste of time and money. Book-learning helps you to gain marks at school and college. I prefer students, who do not acquire adverse 'remarks' in their records, even if their marks are a little less. Study must endow one with humility; but, today students are afflicted with aggressive audacity. We have in the field of education factions and fights that bedevil relations between students, teachers and administrators. Politicians are at the bottom of it all. Neither the students nor the teachers are to blame. Students have tender, eager, self-denying idealistic, compassionate hearts; that is the reason why I have given each of them immaculate white to wear this day, appropriately, at "White-field". Kshethra means Field; your personality and person are the kshethra, but you must, by earning and maintaining purity, cognise the Kshethrajna, the Master of the Field. How stupid, how wasteful it is to fritter away the

glorious destiny, echoing the angry outbursts of vainglorious climbers who misuse your energies for the destruction of the properties of innocent citizens and for terrorising the neighbourhood. When the reservoir is full, the water taps will flow; when the heart is the reservoir of love, sympathy and faith, acts, words and thoughts will help peace and joy. Politicians however do not recognise these needs; they fill the young hearts with hate, envy and greed, and spur them on to violence and vituperation. They draw them away from the classroom, the library and the laboratory and make them tramp the streets. They prod them to injure innocents, damage property and behave wildly, with fury.

Indian culture never encourages the use of force

Indian Culture, as you learnt at this Summer Camp from distinguished exponents never encourages the use of force for effecting changes in law or social conditions or people's attitudes. Gandhi directed the movement for Indian Independence along spiritual lines which drew courage and confidence, and communicated both to the people, from Namasmaraṇa, the recitation and reflection on the Names of God. He cleansed the heart of the nation, of hatred and envy, of fear and doubt. He stuck to the ideal and the path; you too should do the same. A student has study, as his ideal and his path. That study cannot be postponed **or done** slipshod. So, whatever the obstacle or temptation, it must be overcome. Students deserve an atmosphere of peace; teachers too must teach in an atmosphere of peace and joy. Dhronacharya taught archery to Arjuna, as well as to his own son, Aswatthama; but Arjuna received the lessons with avid enthusiasm, and so, he became the greatest archer of that era. Aswatthama could not rise to that height. Attach yourselves to the teacher by means of earnestness and humility; then, you get the best out of him. If knowledge is handed over in anger and discontent and if it is received in anger and discontent, how can the gift bear fruit? How can the receiver be strengthened by it?

Treasure what your teachers taught with reverence

I bless you that you may progress in life with the help of the ideal and

inspiration you have garnered during these days at 'Brindavan - the discipline, the social conscience, the wisdom of the ages, the lessons of the past and of the future. Draw upon them whenever you are afflicted by doubt or despair. Put them into daily practice; meditate on them; reflect on their importance and significance. I shall reveal a truth: you got this chance as the reward for the merit you have accumulated in your past lives. I need not describe to you the affection that your teachers developed for you; you have yourselves witnessed how they were in tears while taking leave of you at the end of their series of lectures. What they taught you with such love you too should treasure with great reverence. Your Sadhguru (spiritual preceptor) is your Swami, I will be with you evermore; so go back happily with courage born of self-confidence; share your anandha and your new outlook with your parents, your friends and companions, kith and kin, teachers and the people with whom you come in contact.

I exhort you to strive sincerely to serve others and serve your own best interests. I bless you that you may have success in your endeavours.

When man is able to master the senses, and direct them along more beneficent channels -
the eye seeing God's footprints in stars and rose-petals, the ear hearing God's voice in the throats of birds and peals of thunder,
the tongue tasting God's sweetness in all that appeals to it, the nose discovering fragrance in everything that recalls the glory of God,
the sense of touch content to clasp the hand of the forlorn and the distressed as the beloved children of God -
then, he can visualise the God installed in the cavity of the heart; that is the lesson the five-hooded Sesha (divine serpent) imparts!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

43. Teach by example

Date: July 1972 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EVERY limb of the body has a distinct name, form and function. Every nerve, muscle, and joint has its own share in the upkeep and growth of the body. The word 'body' denotes all these together. So too is the word 'Village' and, the name, 'Puttaparthi.' It denotes all the individuals, families and communities living and functioning together, here. If a single nerve or muscle or joint is diseased, the entire body suffers, loses efficiency. So too, even if one individual or family in the village has no ease, is distressed or disabled, anxious or afraid, ill or bed-ridden, indigent or ignorant, the entire village is infected by the misery. When the toe is hit, the eye sheds tears; when the lowest and the poorest are hungry and oppressed, the highest and the richest are also affected. During the ages when each one was recognised as complementary parts of the same 'body-politic,' there was peace in the land, laughter in the field and festoons across the door. But, now, each limb endeavours to injure the other; there is no co-operation or co-ordination. And the body is lying prone, in pain. Living, happy living, is possible only in and through society; society cannot thrive on egoism, greed and envy, which turn one man's teeth and claws against another.

Villages which are the cells of the body-politic are afflicted with this terrible malady today. So, this school is being established in order to guide children on right lines and to inspire the elders to be examples of tolerance, service and mutual love. Joy and peace have to be restored in this village through truth, goodness, justice and love. Each one can best perform the duty that has fallen to his lot only when he develops in himself an attitude of dedication to these ideals.

Keep alive the roots of one's native culture

Every village has to be equipped with four Alayas (Houses). First, the Bhojan-alaya (the Eating-house or Hotel), which must provide for a moderate price, clean sustaining food. Of course, man does not feed on such food only. He

feeds on pure water and air and the food that he gorges through the eye, the tongue and the sense of touch has also to be free from pollution and poison. Next, the Arogya-alaya (the Medicine-House, the Hospital). This has become essential, since man has neither healthy eating habits nor the inclination to adopt them. Third, the Vidhyalaya. (the Learning-House, the School) which is a lamp lit to keep darkness away. The School must instruct the young and inspire the old, keep alive the roots of one's native culture. Last, the Deva-alya (the House of God, the Temple, the Heart of the Community), pumping the life-blood of Faith, Reverence and Steadfastness throughout the body-politic. The School is influenced by the Village, as much as the Village is influenced by the School. Children learn at School for a few hours, during a few months of the year, a few disciplines and skills, and some chunks of information. They are already shaped, well nigh irreparably by their parents, kith and kin and elders. Children adore their elders and imbibe by imitation their prejudices and predilections. They watch the behaviour of the elders and value it more, though they may not follow their advice and admonitions. They can see through the veil of humbug and the pall of hypocrisy.

Puttaparthi is a name adored throughout the world; it has become a holy word which gives comfort, consolation and courage to people of all lands. But, this village itself is far behind others in education. I am aware of this; I need not be told or informed about anything. I know that communication with nearby places where we have High Schools are frequently cut off by floods; boys and girls of this village have to trek miles to attend them. So, this High School has been resolved upon.

Don't be misled into doubts and distress

My activities are not for publicity or propaganda or even to confer joy on others! They are for conferring joy primarily on Me! I have no need to please others and to earn approval or appreciation. For, I and you are not distinct entities; you are I and I am you. I am the current that flows into every bulb and illumines it. Those who see Me as separate are seeing falsehood. I am in your hearts; you are in mine. Don't be misled into doubt and distress. Dogs may bark and jackals howl; but Truth moves majestically forward. Everyone in

the village is a flower with its unique hue and fragrance. They are collected and strung as a garland for the Lord. The string that runs through all, that holds them together, that enables them to enhance the charm of the Lord (if ever that is possible!) is the Brahma-suuthra - - the unifying thread called Brahma (the Universal Absolute). This Truth has to be revealed to everyone; it has to be implanted in the heart, so that each one can have the faith that can face both failure and fortune. That is the inner purpose of the School. This is the gift the School ensures. But, the giver will be happy only when the gift is utilised to the best advantage and not frittered away or east aside. The giver can be induced to give again and give more, only when the gift is accepted with intelligence and gratitude. There is an intention to raise the School into a College to serve the needs of this area, a College which can be affiliated with others of a similar type coming up in all the States of India in the Sathya Sai Scheme of Higher Education.

Wisdom alone can bring peace

There is a plan also of establishing in this village some opportunities for gainful employment so that no person suffers from the pangs of hunger. The intention is there; its execution depends on your enthusiasm and faith. The drug is effective and within reach; but unless it is consumed and the directions strictly adhered to, it cannot cure! Do not waste time in idle fantasies but demonstrate your sincerity and faith in practice - sending your children to school, facilitating their studies, and, providing them the environment necessary for progress. The vaults of the Reserve Bank have lots of money but of what use are they to you? Talking about them will not remove your poverty. Work alone can bring income; wisdom alone can bring peace. Gratitude to parents is a basic virtue; reverence to the parents is reverence to the past, to the traditions of the past, to the great treasure of wisdom that the past has garnered and preserved. I am spreading this message by Myself setting the example. The Kalyanamandap that is fast coming up in the village will commemorate the 'father.' He was eager to serve the best interest of this village, as you all know. The Mandap will be a community Centre for religious ceremonies and the spread of spiritual ideals. This School will commemorate the 'mother'. My life is My Message, as I often

declare. I have been re-emphasising the Upanishathic exhortation, "Speak Truth; act righteously; revere the mother as Divine, revere the father as Divine, revere the preceptor as Divine." I emphasise not only through words, but more by deeds. You must dedicate your skill, your earnings, your intelligence to the service of your parents and fulfil your duties as their progeny. If you fail in this, you do not deserve this glory of being an Indian, and a human.

All good things have to be done the hard way. Ease and elevation cannot go together.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

44. Lessons from the Sea

Date: **July 1972** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam**

THIS is the World Teacher's Day, named after the First Preceptor, the Codifier of Vedhic Texts, the Poet who compiled the great epic Mahabharatha, famous as the Fifth Veda, and of the other great text book of devotion, the Bhagavatha - the Sage Vyasa, the Adi Guru (First or Primary Preceptor). In fact, the world itself is a great teacher, a constant guide and inspiration. That is the reason why man is surrounded and sustained by the World. Every bird, every animal, every tree, mountain and star, each tiny worm, has a lesson for man, if he has but the will and the thirst to learn. These make the world a veritable University for man; it is a Gurukul (sacred commune of preceptor with disciples) where he is a pupil from birth to death. Man soaks himself with lessons from the environment, whether he is aware of it or not. That is why those interested in his future urge him to seek Sathsang (good companionship), to avoid slander, faction, pride and violence. The first Guru is the mother; her example, her advice, her admonition affects man deepest and longest. The second is the father, who is admired by the child for his strength and knowledge and feared for the punishments he inflicts. Next is the teacher, who leads him and guides him into the maze of material knowledge. But, the Guru (spiritual preceptor) alone can open the inner eye and cleanse the inner instruments of intuition. He induces you to question yourself, "Dheham?" (Am I this body or is this body only a vehicle which I am using) and discover the answer, "Naham" (Not I; I am not this Body. No, I am the Seer, the Witness, the Spectator). Then the investigation starts to delve into the reality of the I, "Koham" (Who then am I?) and the answer reveals itself in the purified consciousness, "Soham" (I am He); I am a spark of that Glory; I am Divine.

Turn your mind towards Intelligence and Anandha

The gross body has its characteristics - height, weight, girth, proportion, name, caste, sect, nationality; it is a pot, a container, it is devised, designed; it disintegrates; it is destroyed. 'It cannot be 'you'. The subtle body is like the

water in the pot; that too is poured by some one. It does not originate therein; it is no essential part of it; it is not its dharma. So it too is not 'you'. The causal body is affected by attachment and detachment, the world and its objects, through reaction and reflection. So, it too cannot be 'you'. 'You' are beyond all three. You are not limited by these three containers - one within the other, one finer than the other. There are five sheaths within which the I shines. Of these, the Anna-maya kosha (the material sheath), is the gross body. The subtle body consists of the next three sheaths, prana-maya (the vital sheath), Mano-maya (the mental sheath) and Vijnana-maya (the intellectual sheath). The causal body is the Anandha-maya Kosha (bliss conscious sheath). Even this is a limitation, a phase, a characteristic. The I has no such bounds or bondage. The guru who can make you cognise this I is your own mind. Turn it towards Intelligence and Anandha, you are in the right path; turn it towards the vital, the material, you slide down the path of perdition.

If you see only the One, your vision is clearest

The Guru Poornima, the Full Moon day: dedicated to the Teacher, is to be spent in contemplation of the path that leads to liberation and in offering gratitude to the path-finders. There are now three types of Gurus available for man - those who rob the pupils of their possessions and fatten themselves; those who rob the pupils of their individuality and intelligence and elevate themselves into despotic potentates; and those who rob the pupils of their anxieties and agonies and, fulfil themselves as benefactors. Many Gurus insist that their followers should treat them with showy forms of worship this day and offer special donations at their feet. Claiming and accepting such superficial forms of adoration is contemptible. The pupil has to be "Sathatham Yoginah" (In constant divine communion), ever alert to be attached to higher ideals. The Master has to be a supreme unflinching example, in this Yoga. The Guru is Poornima - .full, undisturbed by any doubt, deficiency or sense of want. Like the Full Moon, he confers joy, cool comfort, and a sense of relief. Sit calm a few moments; you can yourself judge your attainments in this line. If you are dually minded, you are half blind still. If you see only the One, your vision is clearest; seeing double is a sign of optical disease. See only the One,

the eternal, the true, the Divine. Rise up to the Divine; don't bring down Godhead to your human and even animal levels. Do not worship God as the picture before you, but, worship the picture before you as God, because God is in everything and can be grasped through every single symbol. There is nothing wherein He is not; there is no might or right, apart from Him. The eye sees; but, what is it that sees the eye that grasps the impressions gained by the eye? It is the mind. The objective world is the dhrushya (the seen); the eye is the dhrashtha (the seer); but, the eye itself is dhrushya to the mind which is the dhrashtha. Now, the mind is also dhrushya, so long as the Intellect is dhrashtha. Finally the Intellect is also dhrushya, for, the Atma is the ultimate dhrashtha which observes as a Witness this mano-rama (play of the mind-principle).

Learn lessons from the bee, the tree and the dog

The mind is ever unsteady; it is "steady in its unsteadiness" as Arjuna complained to Krishna. It is fraught with disaster; it is deeprooted and difficult to suppress, says Arjuna. Krishna agrees but assures Arjuna that it can be tamed and rendered innocuous by acquiring wisdom and by cultivating renunciation.

This morning someone from Delhi placed before Me this same problem. I told him that there is one simple solution but he responded with a sigh. He said, "I have approached many sages and everyone of them has a 'simple solution.' It may be simple, for me they are impossibly difficult". I told him, "You are already engaged in performing even more difficult exercises than the one I propose to recommend. So, it will not be hard at all. Do not lose heart. You have inherent in you, vast potentiality, you can draw upon that reserve strength and succeed." Then, I gave him the example of a bumble bee. It is a small thing, judging from size but it bores through the toughest timber! There is a legend that it bored through the steely muscle of Karna's thigh! This same bumble bee settles at sunset on a lotus flower and drinks the intoxicating nectar. It falls into a stupor, overwhelmed by the elixir. While it is still on the task, the Sun sets and the petals close in, to make the bloom a bud, again! The bee is imprisoned in the softness; it has no strength to bore

through the tender velvety veil! I told him, "Let your mind imbibe the nectar of the Name, let it taste the elixir of the Lotus Feet of the Lord, it will be incapacitated, rendered ineffective, incapable of harm."

The sea teaches you many lessons

You may have vast scholarship, fame and fortune. But, the bee can give you a lesson on how to be free from torment. The tree can teach you forbearance and tolerance. It offers shade to all, irrespective of age, sex or religion, nationality or economic status. It helps with fruit and shade even the foe who lays his axe on its trunk! The dog can teach you lessons in faith, selfless service and the process of dedication. Man disgraces himself by his ingratitude, even to God who has provided him with all his wealth. Today is Full Moon and the sea rolls and surges in great joy. It knows only the fullness of happy contentment. The Sun may lift clouds of vapour from its stock of water; the Sea does not whimper. The rain may fill its coffers with the rich riverine tribute; it does not exult. It teaches you equanimity - no depression, no exaltation. Watch the waves rolling one behind the other towards the shore! You will notice the waves bringing with them bits of flotsam and jetsam, bottles and twigs, logs and pieces of wreckage to be deposited on land. There is a constant struggle evident to maintain a clean face - a laudable Sadhana, which man can well adopt. Again, consider the quietness of the depths, the Prashanthi (serenity) that reigns in the inner regions of its consciousness. On the surface, the sea appears restless, and full of fury. But, down below, it is established in peace. Man too has to be like the Sea, accepting it as his Guru. Accept the World as your Guru on this World Teacher's Day, the Guru Poornima.

God is the embodiment of sweetness. Attain Him by offering Him, who resides in all, the sweetness that He has dowered on you. Crush the cane in the mill of seva, boil it in the cauldron of penitence; decolorise it of all sensual itch; offer the crystallised sugar of compassionate love to Him.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

45. The simplest remedy

Date: 31 August 1972 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

MAN has become the bond-slave of lower instincts and desires. He is unable to distinguish between the low urges of lust and the elevating urge of Love. Prema (Love) is the first step on the road that leads to Divine Grace. But man wallows in lust for physical comfort and pleasure; he is haunted by that nefarious companion of lust, called anger. When lust is frustrated, anger overtakes him and he becomes bestial and even demonic, when lust envelops the heart of man, truth, justice, compassion and peace flee from it. The world degenerates into a snake pit, and God comes to rescue mankind from its doom. The Avathar (Divine Incarnation) comes to reveal man to himself, to restore to him his birthright of Athmic Bliss. He does not come to found a new creed, to breed a new faction, to instil a new God. If such a thing happens, it is the consequence of the evil in man. The Avathar comes as man in order to demonstrate that Man is Divine, in order to be within reach of Man. The human mind cannot grasp the absolute, attributeless principle; it is abstract and beyond the reach of speech, mind and intellect. Fire is inherent in the match-stick but it is only when it is struck as a flame that we can benefit by it. The Nirguna (attributeless) has to manifest as Saguna (with qualities); the Nirakara (Formless) has to appear with Form. Then only can Man listen, learn, understand, follow and be saved, through the Bliss of that experience. The Avathar lights the flame of Realisation in each; and the age-old ignorance is destroyed in an instant.

Significance of the name Krishna, the Avathar bore

When the righteous Pandavas were harassed by wicked Kauravas, the beautiful Krishna appeared and saved them. The Lord can never design violence and blood-shed. Love is His instrument; non-violence is His message. He achieves the correction of the evil-minded through education and example. But, it may be asked, "Why did Kurukshethra happen?" It was a surgical operation and therefore, cannot be described as an act of violence. The surgeon saves life through the beneficial use of his knife. Consider the

name Krishna which the Avathar bore; what a significant name! 'Krishna' is derived from the root Krish which means (1) to attract, (2) to plough and cultivate, and (3) the Divine principle beyond time, space and causation. Krishna, like all Avathars; attracts not only seekers, saints and sages but the simple, the innocent and the good. He draws also the curious, the critics, the skeptics and those who suffer from atheism. He draws them towards Himself by the irresistible charm of His person, by His invincible look, His voice, His flute, His counsel and His undaunted heroism. He is ever in a state of Bliss, spreading harmony, melody and beauty and around Him. He sings everywhere - in the peaceful pasture and lands of Brindavan and in the bloodsoaked battlefield of Kurukshethra. He holds the flute in His hand in one place and He wields the whip in the other. But what emerges is meaningful moving music, either Venugana, or Bhagavadhgeetha! Ganam and Geetha both mean song! Why does He attract all to His Presence? To plough the heart, prepare it for receiving the shower of Grace, to grow the seeds of Love, weed it of all evil thoughts which smother the crops of joy and to enable it to gather the harvest of Wisdom. That wisdom finds its fulfilment in Krishna Himself, for Krishna also means the Pure Essence, the Supreme Principle, the Sath-Chith- Anandha.

Make the gopees of Brindavan your guides

The gopees (milkmaids) of Brindavan were inextricably involved in the Avathar. They had Him indelibly imprinted on their hearts. He alone was real; the rest were also He. When Radha, the most ardent aspirant among them was in agony at what she wailed about as Separation from Krishna (!), the Gopees, who gathered around her to turn her mind away from the infatuation, could not use any other words of consolation and comfort than Govindha! Dhamodhara! Madhava! - words that sent pangs of loss through Radha's heart! When the Gopees brought milk, curds and butter for sale, and peddled them along the streets, they used to shout the names of the ware they had for sale. But the words that emerged were the words that had displaced all else - Govinda! Damodhara! Madhava! - the loving Names of the Krishna they adored! When Akrura, the messenger from the wicked uncle of Krishna, took the Lord away from Brindavan with him, the Gopees, hurried across the road

to stop him but even in their desperate protest, they could not utter any words except, Govindha, Dhamodhara, Madhava! God is the sugar that can make the tasteless drink of life into a sweet potion. Stir the sugar well so that each molecule of the water is saturated with its taste. The gopees are your guides in this sadhana. They had, as you also have, the Avathar in their midst and so, their salvation was assured when they achieved purity and acquired faith. Avathars manifested in the Kritha Yuga for preservation of Vedhic tradition, in the Thretha Yuga for the protection of Dharma and in the Dwapara Yuga for the promulgation of the right of property. In the Kritha Yuga, the Avathar saved the Vedas from neglect, in the Thretha Yuga, He saved women from dishonour, and in the Dwapara Yuga, He saved property from injustice.

This Avathar in Kali Age has a three-fold task

Now, in this fourth Age, the Kali Yuga, all **these** three are in dire peril. The Vedas are ridiculed, woman is tempted into unwomenly lives, and property itself is condemned as theft! So, the Avathar has a three-fold task. Man has no purity **in the** heart, no sanctity in his emotions, no love in his deeds, no God **in** his prayers. Though the evil is thickest in this Kali Age, the remedy is the simplest. In the Kritha Yuga, the Sadhana (spiritual discipline) of escaping from ruin was hard. Years of austerity and abstinence were often profitless. The six-year old Dhruva had to perform penance for years in the recesses of wild forests before God conferred Grace. And the young boy Prahladha underwent unmentionable tortures unaware of the pain but aware only of the God in him. What is needed today to save oneself from anxiety and fear, here and hereafter, is dedication, diverting the mind towards God. If that is done, the pains of the physical body and pangs of the senses will not affect the mind.

Dhyana (meditation) is that inward journey, away from the objective world and the senses that run after it. The Upanishaths declare, Nayam Atma bala heenena labhyah - "the Atma cannot be attained by one devoid of strength." Bala (strength) means physical, vital, moral, intellectual and spiritual toughness. For all these are essential to establish mastery over the senses.

You may do dhyana but your senses are so "awake and active that a tiny mosquito arouses your passion and you swing your arm to slaughter it!

Repentance purifies, contrition cleanses

Long ago there was a very pious family on the banks of the Krishna river. It had vast landed estates. The parents had an only son who was well versed in scriptures and who was obedient and well behaved. But when the father died and the properties fell into his hand the son became a profligate and a libertine, with a gang of evil men always around him. He developed intimacy with a public woman and was so infatuated with her wiles that he swam across a flooded river, holding on to the corpse of his own wife who had earlier committed suicide in despair. He mistook the corpse for a log of wood floating down the stream. Suddenly he became aware of his plight; he blamed his eyes for leading him astray into sin; he blinded himself as a punishment and roamed about the holy land associated with the advent of the Lord as Krishna, singing His Name. That blind singer was Suurdas. With the Name on the lip and the picture of the glory on the mind, no evil can attract you. Repentance purifies, contrition cleanses. Krishna appeared before blind Suurdas and offered to restore his sight. But, Suurdas pleaded for inner vision and discarded the outward-bound eyesight.

God is no stony-hearted despot. He is Compassion, He is Grace, personified. Once you have cleansed yourself by tears, He draws you near and grants you consolation and courage. Without a cleansed heart, realisation is impossible. Wisdom can enter only a purified mind. Sadhana - slow and steady - can succeed in purifying it. Victory is yours if you model yore selves on Arjuna, and his yearning.

Everyone of you can be Arjuna and achieve victory The last shloka of the Geetha was quoted now by Sri Bhagavantham. It says, "Yathra Yogeswarah Krishna Yathra Partho Dhanurdharah, Thathra Sreer Vijayo Bhuuthir Dhruva Neethir Mathir Mama" - "Where there is Krishna the Supreme Yogi and where also there is Arjuna bearing his bow, there victory for truth and justice is assured." This verse assures victory not only when the Mahabharatha Arjuna

wields the bow in the presence of Krishna. Everyone of you can be Arjuna and wield the bow and achieve victory. For the bow is but the symbol of courage and faith, of high resolve and undaunted calibre. And how can you become Arjuna? Arjuna means white, pure, unsullied, without blemish. As soon as you become that and hold the bow (the Upanishaths declare that the Pranava or Om is the arrow and God is the target), 'Krishna is ready with His Presence, for He is everywhere at every moment. There is no need to invite Him or instal Him. He will answer from your very heart.

You may say that progress is possible only through My Grace; but, though My Heart is soft as butter, it melts only when there is some warmth in your prayer. Unless you make some disciplined effort, some sadhana, Grace cannot descend on you. The yearning, the agony of unfulfilled aim melts My Heart. That is the Avedana (anguish) that wins Grace.

How so many Navarathris and Shivarathris you may attend at this place, unless you illumine your heart and make it shine clear and pure, it will be shrouded in darkness, immersed in rathri (night) only.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

46. The sea-saw

Date: **September 1972** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam**

MAN is misled into believing that nature is his rival which has to be defeated and conquered; he struggles and suffers loss and pain in the process. He considers it heroic to undergo travail in what he calls conquest of nature. But, if only he feels kinship with nature, as equally saturated with divinity, and proclaiming with equal clarity the immanence of God, he can be happier and much more restful and content. When you see everywhere, on every inch of ground, in every being, small or big, the foot-print of God, nature is seen in a new vesture of glory, a manifestation that demands worship, rather than exploitation and enslavement. The ego in man sets him against all else; silence it and all becomes one's kith and kin. The ego is the first sprout from the seed of ignorance, which is not a positive acquisition, but only, the absence of knowledge. When knowledge shines, inner and outer natures are both seen as divine. There is nothing that is not IT. When this is experienced, love floods the heart and flows towards all. There is no independence; there is only interdependence, for all waves are equally dependent on the sea beneath. You use the word, 'my own'; who is this 'my' who owns you, and whom you own as yourself?. It is the Divine in you, and in all. Sueccha is the word in Sanskrit, for "one's desire," the iccha (desire) of sva (oneself). Since the self of one and the self of all else are the same, sveccha should be the common factor in all desires, namely, love. Listen to the voice of God, that warns, directs, prompts, and prevents; you cannot then be wrong.

Direct all your powers towards God

It may be said that love is a universal virtue and it is being manifested in human relations, more or less, by all. But, it is limited and poisoned by petty considerations and dried up by hatred and envy. Love must see the best in others and not the worst. Love cannot ignore the divinity in others. Blind men have the right to deny light; but, those with eyes, have no such explanation. When such men swear that they see only the many, and not the One, it is surely the fault of the vision. Try to correct it, through sadhana (spiritual

discipline). You have three means of understanding: Iccha-shakthi (the power of the Will), Kriya-shakthi (the power of Action) and Jnana-shakthi (the power of Knowledge). Direct all three towards God; Desire Him, Serve Him and Know Him. Do not let senses and the emotions run away with you on their back. Hold them in check. Set before them the goal of God. If your emotions prescribe one direction, guide them in the contrary direction; that is the way to counter their evil. Once it happened that Krishna, Balarama and Sathyaki who were quite little boys at that time, scarcely four or five years old, strayed into a thick jungle, all alone, when darkness fell, and there was no way of reaching Gokulam! Of course, as you must have guessed already, it was a stratagem of Krishna; even at that age, he would do nothing without a deep purpose behind it and the purpose would invariably be teaching some one some good lesson. They decided to spend the night, just where they were; Krishna put fright into them, with his descriptions of ghosts, ghouls and demons roaming in search of human prey. He proposed that two shall sleep for three hours at a stretch while the other one kept watch.

Anger can be subdued only for forbearance

It was Sathyaki's duty to keep awake and be on the lookout, from 7 to 10; Balarama was to be vigilant from 10 to 1 a.m. Krishna was to start his part of the duty at 1 and keep on till 4. Sathyaki sat up to 10 and Balarama and Krishna laid themselves on beds of dried leaves and slept soundly. Meanwhile a demon did actually present himself, before the little Sathyaki. He fell upon the boy, who resisted heroically dealing and receiving hammer-strokes with fists, with a good number of clawing and biting in between. The demon had to retreat at last, leaving Sathyaki badly mauled, but, happy. The two brothers were sound asleep; they had not been disturbed in the least by the noise of the encounter. Sathyaki had met blow with blow, and dealt injury for injury. At 10, he awakened Balarama and stretched his body on the heap of leaves, as if nothing had happened. The demon invited Balarama too for combat and had to retreat humiliated, because Balarama too was as fierce as he, and his blows were even more terrible than Sathyaki's. Balarama too curled himself into the bed at 1 a.m, after waking up Krishna who was to keep watch until Brahma-muhurtha, the auspicious hour when Gods are to be propitiated,

that is, 4 a.m.

The demon came roaring like a wounded tiger, and advanced ferociously at the little Divine Boy. Krishna turned his sweet charming face at him, and rewarded him with a lovely smile. That smile disarmed the demon; the longer he came under its influence, the weaker became his vengeance and venom. At last, the demon became as docile as a lamb; when the other two woke, they were surprised at the victory that Krishna had won by the weaponry of Love. You cannot destroy anger by anger, cruelty by cruelty, hatred by hatred. Anger can be subdued only by forbearance; cruelty can be overcome only by non-violence, hatred yields only charity and compassion.

Become rulers of the inner empire

Arjuna too once charged his eldest brother, Dharmaraja, with callous indifference to the sufferings of his other brothers and of their queen, Dhroupadhi and her children; he flung arrows of scorn at him for his blind adherence to 'morality and righteousness', despite the heinous provocations to retaliation, that their cousins aimed at them. As a result, Arjuna told him, "Our mother lives apart from us, our wife is insulted in open court, we wander as exiles in the jungles, my son has been surrounded and done to death, and we have been defamed and disgraced beyond endurance. All the while, you have been putting up with all this ignominy, content with your clinging to virtue." When he had finished his tirade, Dharmaraja replied calmly, with no sign of resentment, "Patience, tolerance, love - these alone can bring success; of what use is victory, if it is gained by falsehood and ferocity? Such a war will breed wars for ever. We shall act ever as if we are in the presence of God, as if God is watching and weighing every thought, word and deed. See yourselves in all, see all in yourselves; that is the road to lasting peace and joy. Let us not seek the outer empire; let us become rulers of the inner empire. Let us not try to defy the outer enemy, leaving the inner foe to grow in striking power. We have Krishna with us, and so, who can defeat us? We shall win through winning His Grace."

Do not allow faith to be upset

Never stray from the path of right, whatever the trouble or temptation. Do not loosen the grip; do not turn back. Do not allow faith to be upset. If you attach importance to riches or children or fame or fortune, you are thereby-announcing that you are devoted, not: to God, but to riches, children and the rest. If you are devoted to God, how should you manifest that devotion? Let me tell you how. By manifesting divine qualities, divine virtues, divine love, divine strength. Become Sai, be Sai.

When the river Chithravathi is boisterously rolling along, we call it a flood; when the waters have receded, we call it a river. When desires, plans, wishes, and yearnings roll along, we call it the 'mind'; when they subside, we call it 'chittha' (consciousness). When the white cloth is dirty, it is mind; when the whiteness is restored by washing, it is chittha. When desires make you greedy to possess, it is mind; when love makes you revere and adore, sympathise and serve, then, it is chittha. The mind can be transformed into chittha, only through jijnasa and sadhana (inquiry and discipline). Jijnasa is the stage of studentship or apprenticeship; sadhana is working on a job; and when you go through these two stages, you can afford to be calm, contented, loving all and being loved by all, as the old man who retires on a pension. When you give expression to your innate Divinity, it takes the form of Love. Ramakrishna Paramahansa could not tolerate someone walking on grass; he felt the weight of the feet and the crushing himself.

View the Universe as the handiwork of God

You have to busy yourselves with activity, in order to use time and skill to the best advantage. That is your duty and duty is God. The dull and the inert will hesitate to be active, for fear of exhaustion or failure, or loss. The emotional, passionate individuals will plunge headlong and crave for quick results and will be disappointed if they do not come in. The balanced persons will be active, because it is their duty, they will not be agitated by anything - failure or success. The godly will take up activity as a means of worshipping God, and they leave the result to God. They know that they are but instruments in the hands of God. The godly are following the Sathwik, but, due to sheer

ignorance and the unquestioned obedience to the senses, man is suffering pain and grief; that is the sad state of affairs, not only in India but all over the world. Try to sanctify every item of work by dedicating it to some Divine end. The Universe is the handiwork of God, and therefore, meaningful and moral. View it as such and derive the utmost benefit. Without dedication, work is like a paper-flower, unfit to be offered to God; cheap, fragranceless, dry, tawdry. Offer God real flowers grown in the garden of your heart, fragrant, beautiful, delighting. Try to see everyone as a ray of God. Life is a see-saw, with man sitting on a plank, poised on the round log - Jnana Shakthi, his basic nature of Wisdom. When the plank comes down to one side, it is Iccha Shakthi - Bhakthi Yoga, emotional adoration; when it comes down on the other side, it is Kriya-Shakthi - Karma Yoga, activity to adore men as embodiments of divinity, service to man, adoration of nature by fostering love and tenderness. So long as the see-saw is based on Jnana, one is safe. Jnana (Wisdom) is the awareness that God is all. He is the seed, the Universe is the tree; instincts, impulses, emotions, passions - these are the branches and boughs and twigs; intelligence is the flower; pure unattached consciousness is the fruit; love is the sweetness in the fruit.

The root of all religions, the substance of all scriptures, the rendezvous of all roads, the inspiration of all individuals is the Principle of Prema (Love). It is the firmest foundation for man's mission of life. It is the light that ensures world peace and world prosperity.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

47. Yajna: what it teaches

Date: 11 October 1972 / Location: Prashanthi Nilayam

THE Vedapurusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna, being celebrated every Dhasara at Prashanthi Nilayam, is a rite that promotes the welfare and prosperity of the whole of mankind. But, it is difficult to convince doubters and disbelievers that this is the truth. Many feel that since such Vedhic ceremonies can be performed in orthodox style, with all the manthras uttered in correct style, only in India, their efficiency, if any, is confined to this land only, and so, they ask, how can this be beneficial in other regions where people have no faith in such rituals and hymns? Such doubters restrict the meaning of the word, Yajna. Yajna means, 'any activity dedicated to the glory of God,' not merely, this activity prescribed in the ancient scriptures. Activity dedicated to the glory of God is being done, and can be done in all climes, in all realms, by all races. The 'dedication' ensures success. Without it, there will inevitably arise anxiety, fear and faction. Every activity in the world is God-directed, Godward moving, whether you know it or not. Only one has to be aware of it and share in the thrill of that knowledge. If God is not the inspirer and motivator, how can the Universe be moving in harmony, wheeling so smoothly? Else, there will be chaos, anarchy and an inferno of gamble.

Charity and self-control are integral parts of Yagna

Do not think that the Yajna is only this ceremony performed in this enclosure, marked out as specially holy, attended by readings and recitals from sacred texts and the chanting of Vedhic hymns, and nothing other than this. No. Yajna is a continuous process; every one who lives in the constant presence of God, and does all acts as dedicated to God is engaged in Yajna. Three processes go together in spiritual discipline, as laid down by the sages: Yajna, Dhana and Thapas (Sacrifice, Charity and Self-control). They cannot be partitioned and particularised thus. Charity and self-control are integral parts of yagna. That is why Yajna is translated as Sacrifice, for, the process of charity or Dhana is essential in yajna. Also thapas, that is to say, strict regulation of emotions and thought-processes, to ensure peace and faith.

There are various yajnas prescribed by the Vedas. This is the Vedapurusha Yajna, a sacrificial ceremony dedicated to the Purusha extolled in the Vedas, the Purusha mentioned in the Purusha Suuktha as constituting the Universe and subsuming it wholly as the limbs of His Cosmic Body.

Every house-holder has the duty of performing for his own welfare and the welfare of the society in which he lives, five Yajnas like Pithryajana (yajna by which the forefathers are worshipped), Rishiyajna (yajna by which the sages are honoured, that is to say, by the study and practice of their teaching), Bhuuthayajna (yajna by which the animals and lower-beings are revered, that is to say, by provision of shelters, fodder etc.) and Dhevayajna (worship of God). The Vedapurusha is the Purushotthama (the Supremest Person) for by His Will He manifested Himself as the cosmos and its components, out of Himself. There is nothing that is not He; so, how can you be different? In these matters, faith comes first; it has to. Believe that you are Divine; conduct yourselves in accordance with that sovereign status; then, you will be blessed with the Anubhuuthi - the experience, the vision, the realisation, the awareness, the bliss. And, as a result, you are merged in that everlasting Anandha.

The only one God can be reached by a thousand Names

Remember, you cannot have the anubhava (experience) and the Anandha (Bliss) first. And, you cannot postpone faith, until you get them. You cannot bargain: "Give me the Anandha and then, I shall have faith." See the Purushotthama in all purushas. Purusha means, he who lives in the pura (port, city, or town). Each one of us is the resident and the sole resident of a distinct house of God. But, the Purushotthama - the 'Supreme Resident in all the cities - is God. You can recognise this Purushotthama, if you educate yourselves properly. Take this Yajna performed here. In this One Fire, offerings are made concurrently with the recitation of the names of God, enclosed in elaborate hymns. More than 3560 offerings are made each day, for seven days. Each name describes God as having a special form. But this One Fire consumes all the offerings, and through its intermission every one of the offerings reaches the One God, the One that really IS. Or, consider this: you perform worship

with 1008 Names, a rite called Sahasranama archana. You keep an idol or picture before you and offer one flower at a time at the feet of that symbol of God, repeating the names, one at a time. The one symbol of the One God is only One, though He can be reached by a thousand names. Though you are acknowledging only One in all these rites, proclaiming the One Adhwaithic (nondualistic) Divine, your sense and your intellect and your mind, its pack of desires, insist on running after the Many. This is the Maya (delusion) that casts its enchantment on weak and ignorant men. It urges man towards wild prolific greeds of the manyfaced senses.

When you take food, do it in a prayerful mode

To realise the One, the Universal Absolute, which personalises itself into God and Creation, there is no discipline more valuable and more effective than SEVA. All the 1008 Names of the Sahasranama archana reach the One. All the 1000 names of thousand-faced society connote only the One God that plays in those 1000 roles. The One appears as if it is enshrined in the 1000 bodies. This is the truth you have to realise and cherish as the most precious in life. You have observed that the Vedhic Pandiths (priestly scholars) are pouring ghee into the Fire, every time the recitation of a hymn is over. Every day, when you take food, you are offering eatables to the Fire that God has lit in you to digest food. You have to eat in a prayerful mode, in profound gratitude. The Geetha says that the fire which cooked the meal is God, the meal is God, the eater is God, the purpose of eating is to carry on the work entrusted by God or pleasing to God, and that the fruit of that work is, progress towards God. You must perform another yajna too, every day. Pour the egoistic desires and emotions, passions, impulses and acts into the flames of dedication and devotion. In fact, that is real Yajna, of which these are reflections and prompters, guides and prototypes. This yajna is only the concrete symbolic representation of the abstract underlying Truth. Just as a child is taught to pronounce the words, head, net, wave, garland, by making it associate the sounds and the letterforms with pictures of the objects so named, through this kshara (temporary) symbol the Akshara thathwa (the Eternal Principle) is brought before the consciousness.

Make every thought a longing for God

This Puuja, this Yajna, and this Homa, are arranged here every Dhasara, in order to help you to learn that other, ever-lasting, abstract Yajna, which every one of you has to do, to save yourselves from fear, grief and anxiety. You must have noticed that the Pandiths close each day's Yajna with a prayer that calls for World Peace, peace for all mankind, peace and happiness, for there can be no peace without happiness and no happiness without peace. Lokas samasthas Sukhino bhavanthu, they pray. "May all the world have happiness, and peace." Peace of mind cannot be gained by wealth or fame or scholarship or skill. For that, you have to clean the mind, purify the heart, yearn for service of the divine forms that move around you. Do every deed as an act of worship; make every thought a longing for Him; change every word that comes from your tongue into a hymn in His praise. This is the lesson that you have to learn from Prasanthi Nilayam, every Dhasara, during the week the Yajna is celebrated.

Each of you has struggled upwards from the stone to plant, from plant to animal, from animal to man! Do not slide back into the beast; rise higher to Divinity, shining with the new effulgence of love.

The Divine is the energy that animates, the urge that circulates the blood in your veins, that transmits knowledge and experience through the nerves, that correlates and collects for storage the impressions your senses gather, the conclusions your intelligence garners!

Keep in line with the Divine, by means of Love, Truth and Goodness.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

48. Poornachandra

Date: 17 October 1972 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

A BUBBLE is born on water, from water and merges in water! Man is born in God and merges in God! This is the lesson India has been teaching her children as well as all men anywhere for centuries. She gave the message of Divinity to humanity. Festivals like Dhasara are designed to make man aware of his Divinity, to endow him with purity to become aware of his holiness, to imprint on his heart the wisdom won by the sages after years of yearning. The monastic heads, hereditary gurus, the leaders and rulers of the land are not inspiring people to awaken to this truth. Though millions get a glimpse of the ecstasy of union with the Divine Beauty and Divine Majesty from these festivals and pilgrimages, the real purpose of the festivals and the benefit one has to derive from the concourse of like-minded people is not understood or explained by any one. The holy teachings of our land are not being implemented by the so-called custodians of culture - the educationists, the preceptors and the gurus. Pilgrimages impress on people the lesson of unity; they bring together people from all corners of the world, irrespective of language or locality. The places of pilgrimage are also distributed all over the land. Festivals like the Dhasara at Prasanthi Nilayam bring together Sadhakas from all the continents, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, and colour; they are all motivated by the same urge, to involve themselves more and more in attempts to realise their innate Divinity. They have met here to enjoy the supreme delight in the Holy presence of the Lord and to recognise the unity of all in the Divine Athmic splendour.

Desire knows no justification and has no end

But man is caught in low desires. Desire is the sole cause of sorrow and distress. Sacrifice is the best means of avoiding desire and the consequent grief and disappointment. Several devotees come to Me and complain, "Lord! I am suffering from this problem," "I am suffering from some headache," "I am suffering from stomach ache." I give all of them the same reply, "Santhosham" (I am happy), to every one. When a bereaved wife tells Me that

her husband has departed, then also I say Santhosham. You may wonder why I give the same reply to all such persons. Santhosham is not the common type of joy or happiness, the transient, trivial pleasure you get from worldly success or material gain. "San" means anything gained through fair means, honourable methods. Thosham is sacred, holy, exaltation, ecstasy. Of all the gifts that you receive from God, the greatest gift is Santhosham. The opposite of Santhosham is 'Sorrow', which is the fruit of asha (desire) that arouses hope and almost always results in disappointment or despair. One asha engenders another: one desire proliferates into a hundred, even when it is fulfilled. Asha is like the shadow caused by the morning Sun - it gets longer when you run to catch it. It tantalises you and makes you a fool. It knows, no justification and has no end. So, Santhosham is the supreme blessing of the Lord, who in His infinite Love, puts an end to that unquenchable thirst. No wealth or other attainment can equal it in efficacy. Santhosham is the culmination of Desire in full contentment and sacred satiety.

The sacred texts of India have abiding, vitality

The culture of India has been exhorting people to learn this lesson and practise this discipline but, the glitter of the West with its scientific advance and technological superiority have enslaved the brain and hems of Indians and they pay no heed to the Voice of the Mother which warns and teaches. They are like the dull-witted inhabitants of the Gangetic basin who dig wells on the banks of the holy river - instead of drawing the sacred water itself for their needs! You should pledge yourself to protect, practise and promote the ancient time-tested culture of your country. It is not an accident that you are born in this land. A sacred responsibility is resting on your shoulders. The greatness of India is something unique; so is your good fortune to be living at a time when it is being fast recognised all over the world by anxiety ridden, fear torn, humans. A word about; Poets who read poems now. According to tradition only the Rishis who had intuitively cognised the hymns in. praise of God and the Divine in man were revered as Poets or kavis. Of course, rishis or sages were honoured as poets, and the appellation rishis was not given to 'poets.' Rishis could be called kavis, because, 'kavi' meant he who understood the past, realised the present and educated people for the future. Since the

poet has a purified consciousness, he could pronounce impartial judgement on the past, he could lay his finger on the ills and 'wells' of the present and he could recommend the paths for progress in the future. People could place faith in their words and listen to their call. They would not mislead or misinterpret. Genuine poets are aware of the three periods of time, can roam in their imagination over the three worlds and be ever fixed in consciousness with the three Divine Entities of the Trinity. The Shasthras, Puranas, Epics and other sacred texts of India have abiding vitality and validity, only because their authors had such unquestioned authority to guide and interpret the Age 'in which they lived and composed their works.

The sages of India desired to establish peace on earth

Vyasa and Valmeeki underwent a long process of asceticism and study, as well as experience 'of spiritual bliss and thus lifted themselves upto the heights of rishihood, before they composed the epics and texts bearing their name. The question may be asked, "Why should they compose poetry, however exalted, after attaining rishihood? What was the urge that prompted them?" The answer is: "They were overcome with compassion, for the fellow-pilgrims struggling along the path they had-traversed; they were full of agony at the plight of fellow-beings who were sweltering in the heat of worldly entanglements." They desired to establish peace on earth and good-will among mankind. Their attention was ever on the Vedhic message, "Swayam theernah, paran tharayathi." "Themselves having crossed the Sea of Samsara (change), they help others to do likewise." Themselves risen to the Divine, they helped others to rise.

Nature has no beginning and no end

One of the stages of development of beings into Divinity is Manavathwa (Humanness), being endowed with Manas (mind), which is an instrument for bondage to, as well as for liberation from, physical shackles. Some people define 'Prakrithi' (the objective world) as a mere fancy of the mind. But, it 'is as valid, as real, as the Lord Himself. God has no beginning and no end. Nature or Prakrithi too has no beginning and no end. Prakrithi is a stream that

flows from beyond time into the timeless future. The individual is the Purusha, the person who resides in this Pura (Body or Castle or Fort). There are two Purushas - the Kshara Purusha, and the Akshara Purusha. The Kshara Purusha is bound up with material life and so is subject to change. He is entangled with the five Koshas (Sheaths), the five Pranas (Vital Airs) the five Indhriyas (senses of perception). The Akshara Purusha is the Sakshi (Witness). There is another over-all Purusha, the Purushothama, who is beyond the three segments of time, the three Universes and is everywhere at the same moment and all moments. His Glory is evident in all things and beings. You should strive to escape from the identification with the body and feel that you are only the residents of the Body - the Kshara Purushas. Then, by sadhana you are able to cognise the Akshara Purusha, the Witness of even the Kshara Purusha, the Jeeva. By practising the unbroken presence of the Purushothama (Supreme person) who is resplendent in all creation, you can ultimately merge in Him, as the consummation of all the lives you have spent here below.

Devotees who worked with a spirit of dedication

Members of the Sai Organisation and those who adhere to the Universal path to Sai should not be carried away by ideas of inferiority or superiority based on differences of religion, caste or creed. They should honour Faith, Steadfastness, Sincerity, Purity, wherever found. There are some people who ascribe all the ills of Society to the prevalence of religion and the importance given to social divisions. They say all the unrest and turmoil prevalent today are the direct results of this system. This is not true. Diversity of religion and faith is conducive to the welfare of mankind. Division of labour is a genuinely beneficial social need. Life can be sanctified and elevated to a worshipful pilgrimage if only everyone clings to his way and sees it in its proper perspective. Idle brains exaggerate matters and cynics cause great social damage. Gulfs are widened by thoughtless criticism. If only all of you remember the twin principles of cohesion, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, mankind will soon become a mighty family full of peace and joy.

I must mention one instance of good work done by people who are actuated

by sense of duty. This spacious shed, these lines of three storeyed flats, this addition and artistic alterations which are made in the Prashanthi Mandhir are all examples of work done in the spirit of worship. Swami confers blessings on the engineers whom He has called up to sit on the dais - for they have done signal service to provide more facilities for the streams of devotees who long to stay in Swami's Presence.

We have here the 82-year old engineer B. Sathyanarayana of Andhra Pradesh, who has held positions of great responsibility and high usefulness in the past. He has worked with full fervour and enthusiasm using all skills for the works allotted to him. Joga Rao has shouldered the responsibilities laid on him as an Engineer by Swami admirably well. He has worked night and day in a spirit of dedication. I bless them and their families. May they enjoy peace, health and happiness.

Become free from the taint of selfishness

This vastly spacious shed with all amenities of lighting and sound equipment where you are sitting comfortably in thousands, with this platform so broad and deep, and so impressively designed are the products of the dedication and sense of duty of another individual about whom I want to tell you. Keeping in mind the target date set by Swami, Sri P.R. Kamani, one of the greatest of Swami's Devotees, has personally supervised the erection of this shed. Supplying scarce articles like iron and cement and also the technical guidance and skill, with a smiling face and an exuberant heart, he sought to fulfil Swami's Sankalpa and succeeded. Sri P.R. Kamani is responsible for giving you all so much delight. His devotion and the loving care and steady attention that he bestows on any work connected with Swami is really remarkable. It is decided that this great auditorium shall be consecrated to the memory of Sri ' P. R. Kamani. From this day, it shall be known as Poornachandra Auditorium. Poornachandra, where we derive all this Anandha is like the Full Moon, the embodiment and symbol of a full mind that is free from the taint of selfishness and wavering. It is my intention and desire that all those who use this Auditorium and who listen to and are inspired by the discourses and Special Programmes that happen here should also become

'Full Moons'. Sometimes, we pursue this or that fragment of the mind and derive some little Anandha, spending our lives this way and that, but the highest fulfilment is to have the full expansion of the pure mind, which is symbolised by the Full Moon - Poornachandra. The mind is the Moon, the buddhi (intelligence) is the Sun and both are interacting with each other, rotating in the heart, which is the sky! In the sky, clouds of pleasure and sorrow, disappointment and success, joys and griefs, may be rolling along. But, in spite of these, the Sun and Moon carry on their allotted duties. So man too must carry on in a spirit of dedication, as P. R. Kamani did. We can assert; that there is no fulfilment greater than that, there is no merit higher than that, to be acquired by man.

Because this great devotee has always cherished Swami in his heart and was ceaselessly engaged in the thought of Swami only, he is ever with Swami and in Swami. This Auditorium shall be known as Poornachandra - His memory, enshrined in that name, will live for ever.

49. Why Shivam?

Date: 25 October 1972 / Location: Hyderabad

THE construction of this Mandhir named Shivam is a special Sadhana for the residents of Bhagyanagara (Hyderabad). Its appearance is unique, for it is to be built in the shape of a Linga, the form most approximate to the conception of the formless, attributeless Absolute. The Linga is the form of God, emerging from the Nirakara (formless) to the Sakara (formfilled). Other Akaras (Forms) are all subsumed in the Linga Form. Prakrithi, the objective world, is the base; it signifies that the Lord is established in that manifestation of His, which is the concrete presentation of His play, His potentiality and His Shakthi (Power). That is why the Lord is described as Shiva Shakthi Atmaka Swarupam : - "the Supreme which became the Shiva and the Shakthi," the latent and the patent. You will notice that the base has a horizontal superstructure, over which the cylindrical Linga is placed. The base is Sathyam, the structure over it is Shivam and the Linga is Sundharam. One is the flower, the second is the perfume and the third is the wind, the Formless that wafts the fragrance, which is the symbol of mangalam (auspiciousness) which is Shivam. Sathyam or (Truth) is the base on which the Universe and all that it implies rest. The message this building will convey is that man is the embodiment of Sathyam, Shivam and Sundharam, and it will call on all to live up to that glory. He has to realise the Truth and demonstrate in thought, word and deed that Truth is the very basis of his existence. Know the Truth and the Truth shall make you strong, steady kin with all, and free from the bonds of lust and hate. Man has to learn the lesson of Shivam: swallow the poison of anger and greed, and make it ineffective in its effort to harm the world. Spread consolation and comfort through speech and action.

Man has to realise that he is Shivam

Shiva wears the crescent on His crown so that the soft moonlight might mark out the pilgrim route to God, and make the journey less toilsome. He spreads joy and peace. But, the fiery, ferocious poison, Shiva hides behind the blue

patch on His throat. That is a lesson for man: keep under restraint, within you, the qualities and tendencies that are anti-social, the poisonous hatreds and competitive greeds. The Shivam does not mean any particular God or unit of the Trinity. It includes all mankind, for man has to realise that he is Shivam. Then, the Sundharam too is a reminder that Truth is beauty, and Beauty is Divine, not mere physical beauty but, moral and spiritual beauty. Give up ugly thoughts, unpleasant speech and disgusting acts. Have the ideal of beauty ever in mind.

Avadhani said just now that such buildings are the landmarks of the Sai Era and that they should be built all over India. I have no such desire. I do not appreciate or encourage such accumulations of stone and cement, of brick and mortar. I long to reside in your hearts, fragrant with the incense of fine virtues, merciful intentions and compassionate emotions. That is the Shivam I desire, the Mandhir built of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Inner Charm is the genuine Beauty. Seetha interned in Ashoka Vana in Lanka, was suddenly confronted by a monkey; but, that ugly creature struck her as full of beauty, when it brought her the long awaited message from Rama! The loveliness of the Vana (garden), the appealing scenery, the bright beautiful ware that Ravana spread before her could not win her heart; but, the one word, Rama endeared her to the strange monkey crouched on top of the tree under which she was encircled by ogresses.

Smog of hatred and greed tarnish the temple towers

The beauty of Nature is but a reflection of the Beauty that is God. But, like all images, it is not substantial. Flowers fade, clouds scatter into new patterns, physical charm is but a flash that disappears in a moment - but, Divine Beauty is eternal, full, free. That Sundharam, is Sathyam, unaffected by the passage of Time, unchanging with the location; that Sundharam is the real Shivam, the only Good that is. Pursuing paltry physical beauty leads man astray; it is as calamitous as the pursuit of trivial joy. Shivam is Goodness; the Body is for realising Godness, which is total goodness. But, the body is not itself goodness or godness; it is an instrument that breaks down every moment and that is rebuilt every moment getting weaker in the process. The

father says proudly, My son is growing fast, but really, his life is ebbing fast. The body is valuable, only on account of its use in realising God. So also, a Mandhir or this Shivam is valuable only when you are able to realise the God that dwells therein. The Gopuram (Tower) of a temple or mandhir is like the raised hand of God calling on the weary pilgrim to halt and take rest, and proceed faster to the Goal he is seeking. In most places, these old towers are hidden in the forest of chimneys that have crowded around them in recent times. The smoke from these factories and the smog of hatred that emanate from faction and greed tarnish the atmosphere of the temple towers. Even the temples have been denigrated by the bargaining for fees and the collection of toll for religious services. The stream of Anandha that flows from worship is interrupted by demands for monetary contributions. Temples are not allowed to pour into the social mind a constant stream of peace and joy.

"Why this Mandhir? you may ask. Is it for My stay whenever I happen to visit Hyderabad? I do not need a huge building, nor the furniture and appliances you are proposing to collect here. It will serve more the needs of those who have now to follow Me around from house to house. Since I have no fixed residence, they are hard put to it, women and children, the well and the ill, to know where I will be available. This building will give them a place where they can await Me. It also gives Me another excuse to come to Hyderabad for, I am surely coming to 'open' this Shivam, when it is completed!

50. Play the game

Date: 23 November 1972 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 47

BELIEVING that the body is All, and that there is no entity embodied in it - this is Mistake No.1. Ignoring or forgetting that there can be no wave without the ocean, no body without the Atma (Divine Self), is Mistake No.2. The Atma has no modification or mood. It is the individualised embodiment that undergoes modifications and is caught in moods. Once you know that you are in essence the Atma, you too will be unaffected. Another characteristic of the individual is that he cannot be alone, separate from the rest. Like a drop of oil on water, he spreads; he reaches out and far. 'I' seeks other 'I's and seeks to become We. Life is a march from I to We. But, it usually strays from I to They. And does not reach the God, We.

Intellect alone can direct man in the path of discrimination, between the true path and false, the proper step and the improper. This is the reason why man has been praying since ages, through the Gayathri hymn: "Illumine me, prompt my intelligence, so that I may walk aright." The reasoning power of man is shaped, not only by the education he receives now, but, more by the impact of past lives and the import of future events. If the power is used for selfaggrandizement it feeds delusion; if it is used in service for others, it will promote the Revelation of Reality. Reason must examine the vagaries of the mind and make patent the Divinity, the resides and shines in every individual.

Avathars are ever alert, aware, alight

Give away 'Love' to all; give up the ego; display heroism in service; with compassion to fellowmen, feel your intimate kinship with them. Visualise the Atma that illumines all; derive unending Bliss therefrom.

All who come embodied are Avathars, that is to say, advents of the Divine, manifestations of God. What, then, is the special feature of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ? Why do you celebrate their birthdays with such reverential enthusiasm? The speciality is this: they are aware; you are unaware of the

Atma which is the Truth. Awareness confers Grace, Glory, Majesty, Might, Splendour. Awareness confers liberation from bounds, from time, space and causation, from sleep, dream and wakefulness. For you, sleep is fiction, dream is fantasy and wakefulness a many-directional storm. Avathars are ever alert, aware, alight. The wise man is he who keeps his reason sharp and clear, and sees things as they really are. He listens to the advice: Life is a Challenge, Meet it; Life is Love, Share it; Life is a Dream, Realise it; Life a Game, Play it.

This is the real Pilgrim's progress. This is the Lion's march across the forest, fearless, masterful and victorious. The roar of the lion makes all the denizens scamper in panic; so too the Halo of Wisdom scatters the dark brood of fear and doubt. Life sweeps along like a wild typhoon; the allotted years do melt like snow before the Sun; but, man wastes the precious chance, and strays into folly and frivolity. The yearning of the human soul, "From untruth lead me into Truth; from darkness lead me into Light; from death, lead me into Immortality," - this is unrealised. Of what use is it to honour the Avathar and hold the day when the Avathar took human form as sacred?

Plant the seeds of love in your hearts

The message of the Avathar must be born, must become alive, must grow in you, your heart - that is the birthday, you have to celebrate. Celebrate the Avathar's Birthday in your own village. You need not travel long distances to where I physically am. Plant the seeds of Love in your hearts, let them grow into trees of service and shower the sweet fruits of Anandha. Share the Anandha with all. That is the proper way to celebrate the Birthday. I have been telling you that My Life is My Message. I am exhorting you in the Upanishadhic way, "Revere the Mother as Divine, Revere the Father as Divine, Revere the Teacher as Divine, Revere the Guest as Divine." Now I am proceeding to the place where their bodies are entombed to offer, as I have advised you, to express gratitude and respect, to the parents. After that, the Prashanthi Flag will be hoisted on the Mandhir. Hoist it on the shrines of your hearts, shrines where God is installed and realised in actual presence, every moment of your lives.

A red-hot iron hammer can be hammered into shape by a cold iron hammer. So too, a person red hot with emotion and passion can be hammered by the hammer that knows no heat of anger or hate. That is the reason Rama was able to defeat Ravana and destroy him. Why?

The very word Sathwa means strength, power, vigour, vitality. For virtue is power, goodness is power. Rama and Lakshmana are Sathwik Mahatmas, embodiments of the powers that righteousness can endow.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

51. The three bodies

Date: 23 November 1972 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 47

MAN is engaged in ceaseless search for happiness; but, he is incapable of defining what exactly is the essential component of happiness. So, he flits from one objective gain to another, ever discontented with himself, ever bothered by disappointment. He tries to possess, to accumulate, to acquire more and more of external junk, which cloud his vision and dulls his appetite for gains for lasting value. When can a man say, "I am fully happy; I need no more?" What is the nature of joy or comfort that external objects can give? Man does not pause to inquire. He is unaware that he himself is the embodiment of the highest and the most lasting happiness or Anandha (Bliss). That flaw has led him into disaster and disease. Before seeking happiness through the senses, the mind and the intellect, man has to examine whether he is a bundle of senses, or a mind playing with them or an intellect that rationalises the mental cravings. The body is the gross body; the water which it is intended to contain and carry is the subtle body; the reality of the potter who shaped it and willed it is the causal body. The three bodies which each has are called respectively Sthula (gross), Suukshma (subtle) and Karana (causal). Physical and vital sheaths are sthula, mental and the intellectual sheaths are the Suukshma, and the Blissful or Anandhamaya sheath is the Karana or Causal body of man. Behind the Anandha is the spring of Anandha, the Atma.

Three stages of Wisdom related to three bodies

There are three stages of wisdom correlated to those three bodies: Jnana, Sujnana and Vijnana. Knowledge that is gained by the analysis of the objective world and the similarities of the behaviour of its components is Jnana. When this knowledge is further studied and practised to subserve the best interests of the individual society, it becomes Sujnana, or beneficial wisdom. The intentions and urges that arise from the purified consciousness saturated with the Divine qualities emanating from the sage is Vijnana, the Highest Wisdom. It is to be noted that the word Vijnana is often misused to

indicate mere Jnana, or co-ordinated information, analysed information about sense perceptions arising out of contact with the material objective world. Bharatheeya Culture uses the word for the Supreme Wisdom, which denotes the seer, the saint.

Intelligence, intellect, intuition - these three govern the thoughts and actions of man. One leads to another. This is the significance of the prayer with which Gandhi awakened the urge of liberation in this vast country, liberation not only from alien rule but also from alien tendencies and trends of thought. He caused the reverberation all over the land from a million throats of the prayer, Sabko sanmathi dhe Bhagavan - "O Lord! Grant every one the equipment of beneficent intelligence." Once that is assured, progress is certain.

Lessons to be learnt from Hanuman's mission to Lanka

Once the intelligence is purified and dedicated to spiritual effort, there should be no slipping back whatever the obstacle, whatever the temptation. Hanuman, charged with the mission of discovering the place where Ravana had confined Seetha, decided that he should take a leap over the sea towards Lanka to search for her in that island of Ram that he carried in his heart and on his tongue. A mountain immersed at the bottom of the sea felt a strong urge to do him some little service, for, he was the instrument of God, and engaged in an exhausting adventure! Its name was Mynaka. It rose above the waters and called upon Hanuman to rest awhile on its crest, and refresh himself with the fruits upon the trees that grew thereon. Hanuman declined to delay his landing in Lanka; he was engaged in a Divine Mission, which brooked no rest, no delay, no dallying. He turned a deaf ear to the importunities of Mynaka, and sped forward to fulfil the command of the Lord. Ponder over this incident: Consider the compassion and the eagerness to serve which the 'inert' massive mountain felt! Consider the steadfastness, the un-deviating faith, the single-pointed loyalty of the monkey, Hanuman! Do they not teach invaluable lessons to man - lessons of heart that melts at suffering, a head that refuses to swerve from the path of duty? The whole duty of man is to engage himself in good acts with the gross body, scatter

good thoughts and good influences around him with his subtle body, and earn self-realisation and Bliss through his causal body.

To search for God with the instruments of the laboratory is like trying to cure pain in the stomach by pouring drops into the eye. There is a technique and a special instrument for that purpose, which the pastmasters in that science have developed and spoken about.

Equip yourselves with a clear eye, through detachment and love, sharpen your sense of discrimination, viveka, so that it has no prejudice or predilection; then, you can see God in you, around you, in all that you know and feel and are.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

52. For me, from me

Date: 24 November 1972 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE mother who bore you, the father who fostered you and the teacher who opened your eye to the mystery of Nature in and around you, have all to be revered. However high you may rise in social status, however huge may be your bank account, if your parents are neglected in distress, your life has been a tragic waste. Parents are mightily happy, when their children evince the slightest regard for their comfort. Any little sign of gratitude is welcomed by them with delight. If you have no urge to please them and make them happy, how can you ever hope to please God? The envelope might cost a naya paisa only; inside it, the bit of paper might be shoddy and soiled. The scribbling on it might be full of blotches; the letters might be higgledy piggledy, but, when the child writes to the mother, she reads and appreciates the letters with tears of joy. The envelope might be a deluxe one costing five rupees, the letters may be of gold, printed in choice antique type in an aristocratic press; but, she will not be interested even to look at it. The mother seeks love, craves for gratitude, thirsts after sympathy. She values feeling, not external display. The Divine Mother too is moved by the same feeling. She does not appreciate demonstrative trappings like matted hair, rosaries, marks on forehead or sacerdotal robes. She values sincerity, yearning, virtue, compassion, love.

Minds of men are cesspools of desire

The Vedas declare that Her Grace, that is to say, Immortality, can be achieved by Thyaga (detachment), rather than by hectic activity, or affluence or progeny. Give up; do not grasp in clenched fists. Release; do not bind and get bound. The units of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation must emphasise through example and personal practice that no joy is equal to the joy of sharing, giving, renouncing.

You can understand this better when you pay attention to the behaviour of children. They are like realised souls, without attachment. There are three

motives that rule man: rathi (attachment), prapthi (acquisition) and thusti (bliss). Rathi is the desire to contact the objective world; prapthi is the craving to possess the object; the thusti is the Anandha (Supreme Bliss) available when the secret of Nature is realised. Examine the contents of a child's pocket. You will find a few pebbles, a piece of glass, or a twig or flower. The child gets from these more joy than an adult derives from a wad of notes. The child does not crave to possess and to deny others. It does not accumulate for coming days, or for the mere pleasure of becoming renowned as an accumulator. The child may have a dirt-covered body, but its mind is free from dirt; elders are scrupulous about physical cleanliness but, their minds are cesspools of desire, of hate, envy and clogging slush.

Shed all envy and grow greatly in Love

This is because the real nature of God, Nature and Man is not understood. Man is but a wave of the ocean which is God. Nature is just a manifestation of the same God, appearing as having diversity, and as good-bad, gentle-cruel, useful-useless, and, such other dual attributes. Desire to acquire or anxiety to avoid comes because man is caught in this duality, which is fundamentally, a creation of his own mind.

Man caught up in the tangle of desire, craves for much fruit with little effort; the man who is detached from the temptations of the objective world craves for a little fruit, but, is prepared to undergo much effort for the same. Just a little sign of Grace endows him with immeasurable delight, Anandha.

"For me," "to me" - This is animal desire. "From me, by me" - this offering is a sign of the Divine nature in man. Share, then the sense of One-ness gets established; you lose all fear and shed all envy, and grow greatly in Love.

When devotion shines full, the sky in the heart becomes a bowl of beauty and life is transformed into a charming avenue of Anandha (bliss). That beauty of heart, that Anandha in life can be won through the mind, if the

lesson of Guru Poornima day is remembered and realised.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

53. To three Pandiths

Date: December 1972 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE wise are those who know the Atma (Divine Self). They distinguish between That and This, Thath and Thwam, the Absolute and the Relative, the Universal and Particular, that is falsely conceived as separate from the Universal. When he experiences the Truth that he is the Absolute Atma, man is endowed with Supreme Bliss. It is sheer waste if one has no such experience but has pored over mountains of spiritual texts or earned fame as a deep scholar. Man alone has the ability to understand the phenomenal world around him. He can grasp the ways and waywardness of the world; he can delve into its evolution and involution, its contraction and expansion. Therefore, he has to give it only a relative value, and follow as his only goal, the search for the Atma and the attainment of the Atma. And, the search has to be through continuous, consistent Sadhana. Boundless spiritual potential is encased in every being. In man, it expresses itself as Jnana (Supreme Wisdom). Man is neither a bit of clod, nor a bundle of flesh. He has in him the inexhaustible spring of Anandha (Divine Bliss). A person is not just the body, with its limbs and other mechanisms. The Atma is the Divine Person. The soul is the Personality. And the person realises Anandha only when the Atma is cognised. This achievement cannot be won through riches or authority of office, scholarship or status, fame or force. Discarding this perennial Anandha, man imagines the sensual pleasures to be Anandha and he spends his life in fruitless pursuits. He wanders about in the thorny jungles and desert sands. He humiliates himself and crawls and cringes for favours from all and sundry. This is the consequence of the ignorance that blinds.

Man must die triumphant over death

Man is equipped with a return ticket, when he takes birth. Holding it in his grasp he earns and spends, rises and falls, sings and dances, weeps and wails, forgetting the end of the journey. But, though he forgets, the wagon of life moves towards the cemetery, which is its terminus. It brings no glory to man if he is tied helplessly to the wheel of birth and death. His glory and

greatness consists in disentangling himself from that revolving wheel. Before death nips life, and thrusts him on to another birth, he must by means of Sadhana learn the mystery of the Atma. When death comes one must be glad to meet it since he comes for the last time and there will be no more birth for him. Man weeps when he is born; he should not weep when he dies. He must die triumphant over death. Otherwise, he lives only to consume tons of food, as a burden upon the earth. You seek to escape pain and grief; but, they are inescapable. Life is as a dream. In the dream, you experience joy and grief; but when you realise that both joy and grief are unreal, when you awake into the consciousness of the Atma, you will no more have the thrill of joy or the despondency of pain. You will not have any longer fear or anxiety, fear of death or anxiety about the future. The mind is the architect of your progress or decline. For the fool, the mind is a formidable dinosaur; for the intelligent, the mind is an angel. The trained mind is torn by fear; the pure elevated mind is placid and unruffled, like that of the homeless sage. The Vedas teach how to purify the mind and render it a useful tool.

Pandiths must themselves shine as inspirers

Nothing is uncaused in the Universe. Every being, object, incident has been caused by the primal Cause and its direction or guidance' The Shasthras (spiritual sciences) yearn for the discovery of that unseen Principle. Through sheer ignorance and perversity, the Shasthras have been ignored and set aside, and man is misleading himself into the belief that his fancies are true, just and beneficial. Man has thrown his "humanness" into the crater of cruelty forgetting his best interests, under the influence of hatred, envy, conceit and power. He has cast aside the expanse of his culture. As a result peace has flown from the heart of man, from the fold of society and the boundaries of nations.

The Pandiths and Scholars who have gathered today under the auspices of the Prashanthi Vidhwan-Mahasabha must promote and set themselves up as pioneers and examples for the task of making people aware of the greatness of Sanathana Dharma, and of the Vedas and Shasthras in which is enshrined Dharma (righteousness). They must teach the people the Principle of the

Atma, and themselves shine as inspirers through their own practice of what they teach. Immersed in Sath-Chith-Anandha (Sheer bliss in the total awareness of the Supreme Reality) themselves, they must communicate that joy and that wisdom to others. Plant in every heart the seed of Truth; I bless that you succeed in leading men into that Bliss of fullness and fulfilment.

Sath-sangh means Meeting the Sath, the Sath which is spoken of while extolling God as Sath-Chith-Anandha. Sath is the Existence Principle, the IS that is the basic truth of the Universe. Align with the Truth, the Sath in you, the Sathya (Reality) on which the Mithya (false) is imposed by minds that do not see light. By dwelling in that Sath, the flame is lit, light dawns, darkness flees and Jnana Bhaskara (the Sun of Realisation) rises.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

54. He whom Christ announced

Date: 24 December 1972 / Location: Bengaluru / Occasion: Christmas

RELIGIONS arise from the minds of good men, who crave to make all men good; they strive to eliminate evil and cure the bad. They are many, since they have to be adjusted to the individuals, their activities, their professions and roles, their character and characteristics. The individual has to start observing the limits and laws laid down, and derive joy and strength thereby. And, then, his cleansed mind will lead the way, to higher and higher stages. He and the society of which he is a unit will benefit thereby. It is therefore appropriate that the Birthday of Jesus, who felt the need to save mankind and who strove to achieve it, is celebrated; but, the celebration must take the form of adherence to the teachings, loyalty to the principles, practising the disciplines and experiencing the Awareness of the Divine that he sought to arouse. These days, the world is deriving satisfaction in mere words, and in witnessing clever rules designed to cover up one's faults. The Birthdays of the Great are honoured by such hypocrisy and external pomp. There is no examination in the light of the message they gave, nor, any effort to practise it and derive the bliss it promises. The Great Teachers belong to mankind. It is wrong to believe that Jesus belongs only to the Christians and the Christmas is a holy festival for the West only. To accept one of them as one's own and discard the rest as belonging to others, is a sign of pettiness. Christ, Rama, Krishna - they are for all men everywhere.

Man's life is conditioned by feelings and deeds

The various limbs and organs together form a body; various nations and communities together form the world. The sustenance given by Divine Grace circulates in every part of the body, helping it to function in unison. The stream of Love, endowed by Divine Grace, has to circulate in every State and community to make the world live in Peace and Joy. If this truth is realised, there will arise no idea of difference. If the members of a family are at loggerheads, the lands and other possessions of the family will be uncared for, and be either wasted or lost. The separation of one member will also be a

big loss, for, the Grace that sustains the family will diminish and get lost. When a hand is amputated, the limb loses its function, and a great deal of blood too is lost during the removal. So too, the Divine Grace of Love is lost when a country sets itself apart: it also becomes a weak and functionless limb of the World community. Division, difference and distinction cuts one off from the life-giving Grace, that feeds every cell of the body and every individual in the World. The World is sustained by the self-same Grace. A tree requires for its growth, soil, sunlight and atmosphere. But, more than these three, it requires the seed. Man's life is conditioned by feelings and deeds, and the consequences of 'these feelings and deeds. But, his existence, his very Is-ness, depends on the Will of God. Growing trees may differ, according to the nature of the soil, the quantity of sunlight and the quality of the soil. So too, men may differ according to the consequences of the types of feelings and deeds that emanate from them. But, just as it is true to say that" the seeds are the same, is One, without any difference, the variety of forms, the variety of emotions and attitudes, the variety of communities and loyalties are the result of man's ignoring his fundamental Unity in the one Divine Will, and his acting contrary to that Unity.

Meaning of three statements made by Christ

The moving water of a river has the Moon in its depths; the still water of a lake has also the Moon underneath; the sky has the Moon up above. The Moon in the flowing river is broken and fragmentary, it flows fast, apparently, with the floods. The Moon in the lake is calm, unmoved, undistracted. These two are but reflections of the real Moon in the sky. The Moon reflected in the flood is the Individual Soul, engaged in activity, embroiled in-Maya, cause and effect. The Moon reflected in the placid face of the lake is the Yogi, the Saint, who has attained balance, equipoise, peace, dwelling in the One. The real Moon in the sky is the Eternal Witness, the Absolute, the Primal Principle. Christ spoke of these three, when He made, one after the other, three statements. Referring to the active individual soul, the flickering Moon, he said, "I am the Messenger of God;" referring to himself as the Yogi, who has risen beyond dualities, and attained balance, he said, "I am the Son of God." Realising that these two are but reflections, and that the real Moon is the

Witness in the sky, that he too is the Formless, Nameless Absolute, he declared, towards the end of his life, "I and My Father are ONE." All beings are images of the Universal Atma, in the names and forms they have apparently assumed. This is the truth, enclosed, elaborated and demonstrated in the spiritual texts of India, which form the basis of Bharatheeya culture. The essence of all religions and faiths then, is this: the merging in this Unity. The goal of all spiritual endeavour is this: the merging in this Unity. The object of all enquiry is this: to cognise this Unity. But, this patent fact is ignored, and persons create strife, anxiety and unrest for themselves and perpetrate horrors to hold forth the support, the disunity so dear to their fractioned minds.

People today relish the very things religion condemned

The passage of time has clouded the splendour of the message, the fascination exercised by the material and the worldly has drawn them away from the path, and the expansion of science and technology has made them conceited and wrong-headed. So, people now relish the very things prohibited and promote the very things condemned by religion. All religions teach that one should revere the parents and evince gratitude to them; but, ridiculing them and neglecting them have become fashionable now. All religions lay down that the aged are to be honoured, since they are the repositories of experience and their guidance is indispensable; but, now elders and the aged are treated as nuisances and handicapped. All religions insist on truth; but now, the man who sticks to truth is laughed at as if he were a fool. Cruelty and violence, condemned by all religions, have raised themselves to the status of weapons of progress and means for desirable ends. However, the basic truths of religion are not affected or tarnished by the evil that men practise or the competitive propaganda they indulge in.

On Christ's Birthday, sacrifice at least a desire or two

Only those who are not keen on practising the message will waste their energies in condemning other religions and glorifying their own. And, once you enter sincerely into the path of spiritual practice, the urge to find faults in

others or publish one's own excellences will disappear. Such people will celebrate the Birthday of the Founders in a spirit of dedication only, deepening the faith in their hearts and revering its doctrines by more intense practice rather than by more emphatic argumentation. If one has the yearning to reach the goal, one has to follow the path that leads to it. When you learn to reach God, you have to observe the guidelines He has marked out. You need not dwell on His name, or His lineaments all the time! That may not take you far. But, walk along the Path; every step will bring you near. When you need to reach a village, you have to rise and move towards it; it will not rise and move towards you! When you need to reach God, rise and move, as He has directed you to. By this means alone you can make life worthwhile. Jesus taught simple practical lessons in spiritual advancement for the good of mankind; He manifested Divine Powers to instil faith in the validity of his teachings; he marked out the path that can confer on men the sweet nectar of Anandha. He exhorted people by precept and example to cultivate the virtues of charity, compassion, forbearance, love and faith. These are not separate and distinct qualities, they are only the many facets of the Divine in Man, which he has to recognise and develop.

Significance of the story related to Christ's birth

People talk of the sacrifice of Christ as evidence by His crucifixion. But, he was surrounded and bound, and crowned by the crowd who captured Him with a crown of thorns, and later, nailed to the cross by his captors. A person bound and beaten by the police cannot say that he has sacrificed anything, for, he is not a free man. Let us pay attention to the sacrifice that Jesus made while free, out of his own volition. He sacrificed his happiness, prosperity, comfort, safety and position; he braved the enmity of the powerful. He refused to yield or compromise. He renounced the 'ego', which is the toughest thing to get rid of. Honour Him for these. He willingly sacrificed the desires with which the body torments man; this is sacrifice greater than the sacrifice of the body under duress. The celebration of His birthday has to be marked by your sacrificing at least a desire or two, and conquering at least the more disastrous urges of the ego. The followers of Jesus have got broken into schisms on various counts; but, the life of Christ is a lesson of Unity. When

Christ was on the cross, ill-feelings towards the men who tortured Him troubled Him. Suddenly he heard a voice alerting him. "All Life is One, my dear Son{ Be alike to every one!" This was followed by another admonition, "Death is the Dress of Life." As one casts off the worn clothes and dons another set, so, the soul dons and doffs bodies. Therefore, Jesus was warned against hate and ill-feelings, as well as the lamentation to which man is heir.

Manifestations seen when Christ was born

The lives of such personalities are lived out, in order to establish the welfare of humanity, the prosperity and peace of the world, and individual liberation from bondage to sensual desires and passions. This is illustrated by the strange phenomena that occur at the time of their Advent. It is believed that when Christ was born there were such manifestations. The ruler of the realm had ordered a census, and each had to be counted in his own village. So Mary and her husband moved along the road that led to his native village. Mary was with child; the pains started midway; they knew no one in the hamlet through which they were passing; so they took refuge in a cowshed. Joseph made ready the space between the cows, and went out into the road at midnight, to seek some woman who could help. But, soon, he heard the Baby's cry. And, the story says, there was a Star in the sky, which fell with a New Light, and this led a few Tibetans and others to the place where the Saviour was born. This story is read and taken on trust by many, though stars do not fall or even slide down so suddenly. What the story signifies is this: There was a huge halo of splendour illuminating the sky over the village when Christ was born. This meant that He, who was to overcome the darkness of evil and ignorance had taken birth, that He will spread the Light of Love in the heart of man and councils of humanity.

Use and misuse of wealth and wisdom

Appearances of splendour, and other signs to herald the era that has dawned are natural when incarnations happen on earth. Jesus was to shatter the darkness that had enveloped the world and the aura of light was a sign that announced the event. The Masters arrive in answer to man's prayer.

"Thamaso ma jyothir gamaya" (Lead us from darkness unto Light!) If each one does his duty, in the spirit of Â· dedication, the Light can illumine all, but, if the doors of the heart are shut against the Light, how can darkness disappear? You cannot sit back, and expect the Incarnation to bring peace and joy into you. The incarnation comes to warn, to guide, to awaken, to lay down the path, and shed the light of Love on it. But, man has to listen, learn and obey with hope and faith.

There is a tale told of old that Wisdom and Wealth once quarrelled loud and long, about their relative importance. Wealth argued that without it, the body will be weak, the brain hazy and wisdom a will-o-the-wisp. Wisdom retorted that, without it man cannot even distinguish wealth from non-wealth or know how to earn it or use it. The Soul intervened and told them that they were both equally important, but, only when properly used. Wealth without wisdom becomes an instrument of exploitation and tyranny: wisdom without wealth becomes mere fantasy and a bundle of blueprint. Use makes them worthwhile; misuse makes them disastrous. It is like the knife in the hands of a maniac, which becomes an instrument for murder; in the hands of a surgeon, it becomes an instrument which saves a life! Are you doing good with wealth? Are you benefitting others by means of wisdom? - that is the test. This day, Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of Christ, resolve to lead the lives of loving service to the weak, the helpless, the distressed, the disconsolate. Cultivate tolerance and forbearance, charity and magnanimity. Hold dear the ideals He laid down and practise them, in your daily lives.

The best way of celebrating the Birth of Christ

The ways in which Christmas is being celebrated now show how far men have moved away from those ideals, how much ignominy they are heaping on his name! The midnight hour is revered; illumination is arranged; the Christmas Tree is set up; and then, the night is spent in drinking and dance. It is a day of Holy Anandha, but, the Anandha is reduced to the level of the poisoning excitement of intoxication!

Drink is so pernicious an evil habit, that when man puts the bottle in, he

himself gets into the bottle and cannot escape! First man drinks wine, then the wine drinks more wine; and finally, the wine drinks man himself! He is sunk and drowned in drink. Liquor destroys the humanity in man! How then can it develop the Divinity in him? One must dance in Divine Bliss; instead, sensual dance is indulged in as a deleterious substitute! Make your hearts pure, your activities holy, and your feelings beneficial to all. That is the best way of celebrating the Birth of Christ. There is one point that I cannot but bring to your special notice today. At the moment when Jesus was merging in the Supreme Principle of Divinity, He communicated some news to his followers, which has been interpreted in a variety of ways by commentators and those who relish the piling of writings on writings and meanings upon meanings, until it all swells up into a huge mess.

Christ's announcement of the Advent of Baba

The statement itself has been manipulated and tangled into a conundrum. The statement of Christ is simple: "He who sent me among you will come again!" and he pointed to a Lamb. The Lamb is merely a symbol, a sign. It stands for the Voice - Ba-Ba; the announcement was the Advent of Baba. "His Name will be Truth," Christ declared. Sathya means Truth. "He will wear a robe of red, a bloodred robe." (Here Baba pointed to the robe He was wearing!). "He will be short, with a crown (of hair). The Lamb is the sign and symbol of Love." Christ did not declare that he will come again. He said, "He who made me will come again." That Ba-ba is this Baba and Sai, the short, curly-hair-crowned red-robed Baba, is come. He is not only in this Form, but, he is in every one of you, as the dweller in the Heart. He is there, short, with a robe of the colour of the blood that fills it. The great axioms of Bharatheeya culture found in the Vedas - Ishwarassarvabhuthanam, Isava-yamidham sarvam, Vasudhevassarvamidham - "God is the inner Motivator of all beings. All this is enveloped in God, All this is Vasudheva, the Divine" - are to be in every one. This is the inner mystery of Incarnation, God incarnating in all! All are One; The One is All. There is only one God; He is Omnipresent. There is only one religion, the Religion of Love; there is only one caste, the Caste of Humanity; there is only one language, the Language of the Heart.

Roga denies you ease and peace. The roga (disease) can be cured by yoga (Divine communion), not by bhoga (material enjoyment). Bhoga means catering to the whims and wildness of the senses. Yoga means the regulation and reform of the impulses of the mind which run after goals laid down by the senses/

Make the senses the servants of the intelligence, not the overlords of the mind.

Tell them that the mind is dethroned, it is non-existent/ Sensuousness is a disease.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba