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1. Vedic Declarations

Date: **01 January 1983** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **New Year**

ONE should yearn not for the prolongation of life but for the purification of life. A few moments as Hamsa, the Celestial Swan, are far more precious than many years as the crow. In order to sublimate the low yearnings of man, to lead him along the path of holiness and to hold before him the glorious destiny of his oneness with the Cosmic Consciousness, the identity of the Jeeva (individual) and the Dheva (Universal), the Vedas (ancient revealed scriptures) have laid down many lessons, in profound axioms summarising realisable Truths. Each Veda has one central declaration or Mahavakya or Mahamanthra around which it revolves. PRAJNAANAM BRAHMA is the Holy Declaration of the Rig Veda. Prajnanam means constant integrated awareness. This is present and active, in all things, at all places, all the time. It energises the physical, mental and spiritual realms, the lower, middle and higher regions and the sub-human, human, and super-human beings. The three periods of Time - the nether, spatial and heavenly worlds, and the three modes of being - goodness, passion and inertia (Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas) - are all pervaded and permeated by Prajnanam (total awareness) or Chaithanya (pure consciousness).

Aham implies a total composite Personality

AHAM BRAHMAASMI is the Holy Declaration of the Yajur Veda. It is a component of three words Aham, Brahma and Asmi. Aham implies a total, a composite: Personality. Man is subjected to countless thoughts, desires and resolutions, called "Sankalpa". The very first Sankalpa that nestles in the mind of man is Aham or I-ness. Other ideas or thoughts leading to action can enter the mind only after Aham has struck root. Earlier than that event, no acceptance or rejection, no Sankalpa can find a place. The I-ness persists in the gross body of the waking stage, the subtle body of the dream stage and the causal body of the deep sleep stage. It persists through all three states. The One that permeates in all three is the I, the ham. I is the universal response, whether I ask who is Gokak or who is Sudharshan or who is

Chakravarthi. From every, one, the answer arises, I, I, I. I is in every one, the core of all.

Next, we have the expression Brahma-Asmi, (I am Brahman). This truth can be made clear by an example. To curdle milk and get curds for use, we add a small quantity of curd itself to the milk. Then all the milk turns into curds. Wherefrom did we get the curd, initially? From milk which was similarly treated. The years of life are the milk: the Divine Principle. Brahman is the curd, which, when it is welcome to pervade life, converts them into a Divine Saga. This is what the Upanishaths mean when they declare that he who knows Brahman becomes Brahman (Brahmavith Brahmaiva Bhavathi). Asmi is the process of mixing, the consummation of adding, the merging, the union. When it happens, Aham becomes Brahman. When human-ness is permeated by God-ness, man becomes God. For, what is it that takes place subsequently? The milk that has been curdled is churned by inquiry and inner probe and the soft sweet fragrant butter, Anandha (divine bliss), emanates. This Anandha can be gained only through and from the Divine. Hence it is proclaimed that Anandha is the core of all the Vedas, the fruit of all the Shasthras (the goal of all the scriptures) in all the tongues. One must have faith in this truth, or else, he will miss the fruit. I am also stressing the need for faith, very often. For, where there is faith, there is love. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is truth. Where there is truth, there is bliss. And, where there is bliss, there is God.

Faith arises in the heart through conviction

People, nowadays, have weakened their faith and even lost it; yet they clamour for Anandha. Anandha cannot be procured from any shop or ordered from any Company. Many enquire, "How do you develop faith? What are the reasons for faith?" One cannot define or demarcate the reasons; faith arises in the heart, through imperceptible conviction. One has faith in son and father, husband and wife, but one cannot explain why? It does not grow in the mind or as a result of external causes.

The I or Ego should not be moulded or enclosed in an "ism"; then, it becomes

harmful as egoism. If the I is limited to the body and labelled on the form, it is harmful, it brings about pride and selfishness. If it is identified with the Atman (true self), it is sanctified and it leads to the mergence with the Brahman (Divine Self). Do not take the temporary, trivial body which is like a bubble as the Aham. For, what exactly is such an I? You use the words "I" and "mine" from morning till night and repeat My home, My body, My life, My senses, My, My, My, without delving into the I that owns these. When you are in deep sleep, you don't feel I, or think of the I, or worry about any My. Where does it go to, then? When the "I" leaves you even during the few hours of sleep, how can it be with you during the permanent sleep from which you do not wake? Sleep is a short death; death is a lasting sleep. Consider the attachments that develop between the one and the other. Then, you can arrive at the truth, Aham Brahmasmi.

There is nothing in the Universe higher than God

THATH THWAM ASI is the holy declaration of the Sama Veda - That thou art. Thath (That) was in existence before creation and is in existence subsequently too. It is the Principle of Total Consciousness, the totality of Being and Becoming, encompassing and transcending the physical, mental and spiritual reaches, "beyond the horizon of expression and imagination" (Yatho Vacho Nivarthante, aprapya manasa sah). The Cosmos did not originate from God; It is God. There is nothing "Other"; "there is no Second." Some people ask, "Have you seen God?" Reply, "I have." Then they ask, "Where is He? Show Him to us." If He is in one specific place, you can point your finger in that direction and say "He is there." But, this microphone before Me is God; this garland on this table is God; this handkerchief is God. There is nothing in the Universe higher than God, different from God, distinct from God. He is the "Thath" (That). It is the Omnipresent (Eternal Awareness Chaithanya. It is referred to as Thath (That), since we now imagine It to be distant, far from us. Far from where? Yes. Far from your body, your senses, your mind, your reasoning faculty which are all equipped only with limited capabilities. But, once your intuitive consciousness is aroused, the "far" is "close."

The Atma shines within the cave of the heart

The Vedas announce It to be "duurath duure, anthike cha" (farther than the farthest, also closer than the closest). "Thwam" ("Thou") is the body-sense-mind-reason complex. This too is That, as confirmed by the verb, asi (art). When you are engaged in reading the prayers of a book, what exactly is happening? The hand is holding, the eyes are seeing, reason is judging, and the mind is reacting to the flood of feeling. "Thou" is the composite of hand and eye, reason and mind. "Thou" is the mould, the Akara (the form). "That" is the core, the genuineness, the svabhava. To realise the identity of the two, one has to resort to the sadhana (spiritual discipline) of meditation. Meditation is the process of sublimating concentration (which concerns itself with the realm of the senses), leading into contemplation (which concerns itself with the realm of mind and reason), resulting in real meditation (which concerns itself with the realm unreachable by logic or thought or even imagination). This declaration is enshrined in the Sama Veda, whose hymns are musical and have to be sung as part of holy rites. Music is an excellent medium for harmonising Thou and That, the Human with the Divine. Of course, the song/mus to emerge from prema (selfless love), not from greed for fame or profit. When rain pours, the sheet of water brings together earth and sky. So too, the shower of Love-lit song can bring Thou and That together. Asi (art) can be consummated. AYAM AATHMA BRAHMA is the Holy Declaration of the Atharva Veda, the Fourth among the Vedas. It means, "This Atma is Brahman." It implies 'that the Individual Self is the untarnished, unaffected Witness of the activities of the Body-Mind Complex. The lamp illumines the area around it. One person falsities accounts so that he can escape paying tax; another writes the Name of Rama as a sadhana; another person takes advantage of the light to lay his hands on articles to steal. The lamp is the witness. The Atma too shines within the cave of the heart. One should engage oneself in sacred activity, with the inspiration of that illumination. Many people who come to Me ask, "Swami! We are striving to control the mind but it runs about like a maddened dog. How am I to succeed?" Therein lies a wrong step. The mind is beyond contact, for it is attached to the senses. Control the senses; let them not draw you into the objective world. By this means, the mind can be made an instrument of illumination and not of

delusion. The truth will then dawn, this Atma is Brahman. The splendour of this awareness will drive away the darkness of ignorance. There can be no thamas (ignorance) where there is jyothi (light). The Atma (Self) is jyothi (self-luminous). The Gayathri Manthra helps to uproot nescience by invoking the splendour of the Sun to illumine the buddhi (intellect), the faculty of thought. That splendour will reveal the identity of Ayam Atma, of this self (individualised) with Brahman (the Cosmic Overself). Discourse on New Year Day

Truth will always triumph; do not doubt that in the least. There are two eight-lettered axioms in the Geetha, which support the Vedhic dictum: Sathyam eva jayathe na anritham (Truth only wins, not falsehood): They are, Samshayatma vinashyathi (He who doubts is destroyed), and Shraddavan labhate jnanam (Steady faith wins true wisdom). If people are slaves of doubt, how can they save themselves?

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. The daily prayer

Date: 08 January 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Without giving up sloth, how can Truth be known?
Without giving up passion, can devotion take root?
Be serene and calm, in stress and storm,
That is the Sathwik Road to win the Lord, the Truth.

THE mind is a wonder, its antics are even more surprising. It has no distinct form or shape. It assumes the shape or form of the thing it is involved in. Wandering from wish to wish, flitting from one desire to another, is its nature. So, it is the cause of loss and grief, of elation and depression. Its effects are both positive and negative. It is worth while for man to know the characteristics of the mind and the ways to master it for one's ultimate benefit. The mind is prone to gather experiences and store them in the memory. It does not know the art of giving up. Nothing is cast away by the mind. As a consequence, grief, anxiety and misery continue simmering in it. If only the mind can be taught *thyaga* (sacrifice), one can become a *yogi* (spiritually serene person).

Dhyana provides rest for the wayward mind

The clock, to all appearances, keeps on ticking away continuously. But this is really not the case. It is not continuous, for there is, one can notice, a short pause between one tick and the next. That is the interval of rest. But, the mind does not have even this short interval between one thought and the next. And in the continuous succession of thoughts, there is no order or relationship. This adds to the confusion and concern. This is the main source of ill-health in man. We are at present planning and preparing for physical rest and recreation and we know that even machines need hours of rest! But, we have neglected the duty of ensuring rest for the mind. Dhyana

(meditation) is the name for the period of rest we provide for the busy and wayward mind.

The heart is engaged, like the ticking of the clock, in beats but, a new pulse of energy is generated between one beat and another. It makes for the flow, regardless of the past or the future moments. It is a constant flux towards a goal. The swimmer in the river has to push aside the waters in front to the sides and to kick the waters to the back so that he can move forward straight and fast. Forcing the water back is the act that takes him forward. That is to say, do not attach importance to it, throw it back, give it up, renounce; that alone can help you to progress, even an inch.

Instead, man collects and stores, accumulates and takes pride in what he holds firm, regardless of the preciousness of the human trait of renunciation. So, we sink in material possessions, victories and vagaries. We do not float or swim across the temptations. We must try to discover and learn the means of progress. A poet sang, "Can canines conceive of colourful poetry? Or, donkeys know of the taste of the parched grains that we load on them? Or, a blind man admire the charm of the full moon?" We may well ask, how can a man sunk in relative knowledge become aware of Atma (the Absolute)? But there is no reason for despair, or for condemning ourselves as mean and low. For, when small men take big decisions, they earn encouragement from the great. When the tiny squirrel decided to share in building the passage across the sea, did it not receive the blessings of Lord Rama? The squirrel knew that its help could only be infinitesimal, but the feeling of dedication which prompted it won the grace of God.

Devotion has to fill and overflow the heart

Men, however, generally do not sublimate small *sadhana* (spiritual effort) through high purpose. They engage in *Bhajan* (congregational chant), *Puuja* and *Dhyana* (ritualistic worship and meditation) but these are but physical exercises! The mind does not elevate them into sincerity. The heart does not pour forth or vibrate in them. So, they remain at the human level. They do not rise to the Divine. "Can the lake be filled when there is only a sprinkle of rain?"

Can thirst be relieved, when saliva gets in? Can the belly be full, if breathing is held tight? Can live cinders be secured by the burning of blades of grass?" asks the poet. Logs have to be burned if charcoal is needed: only sheets of rain can fill a lake to the brim; a glass of cold water alone can cure a person of thirst, nothing less. The heart has to be offered in full. Devotion has to fill and overflow the heart. Look at the lotus; its roots are in under-water slush. It grows through water and floats on it. But, it does not get tarnished by slush or wet by water! The wonder is, it cannot survive without slush and water, but it rises up to the air and the sun, nevertheless! Our life has its roots in the Atma and it grows through the agitated waves of living. It can never uproot itself from its Athmic source.

Grief has three sources and three characteristics

Man has, through the ages, sought liberation, struggled for freedom from bondage. But, he has no correct appreciation of what he has to liberate himself from, what the bondage is from which he has to be freed. Many are not even aware that they are imprisoned and are bound. So, they do not even try to free themselves. Is the family, the wife and children, the prison? Are riches, properties and possessions the bonds? Are attractions and aversions the bonds that curb him? No. No one of these binds him. The tightest bond that limits his feelings and deeds is his ignorance of who he really is.

Until one is aware of the Atma (divine soul), one is certain to be tossed from grief to grief, with intervals of joy. The grief has three sources and so, it has three characteristics:

- (1) grief caused by the unreality of the apparent,
- (2) grief caused by want of knowledge or wrong apprehension on account of the limitations of our instruments of perception and inference or on account of the mystery of the Divine phenomenon that subsists in everything, and
- (3) the grief caused by the death, disintegration or dissolution of things which we held to be real!

When one is established in the awareness of the truth of the *Jeevi* (the individual being), the *jagath* (Cosmos) and God, the Creator, he need have no grief or fear any more. Let us consider Jagath - The visible cosmos around us, which we can cognise. The feelings we experience in dreams disappear when we wake up. The things we see when awake are also shortlived. During sleep, we are not aware of the world at all. Though the body is in the bedroom, we dream, and the dream is direct and dramatic, that we are busy shopping in Mount Road, Madras! So, the waking, dreaming and sleeping stages are all only relatively real, deludingly real. When you come towards the hostel at dusk singing Bhajans, the boy in the front row shouts in fear, "Snake! Snake!" fear overtakes all. Fear made them step back. But, was it a snake? A boy looked at it with a lit torch, and found that it is only a rope! Ignorance caused it, knowledge removed it. When the torch lights up the world, it is seen to be really God, Vishnu, the Divine Body, sacred substance, *Sath-Chit-Anand a* (Existence, Awareness, Bliss Absolute). The *Asath* (unreal) is realised as *Sath* (Real).

Faith is life, absence of faith is death

The process of living is the swinging of a pendulum from smile to tear. Childhood is too tender and innocent; youth is too full of folly and faults, middle age is muddled with problems and possible remedies; old age is spent in regret over past failings and falterings. When can man taste some little sincere joy? Nature is the vesture of God. It images the Supreme. It shines through the machinations of the mind. The inner core of each living thing is God. Joys and sorrows are the results of the mind's involvement in the transient and the trivial. Like the Sun, divine grace falls. The Sun is not tarnished by anything harmful which it falls upon. The Self too is unaffected by the effects of the mind pursuing the senses wherever they lead it. When one becomes aware that the Self is God, there can be no fear of death haunting him. The building may collapse, but the basis is safe. When does man die? Every moment he dies; every moment, he is born. When the next tick does not happen, it is death. When it beats again, one is born anew. Faith is life; absence of faith is death. Only the body dies; the Atma (Divine Self) is beyond birth and death. Aware of this, one is soaked in Ananda (Divine Bliss).

Death affects only the body-mind complex

Give up what has to be cast away, know what has to be attained, then, Ananda becomes your unruffled nature. So give up the idea of the world being valid; know the reality of the Self and attain the Source, the Brahman. This is the significance of the Upanishadic Prayer, which you use every day before the lessons start at the Institute:

Asatho ma sath gamaya (Lead me from the Unreal to the Real)
Thamaso ma Jyothir gamaya (Lead me from darkness to light)
Mruthyor ma amrutham gamaya (Lead me from death to immortality)

This is a prayer asking to be led from the Jagath (mundane world), which is constantly being built and rebuilt, resolved and dissolved, into the Divine whose Being undergoes no change. The darkness symbolises the ignorance which induces identification with the body-senses-mind-reason complex. The light reveals the Divine core, over which all the rest is superimposed by the fog of faulty vision. Death affects only the body-mind complex. When we are led into the light, we become aware that we are the undying Atma, and so we become immortal. The human heart is an ocean, whose depth none can gauge nor can anyone limit its horizon. The ocean has countless pearls and precious corals but it has also sharks and crocodiles. One has to explore continuously and boldly for the gems and pearls of good thoughts and feelings, and cultivate them more and more.

Source and the goal are God and God only

There are two obstacles which prevent man in this valuable effort. The first is the tendency to compare yourselves with others. This is very wrong. No two things or no two men are identical. Even identical twins grow in distinct ways of life. No one of the millions of leaves on a tree is exactly the same as

another. Botanists are aware of this feature. Billions of human beings are on the earth, but which is the press which has given each of them a novel imprint? This is the glory of God. Millions of boxes are manufactured by a company; all are identical; all can be locked and opened by the same set of keys.

Man is created by God, each with his distinct nature, quality, potentiality and destiny. How, then, can any one compare himself with another and either exult or despair? We say he is tall and feel dejected because we are short. We are proud that we are better than others. All this is very silly when we come to think of it. Secondly, we are in the habit of justifying our faults, rationalising our errors and avoiding the responsibility of facing them squarely and correcting them. These two attitudes thicken man's ignorance and breed further failings. Every one has God as the source. No one is higher or lower. We are all kin, through God from Whom we have come. Parents and other physical kith and kin are those whose impact we feel on the way. But, the Source and the Goal are God and God only. "Keeping the child on her hip, the mother roamed in search of the child, which she thought had wandered far. She was peering into the face of every child to discover whether it was hers. Poor unripe fruit! Incompletely wise" laments the poet. One can ripen only when the Divine in us is developed, after its discovery. Live in God, with God, live on God and for God. Drink God, eat God, see God, reach God. God is the Truth, the substance, the Heart of Man. "I am the occupant of your heart", says Krishna. Every cell in the human body is God, though under a microscope you cannot find Him. You are now recording my speech in the cassette. But can you see my voice or words now on the cassette? No. When you play it back, you can hear the words. So too, the body is the tape, the voice of God is immanent. Equip it with faith and tune it with Love. Then, you can imbibe My voice and words. A pure heart, a cleansed mind, a God-filled consciousness will help you to listen to the voice of the God within you.

3. Ceiling on desires - I

Date: **19 January 1983** / Location: **Chennai** / Occasion: **Address to Members of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, Tamil Nadu**

MEMBERS appear to be confused about the true meaning of this programme of "Ceiling on Desires" decided on at the Tenth All India Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations. There are four components in the term "Ceiling on Desires."

They are, respectively;

1. curb on excessive talk,
2. curb on excessive desires and expenditure,
3. control of consumption of food,
4. check on waste of energy.

Man needs some essential commodities for his sustenance and he should not aspire for more. We can learn a lesson in this respect from Nature. Only if air is available in sufficient quantity will it be comfortable and good. If it is excessive and there is a gale you will feel uncomfortable. When you are thirsty; you can consume only a limited quantity of water. You can't consume the entire water of the Ganga! We take only as much as is needed for the sustenance of the body.

Doctors know that the body temperature is normally 98.4. If this goes up to 99 they say fever has set in due to some disorder in the body. We inhale and exhale at a normal rate. If there is a slight increase or decrease in the rate it indicates disorder in the body. Changes in the pulse rate or blood pressure also indicate disorder. So you find that if you cross the limits even to a little extent it is dangerous or harmful to the body. There is a limit for everything to function in a normal way. When your eyes happen to see a flash of lightning or a flash light while taking photographs, they automatically close

because they can't withstand such high illumination. Ear drums also cannot tolerate hearing beyond a certain volume and we close our ears or keep cotton inside the ears. From these we see that our life is a limited company!

Misuse of money is a great evil

Similarly our desires also should be limited. Women are usually desirous of adding to their wardrobe any number of sarees when they go to a shop or an exhibition. You should have a reasonable number of sarees, but not a huge collection for pomp or show. Misuse of money is a great evil. Even men will have to do their own bit in controlling the expenditure on unwanted and unnecessary things. Money is *Dhaivaswaroopam* (embodiment of Divinity). When you talk of wealth you should be careful to avoid avaricious accumulation and extravagant expenditure. Even in the preparation of food, you should be careful in avoiding wastage. We are only doing a disservice by consuming more food than what is necessary for the body. Thirdly, you should be careful about 'time', which is the yardstick of life. Seconds become hours, hours become years, years make yugas (ages) and so on. You should not waste this most valuable 'time'. Time lost in wasteful pursuits can't be got back by any means. All our activities should be planned for utilising the available time to maximum advantage. So, we should not waste food, money, time and energy.

Even in purchase of garlands, you need not waste money. What God wants is the flower of your heart that is filled with humility and devotion. Eight types of flowers can be offered to God, viz,

1. Ahimsa (Non-violence),
2. Indhriya Nigraha (Control of senses)
3. Sarvabhootha Dhaya (Compassion towards all beings)
4. Sathyam (Truth)
5. Dhyanam (Meditation)
6. Shanthi (Peace)
7. Vinaya (Humility)
8. Bhakthi (Devotion).

God appreciates only your motive

I feel very much concerned about the excessive money that is spent by the Trust and Samithi on the expensive huge garlands offered to Me on every occasion and also the use of flowers for decorating the path. No doubt you are doing this as an expression of your *Ananda* (Divine bliss). But I won't call this *Bhakthi* (devotion), though you may not own this. We should realise our defects and rectify them. You may show your affection by just handing over one flower and spend the money wasted on garlands for helping the poor people in distress. People may think that Baba will not like it if flower paths are not provided and huge garlands are not offered. You must understand that God appreciates only your motive and not the external things. By indulging in such exhibitionism, you will only spoil the name of the organisation. As a member of Sathya Sai Organisation, you should have no sense of ego or pride. As I have often said you should have your

"Hands in society **and** heads in the forest".

This should be your guiding principle. What little you do you must do with a good and pure heart. In the Bhagavathgeetha, Krishna has referred to "*Pathram, Phalam, Pushpam, Thoyam*" (that is, leaf, fruit, flower or water) that can be offered to God. I am pleased with any of these provided it is offered with sincere devotion.

What is 'pathram'? It is not the 'leaf' that you see around you. The inner meaning is that your body itself is the leaf. Flower is not the one in the plants but it is the flower of your heart, "Hridhaya Pushpam". 'Phalam' is not the ordinary fruit but 'Manophalam' (the fruit of your mind). 'Thoyam' means water but what is referred to here is not the water from the river or tap. It refers to the tears of joy welling up within you from a sincere and prayerful

heart.

Transform yourselves into better individuals

Moreover you should not only practise yourself but teach others also about this ceiling on desires. Though Narayana is in everyone, the one in the poor people is referred to as "*Dharidhra Narayana*". When this Narayana begs for food, you refuse to give him food while you offer food to another person who is already well-fed. You place before God's pictures a lot of food of rich variety as '*Naivedhyam*' (offering). You do this because you know very well that this is coming back to you. So, here too it is '*Swartham*' (self-interest) and not '*Thyagam*' (sacrifice) The *amrithathwa* (immortality) or *Moksha* (Liberation) will come out of thyagam. We have Seva Dhal, Bhajan Mandalis, and other Wings. It is a good sign that more and more youngsters are coming forward to join the Seva Dhal and take part in service activities. The participation of youth is necessary for the welfare of the world. We should rejoice when they turn over a new leaf in their life. There is a common saying that you should not rejoice and distribute sweets etc. when a child is born, but you should do so only when the son grows up and earns a good name as a 'Sathputhra' (good son).

You can't please Me just by joining as a member of the organisation. I shall wait for the day when you turn over a new leaf and transform yourselves into better individuals. You should become '*Guna-sheelas*' (persons of sterling character and good qualities). It is the code of conduct which is responsible for the organisation moving forward growing from strength to strength. The office-bearers should exercise maximum care to see that the code of conduct is adhered to and guide others also in the right path. When a cook in a house works with integrity the master on his own will entrust him with the keys of the house. Similarly, God also will appreciate only men with integrity. The desire to please God should be the fundamental motive.

Be always saturated with prema; do not use poisonous words against any

one, for, words wound more fatally than even arrows. Speak soft and sweet; sympathise with suffering and loss and ignorance; try your best to apply the salve of soothing word and timely succour.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4. Service and Saadhana

Date: 23 January 1983

LIVING in this land of Bharath with its rich rewarding culture but yet not absorbing its broad all-inclusive insight, not delving into the secrets of its survival and freshness, how can any one achieve progress and ensure the peace and prosperity of the world? Uttering the voice of peace while shattering by deeds all hopes of establishing it can only be termed as deceiving oneself. World progress is not an abstract ideal; it means series of concrete achievements in the community of nations, the diversity of societies and the entities of individuals. Each of these has to march forward to the same goal, in concord and with cooperative effort. In spite of the amazing victories that man has won over the forces of nature, man has yet to win peace and joy, for himself and his fellowmen. For, these can be gained only by the mastery of the inner impulses and the sublimation of the inner emotions. Lions have as their motto, "Together, we serve better." This togetherness inspires mutual help and service. It must inspire those who serve and those who are served and bring both into the bond of Love.

Man is no more the master, but the slave of habits

The path of Love and Service is not smooth: it abounds in struggle and disappointments. Life itself is a pendulum between sighs and smiles. But, every obstacle is an invitation to your intelligence. "Life is a challenge; meet it ! Life is a dream; realise it." Mankind is terrified by a crowd of problems at the present time - scientific, technological, economic and moral. These cannot be solved by material means alone. Mental transformation too must happen. The ideals laid down by the seers who moulded our cultural tradition have to be honoured and practised. They hold before the eyes the means to fulfil the years of life, not through the multiplication of material comforts, but through serenity and simplicity. Bigger mansions, swell cars, rare luxuries are eagerly sought after Man is no more the master; he is the slave of the habits, the pleasures and the riches he runs after He counts the number of years he has grown; he forgets that each year, his life-period is being shortened. Erudition

sans humility, expertise sans discrimination, work sans wisdom, life sans love, music sans melody can never receive honour in the community. When virtues are few and studies are huge What is the gain, what is their worth? When desert land one has acres ten, What is the gain? What their worth? A patch is a treasure if fertile it be. Character is the measure of man. Character insists on keeping vice and wickedness at a distance. It reminds man of obligations and responsibilities, of the high ideals and goal of human life. Life not sanctified by character is a home without lamps, a coin that is counterfeit.

Money makes many things and wrongs too

Many a time, the game ends even before one recognises the Master. So, while life is on, one should devote it for some sacred activity - the most sacred being Seva (Service). It ensures fellowship and kinship among all men. It discloses the unity inherent in all the divinity. In India, people have clubbed together in the name of seva or service as Lions Club, Rotary Club, Cosmopolitan Club etc. Their ideals are really sacred and the projects too are commendable. They revere all men as a single family. Many worthy persons perform devoted service as members of these Clubs. It is indeed a fortunate chance for them, for there can be no good work, higher than this.

They say, "Money makes many things" but it is more correct to say "Money makes many wrongs." Not all, of course, are ruined by affluence. They can help such organisations to do more and better service. They can supply medicines to those who render health service to the poor. They can visit slums and offer help in various ways to the dwellers. These are all laudable. But, collecting money and paying others to do the service is not enough; we must assess what services we ourselves are offering directly. And, we must not be content - the doctors, lawyers, the rich, the educated - with spurts of service, off and on. It must be a continuous process, according to a settled time table undertaken every week Doctors must proceed to slums and villages and help the dwellers. There is urgent need for this type of seva. Lawyers must take up the cases in which wrongs are committed on the poor through their ignorance and plead on their behalf for justice. They could devote time for at least two or three such cases per week. Their pleadings on

behalf of the poor should not be cursory and casual. They must be as earnest and as effective as the rest.

Love is selflessness, while Self is Lovelessness

Embodiments of Love!

Members of the Lions Club have high ideals and are urged by sacred feelings. They have frequent meetings in order that they can come close, to each other. Some Clubs meet in five star hotels and spend huge sums. At home, we can feel happy with a full meal on five rupees but in hotels, even fifty rupees won't suffice. We lose forty five rupees each, whenever we have a meeting. The amount gained by discontinuing this practice can be spent on helping the poor. Our aim should be the work, the practical solution and not publicity only. Even from our personal point of view, we should so manage our affairs that money is not wasted. What is most important at this juncture is the consideration of the problems facing Bharath. These problems require the promotion of Prema and Seva (Love and Service).

Love is selflessness, while Self is Lovelessness!

I wish the citizens of Bombay to stand shoulder to shoulder with you and ensure the success of all your efforts on their behalf. They must co-operate with all their hearts all their resources and with all their skills. We waste heaps of money but we do not feel they are best utilised in service projects such as you have planned. This day is really a day of joy. I am happy I am amidst persons dedicated to service. It is essential that members of such Clubs pay attention to our spiritual advancement also, for that ensures our attainment of the goal of Life. The worldly and the spiritual are like the two wings of a bird, the two wheels of the vehicle, equally essential and equally important. By means of spiritual sadhana, earn spiritual wealth and share it with those whom you serve.

In the Sathya, there is no mithya; but, in the Mithya Jagath (illusive world) you have to search for sathya (truth) and experience it. You can do it if you rid your mind of all modifications and modulations.

Let it be transformed from its present complex confusion into something like the sky, which does not bear any mark though millions of birds fly through it and thousands of planes move across it.

Be unaffected, untouched, unattached. That is the spiritual discipline which will reveal the Reality, and which will ensure both physical and mental equanimity.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5. The Ever Auspicious Lord

Date: 11 February 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

The ever auspicious Lord The manifest form of Om, the one who has come to teach, The One who churns for butter, the hearts and minds of men, The Friend, the charmer, the liberator from blinding bondage, The Comforter of those who clamour and pray, the Destroyer of currents that drag,

The Consoler of torn hearts, like the moon so cool, The Derider of Pride, the Healer, curing birth and death, The Lotus-eyed, the Negator of Time, Himself the process and the play of Time,

The Thief who steals for Himself the pure minds of the good, Beauty embodied, the child of Dhevaki, Vasudheva, Son of Vasudhev,

The glory of the Yadhu race, is here, with you, beside you. THE man who is unable to imbibe true wisdom which broadens the mind, and to explore the inner truth about life, cannot promote the welfare of the world. The well-being of the world depends on the well-being of society and the latter depends on the welfare of individuals. All these are mutually interdependent. They are integrally related to one another. Hence the need for individuals in society to be truthful in thought, word and deed. The spiritual principle dearly warns those who mouth slogans of peace but indulge in acts inimical to peace. Human life can be truly understood only in the context of harmony and co-operation. For this to be realised, one must engage oneself in service to society. Such service is rooted in spiritual faith.

Man must turn away from the material to the Divine

Man today is exploring outer space, but does not know the truth about himself. Those who cannot know their own true nature cannot accomplish much. They cannot perceive the Real. And without perceiving the Real, they cannot realise Anandha (Divine Bliss). There is nothing that man cannot achieve, but before attempting anything he must recognise his powers, role

and purpose in life. As long as he is bound by ignorance of his true nature, he cannot escape from sorrow.

The Cosmos, as has been said before, is a manifestation of the Will of the Divine. To realise the Divine, however, it is not necessary to explore Prakrithi (creation). Everything in the universe is subject to change, impermanence and disappearance. How, then, does it acquire such importance of value? This is because of the Jeevis (the human beings) without whom the universe will be valueless. Here is a small example. In cities like Madras, Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta there are millions of people. In these cities land costs hundreds of rupees per square metre. But, for the same price one can buy many acres of land in a jungle. Why is land so costly in cities? It is because of the density of population in them. In a forest, remote from human aggregations, land has little value.

Man is the most valuable being in the Universe. He is also the creator of all values. The goldbearing ore that is mined from the earth acquires value after it has been extracted and refined by human effort. Likewise the rough diamond that is got from a mine becomes extremely valuable after it is cut and shaped by man. Immersed in worldly concerns and looking upon material things as the source of happiness, men become victims of unhappiness. The material world can only produce sorrow. Man must turn away from the material to the Divine. Involvement with the mundane should yield place to the quest for Self- realisation.

Man is the creature of evil planets, Raga & Dhvesha

Life is like a tangled skein of yarn. The more you try to unravel it, the more tangled it becomes. Life is like a tank infested with crocodiles. It is difficult to cross it avoiding the crocodiles. But it has to be done. Life is like a block of ice that is continually melting away. Before it melts completely, the truth has to be realised. People believe that man is controlled by navagrahas (the nine planets). But he is in fact the creature of two evil planets, Raga (Attachment) and Dhvesha (Hatred).

Life is a short play on the stage. This body is like a bubble. The mind is always fickle. In the Geetha, Arjuna confesses to 'Krishna that the mind, which is constantly vacillating, is difficult to control. Nevertheless, man has to concentrate on his true destination. What is this destination, the goal and the aim of life? The Bhagavatha and the Bhagavath-geetha have made this clear. Our destination is the source from which we came. As long as the individual is caught up in the Prakrithi (phenomenal world), his mind will be unsteady and vacillating. As long as there is life in the body it is Shivam (sacred). Once life goes out, it is nothing. The Vedhic declaration, "Soham" ("He is I") is demonstrated by the inhaling done during breathing. When you exhale and utter "Aham," you are giving up the "I". "So-ham" proclaims the identity of the individual and the Divine ('I am He'). This identity will not be understood as long as one is caught up in the tentacles of the material world.

Service to the public is true worship of God

This is the truth about God. If one asks, "Where is that God?" the answer is given in the 18th canto of the Bhagavath-geetha in Stanza 61. Krishna has declared there: "Eeshwarahsarvabhuthanam hriddheshe" (The Lord resides in the heart region of all beings). We study the Geetha. We adore it. There is daily recitation, but no practical application in daily life. The one who realises his identity with the Divine will not cause hurt to any one. Service to the public is true worship of God. The power of the divine permeates everything. Our journey is from the individual to the Universal from 'Swam' (mine) to 'Soham' (oneness with God), from 'I' to 'we'. The effulgent Sun can be seen only with his own light. Similarly, only by the grace of the Divine can one obtain a vision of the Divine. No skill, intellectual effort or scholarship is required to experience the Divine. Just as clouds may obscure the Sun, the clouds of egoism, attachment and hatred prevent one from seeing the Divine. Prayer and sadhana are the means by which these clouds are dispersed. Sadhana (spiritual discipline) is the royal road to reach the Divine. The human make-up is a mixture of good and bad traits. One in whom the good traits predominate, tends to see only the good in others. Those who have equal-mindedness see the good and bad qualities impartially. It is necessary therefore to cultivate good qualities.

Shiva or Shankara is always auspicious

Whether one does good or bad acts, there is no escape from their consequences. Knowing this, our ancients always sought what was good and auspicious. This is the meaning of the worship of Shiva. When we speak of Shiva Rathri, we refer to the night that is associated with Shiva, that is, an auspicious night.

Shivam means that which is auspicious. The Shiva principle is totally free from anything that is inauspicious or unholy in any circumstance. When incarnations like Rama and Krishna appear in human bodies, they have some inauspicious associations related to their bodies. Although they incarnate for the purpose of saving the world, protecting the devotees and uplifting humanity, they have to shed their bodies sometime or other. Hence in the name of such avatars, the honorific 'Sri' is prefixed to indicate the sacredness of their advent. But for Shiva no such appellation is needed because Shiva transcends corporeal limitations. Unlike Sri Rama or Sri Krishna there is no "Sri Shiva" or "Sri Shankara". Shiva or Shankara is always auspicious. The realisation of oneness with Shiva means the attainment of immortality. "Chandhrama manaso Jathah," says the Purusha Shuktha (The mind arose from the moon). The Moon has sixteen digits. Likewise the mind has sixteen digits. On Shivarathri night, fifteen of the Moon's sixteen digits are invisible, and only one digit can be seen. The mind also is in the same state. If during Shivarathri one meditates on God, one can achieve nearness to the Divine. Supreme sacredness of Shivarathri consists in realising oneness with the Divine through meditation on God.

What you deny is the Reality; only the Divine exists. The world is the unreal. Forgetting the Real, men are lost in the pursuit of the transient. The world must be viewed as the reflected image of the Divine. All acts must be done as an offering to the Divine. True devotees of God should not attach any importance to differences of religion, caste or sect. These are merely differences in name and form. Realising that the sacred Shiva principle is present in everyone, the devotee should not look down upon anyone or cause

harm to others. Dr Chenna Reddy spoke about greatness of the name "Samba Sadhashiva." Sa + Amba + Sadhashiva represent the union of the Universal Divine Mother and the Universal Divine Father, who are eternally auspicious. Sambashiva is the embodiment of the Shiva-Shakthi union. The world may change, but the Shiva principle is unchanging. The same union of the Universal Divine Mother and Father is represented by the name and form of "Sai Baba."

6. The Gaayathree Path to God

Date: 17 March 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Out of action arises the bondage of Delusion; From Delusion grows a perverted mind; Mental perversion leads to perverse deeds; Such deeds again result in rebirth. YOUNG embodiments of the Divine! The grand mansion of Hindhu thought has been raised on the four walls of karma, janma, dharma and Brahman (action, birth, righteous action, and Supreme Self or God). These four are interdependent. No one can escape the consequences of one's action, whether good or bad. No action goes in vain. Karma (action) is the primary cause of one's birth.

The jeevi is born in karma, He grows through karma, He ceases in karma.

Karma is the cause

Of happiness and misery. It has been well said that "The body indeed, is the basis for the pursuit of dharma" (Shareeramadhyam khalu dharma sadhanam). It is by the pursuit of dharma that Brahman is realised. The Geetha has declared that whenever dharma declines the advent of the Avathar (Divine incarnation) occurs. This implies that the object of human existence is to uphold dharma. As creation is a projection of the Divine Will, the aim of every human being should be to live in harmony with that Will. One's life should be dedicated not for promoting one's selfish interests or to serve the interests of other fellow-beings but in the service of the Divine. Whatever is done to anyone, if it is done as an offering to the Divine, it will reach the Divine. Man should consecrate every action by regarding it as an offering to the Divine.

Gayathree initiation gives one the Second Birth

From the moment of issuing from the mother's womb, one is involved in action. This natural state is common to all and may be described as Shuudhrathwam (the state of the Shuudhra, that is, one who is not subject to

any regimen). After one receives the Gayathree initiation, he is born again and becomes a Dwija (the twice-born). The Gayathree is described as "Chhandhasam ma thah" - the mother of all the Vedas (ancient sacred scriptures). One meaning of Gayathree is that it is a manthra (sacred formula) which protects or fosters the "Gayas" or jeevis (individual beings). You must note that today you have all got a second birth by receiving the Gayathree manthra (Vedhic prayer to illuminate the intelligence). By observing the disciplines of the Brahmachari (celibate) stage, you will qualify yourselves for the study of the Vedas. When one begins to study the Vedas he is known as "Vipra" (Brahmana). This is a third birth, as it were. At this stage, by the study and understanding of the Vedas and living up to their precepts, one gets the opportunity to understand Brahman (Supreme Being). Once the Brahman principle is understood, one merges in Brahman. It is only when there is awareness of Brahman can one claim to be a real Brahman. It is not birth alone, but the realisation of Brahman which confers real Brahmanathwa (Brahmana-hood) on a person.

Gayathree manthra is the embodiment of all deities

The Gayathree manthra has to be recited three times a day - in the morning at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset. These are called "Sandhya Kalam" - the time of coming together of night and day, of morning and evening, and of day and night. Time, like man, has three qualities: Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas (poised, passion and inertia). The day is divided into three parts. The four hours between 4 and 8 a.m. in the morning and between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the evening have the Sathwa (equanimous) quality. The eight hours between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. are Rajasik (Passionate). The eight hours between 8 p.m. and 4 a.m. which are mainly used for sleep, are Thamasik (inaction). The eight hours of the day (from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) are employed by all beings, including animals and birds, in the discharge of their day to day duties and are regarded as Rajasik (active pursuit). When the four Sathwik hours of the morning (4 a.m. to 8 a.m.) are used for engaging oneself in good actions like worship, virtuous deeds, keeping good company, one is sure to raise, himself from the human to the Divine level. It is during the Sathwik period (from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.) the Gayathree manthra should be recited.

This manthra is the embodiment of all deities. It is not related to any particular sect, caste or idol or institution. It is said to embody nine "colours": (1) Om (2) Bhuh (3) Bhuvah (4) Suvah (5) Thath (6) Savithur or powers (7) Varenyam (8) Bhargah (9) Dhevasya. "Dheemahi" is related to the meditative aspect. "Dhiyo-yo-nah prachodayath" relates to the aspect of prayer. The manthra as a whole thus contains three aspects descriptive, meditational and prayer.

Discover the Unity that underlies the Diversity

On the basis of differences in behaviour, the antahkarana (inner-psyche) has been accorded four names. When it is concerned with thoughts, it is called manas (mind). When it is restless and wavering it is called chiththa (consciousness). When it is concerned with enquiry and understanding, it is called buddhi (intellect). When it is associated with the sense of "mine" (possessiveness), it is called ahamkara (egoism). Why are four different names and attributes given to one and the same entity (the Antahkarana)? The mind is pre-occupied with distinctions and differences. The buddhi is concerned with oneness and reveals the Unity that underlies the diversity. All our efforts must be directed towards discovering the Unity that underlies the diversity rather than seeking to divide the One into the many. The Gayathree manthra (Vedhic prayer to illuminate the intelligence) is a sacred manthra which demonstrates the unity that underlies manifoldness in creation. It is through the recognition of this unity that we can understand the multiplicity. Clay is one and the same thing, though pots of different shapes and sizes can be made from it. Gold is one, though gold ornaments can be multifarious. The Atma (Divine Self) is one, though the embodied forms in which it resides may be many. Whatever the colour of the cow, the milk is white always. There is no object in the world which does not have a form and a name. The Cosmos is made up of things with forms and names. While the forms are subject to constant change, the names remain unchanged. The form may change and even completely disappear but the name remains. Once we know the name, we can recognise what or whom it represents. In a large gathering, it will not be easy to trace a person merely from the description of his features. But when his name is called, he immediately responds and can be identified.

Likewise, through the name of the Lord; the form of the Lord can be visualised.

Five faces - Three deities

Gayathree is described as having five faces. The first is "Om" The second is "Bhurbhuvassuvah" The third is. "Thathsavithur Varenyam". The fourth is "Bhargo Dhevasya Dheemahi". The fifth is: "Dhiyo-yo nah Prachodhayath", Gayathree represents in these five faces the five Pranas (life forces). Gayathree is the protector of the five Pranas in man. Gayantham thrayathe ithi Gayathree - "Because it protects the one who recites it, it is called Gayathree." When Gayathree acts as protector of the life-forces, she is known as Savithree. Savithree is known in the puranic story as the devoted wife who brought back to life her husband, Sathyavan. Savithree is the presiding deity of the five pranas. She protects those who lead a life of Truth. This is the inner meaning. When one's intelligence and intuition are developed by the recitation of the manthra, the activating deity is Gayathree. When the life-forces are protected, the guardian deity is called Savithree. When one's speech is protected, the deity is called Saraswathee. Because of the protective roles of Savithree, Saraswathee and Gayathree, in relation to life, speech and the intellect, Gayathree is described as "Sarvadhevathaswaruupini" - he embodiment of all goddesses.

It is essential to recite the Gayathree manthra at least three times during morning, noon and evening. This will serve to reduce the effects of the wrong acts one does every day. It is like buying goods for cash, instead of getting them on credit. There is no accumulation of karmic (result of action) debt, as each day's karma (action) is atoned for that day itself by reciting the Gayathree Manthra.

Redemptive Power of the Gayathree manthra

The plea that one cannot find time for reciting the Gayathree thrice a day is specious and untenable. People waste so much of their time in worthless activities that they can easily find a few moments for reciting the Gayathree

when they wake up from bed and before they go to sleep, if only they have the will. The Gayathree can be recited even when one is taking his bath. It will mean also offering ablutions to the goddess. At noon, if the Gayathree is recited before taking one's meal, the food will get sanctified and become an offering to the deity. The Brahmacharis (celebrates/religious students) should realise the redemptive power of the Gayathree mantra. Through the Brahmopadhesam (initiation into sacred knowledge), the young boys have had a second birth. It is only when they have achieved the purposes of this second birth will they be qualified to enter on the sacred third stage of "viprathvam" (Brahmana-hood), which leads to the realisation of Brahman. "One who is aware of Brahman, becomes one with Brahman" is the Vedhic saying. To recognise the Brahman principle, one has to understand one's own true nature. There is a story to illustrate how one can see whether he is qualified to realise Brahman. An unmarried girl acquires the right to a half-share in a man's property after she is married to him and he ties the mangalasuuthra (the auspicious marriage thread) round her neck. It is this sacred thread that confers the right on her. Likewise, one remains remote from God as long as one has not acquired the thread of "surrender to the Divine" (Sharanagathi- thathwa). The moment one wears the suuthra (thread) of Sharanagathi (total surrender), one acquires the right to a half share in the energy and authority of the Divine. We must strive earnestly to pursue the path of submission to the Divine Will and offering everything to the Divine. The attitude of surrender will grow in us as we recite regularly the Gayathree mantra. This is the reason why boys are initiated into the mantra at an early age. There is also another reason for this early initiation. Boys, who have been indolent or dull before getting the Brahmopadhesam have been able to develop their intelligence and be more diligent in their studies after they have received the Gayathree mantra. This is a matter of proven experience. Like sunrise after the night, the Gayathree mantra dispels the darkness of ignorance: "Dhiyoyo- nah prachodayath." The rays of the Gayathree mantra illumine the mind and intelligence and promote knowledge, wisdom and discrimination. I bless the young vatus (boys who have been initiated) so that from today they recite the Gayathree regularly, lead exemplary lives and grow into good, god-fearing, educated and enlightened citizens of Bharath.

The pain that another suffers from, which you seek to assuage, is really your own pain; when you stop his pain, it is your pain that stops. Service can be effective only when the feelings of 'I' and 'Mine' give place to 'God' and 'God's'. It is only when your attention is monopolised by the body and its needs, that egoism will grow in strength.

When you direct your attention to the Anthar-atma (Inner-self) which is God, then, you find the same of God in all and a flood of reverence fills you and fertilises every act of yours.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Karma, Dharmaja and Brahma

Date: 17 March 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Without Charity and Righteousness, Devoid of Truth and Compassion, With a mind bereft of scruples And filled with bad impulses, The evil minded man fares ill Here and Hereafter.

Oh foolish mind!

Seeking the Vision of the Divine Where do you wander in vain? What you seek is within you Know that truth.

THERE are in the world various kinds of subjects for which knowledge is available - knowledge of music, literature, art, sculpture, economics, politics, and the like. All these are only components of worldly knowledge knowledge relating to the phenomenal world. All worldly knowledge can help to increase one's comforts, but will not contribute to his Mukthi (liberation). However much we may acquire control over material conditions, this will not serve to produce peace of mind or the bliss of the soul. In a sense, the more the worldly knowledge the less is one likely to have mental peace.

Whatever is perceptible, is perishable

Worldly knowledge is no doubt necessary. But it is not the be-all and end-all. Many great kings in the past, who had ruled over vast empires and enjoyed every kind of pleasure, chose at the close of their lives to renounce everything for the sake of realising spiritual peace. "Yaddhrushyam than-nashyathi" - "Whatever is perceptible, is perishable." In the pursuit of fleeting and impermanent pleasures, we are throwing away the permanent, the unchanging and the real elements in human life. You imagine you are the architect of your fate. But the Author, the Master and the Enjoyer of everything is the Lord. By failing to grasp the nature of karma (action) and not seeking the path of dharma (virtue), man is making himself remote from Brahman (Supreme Being). For the performance of karma, the body is the

primary instrument. It is through fight karma that one understands dharma (righteousness). The Karma Kanda (branch dealing with action and its reaction) of the Vedas (ancient revelations of spiritual knowledge) indicates how the primary goals of life are to be realised by the performance of sacramental duties - Sandhya Vandanam (daily worship of Sun God), yagna (sacrificial rite) and yaga (ceremonial sacrifice). Even as birth is related to karma, karma to dharma, and dharma to Brahman, the mother, the father, Guru and God are related to the individual. The mother indicates the father. The father leads one to the Guru (preceptor). The Guru shows the way to realise God. All the four are fundamental to one's life. The mother comes first because she bears the travail of carrying and giving birth to the child. Hence, the Upanishaths urged: "Mathru Devo Bhava" (Regard the mother as God). Then comes the father, who takes the child to a proper Guru for the acquisition of jnana (spiritual wisdom).

The primary duty of the Guru is to show the path to God-realisation. Prahladha declared: "Only the Guru who teaches about God is worth the name". True Gurus are those who show what are the true purposes of life and how they should be realised. The Guru is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance by leading one to the light of knowledge of the Good, the True and the Eternal. The Guru should demonstrate to the student that beyond the changing forms and names of the phenomenal world there is a Divinity that is permanent and unchanging.

Fruits of one's actions bound to appear sooner or later

The materialistic philosophers today speak about oneness of mankind. But how do they explain the vast and immeasurable differences among men - differences in abilities, conditions, attitudes and impulses? One is continually sick. Another is hale and hearty. One is always cheerful. Another is continuously miserable. People do not realise that these differences are the results of past karma (action). Karma is the cause of everything that happens. The fruits of one's actions may not be evident immediately, but sooner or later, they are bound to appear. "I shall do this, I shall do that," Vain is this boast, Oh man, As you sow, so shall you reap, As the seed, so will the fruit be.

Hence, it is only by doing good deeds can one achieve desirable results. It is for this purpose that the Vedas (sacred scriptures and eternal values) have laid down in the Karma Kanda (action-oriented part of Vedas) the good deeds by which beneficial results can be got.

Even the Trinity cannot avoid of karma

The Karma Kanda reveals that the Law of Karma affects everything that has a body and not merely human beings alone. For instance, even the Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Rudhra - cannot avoid the consequences of karma. By their actions they are demonstrating this truth to the world. For instance, like a potter, Brahma is continuously creating things in this Cosmos. This is the unceasing work. Why is he involved in this? Because he has a distinct body. Assuming the body for performing karma and discharging his dharma (righteousness) through his karma, he is setting an example to the world. Vishnu comes down in human form whenever dharma declines on the earth and is in danger of extinction. Facing the censure of the wicked, punishing evil-doers and protecting the good and the innocent, and receiving the praise of the devotees, Vishnu is carrying out His duty of protecting dharma and reforming mankind. It may be asked, "Why should Vishnu go through this ordeal as the protector of dharma?" It is no ordeal. It is only a demonstration of the duties that are related to the assuming of a certain form. Eeshwara (Shiva) covers Himself with vibhuuthi (sacred ash), dwells in the burial ground and subjects Himself to various rigorous disciplines. Thus even Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, by their actions, have been setting an example to mankind as to how to make human life purposeful. There are in human beings three aspects: mala, vikshepa and avarana. "Mala" is the cause of ashanthi (mental disquiet). "Mala" represents the fruit of actions done in previous births. As long as this is not eliminated, like the faeces resulting from the digesting of food, it will give rise to all kinds of trouble and sorrow. How can there be peace or joy when the fruit of past karma remains in us? Only when we are rid of the burden of karma can we attain peace. The results of past sins continue as "mala". To get rid of "mala", we have to engage ourselves in sacred tasks.

The Lord looks at your heart, not your wealth

The Lord judges you by the sincerity of your thoughts, not by the forms of your worship. The Lord sees your bhakthi (devotion) and not shakthi (power). He cares for your gunas (qualities) and not your kula (caste or lineage). He looks at your chiththam (heart) and not at your viththam (wealth). You must strive to purify your heart and engage yourself in righteous action, with devotion and integrity. No sadhana (spiritual discipline) is of any use if you are involved in sinful deeds.

"Vikshepa" consists of worldly distractions to overcome which various sadhanas are undertaken for realising the Divine. The sadhanas include meditation, concentration and performance of good deeds for achieving purity of mind. When one succeeds in overcoming Vikshepa, one is confronted with "avarana" (the thick covering in which one is enveloped). This covering is known as maya (delusion). It envelops everything in the universe. The eyes with which one can see everything that is outside cannot see themselves. Likewise, Maya, which reveals the entire universe, cannot reveal the Divine. Because we are enveloped in Maya, we seek worldly pleasures and do not seek our own Divine essence.

Gayathri Mantra is the royal road to Divinity

Young people should realise the connection between food and the state of one's mind. For much of the demonic qualities prevalent among men today, the primary cause is the food they consume. One will develop good qualities if one takes Sathwik food, which is wholesome and moderate in quantity. It should not involve causing pain to others. And all that is eaten should be regarded as an offering to God. This is the inner significance of the Sandhaya Vandhana manthras. When uttering the different names of Vishnu - Keshava, Narayana, etc. - one should bear in mind the meaning of each name. Narayana, for instance, means that He is the Lord of the Five Elements. If the name is recited, bearing in mind what it signifies, the full benefit of reciting the mantra will be got. The Gayathree mantra is the royal road to Divinity. There is no fixed time or regulation for reciting it. Nevertheless, the young

Brahmacharis (celibates) would do well to recite it during the morning Sandhya and evening Sandhya (worship during dawn and twilight hours) to derive the greatest benefit. However because the Divine is beyond time and space, any time, any place is appropriate for repeating God's name. The Bhagavatha declares: "Sarvatha, sarvathra, sarvakaleshu Harichintanam" - "Contemplate on God always, at all places and at all times." You must learn to think of God in whatever you see, whatever you do and whatever you touch. You must realise that you are playing temporary roles on the cosmic stage. You must get back to your true Divine Selves when the play is over. By regularly reciting the Gayathree, you must purify your lives and be an example to the world in righteous living. This is my benediction for you.

When someone suffers from acute stomach pain, his eyes exude tears! For, there is one consciousness pervading and activating all parts of the body, and producing appropriate reactions everywhere. Similarly, the world too is just one body and pain anywhere naturally affects other parts. No single part can rejoice when another part, however distant, however insignificant, is in pain.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8. Build temple in your hearts

Date: **06 April 1983** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Inauguration of new mandir**

YOU have built this *mandir* (temple). This does not satisfy Me. Only the temples erected in your hearts are permanent. The sums spent on the construction of temples could be spent more usefully on service to the poor and the needy. Almost every activity of man is motivated by *swartham* (self-interest). This concern for self-interest is opposed to the divinity that is immanent in man. Without realising this Divinity, how can man achieve peace internally or in the world outside?

The individual, society and the world - all the three are inextricably interconnected. The individual's welfare is dependent on the state of the nation. Everyone should strive to develop his spiritual qualities and utilise them for promoting the interests of the community and the country. Service to society should become the constant concern of the individual. There is no greater quality in man than selfless love, which expresses itself in service to others. Such love can be the source of real bliss. The relationship between karma and karmayoga should be properly understood. Ordinary *karma* (action) done with attachment or desires causes bondage. But desireless, selfless action becomes karmayoga. Our life should become a *yoga* (Divine Communion) rather than a '*roga*' (disease). Today most of our actions result in '*roga*' because they are related to sensuous pleasures. Freedom from this disease can be obtained by pursuing the spiritual path. The spiritual path does not consist merely in singing *bhajans* (devotional songs) or reciting hymns. These are good deeds. Only actions performed as a complete offering to the Divine can be regarded as spiritual. The man who is in a state of ignorance about the Self is like the bud of a flower that has not yet blossomed. When the flower blossoms, it sheds its fragrance all round. Likewise, the man who has realised the Divinity within him becomes a source of light and strength.

Temples are useful only as reminders

Why should you build temples? The ideal is to make your hearts the temples for the Divine to dwell. But this is not possible for everybody. Temples in stone are reminders of the existence of God. When you see a lawyer you are reminded of your legal troubles. When you see a doctor you think of your illness. Likewise, when you see a temple, you are reminded of God. Temples are useful only as reminders. But true worship consists in heartfelt devotion to the God within each one. Purifying this temple of your heart, you must dedicate your life to service. It is such dedicated service, done in the spirit of sadhana, which distinguishes the Sathya Sai Organisations from other spiritual organisations. Innumerable Sai devotees - men and women, young and old - are rendering service in various forms out of their love of Sai. People talk about Swami's *vibhuthi* (sacred ash) and Swami's miracles. But the real miracle is Swami's boundless love. It is this love which is inspiring countless devotees to engage themselves in selfless service.

Ups and downs of life have lessons to teach us

There is nothing greater than this love. You have all been drawn to Me by this love. **To give love and to receive love. This is My business.** No income-tax officer can know the extent of the "income" derived from this "business". There is no limit to My *Ananda* (Divine Bliss). I am always immersed in bliss. This is because My bliss is associated with love and not with any material objects. If you follow this path, you will also derive this ineffable anandha. You will realise peace of every kind.

Look with an equal mind on good fortune and misfortune, on happiness and sorrow, loss and gain. These are products of nature like heat and cold, summer and winter. They have their purposes to serve. Similarly the ups and downs of life have lessons to teach us. In fact, without reverses in life, we shall not be able to experience Divinity. Without darkness, we cannot value light. Without experiencing difficulties, we will not enjoy benefits. It is the lack of peace of mind which compels us to seek the means to realise enduring peace. The Upanishads have declared that through renunciation alone is immortality to be attained. Men should learn to practise renunciation so that they may discover the secret of enduring peace and bliss.

The significance of yajna, dhama and thapas (sacrifice, self-control and penance), of sahana, sadhana, samyama (forbearance, spiritual discipline and restraint), of the great Mahavakyas (Vedic dicta) enshrined in the Vedas, of the three Yogas - bhakthi, karma and jnana - as elaborated in the Geetha, of the Dhaivi and Asuri (godly and demonic) natures - all these and many more of the fundamentals of Indian culture have to be taught to the children in schools and colleges.

They must be encouraged to practise them, for their own as well as for the country's good.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. Bhagavan's advice to villagers

Date: 08 April 1983 / Location: Singanamuppavaram

MORE than economic development or provision of amenities, what is important in the reconstruction of our villages is the raising of the quality of life of the villagers and developing their moral and spiritual values. Jnana (spiritual knowledge) is regarded as the primary requisite for man. But what is really primary is his conduct - righteous conduct. One's conduct determines one's qualities and the qualities, in their turn, determine one's behaviour. All are God's children and are equally entitled to the love of the Lord.

Why, then, are there differences among men? Why is there no equality or sameness? This is because of differences in the mental make-up of people. If the mind is impure, one's actions are bound to be impure. When the mind and the consciousness are warped by egoism, the human behaviour is also distorted. When these are turned towards the Divine, good actions follow naturally. The mind is the cause of good and bad deeds. Hence, whatever we wish to achieve, we should try to accomplish without excitement or agitation. For a human being, the important qualities are sathya, dharma, shanthi and prema (truth, righteousness, peace and love). The villages are very backward today. To remove this backwardness, the first requisite is unity in the village. Villagers must be helpful to each other. If any one is afflicted with pain, all others should feel that they are equally affected. If the village is considered as a body, all the households in it are different limbs of the body. Harm to any part is to be treated as harm to the whole. Villagers should learn to speak sweetly and pleasantly. A harsh word can cause lasting damage. "If the foot slips, only the leg is injured; but if the tongue slips, one may go to hell," says the proverb.

Unity should be the watchword of villagers

The villagers must eschew hatred and discord. The village can prosper only when the villagers develop mutual love and cooperation. There may be differences between individuals. But these should not affect common action

in the interests of the village as a whole. Unity should be their watchword. Through unity anything can be accomplished. It is unfortunate that politics has invaded rural life and promoted conflicts and divisions among the rural population. This is not good for you. You must all make your village an ideal village by banishing factions and other differences. You must suppress your ego and pride. There is no basis for this pride when you realise that life is impermanent and all one's possessions may be taken away in one moment. Ravana made Lanka greater than Swarga (heaven) itself. But his egoistic arrogance brought about his fall. Similar has been the fate of arrogant men like Kamsa and Sisupala. All of them courted destruction. The Kauravas met with disaster because of their arrogance. People should cultivate humility. The villagers should avoid idle gossip and wasting their time in useless pursuits. I desire that you should build up your village as an example to the country by your unity, mutual cooperation and integrity.

The Lord has declared in the Geetha that He is Sarvabhuuthantharatma - "the Inner Reality of all beings." Try to be ever in the awareness of this Unity in God; this is the one truth that has to be seen, experienced and announced; this is the soundest basis for individual and social life. This will serve as an unshakable foundation for your international outlook.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. Your Divine destiny

Date: 21 April 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Rama Navami

The Universe is illumined through and through by, the splendour of the Lord.

The Universe shines forever in the glory of the Lord. When the Light of the Lord is withdrawn from it, the Universe cannot shine.

The Universe and its Lord are eternally bound by all-prevading light and love. Embodiments of Love! Good thoughts in mind good words in speech,

Good steps in every deed - When these are not found, How can Sai pat and praise and give you joy ? Decide and declare the answer to yourself. WHAT pleases man most is sweetness - in thought, word and deed. This mysterious component that evokes joy in the human heart is the genuine Rama principle. Rama means that which causes delight. A stomachful of food, an eye-ful of sleep, a home full of children's laughter - these, according to most people, are the highest levels of happiness. But this refers only to the interval between birth and death. What of the before and after? The body is something separate from you. You own it for some years and you feed it and foster it and struggle with it, to tame it to do your will. 'You' or the 'I' in the body, the 'Atma', is the One, without a second. When identification with the body weakens, the effulgence of the Atma (divine Self) will be patent.

Accumulation of things cannot win Grace

Attachment to the body complex implies accumulation and acquisition of things that cater to its needs and greeds. Accumulation promotes exploitation;-it cannot win Grace. It has no limit; the thirst increases with each gulp. It always asks for more. Can a lake be filled with a drizzle? Can saliva slake the thirst? Can blades of grass burn as coal? Accumulation of things, of scholarship or fame can yield no good, unless what is acquired is put to practical use for oneself and others. The wisdom to recognize that the body he believes is himself is only an instrument wielded by him, has to dawn in

man. That is the first step to the higher spiritual consciousness. There is in every person the ever-free, ever-unattached, ever-pure Atma. That is the Brahman (Absolute Reality), the Cosmic Awareness latent and patent in every one. Yoga (Divine Communion) awakens when the world is viewed with glorious unconcern. This is the source of supreme Anandha (Divine Bliss). How can renunciation, non-attachment, result in joy, it may be asked. Discard the sense of egotism while engaged in activity; discard, while experiencing any emotion or reaction, the feeling of being a partaker - then, one can be ever in joy. Then the Bhogi (enjoyer) is really a Yogi (spiritually advanced person).

The Divine is the basis for everything

Consider the reality of the things from which one derives joy! Each one of them is saturated with the Divine Principle. The rain that falls, the Sun that shines, the Moon that cools, the rivers that flow are all for all. Therefore no one has the right to claim them exclusively or to prevent others from sharing these gifts. The Divine is the basis for everything, objective as well as subjective. The eye cannot see nor the ears hear unless the life-principle is active through the grace of the Divine Atma or Brahman. Man can become aware of the Athmic truth when he casts off the trammels of egotism and possessiveness. The tender child is not burdened with these two. Fed at the mother's breast, inhaling fresh pure invigorating air, it is thrilled by the sweet lullabies the mother sings. But, as it grows in age, it assumes the dual emotions of mine and thine and gets entangled in greed and hate, in pomp and possessiveness. So, the basic Divinity gets ignored. The Atma is unaffected by what we call ups and downs. When the waters of the lake are agitated, the moon reflected in its depths appears agitated and wavy but the planet up in the sky is unaffected by what happens to its image. So, too, the mind wavers and wobbles but the Atma is calm and unconcerned. Another facet of the Atma or the Divine in us has also to be kept in view. It is not only in us but outside us also. In fact, the Vedas say, "Anthar-bahischa thath sarvam vyapya Narayana sthithaha " (Inside, outside That Divine pervades everything). No one can see his own face except in a mirror or some medium that can reflect it. When he discovers that he has some dirt on his face he can

clean it and become free. Retiring into a lonely silent place is like facing a fine mirror. Being in the midst of turmoil and travail is like peering into a hazy dusty mirror. Hence such retreats are desirable.

Man is directly derived from the Omniwill

The Atma in us is identical with the Cosmic Divine Consciousness, the Param-Atma (Supreme Self). It is Sath-Chith-Anandha; its nature can only be described as Being- Awareness-Bliss. The Vedas (ancient revealed sacred scriptures) also refer to it as Truth- Wisdom-Infinity - Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham Brahma. The individual is derived from Brahman and so is entitled to the awareness of Brahman. The Vedas declare that the sky is the manifestation of Brahman; from the sky comes air; fire is a projection of air and water, the earth arose from air, water and fire, plants grow on the earth and form the food (anna) which, in turn, moulds man. So, man is directly derived from the Omniwill of the Omni-Self. Man is enclosed in five sheaths the physical, vital, mental, intellectual and Blissful. This Blissful is the core. So, man need only explore within himself for infinite Bliss. Bliss has to be sought not through accumulation but through sacrifice and promotion of the welfare of others. Thyaga (sacrifice) is recommended by the Vedas as the only path to immortality. Give in plenty, give gladly, give for the glow of God, in gratitude to God. Selfishness is the canker that destroys charity. Though one is aware that a step is wrong, selfishness does not allow him to desist. But, it can be overcome by steady determination. Share with others the knowledge and skills you have earned, the ideas and ideals you have benefited and the joy you have won by discipline and dedication. Sharing will not diminish them or devalue them. On the other hand, they will shine better and put on added splendour.

Rama is the Voice of God within

Of these ideals, Truth is the one that Rama upheld. Take it that it is Rama that speaks through you and honour every word as Rama would have done. Consider how much Lakshmana had to repent for not acting, on one fateful occasion, according to the word he had given to Rama himself. Rama had

asked him never to leave Seetha alone in the hermitage and he had agreed. But, he left the place and Ravana could kidnap Seetha and carry her to his island city! Rama is Atma-Rama, the Voice of God within. Do not disobey it or circumvent its directives. Pray that the Voice alerts you ever, pray with humility and surrender to the advice. Then Rama will guide you right with compassion. Ramadhas of Bhadrachalam was thrown into prison; he was whipped without mercy. But, he never lost faith in Rama. He pleaded plaintively for grace, and he was able to earn Divine intervention to save himself from torture. Unwavering faith is the sign of spiritual success. That is the result of the awareness of one's inner Reality, the stabilising core, the Divine in man. Practise this ideal of inner peace and universal love. .Shower selfless love on,.. ten others and bring about once again the Rama Rajya (righteous rulership of Rama) of the Ramayana. 'Rama' means 'he who pleases'. Be pleasant to every one; let every one be pleased with you Do not hurt or harm, by thought, word and deed. Purify your heart; cleanse it of narrow selfishness. Bring million flowers and do puuja with them. All will be rejected, none accepted. Bring a single lotus, your heart, so fresh; Sathya Sai accepts, grants both love and peace. Offer your virtues as flowers. Virtues that spread beauty and fragrance. Offer your heart-lotus freed from insect pests like lust, anger and hate. The seed of Divinity has to be fostered by human effort and steady care, in order that it may blossom and fructify. Remove from your mind all traces of desire to harm others, by thought, word and deed. The reaction you will encounter by indulging in such temporarily satisfying behaviour, will be disastrous. Each such act is a seed planted in your own mind, a weed that will grow wild and destroy your peace and joy. So, be vigilant against such tendencies. Cleanse your thoughts, words and deeds and acts as men on the march towards their Divine Destiny. I bless that you may succeed and reach the goal.

11. Revere the mother

Date: 06 May 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

THE mother is man's first Guru (preceptor). She gives the physical body to him. Besides, she gives man, the father. She alone can point the father to the child and draw his love and care towards it. The mother bears, fosters and moulds the child into human-ness and, therefore, gratitude is due to her first and foremost. Next, the father. He clothes and feeds, helps you to grow and then, points out the Guru, the Preceptor, for you. So be grateful to the father. The Teacher sharpens your intellect, broadens your vision, endows you with discrimination, and helps you to attain higher levels of consciousness and wider horizons of love. Therefore, one has to offer gratitude to the Guru also. The mother leads you to the father, the father leads you to the Guru and the Guru leads you to God. Today, we have mothers who place the children under the care of the father and many fathers who place children under the care of Gurus, but few Gurus lead the pupils to God. The parents promote the health and strength of the body; the Guru reveals the Resident, the Inner Reality in the body. My life is my Message. So, I am setting an example of reverence to the Mother. Nature is the mother in whose lap mankind grows. And Nature fondles the child and says, "Babu, That is your Father, See." Though Mother Nature draws attention to God, the children seldom pay heed. How can they, who do not love the mother that fosters them with affection and zeal, adore the Master of Nature?

The proof of the good is the way they die

"Children! You have come here and gone through the course of studies successfully. Besides developing scholarship, you must live according to the wishes of your parents. You must earn great fame for them. You must maintain the honour they receive from people. By your actions you must please them and increase their happiness." This day is Eashwaramba Day. The significance of the Day is that it is celebrated as Children's Day, a day when little children are to be reminded of the ideal, a day when she presented an ideal. No one can escape death, but the aim of everyone should

be to remind oneself at the time of death of the Divine or have some holy or sacred thoughts. The importance of this Day is known to many. Kasthuuri also spoke about it now. There is a saying in Telugu: "The proof of the Good is the way they die." Genuine devotion is evidenced during the last moments. I shall point out a small incident concerning the goodness of Eashwaramba. The Summer Classes were on at Bangalore. In the morning at 7, breakfast had to be served to the students. They went round with Nagara Sankeerthan (street singing of spirituals) and returned at 6. I gave them Dharshan (audience) at its dose. Then, I went for my bath. Meanwhile, Eashwaramba had finished her bath; she drank her coffee as usual quite happily, and took her seat on the inner verandah. All of a sudden proceeding to the bathroom, she cried out. "Swami Swami, Swami," thrice. At this, I responded: "Coming, Coming." Within that period she breathed her last.

What greater sign of goodness is needed? She had no need to be served and nursed. Swami will come to the memory at that time only for a very few. The mind will usually seek and stay on some object or the other, some jewellery or valuables. From the ground floor, she called: "Swami! Swami!" I replied, "Coming, Coming," and she was gone. It was like the elephant's calling and the Lord proceeding to bless it - the two wires achieving connection, the release happening instantaneously.

The sign of an ideal adorable life

This is the authentic consummation that life must strive for. Beside her at the time she had her daughter moment is the fruit of holy purity. It is the sign of an ideal adorable life. Such attitude must emerge of its own accord and not by means of some external force. Here is an example to learn from. Once, there was a man whose devotion was great. He had four sons. In order that their names may help him to remember the Lord, he had named them Govindha, Narayana, Krishna and Rama. He thought that he could, on some pretext or other, have the Lord's name on his tongue. To facilitate his plan, he started a factory and kept all of them busily employed there, so that they could respond to his calling them by name.

Yearn for the Lord at the time of death

The day when he had to yield to death arrived, he called Govindha; the son came near saying, "Father! I am here." He called Narayana; "I am here father;" he too stood by his bed. He called Rama; Rama came to him and asked him what he desired to confide in him. Finally he called Krishna. He too bent low and wished to know what message the father had for him. He said, "Don't hesitate, tell me what you want to say." Seeing around him all the four sons, the dying man's mind was seized with anxiety. He blurted out "All of you are here! Who is in the factory?" Those were his last words. That was his last thought. When one is involved in the world only worldly thoughts will emerge at the end. To those who yearn with full heart for the Lord at that time, the Lord will present Himself. So, one has to attach oneself to kith and kin and respect them so long as one is concerned with the world. One must needs humour them. But, one must offer unstinted love and loyalty all through life to the Lord alone.

12. Problems of the saadhak

Date: 06 May 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

AN able monarch will have his ministers under control; he will direct them along proper lines and maintain the peace and security of the kingdom. On the other hand, a monarch who allows himself to be controlled by the ministers does not deserve the throne; he is spurned and disgraced. His kingdom has no peace and security. The mind is the monarch in man; the senses are the ministers. It is the slave of its servants and so, the realm has no peace. Every Sadhak (spiritual aspirant) who aspires to achieve the expression and expansion of the Divine in him has therefore to earn mastery over the senses. That is the first step. The next one is the conquest of the mind, its elimination. The third is uprooting the Vasanas (innate tendencies), and the fourth, attainment of Jnana (spiritual wisdom). The branches are the senses; the trunk is the mind; the roots are the innate tendencies. All three have to be overcome and destroyed, so that the awareness of the Athmic (Divine) Reality can be gained.

Man fails to benefit by the daily experience

In the waking state, the senses have free play. The gross body is most active then. In the dream stage, the senses subsist in their subtle form. The mind revels in its fancies then. In the dream, the subtle body is active. It creates many attractive and astounding scenes and incidents for its own edification. In the deep sleep state, the mind along with the subtle aspects of the senses are submerged in the ego or the causal body. This is the shuunya (vacant) stage, according to Vedantic terminology. It is vacant because there is no positive gain associated with it. It does not confer awareness of the Atma (Divine Self) and the Bliss of that Awareness. That can happen only in the fourth state after the sthoola (gross), suhkshma (subtle), karana (causal). That state is named the Maha Karana (supercausal). The waking state is the gross region of Brahma, the Creator, when activity abounds. It merges in the dream, the Vishnu region, when mere sthithi (existence) abounds. That too merges in deep sleep, when both dissolve and lose their identity in Laya

(Rudhra). The fact to remember is that every individual, every day, experiences Shrishti (Brahma, Creator), Sthithi (Vishnu, Maintenance) and Laya (Rudhra, Dissolution). But, he fails to recognise it and benefit by the experience. He mistakes birth as creation and death as dissolution. This is sheer ignorance. One has to transcend these three changes and establish himself in the stable unchanging Maha Karana, the Atma. One has to be cautioned against believing that the victories over senses, mind, innate tendencies and the attainment of the Awareness can be won one at a time. Parallel efforts must be made in all four from the very beginning. You cannot place oil in one place, the lamp in another and the match in a third and hope for light. One has to succeed in mastering the senses, conquering the mind and eliminating the Vasanas all at the same time.

Mind can be subdued through concentration only

The mind hops from object to object with incredible speed. It rises to the heights and drops to the depths with every wink of the eye. It hides, deludes and distorts. One can subdue it through concentration only. The process can be practised in either of two directions - the A-ruupa or the Sa-ruupa. A-ruupa means 'unbound' by form." One feels that he is not the doer or enjoyer; he is only an agent of God, a tool, an instrument. One is not affected, well or ill, when the act results in good or bad. One has no identity with the ruupa (form or body). Sa-ruupa meditation gets lost in dualities of pleasure and pain, profit and loss, for it considers the name and form, the body and its activities as valid.

Similarly, Man has the choice of two paths - the Pravritthi Marga (the path of involvement) or the Nivritthi marga (the path of non-involvement). When involved, man is confronted with the six internal foes - lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and hatred. When non- involved, man is helped by six internal friends - sense control, mind control, fortitude, contentment, faith and equanimity. The human body is deified as a temple, yes, but the foes have to be evacuated and the friends admitted before the Divine can establish itself there.

The rich, the healthy, the strong, the powerful, the influential - all are afflicted with discontent, worry, fear and anxiety. They have no peace of mind.

Shanthi comes from within; contentment is a mental condition. Do not feed the roots of attachment to worldly comforts more than is absolutely necessary. They lead only to anxiety and fear; they can never satisfy the innermost craving of man.

Lead them into the path of devotion and dedication; for them that will be the path of contentment and joy.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

13. Develop devotion to Dharma

Date: 16 June 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

HUMANITY has achieved today tremendous progress through science. Astonishing advances have been made in areas like plastics, computers, electronics and exploration of space. On the other hand, in the sphere of ethics, the picture is depressing. The world is confronted with grave economic and political problems. International, racial, religious, caste and communal differences, inter-state conflicts, violent agitations by students are rampant, all over the world. What is the reason for these contradictory developments scientific progress on the one side and moral deterioration on the other. How has mankind fallen to this egregious depth of ethical and spiritual degradation?

Wickedness and cruelty are spreading among men today. Lacking in devotion and righteousness, men are developing only their bad habits and tendencies. Mankind does not lack scriptures like the Vedas (sacred ancient scriptures), the Upanishads (Vedhic metaphysical treaties), the Bible, the Quran, the Zend Avesta and other great works to show how peace and the higher wisdom are to be got. Spiritual books are published in countless numbers. Nor is there any dearth of religious preachers. heads of mutts, religious scholars, sadhus and sanyasis are proclaiming spiritual and ethical truths to warn mankind. In spite of all these well-meaning efforts, why is it that men's minds are turned towards narrow, unrighteous pursuits?

Social transformation is related to spiritual change

There has been any amount of transformation in the political, social and scientific fields. But all this development is of no avail if there is no commensurate transformation in the mental outlook of the people. Ethical transformation depends on social transformation. Social transformation is related to spiritual change. Without tends to Spiritual transformation, social progress tends to become inimical to human advancement. Spiritual transformation is the basis for ethical transformation.

There is a belief that science is opposed to spirituality. Science by itself tends to make man's life artificial. Demonic qualities like envy, greed, selfishness and ostentation are today dominating men's minds. Selfishness has grown beyond limits in men. Behind every action there is the desire for personal gain. Man is attached to worldly things out of selfishness. The world will make genuine progress only when men give up self-interest and self-centredness. Dear students! Time is infinitely precious. You should not waste even one moment of it. In a man's life, the period as a student is most valuable and sacred. You should make the best use of it. Milk mixed with water cannot get back its original purity, however much you may try to separate it. But once you have converted the milk into butter, it will not be affected by association with water. It will float above the water and maintain its distinctive quality. Likewise, Samsara (worldly attachment) is like water. The mind of man is like milk. When the pure, sacred, uncontaminated mind is mixed with the water of worldly desires, it is difficult to recover the original purity. However, if in this sacred period of study you derive from your unspoilt mind the butter of knowledge, wisdom and right conduct, you will be able to remain unpolluted by the attractions of the world even when you are in it.

Teachers who can inspire are becoming rare

Students should realise the importance of ethical, dharmic (virtuous) and spiritual development. These three should be present in teachers to a greater degree. The reputation of teachers and their success depend primarily on their conduct. The future of numerous innocent children is in their hands. The good conduct of the students depends on the example set by teachers. The teaching profession is a highly responsible one. Today there are three kinds of teachers. The first type consists of teachers who revel in "complaints." They are the teachers with grouses of one kind or another. The second type consists of teachers who "explain". They "explain" what the students have to learn. To the third type belong teachers who "inspire." This category of teachers arouses the enthusiasm of students and inspires them to take deep interest in their studies. Such teachers are becoming rare these days. Once the enthusiasm of the student is aroused, learning becomes a creative process. The teacher should patiently understand the problems of students

and help to solve them. Teaching today has become more and more mechanical, with each teacher content to "teach" the prescribed portions of the syllabus. Teachers should see whether the students have properly comprehended the subjects taught to them. Any deficiency on the student's part should be ascribed to the teacher's failure to do his job well.

Pursuit of the science of the spirit is essential today

In the field of science today, there is great emphasis on research and discovery. But unless the results of research are applied in practice, it will be an expensive futility. If all the time is spent on research when is it to find useful application in practice? Nor is there any sense of discrimination in the promotion of research. To give an example: When I attended recently a symposium in Bombay on "Science and Spirituality," a prominent scientist said that the nuclear arsenals of the Big Powers contained enough atom bombs to destroy the world ten times over. What is the sense in building up such arsenals? If you have destroyed the world once, what is there left for the other bombs to destroy? In the process, you would have destroyed yourself. Those engaged in research seem to be more concerned about boosting their name and fame by their research than about promoting public well-being through the results of their research. Nor do they seem to be bothered about the harmful consequences of their discoveries. There is nothing great about causing harm to others. To destroy a million persons by a single bomb is no great thing. To do good to a single individual in the world is more praiseworthy. The scientific knowledge we acquire must be used for the benefit of our fellow-men. Only that is proper education which prepares the student for disinterested action. The pursuit of the Science of the Supreme Spirit (Parartha Vijnana Shasthra) is more essential than involvement with the Physical Sciences (Padhartha Vijnanam).

The Supreme is in the subtlest and the vastest

In every padartham (object) in the Universe there is a Parartham (Supreme Principle). The physical object is Matter. The Supreme Principle within it is Energy. There is no matter without energy or energy without matter. The

Vedas proclaimed this by saying that the Supreme is in the Anoraniyan (subtlest of the subtle) and the Mahathomahian (vastest of the vast). Students! By deriving pleasure from a small fraction of the Pancha Bhuuthas (Five Elements- Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth) we are forgetting the truth of the Cosmos. What is it that sustains these Five Elements? The five elements have their respective qualities: sound, touch, form, fluidity and smell. The corresponding sense organs in man are important for experiencing these qualities. But the power behind these sense organs should be noted. For instance, the eyes are able to see things. But the retina on which the images are reflected is more potent than the eye itself. The power of sight is more important than the eye. There are many who possess eyes but who cannot see. There are persons with ears but who cannot hear because they lack the power of hearing. We are trying to control the sense organs without trying to regulate the power that is responsible for their functioning. For example, there is in the body a digestive organ. When one takes a balanced diet, the food is properly digested and the body is kept healthy. Similarly the body's temperature has to be kept at a certain norm. If the temperature goes above or below that norm it is a sign of illness. Similarly if the Five Elements that constitute the natural environment are kept in balance, the world is in a healthy state. If this balance is upset or if the elements are polluted, then the country suffers in various ways. If the products of science and technology result in upsetting the balance of Nature and pollute the atmosphere or the rivers and the seas, many harmful consequences follow. Pollution gives rise to many new diseases. Today even pure air has become a rare commodity. Three-fourths of the earth is covered by water. There are many minerals in the ocean bed. But in extracting them, some limits should be observed. Otherwise, even the ocean, which has been adhering to its bounds, will exceed its limits. Even earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are caused by the unsettling of the ecological balance in nature.

The five types of life-breaths or vital airs

Take the body, for example. The body derives its vital force from the Sun. There are five types of Pranas (life-breaths). These are known as Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udhana and Samana Vayus. (Prana Vayu is the life-wind or

vital air which has its seat in the lungs; Apana Vayu is the life-wind that goes downwards and out at the anus; Samana Vayu is the vital air which has its seat in the cavity of the navel; Vyana Vagu is the life-wind which is diffused through the whole body; Udhana Vayu is the life-wind which rises up the throat and enters the head). The Prana (life-breath) comes from the Sun. The Vyana comes from Vagu (air). The Apana comes from the earth. Udhana comes from Agni (fire). The Samana comes from Akasha (space). Because of these five breaths functioning in us, we are able to live healthily. There are 72,000 blood-vessels in a human being. The Vyana Vagu blows through the entire circulatory system. The Vyana Vagu is derived from Vagu (air). When the air is polluted, the 72,000 blood-vessels get polluted and the effect of this on the Apana Vagu leads to cancer and heart attacks.

Difference between worldly and spiritually minded

Man needs pure Vyana Vayu for good health. Students should realise the importance of maintaining the purity of the environment and developing a pure heart in the interests of their body and mind. Some kind of cleaning powder is used for cleaning vessels. Similarly prayer is the means of cleansing the heart. Through a pure heart one achieves spiritual insight. Impure minds are the cause of many heart troubles. When the heart is filled with all kinds of worldly desires, there is no room in it for spiritual effort. There is a vast difference between one who is attached to worldly things and one who is devoted to Dharma. This may be illustrated from the actions of Dhrona and Bheeshma, the two principal Gurus of the Kauravas. Both Bheeshma and Dhrona were supreme masters in the arts of using Asthras (weapons directed by mantras) and Shasthras (lethal weapons). But what a difference between the two! Bheeshma was highly spiritually minded. After he was wounded all over the body in the Kurukshetra battle, when blood was flowing from the wounds, lying on a bed of arrows he taught Dharma (righteousness) to the Pandavas. His teachings are contained in the Shanthi Parva (part dealing with peace-keeping) of the Mahabharata. On the other hand, when Dhronacharya heard Yudhishtira say "Aswathama hatah" (Aswathama is killed), he did not even wait to hear that it was the elephant named Aswathama that had died, he concluded that his son Aswathama had

died, and he collapsed on the battlefield. Dhronacharya was filled with worldly attachments. Bheeshmacharya was filled with love of Dharma (virtuous action).

Use scriptures as guides for right action

There is another example in the Mahabharatha of the differences in response of those attached to Dharma and those filled with worldly attachments. When the news of the death of her son, Abhimanyu, was conveyed to Subhadra (Arjuna's wife), she saw in her son's death the signs of the impending Kali age in which mothers would lose their young children and unrighteousness would prevail on earth. She recalled that during Rama's reign' no woman wept over the loss of her child.

When Arjuna received the news he bitterly lamented the fact that there would be no one to inherit the kingdom after his victory over the Kauravas. What use was there in winning a kingdom after he lost his son Abhimanyu, he wailed. While Subhadra was grieved about the impending plight of all mothers in the Kali age, Arjuna was only worried about his personal loss. Men today are either indifferent to Dharma or seek to use even the scriptures for their selfish purposes. The scriptures are to be used as guides for right action. They are signposts showing the way to the realisation of the Divine. We must be ever conscious of what we owe to God. The air we breathe, the food we eat, the light that enables us to see the world, all these are the gifts of Providence. What gratitude are we showing to the Great Giver of all these benefits? We are thankful to many for small favours. But to the Lord who is the source of all the innumerable things we enjoy, we show no regard at all. The man without gratitude is worse than a cruel animal.

Six virtues to be cultivated in life

Students! Realise that without the Grace of the Divine we cannot exist for a moment. Cultivate good qualities and strive for the promotion of Dharma in the world. This will give you more enduring happiness than the acquisition of perishable worldly things. Once the sage Markandeya asked the Goddess of

Dharma why she was leaving the earth. She smiled and replied: "I have no place in a land where wickedness prevails and there is no truth or Righteousness." Education consists in cultivating the following six qualities: "Good thoughts, good actions, adherence to truth, devotion, discipline and discharge of one's duties." When you have acquired the friendship of these six virtues, your life will become purposeful and satisfying. Students! Concentrate on your studies from the beginning of the academic year itself and develop discipline and right habits so that you may make the best use of your opportunities in the Institute. Teachers should not consider that they are teaching for the sake of emoluments and students should not consider their studies as primarily for the purpose of getting a job. Education must develop in you self-reliance and prepare you for all the challenges of life. With faith in God and leading a righteous life, you must become true citizens of Bharath. The discipline and regulations you observe now will stand you in good stead all your life. Prepare yourselves to serve society and thereby propitiate God, whose Grace is a greater benediction than all the gains from the world.

Discourse on the occasion of commencement of new academic year of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute

The best sadhana (spiritual practice) is to discover your Athmic reality and to recognise your kinship in the Athmic fold with all others. The body has to be kept trim until this is achieved; its purpose too is just this. Keep it light and bright. It is a boat which can take you across the sea of illusion, of false multiplicity. Don't add to its weight by attachment to things and others; then, it is in danger of sinking during the voyage.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14. Unity and Purity: Message of Ramzan

Date: 12 July 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ramzan

WHOEVER speaks, the expression begins with 'I' and revolves around 'I'. 'I am walking', 'I am sitting', 'I am eating', 'I am going', 'I am listening, 'I am seeing'.... 'I' is ever forward. It is then that man manages to live. 'I' am the doer, whatever the deed, whichever and whenever. Who exactly is this 'I', the agent, the doer?

There are three aspects connoted by the 'I'. 'I am this body' is the first; 'I am the life-force in it' is the second; 'I am the Atma (Divine Self)' is the third.

'I am dark', 'I am fair', 'I am short', 'I am tall' these are statements generally made. 'I am young,' 'I am old', 'I am a Brahmana', 'I am a Non-Brahmana' - these statements too are indulged in. These qualities concern the body only. When a person is unconscious or in deep sleep, or dead, he is not aware of any of these characterisations regarding his body. They are extraneous to the real 'I', for the attributes adhere or fall off when time elapses or when circumstances change.

Next, the *Jeeva* (individual being) principle or Life Force: The incessantly active consciousness is ever wayward and restless. We say, "My intelligence is not clear," "My mind is perplexed." These apply to the second facet of the 'I' only. This facet too is linked with the body through the objects-senses-mind-reason complex.

The Atma is immanent all over the world

Now, the third, the *Atma* (Divine Soul):

"I am Sadhanandh, Nithyanandh, Sathchithanandh!
I am Nirmal, I am Nischal. I am all. I am Brahman.
Aham Brahmasmi."

The body is mortal; the Jeeva-principle undergoes transformation; but the Atma is Immortal. The Atma persists in unaffected glory in the waking, dreaming, sleeping and the fourth level beyond. The gross body is active in the waking stage; the subtle consciousness is alert in dreams, the Causal Atma is dormant as 'I' in sleep. The real I or Atma has no exclusive affiliation to one body, one country, one nation or one sex. It is in every being everywhere, in bird and beast, plant and tree. Each of these reveals its existence. The Atma is all pervading and immanent in Bharath (India), Russia, America, England, all over the world. All founders of religions have heard this impersonal Voice of God revealing the Atma that activates the entire Creation. Just as the Vedas (revealed sacred scriptures) were 'heard' and propagated as 'heard' (Shruthi), the Quran too was 'heard' by Hazrath Muhammad.

The Quran has *Salat* and *Zakat* as the two eyes. Salat means prayer; Zakat means charity. **Those who consider charity as a high duty and elevate their consciousness through prayers and continuous meditation on God are Muslims. Islam is a word which denotes not a particular religion but a state of mind, the state of total surrender to the Will of God. Islam means dedication, surrender, peace, tranquillity.**

Islam denotes the social community whose members have achieved supreme peace through surrender to the All-Merciful, All-Powerful God and who have vowed to live in peace with their fellowmen. Later, it came to be applied to communities that considered themselves separate and different and so hostile to the rest. Islam taught something higher. It directed attention to the One in the Many, the Unity in Diversity and led people to the Reality named God.

The Atma can never be hurt by insult

Every human being has three needs: food, clothing and shelter. Seeking to fulfil them, man has developed a variety of foods to fill his little stomach

ignoring the purpose of eating them. Clothing has to be worn to protect the body from cold. But we are attaching enormously exaggerated value to clothing. Of course, one must have a house to live in and lay the body down for rest. The Muslim, Gibran, asks why build these gigantic dwellings then? They are erected not for oneself but to hoard one's treasure and riches. Gibran says these mansions are tombs erected by the dead for the living.

Hazrath Muhammad announced the message of God that he had heard to the townsmen of Mecca. At that time, people did not give heed to the Divine Declarations. They forced him to leave the place. But, Hazrath Muhammad, knew that truth will win and God will prevail. He knew that the insult and injury were only for the body; the Atma can never be hurt. The Ramzan month is set apart for the holy task of bringing into memory and practice the teachings that Hazrath Muhammad conveyed and attaining that stage of unity and purity which is truly Divine. Islam gives importance to the Moon which regulates the months. Hindus consider the Moon as the deity presiding over the mind. With the dharshan of the New Moon, the Ramzan fast begins and when the New Moon is seen again, the fast ends. 'Fast' does not consist in merely desisting from food and drink. The fast starts at sunrise and is broken only after sunset and is observed most rigourously.

During Ramzan month rivalry is avoided

Waking as early as three or four, in the Brahma Muhuurtha, prayer is started, and throughout the day, the constant presence of God is sought to be experienced. This is the meaning of *Upavasa* (fast). Also, during the Ramzan month, rivalry is avoided, hatred is suspended. Husband and wife live apart though in the same home, mother and children both follow the same spiritual regimen and an atmosphere of brotherhood is maintained. The body, the senses and the mind are subject to rigourous discipline.

Periods of fast comprising a month are prescribed in all religions. The Hindus observe it in Magha and Shravana months. Zoroastrians and Christians have allotted for themselves months for the same purpose.

The Quran lays down that all men should cultivate the sense of unity, of interdependence, of selfless love and of the immanence of Divinity. Generally, all men take food of some kind or other for the body five times a day: an early cup of coffee in bed, breakfast two hours later, a heavy lunch at noon, tea at four and a fat dinner at nine. Islam prescribes food for the spiritual nature of man and directs that it be taken five times a day, as prayer. For the arousal of the Atmic consciousness, for earning spiritual joy and for promoting the manifestation of Atmic illumination, prayer is prescribed as many as five times a day, from the dawn of discretion up to the moment of death.

Unity is the basic teaching of every religion

Prayer, in Islam, is also a congregational activity. Prayer in a group produces beneficial vibrations. Islam promises a greater flow of ecstasy when God is adored by a huge concourse of yearning hearts. All of them bow low at the sight of the Masjid. They sit in rows on their bended knees and lean forward until their palms and foreheads touch the ground in humble submission to God's Will. Misunderstanding, conflict and enmity should not disturb the serenity of the occasion.

Thus Islam emphasises the One in the Many, the urge for God which manifests in various degrees in various minds. Unity is the basic teaching of every religion. Faith in Unity is cardinal. Without it, no system of belief and conduct can be a religion. God is One and the teachings in all faiths that exalt Him are all on Love, Compassion, Tolerance and Sympathy. The tragedy is neither the Muhammadans, nor the Hindus, nor the followers of other religions are practising these qualities in daily life.

Islam teaches that God's Grace can be won through justice and righteous living; wealth, scholarship and power cannot earn It. Holy Love alone can please the Lord. This is the message of every religion. But mankind has ignored this crucial point.

Ramzan brings together in bonds of love kith and kin, near and far, friend and foe. This type of negligence is happening in every religion. The followers

adopt the rules they like and break those which they find exacting. So, they become narrow-minded and crooked. And, they rationalise their defects and justify their failings. They have become habituated to this practice of self-deceit.

Demonstrate love and tolerance in daily activity

Since Islam means surrender to God, all who in a spirit of surrender and dedication, live in peace and harmony in society, do really speaking, belong to Islam. Islam insists on full co-ordination between thought, word and deed. Muslim holy men and sages have been emphasising that we must inquire into the validity of the 'I' which feels it is the body and the 'I' which feels it is the mind and reach the conclusion that the real 'I' is the Self yearning for the Omniself, God. The Ramzan month, the fast and the prayers are designed to awaken and manifest this realisation. Whichever may be the religion, its emphasis is on unity, harmony, equal-mindedness. Therefore, cultivate love, tolerance and compassion, and demonstrate the Truth in every daily activity. This is the Message I give you with My Blessings.

15. The uniqueness of man

Date: **22 July 1983** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Inaugurating Security Training Course**

RARELY does man realise that he is the crown of creation. Rarely is he aware of his innate glory. If he dwells in the constant consciousness of his uniqueness, his life would be lighter, more beneficial and fully saturated with ecstatic delight. Man, then, will strive unceasingly to reach higher and higher levels of consciousness enveloping both the objective and subjective worlds. He will not allow himself to slide into lower levels of animality, which he is now able to subdue and rule over through the use of his intelligence. Of the traditional 84 lakhs of living species, man is the last and the most significant. He is the only animal that is capable of knowing not only itself but also its Creator and Master, not only its own potentialities but the potency of God. Other living beings strive to preserve and prolong life. Man is prepared in pursuit of an ideal or in answer to a call to sacrifice and surrender life. Man alone can posit for his consolation a series of past lives and for his guidance a series of future lives. He can peep into the past as well as into the future and profit thereby. He has the power of choice to rise or fall, to become a God or a beast or a demon. He can use his unique intelligence and memory enshrined in language to widen his vision, to adjust his reactions to nature and society and to benefit by the knowledge and experience of others. He can influence society as much as society influences him.

Man is the representative of the Divine

Man is the only animal that can transform his own nature, along lines consciously laid down. A beast continues to be stupid or cruel until death but man can by spiritual effort or godly company deal with himself as a problem and modify his feelings and actions. The dacoit who became Valmeeki and the highway robber Angulimala who became a staunch Buddhist are illustrations of this characteristic of man. By association, through-teaching and faith, sinners become saints.

Again, man alone is capable of awakening the serpent-power of the life-energy that lies dormant in him as the Kundalini Shakthi and elevate it through chakras (higher fields of awareness), up to the thousand-spoked wheel on the very crest of the head. This is the uurdhwa Gathi (the Upward Path). This yoga sadhana is possible for man, since he has a straight body and can sit with his trunk and head held in a straight vertical line. Quadrupeds and bipeds other than man are severely handicapped. They cannot tap the vital Kundalini Shakthi. The Samskrith word Manava for Man means Ma (not), nava (new). That word intimates that man has had a series of births and deaths and is heavily laden with burdensome heritages of good and bad. He doesn't land on earth for the first time. His task is to discard this burden and become free. For that he must concentrate on another meaning of the word Manava, where Ma stands for nescience, delusion and mistaken identity, na stands for 'without' and va stands for 'Varthana' (Action). Man must act, speak and think without being deluded by the apparent, in preference to the real. Man ignores the Atma (Divine Soul), which is the only Reality, and allows himself to be fascinated by Maya (illusory energy), which scintillates and deceives. Since he has in him the Divine enshrined as the Atma, man has the high status of an embodiment of the Divine, a Prathinidhi (representative) of the Divine. The senses activated by the mind bring in experiences which are collected and coordinated by the mind. Buddhi (intellect) illumined by the Atma examines these and directs action along beneficial lines. Acting under the dictates of the mind brings disaster; acting under the instructions of the illumined Buddhi is desirable. This is the great boon that man has won from God.

To find out what is dharma (righteous) and what is adharma (unrighteous), apply this one test: If it goes counter to Truth and Love, it is unrighteous. If it promote, Truth and Love or is full of both, it is righteous.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



16. In Human Form

Date: 24 July 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

A GREAT yogi (liberated person), resolved to delve into the glory of the Divine Principle, retreated to the depth of a silent forest. He started ascetic practices; he sat in the lotus posture; he kept his eyes closed. He held his fingers in correct chin-mudhra (hand posture with thumb and index fingers joined and other three fingers stretched out). His thapas (penance) continued for five long years. God willed to test his sincerity and his earnestness. So, He came before him as a young boy. At that time, his eyes were a little open. The boy asked him "Grandpa! Why have you shut your eyes thus? Whom are you praying to? Have you found out how God appears?" The yogi replied, "Boy! I have seen him only as much as my eye is open." Thereafter the yogi's eyes were half open. The boy returned again and asked him, "Grandpa! How much of God have you seen now?" He replied, "Boy! I have known half of Him." A year later the Boy came again. By that time, the yogi had his eyes fully open. "Grandpa! Have you seen and known God?" was the question and the answer was, "Yes! I have known." So the Boy demanded, "Tell me what you have understood." And the yogi said, "I have understood that He is beyond understanding." Now, God was before this yogi in human form but he could not identify Him and recognise Him.

Sai gives the prema of a thousand mothers

When God assumes the human form and is behind, before and beside you, speaking to you and moving with you, and allows you to cultivate attachment of various kinds with Him, you do not recognise Him. The Divine cannot be easily recognised, when It is embodied. The Divine proclaims, "I am not a mass of flesh and blood; I am not a bundle of desires, which the mind is, I am not the heap of delusion which the imagination is; I am the Paramatma (Supreme Soul), the Origin and the End." I am the urge within you, the knowledge which you seek as a result of the urge, of your own self. "One word of Swami grants the treasure of all the riches. A single glance of Swami bestows all boons; it is the Parijatha (wish-fulfilling flower-tree) Glance. The

arms of Sai confer the Hai (soft comfort) the mother gives, not one mother, no, the prema (divine love) of a thousand mothers!" This Sathya Sai is such Prema Dhayi (Bestower of Love)." When the Divine plays and sings with us, meets us and eats with us, we should not be misled into the belief that It is just human and nothing more. We generally forget the Truth. Embodiments of Divine Love! You must be clear about the distinction between birth in general and the Advent of the Avathar (Divine Incarnation). Karma (the cumulative consequence of deeds and thoughts) is the cause of ordinary birth. Birth in the human body is the reward for the merit acquired by worthy Karma (past deeds). What is the Karma that has caused the Advent? That too must have some Karma as the antecedent, it may be said. Well! In your case you earn the type of life which the good and bad karmas you have done entitle you to have. Unless you go through the mass of consequence, you cannot change the vehicle or instrument. For, it is a role you have been assigned in the Cosmic Drama on the world stage. The role is part of a play for which it is allotted. You may appear in the first scene but you cannot change your make-up. But, God is not bound or affected by Karma. He takes on a role, as a consequence not of any Karma, but to reward good karma and impose retribution for bad karma. God incarnated as Narasimha as a consequence of the bad deeds of Hiranyakashipu, and the good deeds of Prahladha. The truth is, the body that the Avathar wears is not a karma deha, designed according to the nature of the individual's deeds in past lives. God, as Avathar, can mould or change the body in any way He wills. He can develop it or discard it, as and when He wills. No other power or person can affect it. Everything happens as He desires, as He decides. To look upon the Avathar as the body it has assumed is not correct. The Guru has, as his duty, to teach mankind this great Truth of the Paramatma and the Atma and of the Glory and Compassion of God.

Guru Purnima discourse, Puurnachandra Auditorium,

17. Let God Be Your Guru

Date: 24 July 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

THE supreme meaning of human birth is the realisation of one's true nature. Self-realisation is the path to immortality. Man's life is a bridge between this world and the Divine. The language of Pranava (Om) is the only medium for conversing with the Atma (Divine Self). By wearing the garb of this body, made up of bone and flesh, encasing the Atma that is pure and eternal, man imagines that his happiness lies in the physical environment. This is a delusion. There are two kinds of knowledge which man can seek in his quest for happiness. One is Loka jnana (worldly knowledge). This relates to knowledge of music and the fine arts, of the physical Universe, botany, chemistry, mathematics, and the like. All this knowledge is of use only for earning a living. All of it relates to matters which are ever changing and perishable. The other kind of knowledge is Brahma jnana (knowledge of the Supreme). This knowledge reveals that the origin, growth and dissolution of the Cosmos are due to Brahman (Supreme Reality). The Upanishaths (Vedhic metaphysical treatises) have described it as Akshayya (imperishable) Brahman. Man today needs this supreme knowledge. There are three steps leading to this knowledge. One is "Bhavam" (heart felt feeling). The second is "Sadhana" (spiritual effort). The third is "Upasana" (contemplation).

Consider the entire Universe as temple of God

In the first stage, the thought of Brahman should be firmly established in the heart. When this is done, one has to look upon the whole universe as a manifestation of the Divine. One must realise that the Five Elements (space, air, fire, water and earth), the five Pranas (vital breaths) - Prana, Vyana, Apana, Samana, Udhana), the five sense organs, the mind and speech, all these have emanated from the Brahman. All that is beautiful and great in Nature - the lofty mountains, the vast oceans, the stars in the sky must be regarded as proclaiming the glory and power of the Divine. The sweet fragrance of flowers, the delectable juice of fruits should be regarded as tokens of God's love and compassion. The entire universe must be considered

as the temple of God.

The external world will reflect your thoughts. If you view the world with love, it will appear as filled with love. If you view it with hatred, everything will appear antagonistic to you. Eyes filled with love shine with brightness and cheerfulness. Eyes filled with hatred appear bloodshot and fearful. Our thoughts determine our good and bad actions. The Kauravas and Pandavas were cousins. But because of the inimical attitude of the Kauravas towards the Pandavas, they looked upon the Pandavas as their enemies. Because they looked upon Kama with a friendly eye, they made him ruler of Angadesha. The attitude of man to God is dependent on similar likes and dislikes. There are some devotees who worship God with devotion for a time.

Then they turn against God. The reasons for these changes in attitude are traceable to their ideas about God. When they feel that their prayers are being answered and their desires are being fulfilled, they adore God. But when their wishes are not fulfilled, they revile God in all sorts of words. This kind of devotion is based on self-interest and has nothing divine about it. Pure devotion will not be affected by changes in circumstances or fortunes. True love is not based on any conditions. It is equal in weal or woe and is not affected by the vicissitudes of fortune.

One should not blame God for his difficulties

The Upanishaths regarded Prema (love) as a quality of the eternal and hatred as Asurathvam (a demonic quality). Looking upon love of God as a sacred quality, one should cultivate it and strengthen it. One should realise that he alone is responsible for his happiness or misery. He should not blame God for his difficulties. God has no likes or dislikes. As thoughts are the most important factor in determining one's attitude and behaviour, one should entertain only good and sacred thoughts.

The second step is Sadhana. Sadhana does not consist merely in Bhajans (group singing of devotional songs), Keerthans (Spiritual Composition), Japa (recitation of holy names) and Dhyana (meditation). All these are auxiliaries.

The primary requisite is concentration on the Pranava (Om). All Sadhana should be based on Pranava. There are seven crores of names for God all of which have to be uttered with Pranava at the beginning. "Om! Narayanaya Namah; Om! Madhavaya Namah, Om! Keshavaya Namah!" This is how the names of the Lord should be recited. To utter the name without the Pranava is like using a revolver without cartridges. By meditating on the Pranava, one can glimpse the nature of the Supreme Reality, according to the Upanishaths.

Only when heart is purified Divinity can be realised

The third step is Upasana (divine adoration). Upasana means approaching near the Divine. Upasana is often equated with fasting. This is not correct. There is a bliss that is greater than food. When one is immersed in that bliss the bliss of Brahma-anandha (divine bliss of rapture), one gives up food of one's own accord. It is such giving up of food that constitutes true Upasana. To subject oneself to fasting as a compulsory regimen is not Upasana, but mere starvation. For instance, to keep awake on Shivarathri night by watching films or playing cards is a caricature of the sacred vigil that one is expected to observe on that day. The Upanishaths speak of seven degrees of Anandha (Divine Bliss). The first is the happiness derived from enjoyment of worldly goods, from good health and bodily comforts. This is called Manushya anandha (human bliss). The Pithrudheva anandha (the bliss enjoyed by the Manes) is hundred times Manushya anandha. Dheva anandha (the bliss enjoyed by the Dhevas) is hundred times that of the Manes. Hundred times this Anandha is the Prajapathi Anandha. Hundred times this bliss is Virat-Purusha Anandha. Hundred times the previous one is Hiranyagarbha-Anandha. Hundred times this is Brahma anandha. You can reckon how much greater is Brahma anandha than Manushya anandha. The word Brahma anandha is nowadays bandied about to describe any and every kind of pleasure. "I am filled with Brahma anandha because a son was born today." "I got first marks in my class. I feel supremely happy." Such expressions of happiness are far remote from Brahma anandha. This experience is tantamount to Moksha (Liberation). The Brahman experience is not to be got by the mastery of various sadhanas. It is only when the heart is purified that divinity can be realised. There is no room for divinity in a heart filled with

egoism, pride and hatred.

Cultivate love to achieve fullness

Even when the Divine appears in human form, moves freely amongst men, and is near in various ways to people, few are able to recognise Divinity in the physical form. It is not easy to recognise the nature of the Divine through the corporeal form alone. A true Guru (spiritual preceptor) is required to reveal the real nature of Divinity. Such a Guru has been equated with the Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The devotee who regards God Himself as his Guru will not have any difficulties. Today many who are looked upon as Gurus utter the mantras (sacred formula) in the ear and stretch their palms for money. For everything they do, they expect money. Such Gurus are "badha" (harmful) Gurus and not "bodha" (enlightening) Gurus. The true guru is like an ophthalmic surgeon. The latter removes the film in the patient's eye and restores his natural vision. The Guru also should remove the veil of ignorance and attachment that blurs the vision of the disciple and restore his natural spiritual vision. What is the recompense one should make to such a guru? On Guru Purnima day, it is the practice for disciples to offer Padma Puja (offering worship to Guru's holy feet) to the Guru and give Dakshina (thanksgiving offering). The significance of the Full Moon should be understood. It is a day on which the Moon shines in all his fullness, without any blemish. It is a day of purity. The Moon sheds his cool rays on the earth. The Moon is the deity controlling the mind. Only the day when the mind is rid of the darkness of ignorance and achieves fullness of illumination, is the real Guru Purnima day for man. Looking merely at the full moon in the sky and calling it Guru Purnima is only worshiping the external, while internally there is a sunna (void). It is only when you have cleansed your heart by getting rid of ignorance, sorrow, worry, greed, and envy, that you can celebrate your Guru Purnima and realise the Fullness of your Reality.

Carry with you the Divine experience and enlarge it

To achieve this puernathvam (fullness) you have to cultivate Prema (love). You have to go through all the three stages of shravana, manana and

nidhidhyasana (hearing, meditating and practising) to achieve the goal of human existence. You must all realise that relationship between you and Me is not related only to the physical body. Thinking only of the physical relationship, you should not waste your life. The body is a passing thing. You should concentrate on the attainment of that which is permanent and beyond the limitations of time and space. You have seen for yourself and experienced the Divine here. You must carry with you this experience and enlarge it by contemplating on it internally. Here is an example. Thousands have assembled in this Puurnachandra Hall. I have been conversing with you. How long can this last? Perhaps for two or three hours. Tomorrow you will all be returning to your respective places. After you go back, the memory of what you have experienced here, Swami's discourse to you, the presence of thousands of devotees in the Puurnachandra Hall will be etched in your mind whenever you try to recall this day. It will be a life-long possession for you. This is because you are carrying Me in your mind.

Tests are intended to strengthen your faith

Looking at things externally, the Puurnachandra hall will be before you only for a short time. But you must retain permanently what you have seen with the outward looking eyes. What you see externally is a burden. When you have made it a part of yourself it ceases to be a burden. It is like the food which a traveller carries on his head for consumption on the way. As long as the food remains outside it is a burden. But when he has eaten it, he gets stronger and there is no burden on his head.

As long as we are involved with external appearances, we have to carry the burden' of doubts and weakness of faith. We will not be able to get rid of involvement in unnecessary things. Faith is like a live volcano. No seed will sprout on such a volcano. Doubts are like seeds. If the doubts multiply, it means that your faith is weak and unstable. It is like an extinct volcano. If your faith is strong, no doubts will crop up. Where there are doubts, there can be no faith. We alone are responsible for our doubts. The Divine acts as only a Witness. The Divine shows you the path to self-realisation. Your doubts arise or disappear because of your past karma (action). To realise Divinity you

must first get rid of all your doubts. From time to time, God subjects you to various tests. These are not intended to be punishments as you may imagine. These are intended to strengthen your faith.

Look upon God alone as your true Guru

Arjuna himself was subjected to such a test by Krishna on the eve of the Kurukshethra battle. Arjuna was worried about how to wage the war against his kinsmen and what strategy he should adopt. Krishna took him to a forest in the evening. It was twilight. The light of knowledge was setting and the darkness of ignorance was emerging. Krishna wanted to find out whether Arjuna was fit for receiving the Geethopadhesa (spiritual initiation to Geetha) the next day. He pointed out to Arjuna a bird on a tree and asked him whether it was a peacock. Arjuna said: "Yes, my Lord". "No, no. It is a dove," observed Krishna. Arjuna immediately said: "Yes, it is a dove." Krishna then said: "You senseless fellow. It is not a dove but a crow!" "Yes, Swami! It is a crow," said Arjuna. Krishna then told Arjuna: "You have no power of discrimination at all. You cannot decide whether it is a peacock, dove or crow and only say 'yes' to whatever I say. Should you not have this much of understanding." Arjuna replied: "Krishna, if one does not know your real nature, one may attempt to agree or disagree with you. But I have understood the truth about you. If I declare that it is not a peacock, a dove or a crow, you have the power to turn it into a peacock, a dove or a crow. I have therefore no need to enquire into what it is. Your word alone matters for me. That is sufficient authority for me." When Arjuna displayed such implicit faith in Krishna, he felt that Arjuna was fit to receive the message of the Geetha. Hence He told him "Nimittha mathram Bhava!" ("Be thou my instrument").

Look upon God alone as your true Guru

Therefore, the first requisite is deepening of one's faith in the words of the Lord. It is not possible to know the Lord by book knowledge or by human intelligence. When the Lord comes in human form, His measureless powers are not to be judged by looking at his age, size or innocent behaviour. Such judgement will only lead to greater misunderstanding of the Divine. When the

child Krishna was brought before his mother Yashodha and accused of eating mud, Krishna protested to his mother that he was not an infant, or a naughty boy or a madcap to eat mud. Krishna then revealed to His mother His divinity. The Avathar is not to be judged by reference to age or actions.

Premaswaruupas (embodiments of divine Love)! On this holy day of Guru Purnima, take a resolve to purify your minds and to install in your hearts the Supreme Lord. Look upon God alone as your true Guru. Â·

18. To Divinity through service

Date: 24 July 1983

THIS Cosmos is sustained by one fragment of the Divine (Ekamshena sthitham Jagath), proclaim the scriptures. The universe is permeated by the Divine. The Sun's rays cannot emanate, if there is no Sun; the Universe cannot, exist without God. We say there is a 'pot,' there is a 'picture', there is a 'tank' and so on. The basic word in these statements, "IS," proclaims the existence of God.

The five basic elements which constitute the primary factors in Creation are present throughout the Universe. If the five elements, which are products of creation, have this limitless power of presence throughout the Universe, how can we doubt that the Creator permeates everything in the Universe ?

The first of the five basic elements is Prithvi (the earth substance). It is the base on which everything - mountains, forests, dyers, oceans, cities and villages rest. Though the earth is rotating fast, it holds in position all that rests on it. But, what is the base on which the earth so revolves? It. is the Divine Principle, the immanent Divine Will which regulates its function. The second element is Ap (water), which too is present everywhere in space, whether patent or latent.

All religions accept the Omnipresence of God

The third, Agni (fire) is also omnipresent. Indeed, all living beings do function because of the existence of this latent Jathharagni ('digestive' fire). Fire is present even in inanimate objects like rocks. How else could fire be produced by striking stone against stone? The fourth element is air. Although air is not patent to the eye, its presence can be noticed in breeze or storm. In living beings, it exists as the inner vital force. The fifth element is Akasha (space). This ether is present everywhere. The Upanishaths (highest experiential philosophy of the Vedas) have therefore declared it as the most pervasive element. When we understand the nature of these five basic elements that

constitute the created universe, it needs no argument to realise the truth asserted by Prahladha, quoted in the Bhagavatha: "Do not doubt whether God is here and not there. You will find Him wherever you seek Him." Persons, unaware of the Omnipresence of God, develop antagonisms among themselves based upon religion, caste and race. All religions have accepted the timelessness and the Omnipresence of God. So, it is strange that even those who accept this truth display such narrowness of mind. For, hatred between people professing different religions leads ultimately to the destruction of faith in religion itself. Those who are bent upon destroying religion must be utterly thoughtless. What has to be destroyed is religious bigotry, not religion itself.

Respect the beliefs and practices of all others

To despise other people's religion out of love for one's own religion, is like demonstrating one's love for one's mother by denigrating the mothers of others. One should realise that other people have the same regard and devotion for their faiths, as one has for one's own religion. Young men of today should, while cultivating attachment to their own religion, respect the beliefs and practices of all others.

To give one example of-intolerance: The Vedas declare that the Divine permeates everything in the Universe: "Eesha-avasyam Idham Sarvam." ("God resides in all this.") With faith in this declaration, the people of Bharath revere trees, ant-hills, mountains, rivers and even serpents. This holy attitude towards all things in creation is interpreted by some people professing other faiths, which teach the Omnipresence of God, as blind superstition! The obvious absurdity of this dual attitude has not struck them. The urge in the mind that animates the senses is stronger than the sense organs themselves. The eyes , for instance, are merely instruments for seeing, but seeing itself is a power that is superior to them. Similarly, hearing power is higher than the mere ear. The mind is superior to the sense organs and superior to the mind is "Buddhi" (intellect), the power of discrimination. Above the Buddhi is the animating Life Principle the Jeers. Above the Jeevatma (the individual soul) is the Paramatma (Supreme Soul). Between the individual and the Divine, there

is an attractive deluding veil, Maya (illusory power). When this veil falls, the individualised Self and the Universal Omni-self become one. When the mind turns away from the senses to the Buddhi for enlightenment, Anandha (Divine Bliss) starts to flow and the glory of "Atma" (Divine Soul) is revealed. Buddhi promotes the search inward. While the sense organs - the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the tensile skin - all open out towards external objects, true sadhana (spiritual discipline) consists in turning the vision inwards, in fact, to swim against the on rushing current. It is seldom realised how near is the goal of self- realisation when once the sense organs are turned inwards.

Every act of service is service to the Divine

Students should realise the importance of service, to realise the Divine. It makes one's life significant and purposeful. The first requisite for service is the elimination of the ego. Divine grace and the power it can confer can be acquired by rendering social service in a selfless spirit. Students! Except the Grace of God, nothing else will stand by you, for long. Develop faith in this never-failing source of strength and support. The famous wrestler King Kong, who could stop a fast moving car, died in a car accident! That reveals the limitations of muscle power. How many kings have left the earth, leaving no trace of their wealth or power. Do not postpone the cultivation of devotion to God. Start serving God through service to fellow-beings. Every act of service, however small, is service to the Divine. Demonstrate by reverential behaviour, selfless service, truthfulness and integrity that you are pursuing the ideals for which the Sathya Sai Educational institutions stand.

Discourse while inaugurating the social service programme of students of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Purnachandra Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam.

The most precious possession is mental equanimity; and it is the one thing you cannot give, even if you have it. Each has to acquire it the hard way. But you can enlighten people on the disciplines through which mental

equanimity can be gained, and Shanthi can be won. It cannot be earned through a higher standard of life, bush shirts, transistors, sofas, air-conditioners, etc. It cannot be got through riches, through the acquisition of power and authority, through developing physical strength and endurance. When you plan of service, remember this estimate of comparative values.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. Food and character

Date: 25 July 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

ALL men everywhere are of one species. Yet, man hates man; one religion is opposed to another; one race feels superior to another; one country avoids contact with another. How does this conflict arise? When one delves deep into this question, the answer becomes clear. Everything in creation has five properties. The first three are Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being, Awareness, Bliss) and the last two are Ruupa and Nama (Form and Name), which are lent to the thing only temporarily. They are subject to modification but the first three Being, Awareness, Bliss are inherent, unchanging characteristics. In the language of Vedantha, the three are named Asthi, Bhatthi, and Priya (existence, shining or expressing and loving). They are the innate qualities of every manifestation of the Divine. The last of the three is Anandha (Divine Bliss). Every human being is an embodiment, repository and vehicle of Anandha. The awareness of this Anandha (Bliss) is the goal of man, the consummation of human life. But, man seeks pleasure and happiness from objects through the senses and attains the low material Anandha, not the supreme Anandha he ought to win. It must be said that the Anandha attained through the objective world or through subjective means is only a fractional expression of the Anandha which merges in Brahman (Supreme Reality) grants. We speak of hot water, though heat is not a quality of water, fire has given it the heat. So, too, objective Anandha or subjective Anandha are rendered so, through the grace of Brahma-anandha (Supreme Divine Bliss).

Food prevents or promotes emotions and passions

Man prides himself that he has earned Anandha himself by his effort. It is sugar that makes the bland globules of flour into sweet Laddu. The grace of the Ground of all Being can alone confer sweetness or Anandha. The stars are proud that they shed light on a darkened world but the bright moonlight renders starlight too faint to be noticed. The moon's pride, too, is humbled when the sun illumines the sky. Brahma-anandha is the Sun. This does not mean that one should ignore starlight and moonlight or Vishaya anandha and

Vidhya anandha - Anandha derived from Nature and from spiritual experiential knowledge. They are steps, stages, samples. While valuing them as such, the goal of Brahma-anandha has to be relentlessly pursued. How, then, can man earn that Awareness, that Anandha? What Sadhana (spiritual discipline) has he to adopt? Though men are all equally subject to birth, life and death, though all are of one kind, why do they allow the Anandha which is the right of each to slip away through hatred and conflict? Why is the demon prevailing over the Divine in man? The answer has been deluding man for ages.

Well! Aham (ego) is the cause. The narrow limited self, the ego, is at the root of the evil. Probing the problem a little deeper, I would say that the nature of the food relished is primarily responsible. Food is of three qualities Sathwik, Rajasik, and Thamasik (leading to purity, passion and inertia). Some consume Sathwik-Rajasik or Thamasik-Rajasik food, or they change from one type to another, for better or worse. Since food alleviates or arouses, prevents or promotes emotions and passions, it moulds the behaviour, conduct and attitudes of men.

Sadhaks have to be careful about food consumed

Ravana and Vibheeshana, two brothers born of the same parents, had diametrically opposite natures because of the food they grew upon. Ravana relished Rajasik food while Vibheeshana stuck to Sathwik. Fellow-feeling is difficult when the same quality of food is not preferred. When both live on Rajasik food, though they may have the same nature, friendship cannot last. Envy and hatred will soon break the bond. The Sathwik nature will free man from these evils and purify his mind, preparing him for the journey to God. For, God is Sathwa (pure). Many slide from the Sathwik nature into the Rajasik where the ego predominates. They slide away from God too, for where the ego swells in pomp and pride, God cannot reside. They may parade other reasons for their losing hold of God but the fault lies in their own self. What exactly is Sathwik food? Food that confers Anandha to the body, mind and heart is Sathwik, that which sustains holy living; that which keeps one light, even at the end of the meal. The Sathwiks are satisfied with one meal a day.

Rajasik nature demands continuous feeding on hot stuff tasting sour, salty or pungent. Thamasiks appreciate cold, stale, acrid tastes. The grosser parts of the food consumed are eliminated. The less gross parts build up muscles and bones. The subtle parts make up the nerves and the mind. Therefore, Sadhaks have to be extracareful about the quality of food they consume.

Be clothed in divine qualities to approach God

Pungency in food heightens feelings of pugnacity, aggression and vindictiveness in men, against those who oppose, disagree with or disappoint them. Such men are worse than scorpions and snakes, sharp swords or serrated saws. It is tragic that factional conflicts arise even among persons claiming to be devotees of God. Often, such men behave as if they are desecrating God by deserting Him. When their desires do not fructify as and when they arise, when their faults and failings are laid down before them in order to warn them, or when they are directed to give up the wrongs they are fascinated by, they turn away from God in a fit of fury! There are two types of men - the Amaras (the godly) and the Asuras (the demonic). The Rajasik persons are Asuras. The Geetha directs us to adopt, as the very first Sadhana, the rule: Adhweshta Sarva bhoothanam ("Do not hate any single being"). To approach God, one must be clothed in divine qualities. When it is sinful to hate a fellow-being, what shall we say about' hating God? Live in the love of God - Sthithi-Mathi-Bhakthi (stability, awareness-communion). Devotion arises in the constant mind, not in the agitated, kaleidoscopic mind. Allah showers Grace only on those who surrender wholly. The purification of the senses of perception and the senses of action, the mind and the intellect and the sublimation of the ego-consciousness will happen spontaneously, once the attitude of total surrender is strengthened. That which we consume through the mouth is food. We consume also through the eye, the ear, the nose and the skin. That food too has to be Sathwik, purifying and not pungent or stale and corrupt.

Education is now sought after, more for securing a means of livelihood.

The attempt of many parents and their children is to learn some skill which will give them a good job, in a factory or business establishment or bank, on a decent salary.

Of course, man must live and live comfortably. So, it is necessary that some useful skill is mastered. But, man needs things much more satisfying, much more essential, than comfort.

He must have faith in himself, so that he may respect himself. This Atmavishwas (trust in the Self) lies at the very root of joy.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20. The human destiny

Date: 31 August 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

GOD in the form of Man (Dhaivam manusha ruupena) declare the Scriptures! They describe God as the Virat Purusha (Cosmic Divine Person), with 'thousand' heads, 'thousand' eyes, 'thousand' feet that is to say, all heads, all eyes, all feet are His. While the individual Purusha (Person) is God installed in that body which is thereby a temple, the Purushothama (the Supreme Sovereign Person), is the sum-total of all the Purushas and so has in Him all Of them. The human being alone can know the identity and the Bliss thereof. He is the crown of creation, divine in nature and unique in destiny. There can be no privilege without responsibility. So man has to observe very many regulations and restrictions and abide by duties and directions. The higher the status, the heavier the burden. The office of Prime Minister or President is a position of eminence and therefore, their duties too are of vast importance. Man, holding eminent status and possessing Divine capabilities, has to keep his vision broad and clear and his actions pure and beneficial.

Man has to be ever alert to avoid sin

The obligations that bind man can be considered under four heads: avoiding papam (sin), escaping shapam (curse), observing shasana (law) and following Shasthras (ethical codes). Let us consider sin. Birds and beasts do not commit sin; they have no need to be specially careful to avoid it. For they are free from unrestrained imagination, of cleverness in manipulation or desire to accumulate and possess. Man alone has these qualifications and the duty to use them for his own good and the good of others. Man alone is equipped with a conscience and the faculty of reasoning which can present before him the pros and cons of every step in thought, speech and action. When his reason tells him that a certain thought or speech or action is wrong and he sets aside the judgement, preferring the evil, the wrong and the low, he sins. When an insane person commits evil no court of justice punishes him; it is only when a person, capable of distinguishing good from bad, deliberately chooses the bad, that his act is pronounced a sin. Man has to be ever alert to

avoid sin.

As regards the method of escaping the curse of elders, one has to be equally vigilant. When a man behaves badly or rudely towards persons deserving veneration on account of their fullness in wisdom and virtue, he invites on himself the consequences of this denial of the essential 'man' in him which is God. Such action brings down a curse as an automatic consequence or as a willed reaction. Do not insult others; do not ridicule others; do not demean them in any manner, If you do, you are defying, distorting and destroying man's innate Nature, which is Love. In order to make such men recognise the crime committed against oneself and retreat from this unnatural course, the curse is pronounced.

Man should control their greed and hatred

Consider the behaviour of King Pareekshith which resulted in a curse. He was the Emperor, reputed and respected; he was highly learned; he was an earnest practitioner of spiritual disciplines. Yet, in a fit of anger, he placed around the neck of a hermit who was sunk deep in meditation, a snake that was dead! That was not a pardonable prank. As Emperor, his task was to be an example, a model, an inspiration for his subjects. Punishing him would be an effective method of teaching good conduct to millions. So, Shringi, the hermit's son, cursed him to die of snake bite at the end of the week. The sage Gauthama cursed his wife Ahalya for transgressing the limits imposed by the higher Self on the lower self Man or woman, each one has to honour the glory of mankind and examine each thought, word and deed on the touchstone of Dharma (righteousness). Or else, one has to encounter a curse.

The third obligation is 'obeying the Shasana' (Law). When a stray dog enters the house, moves into the kitchen, guzzles the food kept ready for lunch and runs out breaking a few dishes and cups, it will not be dragged into court and forced to pay compensation. But, when a man does the same, the law takes hold of him and binds him. When a pig enters a field and damages the crop, no one arrests it and claims payment for the loss inflicted. Animals have no moral responsibility to leave alone the property of others. They are not

human beings who ought to control their greed and their hatred. When men are moved into inhuman ways, the law has to restrain and reform them.

Shasthras offer means of purifying the mind

Next, man has the duty to observe consistently and sincerely the Shasthras (codes of morality). The codes are framed for the guidance of living beings who can uplift themselves by their own efforts and determination. Others cannot utilise them or revere them as texts meant for instruction. However arduous and affectionate the training given to a tiger may be, it can never be made non-violent! One can feed a cat on milk and sweets for long but, when it sees a rat, it pounces on it and relishes its taste more than all the fine fresh food one has given for months. A tiger will not eat 'poori' (leavened bread) however gnawing its hunger may be. It will eat only flesh. A beast has to be always beastly. But a vicious man can transform himself into a saint! He may be born and bred in wicked surroundings, but he can be shaped into a good person through the influence of precept and example. Ratnakara, the robber, waylaid travellers and pilgrims and robbed them of their belongings. When some sages whom he attacked reacted with loving kindness, warned him and revealed to him the sacred path of devotion and dedication, he gave up his cruel profession and plunged into severe spiritual exercises which transformed him into a great poet-saint, Valmeeki. There is the example of the highway robber who collected the fingers of those whom he robbed and strung them into a garland round his neck. He was so proud of this horrid achievement that he named himself Angulimala. But, when he encountered the Buddha and listened to His compassionate counsel, his mind was cleansed and he became a faithful follower of Buddha. Man can be educated or nurtured into higher levels of consciousness. The Shasthras offer the means of purifying the mind. Other living beings have no such help or encouragement offered to them; they have to plod on as of old. This is the reason why life as a human being is a unique gift.

It is a hard job to maintain a false stand and so, it is always safe to be

straight and honest. Do not take the first false step and then be led, on and on, to perdition. Truth is one's real nature and when you are yourself, there comes a great flood of joy welling up within you.

When you deny yourself and deceive yourself, shame darkens your mind and breeds fear. You take the path of falsehood because of the Rajasik passions of lust, greed, hate and pride.

Contentment, humility, detachment - these keep you on the path of Truth.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

21. Guidance for the Gurus

Date: 14 June 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Bal Vikas Gurus Training Camp

ADORATION to the All-consuming Time-this is the prayer of the ancient poet Bharthruhari. Time is self-motivated. It halts for no one. We may pronounce the blessing, "Live for a hundred years" but it may not fructify. Death may call any moment. Why? Every moment, everyone is nearing death. No one can recall the time that has flowed by. So, man has to utilise the years he spends on earth for attaining the goal of life, conscious of the great responsibility and the great opportunity.

Man is equipped with a wondrous instrument - the body so that he could engage in fruitful activity on righteous lines. The word Manush in Samskrith (meaning "man") indicates that man is essentially Manas (mind). The mind involves man in thoughts, thoughts lead man to action, and action brings about grief and joy. When one is not as healthy as he deserves to be, the reason has to be sought in the nature of his actions and thoughts. When these are sacred, sublime and holy, he will be healthy in body and mind. The mind is engaged in thought without rest. Constantly dwelling on one subject, attachment and relationship develop. Thus, desire is aroused; when it is frustrated, anger arises and in the frenzy, discrimination disappears. Harsh words end up in hard blows. Man widens the gap between 'his' and 'theirs' every second. This duel is not genuine human nature. In the early years of life, man spends his days in pranks and play. Even while he loses himself in these carefree activities, youth creeps in and provokes him into wild antics and competitive exhibitionism.

Three-fold activities of the human pilgrimage

He brooks no opposition; he is extremely possessive and proud. He builds castles on the foundation of muscle and passion, of group and emotion, not on divine , Grace and righteous life. Meanwhile, age undermines him and he grows old. At that stage, he might lament over lost boyhood and lost youth.

But, however much his repentance and regret, he cannot get those stages again. Man dies as boy, lives as youth, dies as youth and lives as old person. So too, he dies as Yelliah and is born with another name and form. This is how Nature works. While on the pilgrimage of life, man's activities are three-fold - Akarma, Sakarma and Nishkama Karma - the Thamasik, Rajasik and Sathwik types of Karma. Akarma: It starts with high hopes and much fanfare but at the first touch of disappointment, all activity is given up and the man shuts himself up for good. Sakarma: It is undertaken without discrimination. Whatever comes to hand keeps one busy. This is the Rajasik approach. The third type of Karma is Nishkama, gladly done as duty, as worship, as grateful homage, with no eye on the benefit therefrom.

Man has physical urges like hunger and thirst and needs like sleep and exercise. A person may be a scholar in many fields of knowledge or a famous figure crowned with diverse powers, but he cannot escape these urges and needs. But, man has also spiritual urges and needs. While the physical urges are transient and temporary, the spiritual ones have deeper sources and longer satisfactions. They clamour for purity and unity.

Truth strikes root slowly, untruth spreads fast

The purification of the mind is attained through humility, integrity and a sense of justice. The educational process prevalent now cultivates only the intellect of man; it does not unfold and cleanse the mind. An expansive mind is more laudable than an expert brain. One person shedding love is more desirable than a hundred hard-hearted companions. Reputation as a loving lovable person is to be striven for. Such reputation has its origin in little acts of love, tiny upsurges of compassion. When it expands and flows over vast areas, it becomes divine. Truth, too, is established in the heart from small beginnings growing steadily to purify all activities. Falsehood grows quick and wild. When Truth is yet putting on its shoes, Falsehood would have travelled round the globe. Untruth spreads fast; Truth strikes root slowly. No one can hurry the process. One can track and trap a ferocious lion and be proud of it. But, one cannot by one's heroism force a stalk to become a tree. It takes its own time to put forth branches, leaves and flowers, to fill the flowers with fragrance

and to waft the fragrance to the four corners. This fragrance of the fundamental Divine nature in man is his true claim for greatness. Teachers are the Sun which encourages the lotus buds to bloom and scatter fragrance. Their conduct and counsel are the rays which unfold the virtues and talents latent in the hearts of the leaders of tomorrow. Teachers have to fill their own hearts with good thoughts, good ideals, yearning for good deeds and devotion to God. When their hearts are reservoirs of these qualities, the taps, when opened, offer these only and children, who slake their thirst at the taps, are inspired to be likewise. Students need study only for a few years, but the teacher has to keep on studying for years and years, in order to be an efficient Guru. When one lamp has its flame steady and bright, hundreds of lamps can be lit therefrom.

Pursuit of the science of the spirit is essential today

Do not condemn yourselves as petty pedlars of knowledge. You are the makers of the future of mankind. You can make it bright and joyful or mar it as dreary and dreadful. You can weaken or strengthen the foundations of life. You are the planners and engineers who lay the royal road of peace and prosperity. You are the ray of hope that illumines the dismal night enveloping all countries. You are the revealers of the Divine Power that animates every living being and prompts it towards self-sacrifice and self-knowledge. You mark out and build the proper steps for man's ascent to God. You direct the eyes of the pupils inward into the Reality and invite them to revel in that light. You hasten the holy process of ignoring and forgetting the superficial and advancing the Divine Consciousness, which is the reality of man. Gu (ignorance), ru (destroyer)-the word reminds you of the role you have assumed. The teacher is known through his pupils. They proclaim his sincerity and excellence. They are the witnesses for his erudition and endurance. King Bhoja once arranged a scholastic duel between two renowned Pandiths (scholars). When neither succeeded in defeating the other, he invited their respective pupils to continue the debate. But they too were engaged without end in meeting arguments with equally valid counter-arguments. So, the King had to honour them as replicas of their masters! To-day teachers have degraded themselves so low, that their own pupils dare correct their habits

and practices!

Gurus must be living examples of love and light

Gurus imbued with divine love and understanding are urgently needed in every country. They are invaluable assets in every place at any time, for they have such strong faith in their mission and their ideals that they can never compromise or collude. We have this Camp in order to train such Gurus all over the world. Gurus must stand forth as living examples of love and light. They have to cleanse their minds of evil, the worst of them being "talking ill of others." This can be accomplished only through the cultivation of selfless Love. Constant recitation or remembrance of one mantra (sacred formula) is believed by many to be a method useful for cleansing the mind. But, the same mantra cannot serve the purpose for all. Can one size of bush-shirt fit all men? Those who identify themselves with the body-mind complex need an embodied God, an idol, image or picture, and a five-letter or eight-letter Name to fix on. "Dhasoham" (I am your servant) will be such a person's spiritual attitude. So, the mantra will purify and strengthen him. It will destroy; egoist feelings. The constant thought of dependence will destroy pride of power or scholarship or authority over fellow-men, or riches and treasure. Nowadays, ninety-nine out of hundred persons suffer from egotism and they need the curative mantra "Dhasoham."

The mantra of Soham and Pranava

Persons who have attained a higher stage believe that they are jeevis (distinct individuals). For these, the mantra can be "Soham" (I am He) so that the sense of distinctness can be eliminated. In fact even this mantra has a face of distinction, for it posits an "I" and a "He." How can this mantra lead one to the awareness of the one? The next higher stage is the Athmic. When man reaches this level of consciousness, the idea of 'I' as different from 'He' disappears. That is to say, So (He) and Aham (I) fade away and Soham is elevated into OM. OM or Pranava is the Mantra for persons conscious of the Atma in them. Youth today are enmeshed in the coils of the body-mind complex. So, they are engaged in acts prompted by pride, envy and

ignorance. "Son! You are not the body; the body is only your vesture. That vesture has been given to you so that you may lead a beautiful, beneficial life. You should not pollute your years of life with ignorance of your reality. Remove that pollution, acquiring true wisdom." You must advise youth thus, so that they may become aware of their innate Divinity. No one has faith in any others today. Suspicion prevails in the relationship even of parents and children, wife and husband. The more educated a person is, the wider his suspicion. The reason is, education fills the brain, instead of fashioning character. Education has to develop insight along with skills. You have come here, to Prasanthi Nilayam, from over thirty countries, spending enormous amount of money, devoting precious days for journey and stay. Make that stay supremely useful. Understand the importance of disciplined freedom in education. Students might ask, "Grant us the freedom that birds have in the sky or fish in the sea." But, birds behave as birds and fishes as fish. Instead, man clamours for freedom to behave as beast! When the brute in him overwhelms the human, God incarnates as man to warn and guide mankind on the path of genuine human values. Boys and girls must grow with confidence in these human values. Confidence promotes Love. Love fosters Peace; Peace nourishes Truth. Truth confers Bliss and Bliss is God. While dealing with children, do not be influenced by their creed or race, poverty or wealth. Look upon your task as a Sadhana, a form of worship, in fact, the highest form. In the Sai Organisation, no trace of conflict or contempt, of conceit or humiliation should be tolerated or encouraged. During these five days, concentrate on learning from the speakers and from one another and from the Prasanthi Nilayam atmosphere the lessons of humility, tolerance and service, so that the world can have peace, prosperity and joy. Discourse inaugurating Training Camps for

22. The ego and the Avathaar

Date: 22 August 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

BHAAGAVATH represents the essence of all the shasthras (spiritual sciences), the truth proclaimed by all the Vedas (ancient revealed scriptures) and the goal to be aimed at. Bhagah means the omnipotence of Divinity. It also means That which is worthy of worship and meditation. Bha means effulgence. Ga means Making it shine. Va means all-pervasive. Another meaning of Bhagah is Sambhartha and Bhartha. Sambhartha is one who creates the Cosmos out of Prakrithi (Nature). "Bhartha" is the Protector of the created universe. Creation and protection are both covered by the term "Bhagavath." Not only all material things in creation, but also all qualities like fame, knowledge, honour, health, charity and sacrifice are properties of the Aishwarya (Divine).

Emperor Bali, the grandson of Prahladha, was the repository of all great qualities. He was a righteous ruler. There was no want in his realm. On the advice of his Guru (preceptor), Sukracharya, he performed the Viswajith Yagna and became the ruler of the world. When he wanted to conquer Indhraloka (the Kingdom of Indhra), Indhra got frightened and sought Vishnu's help to save him. Vishnu came to Bali as a Brahmana lad, Vamana, and sought from him the gift of three feet of land. Bali readily agreed to make the gift despite warnings from his guru that the person to whom he was making the offer was Lord Vishnu Himself. Bali felt that if the Lord of the Universe came to him for a gift, there was no greater honour for him than to give it.

Immediately the dwarfish Vamana grew to cosmic proportions. By his first foot, he covered the earth. By his second foot he covered the heavens. He then asked Bali wherefrom he should get the third foot of ground. Bali begged the Lord to place His foot on his head.

Vamana Avathara is the Divine principle in man

While Emperor Bali felt supremely happy that the Lord's sacred foot had been

placed on his head, Sukracharya was burning with anger. He was the kind of guru who did not practise what he preached. Hence he had only one eye. Bali was greater than his guru because he practised what he believed in. He was a true devotee of the Lord. He had only one defect - pride in his greatness. The Lord blessed him by destroying his ego. This ego exists in every human being. As long as it remains, man cannot achieve anything good, nor secure God's grace. Bali shed his ego when he told the Lord that he had no more land to give after the Lord had measured the earth and heaven' by two steps and that he was offering himself for the third step. "My ego had warped my mind. Lord, destroy that ego by placing your redeeming foot on my head," he said. The Lord by placing his foot on Bali and pressing him down to the nether world destroyed also his ego and thereby sanctified him.

The three worlds penetrate each other

The place where the Lord assumed the Cosmic form (Trivikrama) is known as Siddhashrama. This siddhashrama is in every human being. The intelligence in man is his spiritual essence. The Vamana avathara is the divine principle in man. The ego arising out of man's consciousness represents Bali. The navel in which Divinity resides is the Siddhashrama. It is called Siddhashrama because it is the place where all aspirations are realised. The three feet of ground Vamana sought from Bali are: Bhuuloka, Bhuvanloka and Suvarloka. Bhuuloka means the entire world constituted by the five senses and the five vital airs. Bhuvanloka represents the subtle life force that is present in the atmosphere enveloping the world. It is the world of Prana (Life-force). Suvarloka is the Atma (divine soul), the consciousness which permeates everything from the atom to the vastest thing in the Cosmos. These three worlds are not one upon the other. They inter-penetrate each other the Suvarloka permeates the Bhuvanloka and the latter penetrates the Bhuuloka. The three worlds represent symbolically the three bodies of man the gross body, the mental body and the causal body. Man must move forward from the gross body to the mental path and from the mental to the Athmic State (Self-realisation). The inner meaning of the Onam celebration is that man must destroy the ego and achieve Self-realisation.

23. Why the Avathaar comes

Date: 31 August 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

DHEHO devalayah proktho, Jeevo Dhevah sanatanah
The Eternal Supreme dwells in the temple of the human body as the newborn Jeeva.

For this reason, all *avathars* (divine incarnations) assume the human form. The scriptures have declared that the Divine submits to devotion.

In the Geetha the Lord has declared that in Man He is the power of discrimination, the *Buddhi* (intellect). Man cannot achieve greatness by the acquisition of all forms of wealth. It is intelligence that makes man respected. One who does not exercise this power of discrimination is no better than birds or beasts. It is to raise man to a higher level that the Divine comes down as Avathar. *Avathar* means descent. To stoop down to lift up the child for coddling and to raise man, who is caught up in petty desires and trivial pursuits, Divinity descends to the human level and teaches how man can divinise himself. This is the teaching of the Geetha. All the great scriptures, the Bible, the Quran and others have originated for the same purpose. The scriptures, by themselves, cannot redeem man. They serve only as guideposts. They indicate the roads to be taken to realise the Divine.

Pilgrimages do not wipe out the sins

All Avathars are *Puurna Avathars*, have all the attributes of the Divine. But the *shasthras* (revealed scriptures) have held that the Krishna Avathar alone is the complete incarnation, with all the sixteen aspects. Despite His Omnipotence, Krishna was easily accessible to the devotee. He submitted Himself to the devotee. When we are filled with devotion, the Lord is ready to serve us as our servant. The Lord is ever prepared to subject Himself to any

kind of difficulty or ordeal to protect or help His devotee. Many a devotee has sung songs in praise of Krishna and lamented the fact that he had not been fortunate enough to be born during His advent and enjoyed His divine music and witnessed His divine exploits. One devotee has decried the dullwitted disbelievers who cannot shed their petty desires and seek the bliss that comes from devotion to the Divine.

Many devotees go on pilgrimages to Benares, Prayag, or other sacred places in the hope that thereby they will be absolved of their sins. Pilgrimages are not the means to wipe out sins. What is required is purification of the heart and the mind. If the mind is cleansed through *sadhana* (spiritual discipline), Divinity will reveal itself of its own accord. Saint Meera gave the same message when she sang a bhajan calling upon the mind to go to the Ganga and Yamuna. The Ganga and the Yamuna she had in mind are not the rivers in Northern India but the inhaling and exhaling breaths in each of us - the Ida and Pingala nadis (nerves). The central spot between the brows is the Prayag, the place where the Ganga and the Yamuna converge and by concentrating on this spot Krishna can be discovered. This spot is described by Meera as cool, pure and undisturbed. Inhaling and exhaling symbolise what one should take in and what one should reject and the holding of the breath (Kumbhaka) signifies what one should hold on to namely, Divinity. One should take in the pure things and reject the impure.

The Lord responds to the yearning of the devotees

The Geetha has laid down three directives: do not be afraid of troubles; do not forget God; do not adore what is false. It is by adhering to these three injunctions that countless devotees all through the ages have sought to realise the Divine through Sadhana.

The Bhagavatha shows how the Lord responds to the yearning of the devotees and assuages their anguish caused by separation from the Lord. When Krishna left for Mathura, the *gopees* (cowherdesses) were languishing in grief, unable to bear the separation. They were all the time looking towards Mathura to see when Krishna would return. One day, they espied a cloud of

dust and imagined that Krishna had at last relented and was returning to Gokulam. They saw a chariot and a man seated in it. The chariot stopped but there was no Krishna in it. With their hearts given over to the Supreme Lord, the Gopees were not inclined even to look at the strange visitor, who was none other than Krishna's very dear friend, Uddhava. Krishna, who was aware of the agony the Gopikas were experiencing, had sent Uddhava to offer them solace and to cheer them up. The moment Uddhava got down from the chariot, he started delivering a long exhortation to the Gopikas. "Oh ye Gopikas! You are ignorant of the shasthras. You have no wisdom. Like silly, dumb persons, you are pining for Krishna. If you know the shasthras, you will realise that Krishna is ever with you. He resides in your hearts. Instead of taking delight in the Krishna that dwells within you, you are pining for the physical form of Krishna. This is due to your ignorance. I shall teach you the science of Yoga for which Krishna has sent me."

Uddhava and the Gopees

The gopikas did not consider it proper to speak directly to a stranger. They adopted the device of addressing a bee to give their reply to Uddhava. The gopees said: "Oh bee! These words (of Uddhava) are adding fuel to the fire that is burning in us because of separation from Krishna. Enough of these words."

Uddhava then held out to the gopikas the letter Krishna had sent to them and said: "Here is Krishna's message to you. At least read that." One gopee immediately said: "Oh bee ! We are illiterate village folk. We are stricken with grief. Show us Krishna." Another gopee wailed: "We are being burnt by the fire of agony caused by Krishna's absence. If we touch His letter, it may be burnt to ashes. We dare not touch it." Yet another gopee said: "The tears from our eyes will stain the pearl-like letters in Krishna's epistle. We cannot endure seeing His message."

Uddhava then said: "At least listen to my message. I shall teach you knowledge of yoga." A gopika answered, addressing the bee, unable to control her grief: "Oh bee, we have only one mind and that has gone with

Krishna to Mathura. If we had four minds, we could turn one to yoga, another to some other subject, and so on. But the only mind we had has been surrendered to Krishna. We have no room for any yoga lessons."

Uddhava was stupefied when he realised their single minded devotion to Krishna. The essence of all the Vedas and *Shasthras* (ancient sacred scriptures) is single-mindedness. This single-mindedness results in one-pointed devotion to God. Uddhava reflected within himself that he had not cultivated the single-minded devotion which the gopees had demonstrated. He decided to return to Krishna.

Radhika's grief-stricken message to Krishna

Among the gopees, the foremost devotees of Krishna were Radhika and Neeraja. Before Uddhava left, he heard them address Krishna as the Rama-parrot and pleaded for a vision of Krishna to assuage their grief-stricken hearts. Uddhava asked Radhika, who was lying unconscious on a sand-dune, whether she had any message for Krishna. Recovering her senses, Radhika thought only of Krishna. She cried: Were you a tree, growing upwards, I would cling to you like a creeper; Were you a blossoming flower I would hover over you like a bee; Were you the mountain Meru I would cascade like a river; Were you the boundless sky, I would be in you like a star; Were you the bottomless deep I would merge in you like a river; Where are you, Oh Krishna ? Whither have you gone, Krishna ! Have you no pity, Krishna ! Krishna !

Love of God is the means and the goal

On seeing Radhika in this piteous state, Uddhava's heart melted. He realised that Krishna had sent him on this mission to the gopees to make him learn what is true *Bhakthi* (devotion). Uddhava realised that Krishna had enacted that episode to show to him that even those well versed in the shasthras had to learn the inner truth about true devotion from the one-pointed, unalloyed devotion shown by the gopees towards Krishna. Love of God is the means and the goal. This was the secret revealed by the gopees. They saw love in everything - in the music of Krishna's flute, which filled the world with love

and flooded the parched earth with love. The Divine is in every one. But to realise it, there is only one way. It is to cultivate intense love of God.

Only that day when one strives to develop such love for God is the day of Krishna's birth. Krishna is not born on every Gokulashtami day. Krishna is born in us when we try to develop divine love as the means to overcome our bonds. To live up to the teachings of Krishna is the true way to celebrate His birthday.

24. Honour the mother

Date: **11 September 1983** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Symposium on Human Values - Valedictory function**

THE mother's lap is the school for every man. It is his first temple. The mother is every man's primary wealth. To recognise this truth about one's mother is the duty of every person. There is no higher god than the mother. The father is one's treasure; the mother is his god. Instead of valuing such precious wealth and divinity, men engage themselves in all kinds of activities to acquire riches and positions. The father and the mother are inseparable like the word and its meaning. Everyone should cherish one's parents as embodiments of the Divine. The mother and father may be physically separate, but spiritually they are one. Even the distinction between man and women relates only to the physical body. The Indwelling Spirit in both of them is the same divine. In fact, every human being can be divided into two constituents. One is the body. The other is the Atma (Divine Self). Hunger, thirst, sleep, work, etc., are qualities derived from the body. Truth, forbearance, sympathy, love and other qualities originate from the Atma. If the truth is gone into, it will be seen that man is not the body, though he identifies himself with it. The physical body is common to all living beings. It is made up of the same five elements. It is subject to decay and death. Food, sleep, reproduction are common to all living things. It is the Indwelling Spirit in man that is immortal. That Spirit is Divine. Man strives hard in many ways to acquire worldly things. But he will not make the sacrifice needed to realise his Divinity.

Role of women is crucial in cultivation of basic qualities

We see in the world today disorder, violence and conflict. The world is like a sick man afflicted with many ailments. What is the cure for these ills? Man must shed his selfishness, greed and other bad qualities and rise above his animal nature. He must cultivate Charity (unselfishness) to achieve Purity. Through purity of hearts, men will achieve Unity, which will lead to Divinity. The mansion of human life should be built on these four bases. In the

cultivation of these basic qualities, the role of women is crucial. Only dedicated mothers can offer to the nation children who will strive for a great future for the country. Truth, sacrifice and peace are predominant qualities in women. Women are concerned about the purity and welfare of the community. When his son Â· Abhimanyu died in the Kurukshethra war, Arjuna lamented that the war had been fought in vain as there was no one to inherit the kingdom. Subhadra, however, felt grieved that the death of a son while the parents were alive was the precursor of the Kali Age. She recalled that in the days of Rama no mother had to mourn the loss of a son.

While the father's love was related to mundane desires, the mother's love was related to spiritual concerns. It is such broad-minded mothers who are needed today. Good mothers are more essential than good wives. A good wife is of value only to her husband. A good mother is a national asset. From ancient times, Indian scriptures have glorified the examples of great women like Maithreyi, Seetha, Savithri. Their lives continue to be a source of inspiration to this day. We cannot afford to forget them. Baba's Inaugural Discourse at the symposium on "The Role of Women in Social Change"

Be always saturated with prema; do not use poisonous words against any one, for, words wound more fatally than even arrows. Speak soft and sweet; sympathise with suffering and loss and ignorance; try your best to apply the salve of soothing word and timely succour. Do not damage the faith of any one in virtue and divinity.

Encourage others to have that faith by demonstrating in your own life that virtue is its own reward, that divinity is all-pervasive and all-powerful.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

25. The triple debt

Date: 10 October 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara - Inaguration of Yagna

EVERY man, irrespective of the country, race or period of time in which he is born, comes into the world burdened with three debts. The first debt is owed to the Divine. The second is to the Rishis (sages). The third is to one's parents. A debt is an obligation arising out of what one has received from others. We can easily identify these debts in the human body different divine forces are present nourishing and protecting it. This divine energy permeates the entire body; it is called the Rasa (Divine Essence). We owe a debt of gratitude to the Divine which has not only endowed us with this precious human body but which also sustains it. We shall be able to enjoy these gifts of the Divine only if we discharge this debt to the Divine. How is this to be done? It is by rendering service to other bodies saturated with the same Divine, by doing righteous deeds and consecrating all actions in the service of society. The debt to the Divine has to be discharged in full in this life itself or during many future lives. The earlier we repay this debt, the sooner we shall realise Divinity.

Our sages have laid down guidelines for right action

Next, the debt to the Rishis: By selfless investigations and experiments the sages discovered for mankind the paths to be followed for bettering our lives here and attaining mergence. They have laid down the types of right action that will help man to lead a good and worthy life and successfully strive for Self-realisation. These guidelines and codes of conduct have come down to us in the form of Shasthras (spiritual sciences). The Shasthras also deal with rituals and forms of worship for propitiating the Divine. The sages have taught how man can proceed from the human to the Divine. Such codes have other names elsewhere. But, whatever the name, these are essential for human survival. When man strays from these codes, he is subject to many calamities. Man will have to pay the price now or later for violating these codes. Because the sages of yore have given man these precious guidelines

for a righteous and sacred life, we repay the debt by respecting these codes and observing the injunctions laid down by them. Today, instead of honouring and following the shastras, people are dishonouring and violating them and committing many wanton sins in the process. When we follow the path laid down by the sages, we can lead exemplary lives and reach the full height of human potentialities. The third debt we have to pay is to the Pithru-runam (debt to the parents). A person desires to have a son and feels that without a son he cannot escape hell. This is not a correct interpretation of the debt to the parents. The ancients desired to have sons who would lead righteous lives and help the parents in discharging the debt to the Dhaiva-runam (debt to the Divine). Many of them performed yajnas (sacrifices) to secure such noble sons. They desired not only to acquire merit for themselves by having such sons, but also to ensure that the sacred traditions of the family were maintained and continued untarnished. In the old days, a father did not feel happy when a son was born; he was delighted only when the son earned name and fame by good conduct and righteous living.

A child grows by following the examples of parents

When a child is born, no one can know how it will turn out, whether into a good and noble person or a wicked and evil person. The father too should set a good example to the son and try to keep him on the straight path. It is by following the example of the parents that a child grows in life.

It was to discharge his three-fold debt that Emperor Dhasaratha performed yagas and yajnas (ceremonial sacrifices) and ensured the presence of his sons on those occasions. He sent them to great gurus so that they may learn the sacred heritage of the past, before they confronted the challenges of the world. He did not calculate that his sons should serve him in his old age. He had no selfish interest in rearing them. He desired sons for the sake of his spiritual well-being. The son owes a deep debt to the parents for the trouble and expense they underwent to bring him up on right lines. This is the primary duty of a son. The son is entitled not merely to a share in the father's worldly property. He is entitled also to a share in the godly life lived by the father. He must follow the high ideals of the father. If the father is given to

evil ways, the son can acquire merit himself and reduce to some extent the effects of the sins of the father by cultivating good company, entertaining good thoughts and doing good deeds. The sage Vasishtha assured Dasaratha that many of the sins committed by him had been wiped out by the numerous Dharmic deeds of Sri Rama, such as destruction of the Rakshasas and protection guaranteed to the Rishis.

Two kinds of yajnas to redeem the three debts

It is to discharge the debt to one's parents that rites like Shraddha and Tharpanam (ritual offerings to the manes) are done. Only a few perform these ceremonies now. The ancients felt that it was sinful for children to be ungrateful to parents to whom they owed their bodies and their achievements.

Yajnas and Yagas (Vedhic rituals of sacrifice) are symbolic rituals designed to redeem these three debts. Yajnas are of two kinds: Antaryajna (internal) and Bahir-yajna (external). The internal yajna is the striving to realise the Divinity within. The Divine is in every one and it can be realised only through Dhyana (meditation). The mind is the sacrificial altar. One has to offer as sacrifice on this altar all one's bad qualities. It may be asked how any bad quality can pollute the body-mind-complex when the Divine is the in-dwelling Spirit. But, it must be realised that this is not one's first birth in a body; many lives have preceded this. Man in Samskrit is called Manava which means, Ma (not), nava (new) - "not new". Birth as man is the final stage in the upward evolution of the 840 thousand species of living beings. In previous lives, one might have been an insect, a worm, a bird or an animal. It is as a result of this that, despite the presence of the Divine, man displays now many animal qualities. For example, pride is not an innate human quality. It is the natural trait of a buffalo. If one displays pride, it means he has been a buffalo in previous lives and this buffalo 'quality inheres in the human. Some persons exhibit stupid stubbornness. This is not a human trait. It is the quality of a sheep.

Reasons for man's display of animal qualities

Sometimes some persons tend to indulge in petty thefts. This is derived from previous lives spent as a cat. Similarly, the vacillating and fickle nature displayed by a person may be attributed to a previous life as a monkey. Fickle mindedness is characteristic of the monkey. Some persons are incurably ungrateful. They indulge even in harming those who help them. This is not a human trait. How, then, is it present in a man? It is because he must have been a serpent in a previous birth. The serpent is notorious, for emitting poison even when fed on milk. So, an ungrateful person must have been a serpent in some previous life. One should offer, therefore, at the altar of his mind as a sacrifice his stubbornness, thieving propensity, ingratitude and pride. This is the Inner Yajna. Unfortunately, instead of performing sacrifices of this kind people treat goats and fowl as offerings. As a result the bad qualities continue to grow in man. It is to eliminate this evil sense of ingratitude that external sacrifices like Yajnas and Yagas have been recommended to man. Yajnas enable us to promote and refine the beneficent qualities in man. In the yajna Indhra is the principal deity generally invoked. Indhra is the presiding deity of the mind, which is the master of the senses. It is because the senses tend to dominate the mind, instead of being subservient to it, that Indhra is invoked in this yajna. Indhra has another name Puruhutha, that is, one who is invoked frequently. Rudhra is defined as the Supreme Lord, the Eeshwara of all the Indhriyas (sense organs). When a man has mastered all his sense organs, he becomes Eeshwara! When we wish to progress from the human to the Divine state, the state of Rudhra, it has to be sought through Sadhana (spiritual discipline).

The sole purpose of internal Yajna

The sole purpose of the Anthar-yajna (internal sacrifice) is to see that the mind does not run after the whims and fancies of the senses, like a master pathetically carrying out the dictates of his servants. The man who is a slave of sensual desire is the world's bond-slave. One who has conquered desire is master of this world and the next. It is desire that makes one dependent on others. When there is no control over the senses, desire grows wild. Yajnas and yagas are not undertaken to promote self-interest. They are performed

for promoting the welfare of the world. Instead of emphasising the inner meaning and significance, of yajnas, most people pay attention to the external features. Pre-occupied with external forms of the yajna, people ignore the basic need to win sense-control, without which spiritual sadhana has no meaning.

Evil desires should be mercilessly scotched

One must constantly strive to get rid of evil tendencies. Inherited evil traits rooted in the mind must be given up at the sacrificial altar. Of these traits, the worst are hatred and envy. They arise from intense selfishness. They are qualities of the leopard and should not find place in a human being. Some people try to pretend that they have overcome anger, hatred, jealousy and pride. The devices adopted by such persons are only the cunning tricks of the fox. As these traits make their appearance from time to time, they should be immediately cast off. This calls for continuous internal yajna, as against the external yajna which is performed only once a year at one particular place.

The internal yajna has to be performed at all times, in all places and under all circumstances. The sacrificial altar for this yajna is within each one of us. Whenever an evil thought or desire occurs, it should be mercilessly scotched. It is only by constant vigilance and continuous endeavour that Divine grace can be earned. Only when evil traits are banished can Divinity manifest itself in all its glory. This is the real purpose of yajnas - -to enable man to achieve purity in order to realise Divinity.

26. Conquest of the mind

Date: 12 October 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

ENQUIRY into the nature of the Mind will reveal that it has no existence apart from the thoughts that arise through the sense organs. That was why the sages declared: "Sankalpa Vikalpatmakam Manaha" (Thoughts and doubts constitute the essence of the mind). To bring the mind under control we have to free ourselves from the entire process of mental agitation. If we want to take a bath in the sea, which is agitated by waves, we cannot afford to wait till the waves subside and the sea is calm. Likewise, it will be foolish to wait for the agitations in the mind to cease for experiencing Anandha (divine bliss). Agitations are of the very nature of the Mind "Manana sthithihi Manaha" (The state of cogitation or remembrance is the Mind.) By constant rumination over one's sensory experiences the mind acquires a form. By relating the experiences to the "I" as the experiencer, the consciousness of a distinctive individual (the 'Ego) arises. From that, desires develop and from the desires the mind acquires a form. In a piece of cloth, when the threads are taken out, only the cotton remains and if the cotton is burnt the cloth ceases to exist. Similarly when desires are eliminated, the "I" and the Mind will go. It has been said that the destruction of the mind is the means to the realization of the Divine. The cessation of the mind can be brought about by the gradual elimination of desires, like the removal of threads from a cloth. Finally the desires have to be consumed in the fire of Vairagya (detachment).

Everything in the world is subject to change

Look upon life as one long railway journey. In this journey it is not good to carry heavy luggage. There are stations on the way like Arthi (suffering), Artharthi (desire for objects), jignasu (yearning for understanding) and Jnani (Self-realisation). The less luggage one carries the more easily and quickly one can get through various stages and reach the destination. The primary requisite, therefore, is the eradication of desires. Everything in the Universe has a form and a name. Of the two, the name is more important than the form. The form is liable to change every moment. The Vedantha declares that

whatever is perceived is liable to perish ("Yaddhrishyam thannashyam"). There is nothing in the world which is not subject to change. A man's body also goes through stages of infancy, boyhood, manhood, and old age. Samsara (worldly life) is like a tree with roots, branches, flowers and fruits. The Mind is the tap-root of this tree. If the tap-root is destroyed the tree with all its branches will fall. If the mind goes, the sense of separateness will go. Man's actions are related to desires and aversions. They are the cause of his joys and sorrows. As the Mind is the source of these actions, it is by cultivating pure and noble thoughts that one can engage in pure and noble deeds. All the world's ills arise from the evil thoughts and deeds of men. It is only when men change that society will change and the world will be reformed.

Nothing can be achieved without faith in God

Man does not use his sense organs in the right way. He has eyes, but does not see what is good. He has ears, but does not listen to what is good. There is only one way of correcting him. He has to be shown the spiritual path and helped to cultivate the virtues of Truth, Love and Self-sacrifice. He must be weaned away from selfish pursuits and from arrogance and pride. His mind, which is the real culprit, has to be cleansed of all evil. He believes in the false and unreal and does not relish Truth, Goodness and Beauty. He can acquire real peace and joy only when he turns his thoughts to God and away from the petty tinsel of the world. Without faith in God there is nothing that man can achieve, whatever his knowledge and wealth may be. Modern education does not teach a young man what is essential for making his life worthwhile and meaningful. His mind is loaded with a lot of useless information, but he knows little that is useful for daily living. Even in the spiritual field, there is a wide gap between verbal knowledge and real understanding of spiritual truth. People perform Japa, Dhyana and Bhajana (repetition of sacred formula, meditation, and group singing of devotional songs), but there is no understanding of their inner purpose or what they are expected to achieve. All living beings have the Pancha Bhuthas (five basic elements) Pancha Koshas (five sheaths) the Pancha Pranas (five vital airs), and the Panchendhriyas (five sense organs) in common. What is the form of these five

elements? What is the power that sustains the five Koshas (sheaths)? Man does not enquire into these matters. He lives continuously in these sheaths and functions through the sense organs but what is the purpose of this life? What is the significance of human birth? These questions do not bother him. He is content from morning till eve to acquire one thing or another and is concerned about "My house", "My car", "My clothes" and the like. In this pre-occupation with the "I" and "Mine", the basic truth about the Divine that is the real nature of the "I" is not remembered at all.

Realise that the mind is the cause of "my-ness"

When a man calls his body, "My body" who is the owner or the indweller of the body? If he is not the body or the mind, what is he? Without understanding who he is, is there any meaning in talking about "my body", "my mind" and the like? Is there any sense in seeking to acquire various possessions without understanding who is acquiring them and for what purpose? Once it is realized that the mind is the cause of this "my-ness", and that it is made up of desires, then one will strive to achieve the state of Samadhi (superconscious state of bliss during meditation) in which all agitations in the mind cease. It may be difficult to achieve this state of yogic serenity. An easier way to still the mind is to concentrate all thoughts on God. When that is done, the calmness that comes in the state of Sushupthi (deep sleep) will be realised. It is a state of equanimity in which one looks upon pain and pleasure, joy and grief, with equal indifference, unaffected by them either way. In the same manner the identity of the Jeevi (individual. Self) and the Brahman (Omniself) has to be experienced.

My desire is that you should not censure other religions. Develop brotherly feelings for all. God is One; there are not many Gods, one for each tribe among men.

Love is One; it transcends caste, colour and creed, if it has to be genuine. Truth is One; there cannot be two. For two can only be one occurring twice. The goal is One; for, all roads must lead to the One God. Why then should

men quarrel and fight over the Eternal and the Absolute?

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

27. Yajnas and the human predicament

Date: 11 October 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE Dheha (body), the Indhriyas (senses), the Manas (mind) and the Buddhi (intellect) are the instruments through which man functions. The true nature of man can be understood only when the secret of each of these is understood. What is the real character of the body, the mind, the senses and the intellect? Once this is known we can discover the means to bring them under control.

The first upadhi (instrument) of man is the body. "The etymological meaning of the word Dheha is "Dhahyathi-ithi Dhehah" ("that which is burnt"). The burning does not refer only to the cremation of the body after death. In fact, the body is all the time burning on account of worries. The body is also called Shareera, which means "that which is subject to change and decay." From childhood to youth, from youth to old age the body undergoes many changes. The body is like a rented house. It is also described as the Tabernacle of God. This means that it is a sacred dwelling. Constant efforts are made to drive the tenant out of the house. Ultimately death evicts the tenant. Another name for the body is Kshethra (as mentioned in the Bhagavath Geetha). The word Kshethra has many meanings. It may be regarded as a Kavacham (armour) which protects the indwelling spirit. Kshethra also means that which is liable to destruction. It also means a field (of action).

Make the body a fitting shrine for the Divine

If the body is considered as a field its owner can reap only crops he cultivates in it. If he sows sacred seeds he will reap a harvest of merit. If he sows sinful seeds he will reap a harvest of sins. When the body is regarded as a shrine, it must be revered as the sacred abode of the Divine. Religious Kshethras are places of pilgrimage because they are associated with Divinity. Because the body is also the abode of the Divine it must be regarded as a Kshethra. In the temple of the body the Divine Spirit is installed. It can acquire purity and holiness only when it is purified internally and externally. By bathing in water

the body can be purified externally. By speaking the Truth, the tongue is purified. Through study and penance, the spirit is rendered pure. The intellect acquires purity through Jnana (spiritual wisdom). In these ways the body has to be made a fitting shrine for the Divine by pure thoughts, pure deeds and by meditation. Purity of mind, speech and body has been described as "Trikarana Shuddhi" (the triple purity.) The body should not be regarded as a mere conglomeration of the five elements. Looking at it externally, it may appear as a structure of bones, flesh, blood and nerves. But just as a temple is not a mere edifice consisting of brick and mortar but is the Abode of the Divine, the body should also be regarded as the dwelling of the Divine Spirit. It is, therefore, the primary duty of man to ensure that the body does not indulge in wrongful practices, and fall a prey to falsehood and unrighteousness. He should use the body to promote his higher human qualities and pursue the divine path. It is for this purpose that Yajnas, Yagas and other religious rites have been prescribed.

Some organs are not easily subject to control

Next there are Indhriyas the sense organs. These senses pursue their own courses. They are not easily subject to control or regulation. They tend to go astray to any extent. The senses are called Mathras. Mathra means that which measures or determines the quality. The tongue, for instance, tastes something and declares whether it is sweet, sour or so on. The eye likewise determines whether something is beautiful and attractive or not. In this manner every sense organ in the human body judges the quality of the objects it experiences. Another meaning of Mathra is that it has to observe certain bounds or limits. The Indhriyas have thus got both a judging quality and a limitation. The nose, for instance, can only smell but cannot take up any other function. The purpose of the limitation is that the nose should confine itself to the specific function of smelling what is pure or fragrant and rejecting what is impure. The ears, for instance, should listen to pure and holy matters and receive what delights the heart. They should not indulge in listening to words which cause pain to the heart or affect its purity. If the ears are used in violation of this rule and give heed to irrelevant matters and to evil gossip they become instruments for the commission of sin. The tongue,

again, is intended to proclaim the glory of God and to speak the truth. Instead of being used for this sacred purpose it is employed for abusing others or causing pain to them. It is a perversion of the divine purpose for which it is given.

Sorrows are the result of abuse of sense organs

Because the Indhriyas (the sense organs) are not used for the pure and sacred purposes for which the Divine has endowed man with them, they become the instruments for doing many evil things. All the sorrows and troubles man experiences are the result of abuse of sense organs. It is for this reason that in the spiritual journey one is enjoined Indhriya nigraham (to control the senses) as the very first discipline.

However-wealthy, powerful or knowledgeable one may be, if he fails to bring his senses under control he will not be able to make purposeful and worthy use of his power or position. One who is a slave of his senses is displaying his animal qualities. One who controls his senses demonstrates the sacredness of the human birth. It is to develop the divine qualities in man and promote his purity in thought, word and deed that Yagas and Yajnas have to be performed. Among the good qualities which man has to cultivate, the most important is thyaga (sacrifice). Thyaga is ordinarily equated with charity or generosity. There is a great difference between charity and real sacrifice. Giving away things like land, cows, gold, food or knowledge represents only an attempt to share with others what you have. By gifts of these kind one does not lose much. In fact many of those who are born in poverty and misery in this life are suffering the consequences of not exercising charity in previous lives. The Shasthras (moral sciences) have laid down that the affluent should share their wealth with the have-nots. This kind of sharing is an inherent obligation of man, according to the Shasthras. Samarasya (compassion) and Samanvaya (one-ness) towards all being have been regarded as two eyes for a man.

Significance of Anga-puuja in ritual worship

Thyaga, however, transcends charity and compassion. It is the readiness to part with a smile the things which one loves, including one's life itself. This is true sacrifice and it is that kind of sacrifice that has been regarded as the means to realise Amruthathvam (immortality). The Vedas have also declared that peace comes from thyaga. Those who seek peace of mind, peace of the spirit and peace for the world or the calmness of the senses have to cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. One must try continually to see how one's wealth or talents, knowledge or qualities can be utilised to promote happiness among others. In the daily religious routine, persons are in the habit of performing what is called 'Anga Puuja' - offering the various limbs of the body to the Divine. But while uttering the Manthra, 'Nethram Samarpayami' (I am offering my eye), if you merely offer a flower, you are missing the real significance of this Manthra. It means that you are offering your eye for seeing the Divine. Similarly, in the Homa (sacrificial offering in the fire) the Manthra is uttered, 'Hridhayam Samarpayami' (I offer my heart). The real significance of this manthra is: "O Lord, this is not my heart. It is yours. There is only one seat in this heart and this is reserved for you. There is no place in it for anybody else, neither for father or mother, husband or wife, or teacher. You are the only one who can occupy my heart. Accept this heart as yours." Instead of uttering the manthras in this faith, nowadays the ritual is converted into a mechanical offering of a flower or something else. Hence the worship becomes a hypocritical formality.

Yajnas are intended for people in all the worlds

We speak of the heart as the throne of the Lord. But we seat on it all and sundry. The throne becomes ultimately a musical chair. How can the Divine be expected to come, and dwell in such a heart? The first thing one has to do is to rid the heart of all the evil elements residing in it. The heart is compared to a lotus. But the lotus of our heart is infested with evil insects such as hatred, lust, greed, pride, attachment and envy. Until these pestilential creatures are removed and the lotus is cleaned by the water of Prema (Divine love) the heart is not fit to be offered to the Divine. During worship, we say 'Suddhodhaka Snanam Samarpayami' (I am offering you a bath in pure water). What is the pure water that is implied here? It is pure unselfish love. Any

offering made to the divine should be done not in expectation of any reward or for any selfish purpose but only to please the Divine. Thyaga must be regarded as a Yajna (great sacrifice). What you offer should be within your capability. The person to whom it is offered should be deserving and should be capable of making proper use of what is offered. To make offerings beyond one's capacity to undeserving persons or to persons incapable of putting them to proper use is like offering a golden toy to a child or presenting a knife to a lunatic. It may have many undesirable consequences. The Rishis (sages) who prescribed Yajnas and Yagas did not intend them for the use of a particular country, community or time. They are valid for any country, for any people, at anytime. The benediction at the end of the Yajna is "Lokah Samasthah Sukhino Bhavanthu" (May all the worlds be happy). These Yajnas and Yagas must be preserved by us with appropriate adaptations for differences in place and time. What is essential is to adhere to the spirit and deeper purpose of the manthras which are employed in the yajnas. When the yajnas are performed in this way they will result in the purification of the spirit and lead us to the realisation of the Divine.

Man being divine must have the divine all around him, all the time, in order to be alive; like fish, he must have the water of divine joy all around him. Instead, he is now seeking to keep himself alive by artificial respiration and borrowed blood. He is himself Amrithaswaruupa, and Anandha-swaruupa (Immortal and Bliss personified). So, why should he strive to get Anandha from outside?

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

28. To Divinity through Sacrifice

Date: **October 1983**

THE sacred and fragrant articles that are offered and the precious gems that are placed in the sacrificial fire are symbolic of the offerings which man should make in life. He should offer his pure heart and good qualities such as Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi and Prema (Truth, Virtue, Peace and Love) to the Divine. The real spirit of giving to society and the community the wealth, knowledge and skills one possesses is the true Yajna (sacrificial rite). Without the spirit or sacrifice the performance of external rituals has no meaning. Life itself is a Yajna. To make human life an oblation in the sacred fire of duties and actions is itself a Yajna. To get rid of one's bad qualities is Yajna. Every individual who seeks to lead an ideal life, to achieve bliss and attain self-realisation has to cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. Yajna is the means to lead one from sorrow to happiness, adversity to prosperity, darkness to light. Human life can be worthwhile only when it is based on sacrifice or the quality of renunciation. Thereby not only can it become meaningful but Divinity can also be experienced. Life does not consist in eating, sleeping and such activities. The Vedantha (concluding essence of Vedas) has declared that the human goal is Moksha (release from bondage). What is this bondage? It is not association with wife and children, with property or attachments and hatreds. Even the sense of 'I' and 'Mine' does not constitute bondage. It is the ignorance of one's true self that constitutes bondage. The process of liberation begins with the attempt to discover one's own Self. This Yajna is intended to reveal to man the truth about himself and lead him to the Divine.

The Lord is both the performer and enjoyer of yajna

From ancient times wrong conceptions about the purpose of Yajna resulted in sacrifice of living beings, and the true purpose of Yajnas was forgotten. Yajna is also called Adhvaram. Dhvaram means "killing". Adhvaram signifies "non-killing". Hence the inner meaning of 'Yajna is that in which there is no violence. All the Manthras (sacred formulas) used in Yajnas are aimed at achieving Anandha (Divine Bliss). Yajnas must lead to Bliss and Self-

realisation. Only when the import of the manthras is fully understood and experienced will there be Self-realisation. The Lord is hailed as the Yajnapurusha. He is known as Yaj nabhruth, i.e., the Lord of the Yajna. He is the Master of all that takes place in the Yajna. From this, the supreme significance of the Yajna should be obvious. The Lord is also known as Yajnakrith and Yaj nabhuk. That is, He is both the performer and the enjoyer of the sacrifice. The Lord is thus the protector and the destroyer of the sacrifice. All the sacred things that are offered in the sacrificial fire, including the manthras (holy sacred formulae) and yantras (ritual diagrammatic representations), are accepted by Him. When each offering is made with the manthra, 'Swaha', it means that it is being offered to the Divine. Hence, everything that is offered must be pure, sweet and enjoyable. We have to look upon our body as the sacrificial platform. Our Mind is the altar on which the offerings are to be made. Our desires represent the ghee that is poured into the sacrificial fire. Our hatred is the sacrificial animal. Our mental conflicts are the blades of Kusha grass. Our heart is the sacrificial fire. It is with these elements that life should be turned into a sacrificial Yajna. Every pure thought should be regarded as a 'Samidh' (holy twig) which is offered in the fire.

Man should offer to the Divine his pure heart

The essential significance of Yajna consists in the spirit of sacrifice. Knowledge or strength or wealth that is not used for the good of others is useless. The object of Yajna is to make man realise that all the powers given to him should be offered to the Divine to elevate one's life. To perform Yajnas and Yagas in the true spirit no special sacrificial altars or priests are necessary. The external Yajna is only a reflection of the internal Yajna. Through the performance of the external Yajnas, by rituals, religious practices and righteous deeds, the Inner-Self is purified. At the time of 'Puurnahuthi' (completion of the Yajna) many sacred and fragrant articles are offered in the sacrificial fire. Precious gems like diamonds, rubies, emeralds etc., are also put into the fire. Even pure silk cloth is offered. The significance of this is that man should offer to the Divine his pure unselfish heart and such noble qualities as Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema (truth, virtue, peace, love),

compassion and kindness for all beings alike.

Cultivate discrimination between right and wrong

The world has any number of wealthy persons, profound scholars and knowledgeable scientists. But if none of them has compassion and kindness, their wealth or knowledge is of no avail. It is only when we resolve to offer all that we have for the promotion of the well-being of the world and the good of society, will we be embarking on real Yajna. Without faith in God and this spirit of sacrifice all actions will only result in evil. Man today has made considerable progress in science. He labours to acquire wealth, scholarship and skills of various kinds. What is the use of acquiring all these if they are not put to right use. The use of these things depends on the character of the persons possessing them. If they are good, these will be put to right use. If they are bad, these will be misused. If wealth, knowledge or scientific skills are possessed by persons with Rajoguna (quality of passionate activity) they will be used for wrongful ends. If persons with Thamoguna (quality of inertia and ignorance) have them, they will be used purely for selfish ends. The persons with Rajoguna may some time or other reform themselves, but those with Thamoguna will use their talents and energies in sinful and anti-social ways.

Man has, therefore, to cultivate primarily the sense of discrimination between right and wrong. The Gayathree Manthra declares, "Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodhayath." It is a prayer to the Gayathree Goddess to illumine the mind. Gandhiji's favourite prayer was Sab Ko Sanmathi Dhe Bhagavan ("O Lord, bestow good sense on everyone"). Because today evil-minded men are active everywhere the world suffers from violence, disorder and confusion. Too many wealthy people nowadays prefer to hoard their wealth rather than utilise it for the good of society and for relieving the distress of the poor. They are behaving like a dog in the manger. It is high time every person who wishes to lead a purposeful and righteous life decides to engage himself in service to society and devotes all his wealth and energies to spreading happiness in the community. Men must realise that there can be no greater source of real bliss than Thyaga (renunciation).

Those who are affluent should help the distressed

Look at the trees, the rivers and the cows. They are supreme examples of self-sacrifice for the sake of others. The trees grow and produce flowers and fruits for the enjoyment of others. A tree gives shade even to one who is felling it. The rivers keep flowing all the time to provide lifegiving water to all living things. The cows offer the milk which is intended for their calves to man. If trees, rivers and cows can exhibit such exemplary qualities of sacrifice, it is deplorable that man, who has inherently noble qualities, should be lacking in the spirit of sacrifice. Bharath had the reputation for centuries of being the land of thyaga, yoga, and karma (sacrifice, divine communion and right action). If today persons born in such a country have no sense of sacrifice it is a matter for shame. The educated persons and those who are affluent should try in every way to help the weak, the distressed and the poor in society. They must go to the relief of the sick and suffering. Those who go abroad to acquire scientific and other knowledge should come back to the mother country and use their knowledge for building up the national economy and serving their countrymen.

Engage in service to people around you

Instead of cultivating the higher human qualities we are developing selfishness and other undesirable traits. Many are engaged in looking at the faults of others and ignoring their own defects. The right attitude is to learn from the good qualities of others and correct one's own faults. If you do not like a person you may keep away from him, but you should not go about decrying him.

When you point your finger at the faults of others you must remember that three fingers are pointing at your own faults.

There are many Sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) and devotees who go to Ashrams (monasteries), cultivate the company of elders and listen to their teachings and who imagine that they have renounced everything. However, if

there is no change in their mental attitude and way of life, of what use is this renunciation? If you cannot shed your envy or likes and dislikes, what is the point in staying in an Ashram? Many Sadhaks are in the habit of moving from house to house and indulging in gossip. Is this the kind of life that should be led in an Ashram? Instead of devoting their time to spiritual and Godly matters, indulging in idle gossip is a gross abuse of one's life in an Ashram. It is more important to put into practice even one or two good things that one learns from a preceptor than listen endlessly to discourses.

Your real wealth is the practice of Virtue

Embodiments of the Divine! On this auspicious Purnahuthi day, offer in the sacrificial fire of your heart, all your defects and bad qualities such as envy, greed, and antipathy and take a resolve to cultivate good qualities. All the wealth about which you boast is valueless. The real wealth is the practice of Virtue. Good character is real knowledge. This knowledge is wealth which will not decline however much you may use it, and no one can filch it away from you. Today this Yajna has come to a close. This should mean that our spirit of sacrifice has achieved fulfilment. Henceforth, develop universal love and dedicate your self to the service of society. Life is constantly ebbing away. To utilise all your resources for the good of others is the way to experience real bliss. Whatever may have been your lapses in the past, begin a new life of dedication and devotion from today. Make the best use of the sacred atmosphere prevailing in the Ashram and engage yourself in spiritual sadhana (practices) and service to the people around you.

On this Poornathuthi day I bless you that you should find fulfilment by becoming integrated personalities, enjoying unalloyed Bliss.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



29. Unity is Divinity

Date: 31 October 1983

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Spirit! The ancient saying, "All roads lead to Rome", has been vindicated today. It is not without great significance that people from many countries have gathered in this historic city. You have to realise that you have come here to learn things which you have never heard before, and to derive inspiration from new ideals about the human adventure. This Conference is not concerned with any one religion, nation, race, caste or individual. It is intended to reveal the essential Truth that underlies all Scriptures and to strive for the peace and welfare of all people through the establishment of Truth and Righteousness. The whole of mankind belongs to one Religion - the Religion of Man. For all men God is the Father. As the children of one God all men are brothers. This Conference is therefore a family gathering. It is not a meeting of nationalities and religions. It is a meeting of minds. It does not relate to any one culture or philosophy. It is concerned with the divine way of life that is implicit in the teachings of all religions. Its purpose is to see Unity in Divinity.

All religions proclaim the Unity of Divinity

The basic truth in all religions, irrespective of country or race, is one and the same. The philosophic ideas or the practices and methods of approach may vary. But the final objective and goal is only one. All religions proclaim the Unity of Divinity and preach the cultivation of Universal Love without regard to caste, creed, country or colour. Those who are ignorant of this basic Truth develop pride and ego because of their own religion. Such people are creating great confusion and chaos by fragmenting Divinity. To confine and divide the Infinite Divine into such narrow compartments is treason to the Divine. The basis for a spiritual, Godbased life is the indwelling Spirit - the Atman (divine soul). The body is the home of Spirit. Life in society should also conform to this spiritual basis. Man, however, bases his life on the belief that the body alone is real. It is to rid him of this error that he has to be taught about Spirit. Mankind has to realise that both the individual and society are manifestations

of the Divine Will and that the Divine permeates the Universe. Only by recognising this Truth can man give up his ego and lead a life of devotion to duty. Society should not become a cockpit of selfish individuals, but a community of divinely guided Individuals. With the progress of science man imagines that he is the lord of the universe and he tends to forget the Divine. Although man today has gone to the moon and is exploring outer space, if he were to consider the innumerable mysteries and wonders in creation yet to be known, he will realise that these are far beyond the limited capacity of mind and intelligence. The more man discovers the secrets and mysteries of the cosmos, the more he will realise that God is the creator and motivator of all creation. All religions are agreed upon this Truth. All that man can do is to strive through his limited intelligence and knowledge to understand the invisible and infinite Divine and learn to worship and adore Him.

Service to Society is the means to promote Unity

Instead of realising his innate Divinity, man is caught up in the prison house of his own material 'achievements. Greater than all his scientific and technological progress is man himself as a being endowed with the divine consciousness. By choosing to regard only the material world as real, it may be possible to bring about the prosperity of a scientific, technological and materialistic society for a time. But if, in the process, human selfishness, greed and hatred develop, as they usually do, society will destroy itself. If, on the contrary, the essential Divinity of man is realised, mankind can build up a great society based on unity and on adherence to the divine principle of Love. This profound change must begin in the minds of individuals. When individuals change, society will change. And when society changes, the whole world will change. Unity is the secret of social progress, and service to society is the means to promote it. Everyone therefore should devote himself to such service in a spirit of dedication. It should be realised that material comfort is not the sole aim of social living. A society in which the individuals are concerned only about material welfare will not be able to achieve harmony and peace. Even if it is achieved, it will only be a patched-up harmony for, in such a society, the strong will oppress the weak. Nor will an equal distribution of the bounties of nature ensure anything but a nominal equality. How will the

equal distribution of material goods achieve equality with reference to desires and abilities? Desires have, therefore, to be controlled by developing the spiritual approach and diverting the mind from material objects to the Divine seated in each one's heart.

Divine experience is inherent nature of man

Once the Truth of the Indwelling Spirit is recognised, there dawns the awareness that the world is one family. One is then filled with Divine Love which becomes the driving force for all of one's actions. Man turns away from the pursuit of endless desires to the search for peace and equanimity. By converting the love for material things into Love of God one experiences the Divine. This experience is not something beyond man. It is, in fact, a part of the inherent nature of man.. It is the secret of his humanness and his Divinity. Whatever one's religion may be, everyone should cultivate respect for other faiths. One who does not have such an attitude of tolerance and respect for other religions is not a true follower of his own religion. It is not enough merely to adhere strictly to the practices of one's own religion. One should also try to see the essential unity of all religions. Only then will man be able to experience the oneness of Divinity. There should be no kind of coercion or compulsion in the sphere of religion. Religious matters should be discussed calmly and dispassionately. Do not entertain the feeling that one's religion is superior and another's inferior. Conflicts on the basis of religion should be totally eliminated. To divide men on grounds of religion is a crime against humanity.

Man today imagines that he knows everything about Nature and the Universe. But of what use is all this knowledge if man does not know himself? It is only when he understands himself that he will be able to know the Truth about the external world. Man's Inner Reality cannot be known by exploring the world outside. When he turns his vision inward and realises his essential Divinity, he will acquire an equal-mindedness towards all beings. Out of that feeling of oneness he will experience the Bliss that passeth understanding. Message to International Symposium in Rome on the theme

God is Omnipresent; He is immanent in every being in equal measure. So, man must visualise Him equally in himself and in others. That is to say, he sees only God in all. So how can he injure others or fear that he will come to harm through others? This is the basis of the Indian ideal of Ahimsa (non-injury).

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30. Perpetual bliss

Date: 23 November 1983 / Occasion: Birthday - 58

Who can ascribe a form to Him who is beyond all bounds and shapes?
One can only laugh at those who babble that He is thus and thus and thus.
He has no hands or feet or limbs or parts: How then can humans picture Him?

His radiance is that of a billion Suns and more: How can the mind hope to reach Him?

'Tis formless Force - to grasp It whole, Who can venture? Who can claim success?

'Tis Atma with no fixed Form, since Time began, Illumining Space and the boundless vast

He, the Ever-existing with no birth, no death,
Sans beginning, middle or end,
Unborn, undecaying, deathless
He is the Atma, the Timeless, the Etenal Supreme.

EMBODIMENTS of Love!

Since dawn this day, from every tongue, the words, "Happy Birthday" "Happy Birthdays" have been resounding. What exactly do these words mean? Are the words used with awareness of their significance, or, are they spoken as a conventional form of social etiquette? Such doubts do arise. The English word "happy" has as its equivalent in Telugu *Santhosham*. We shall probe into the implications of the expression San-thosham. 'Thosham' signifies *prasannatha* (delight). The prefix 'Sam' denotes that the delight has been won through righteous and honourable means, that is to say, through 'detachment' and 'sacrifice.'

When discontent disappears delight is established

One has to give up desires that enslave and imprison, that bring sorrow in their train. Desires can be grouped under two heads: desire for an object or experience that no one else has earned, and desire that the object or experience one has earned should not be earned by any one else! Both these desires are indeed ridiculous. What is desired is as illusory as one's shadow. The faster you run towards it, hoping to seize it, the farther it is from your reach. When you pursue desire, it flees; when you scorn its hold, it submits like the shadow that follows you when you turn your back on it. Desires are born of greed. When greed is weakened more and more, discontent declines in equal measure. And, when discontent disappears delight is established.

Prahladha, as the Bhagavatha text declares, was rooted in the faith in God Narayana and His Universal, Absolute Reality. His father, Hiranyakashipu, however, was drawn by external forms and the limiting names. Therefore, Prahladha was rooted in *Ananda* (Bliss) wherever he was, in whatever set of circumstances. Hiranyakashipu was ever worried and anxious, caught up in the multiplicity of names and forms. Those who are in such bliss as Prahladha had will have an aura around them and an effulgence on their faces. People can derive joy watching their faces and yearn to have that experience again and again. The faces of the worried and the anxious will infect others too with similar feelings.

In deep sleep man is in his native core

Besides, Delight endows one with great power also whereas anxiety robs one of the strength he has. True delight cannot be acquired by effort or produced artificially or maintained by design. No course of *Sadhana* (spiritual effort) can be prescribed to enable one to gain Ananda. For, one is, in fact, the very embodiment of Ananda! But since he has failed to identify his truth, he is seeking it from outside, from the objects around him. For those who have realised that they are the Eternal, the True and the Pure Atma, Ananda is ever accessible. Ananda is Brahman; the Bhagavathgeetha teaches this truth in many ways.

The very name Prahladha has Ananda soaked in it. 'Hladha' means Ananda and the prefix 'Pra' indicates that the Ananda is 'full.' Prahladha means 'Full Bliss' - "a person who is full of Ananda." How could Prahladha attain that state? He gave up attachment to his name and form and sought the Atma as the only reality and identified that reality with Narayana. Every man is privileged to taste this Bliss during *Sushupthi* (deep sleep). In that state, he is not conscious of his name and form, nor do any of his senses function. So, he is then in full Bliss, his native core, his very birthright. This is the reason why he seeks it so restlessly from the moment he awakes until the moment of sleep, unaware of the inner spring which is its unfailing source, engaging himself in the pursuit of knowledge and skills for earning a living. Knowledge, wealth, power and status are all capable of granting only worldly pleasure or joy or exultation. Of course, whatever the extent or nature of this joy, it must be realised that it is a *amsha* (particle) of the supreme Ananda of the Atmic awareness, the impact of *Brahma Ananda* (the Limitless Vast). The mansion of a millionaire may have many evidences of his wealth but each is a particle of the Grace of Lakshmi (Goddess of Prosperity). Men may derive joy from their enormous wealth, deep scholarship, or physical prowess, but each of these is really a ray emanating from Brahmanandha. The ray is reflected differently from different media but the source is One and the primal essence is one.

The yearning to know is the sign of Chith

Ananda (Supreme Bliss) is immanent in every thing in Creation, for Ananda is Brahman (the Universal Absolute). Everything is Sath (Being), Chith (Awareness or Consciousness) and Ananda (Bliss), that is to say, Divine. Everything IS, the IS-ness is the Sath (the being) capable of Becoming.

Next about Chith (awareness): the capacity to be known and to know, to gain awareness and to grant awareness is Chith. When we take with us a child to a fair or market or an exhibition, it asks for answers to endless questions, "What is that?" "Why is it so?", "What is its name?". This yearning to know is the sign of the Chith. In spite of our seeing so many dying around us and hearing about as many more deaths, though we witness the misery and the suffering

of so many, we long for a death-less and sorrow-less life. We spend fortunes to lengthen our lives. That is the urge of the "Sath" in us. The other longing to know is the expression of the "Chith" in us.

The third proof of our innate Divinity is the urge of Ananda in us. Without exception, every one is motivated by this Ananda urge.

Purity of mind is enough to obtain Divine Grace

However, these urges have each two aspects - the impression (internal) and the expression (external). Sath has, for example, the being and the becoming. The process of becoming is what the Gayathri prayer asks for "Awaken my intellect, heighten and expand my awareness (prachodayath)." Becoming is through expanding, manifesting wider and more varied forms. The Upanishads declare, "He is everything that exists both inside and outside."

Antharbahishcha thath sarvam vyapya Narayano sthithah
(Narayana permeates everything inside and outside all this).

He cast His look and it all happened. The Become is a reflection of the Will that urged the Being; so, the Being IS the Becoming. It changes from Is to Was; it is unstable, while Being is stable. Being is the screen and Becoming, the pictures that flit across the screen. When there are no pictures, who will be drawn to the screen? How can pictures be seen, when there is no screen? The fleeting and the fixed are inextricably dependent on each other.

The objective world is but a series of momentary pictures impinging on the mind. The mind is active in the walking stage of the body. The body is built up by *Anna* (food), maintained by Anna and disintegrates through Anna. The body has five sheaths, the outermost one, the *Annamaya Kosha* (food sheath). It is known also as the *sthoola* (gross body). The next three sheaths, the *Pranamaya* (vital air), the *Manomaya* (mind), and the *Vijnana* (intellectual)

form the *suukshma* (subtle) body. The subtle body is active in the dream stage also. The fifth and the inner-most sheath is the *Anandamaya* (Ecstatic, the Blissful), the *Karana* (causal body).

The expression of the urge of Ananda is as Love and Delight. Delight is the product and projection of Love. The expression of Chith is awareness. The expression of Sath is Becoming. Divinity is the Unity that manifests in Diversity, the One as the Many. The One is the efficient cause as well as the material cause of the Many. The One is inherent in the Many and shines in the Many which It has become. The ONE is the source of the highest and the most lasting Ananda.

Brahmanandha is native to Man, his very source

The Ananda we get when hunger is appeased by a meal is short-lived. Hunger afflicts us again before long. However sweet and tasty the food may be, it causes nausea when consumed in quantity. The mythological bird Chakora is said to feed on moonlight only but we can be sure a surfeit of that will certainly be unwelcome to it. Even nectar will cloy when one continues to eat it endlessly.

Brahmananda, however, is different. For, it is native to man, his very source and sustenance. The purpose of human striving, through stage after stage of spiritual progress, is to attain that. A fish placed in an artistic golden gem-studded bowl is miserable. It has no Ananda, for it has no water. Water is its home, its real source and sustenance.

Man too must reach his original home, however far he may wander. Thyagaraja sang: "Birds, big and small, before nightfall seek the tree where they can rest. I hold Your Feet In my grasp; save me, O Rama." The Bhagavatha makes it more explicit, "For every living being, the best course is to attain the source from which it originated."

Be reminding yourself: "I am not different from God"

There exist many flooded streams on the globe. Where has the water come from? The ocean, of course. Consider the impediments the streams have to overcome before they attain the source! The flooded stream of human life has originated from Brahmananda and it has to attain the source from which it has come away. In order to succeed, man must recollect the ecstasy of Brahmananda every moment, in every activity. Thyagaraja revelled in the Ananda that poetry, music and scholarship can confer but since the Ananda that learning can confer (Vidhyanandha) was liable to weaken, he considered it only as a particle or foretaste of the Brahmananda he sought most the Ananda derivable from the Universal Eternal Delight, the Nirguna Ananda Brahman, That Ananda is man's reality, for, man is God.

God is neither distant, nor distinct from you. You are God. You are Sath-Chith-Ananda (Being, Awareness and Bliss Absolute). You are *Asthi* (being), *Bhathi* (awareness), *Priyam* (bliss). You are all. When do you cognise this Truth? When you shake off the delusions which hide the Truth.

If your yearning to experience Brahmanandha, the Sath-Chith-Ananda is sincere and pure, from this day, keep ever in your memory what I am about to tell you:

(1) "I am God; I am not different from God." Be conscious of this always. Keep it ever in mind. "I am God; I am God. I am not different from God." Be reminding yourself of this. Pray that you may not fail in this *sadhana* (spiritual exercise).

(2) "I am the *Akhanda Para Brahman* (Indivisible Supreme Absolute)." This is the second Truth to be established in the consciousness by unremitting repetition and prayer.

(3) I am *Sath-Chith-Ananda* ("Being, Awareness, Bliss").

Divine Bliss is the goal to be ever kept in view

(4) "Grief and anxiety can never affect me." Develop this Faith and convince

yourselves of this Truth by repeated assurance and prayer.

(5) "I am ever content; fear can never enter me."

Feel thus for ever. Pray that this conviction grows stronger and stronger. Exhort yourself, "O self ! Utter 'Om Thath Sath', 'Om Thath Sath'", the threefold symbol of Brahman. As the physical body is maintained healthy and strong by the five *pranas* (vital airs), these five prayers will endow you with the "awareness of Brahman," which is the same as "the status of Brahman Itself."

Do not demean or condemn yourself as low or small or weak. The body is but a vehicle for the journey through life. Do not mistake it as your self and impose on yourself its ups and downs. You purchase a car and possess it for the sake of its usefulness, not for keeping it under lock and key in the garage. The body-car should be put to the best use, for attaining Brahmananda.

The four goals of human life - *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, *Moksha* (right living, right earning, right desiring, and release from worldly bondage) are the wheels of the vehicle; the wheel inside that steers these four is the mind.

The *Buddhi* (intellect) is the switch. The air which fills the tubes in the tyres is Faith and the destination is Ananda.

Ananda is the breath that sustains life. That is the goal which has to be ever in view, while navigating the ocean of one's life. Even the least trace of Ananda that one derives is but a reflection of Brahmananda. One has to keep this in mind. Anything done or said or seen, is but the prompting of the Brahman that is one's reality. Have faith in this fact. In order to develop and deepen this faith, certain spiritual practices can be undertaken. Do not feel separate from God and consider Him as the Giver and yourself as the Recipient. This smacks of commerce. It is wrong to plan for getting some wish granted in return for what you offer. God will not pay any attention to your material greed; He watches the heart and its contents. Believers in God have not understood God if they bargain with Him and clamour for worldly goods.

Hence, from ages past, they have suffered misery. **The Divine seeks and rewards only Divine qualities, virtues and conduct.**

The highest virtue is humility, surrender to God

The body is transient and the joy it seeks and gets is equally transient. The Ananda one gets through meditation on the Atma is as lasting as the Atma. When Godhead assumes a body, It too is unaffected as the Atma. Nothing can confer as much Ananda as virtue, neither wealth, nor material power, nor fame, nor scholarship. The highest virtue is humility, surrender to God. People speak of those who have no one to look after them as 'orphans' but God looks after every one. So, no one can be an orphan. God alone is the *anatha* (orphan), for who can claim that he is God's guardian?

Dedicate thought, word and deed to God. Do not treat some of your activities as done for God and others as done for yourself. They are both like the two halves of a pulse grain. The plant sprouts from the middle of the grain, drawing sustenance equally from both halves. The alert and the inert, the living and the non-living, the moving and the non-moving are all God. Strengthen this faith, live in this faith. This is the prescription for perpetual Brahmananda.

The mother must herself prepare food for the home; for, food that is prepared with love and served with a smile is much more sustaining and strengthening than food cooked by a hired woman and served by a disgruntled refractory kitchen boy!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

31. Be exemplars of Sai ideals

Date: 30 December 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

YOU, children of the Eternal! You are not lumps of flesh. You are embodiments of the Eternal. You are repositories of Bliss. Your hearts are shrines of the Divine. The whole of Nature is your playground; all the things in it are your play-things. Regard yourselves as masters of the Universe and not its bond-slaves. As long as you are bound to your desires, you cannot escape being subject to the material world. With all his prowess, Ravana could not save himself from disaster because he was a slave to his passions. Once you surrender to the Divine, nature becomes your servant.

The boys and girls of today should realise this basic truth. They represent the future of humanity. They are the guardians of the nation's culture. The greatness and prosperity of the country depend on them. The nation's future will be determined by how the lives of the young children are shaped. Today the world is plunged in chaos, violence and wickedness. It is for the young people to see that these demonic forces are routed. For accomplishing any objective two things are needed: Krishi (individual effort) and Kripa (Divine Grace). The two are like the negative and positive poles of a magnet. If there is only Divine Grace, but no proper effort on the part of the individual, the object cannot be achieved. Divine Grace is always there. We need not go far to seek it. The efforts made to secure it are called sadhana (spiritual effort).

Children should learn to admit their mistakes

Every person should possess four important qualities: Shanthi (peace), Sathya (Truth), Nirahankara (absence of egoism) and absence of Asuuya (envy). These four are essential. Suffusing all the four is Prema (love). These qualities are not got through studies or from a teacher or as a gift from someone. They can be acquired only by one's own effort. These noble qualities have to be developed from childhood itself. Only then will they stand in good stead in later years.

The first quality is Sathyam. "Sathyameva Jayathe", says the Upanishath. (Truth alone triumphs). What is this Truth? It is adherence to what is true in thought, word and deed. Often many untoward situations arise which render such adherence difficult. Children, for instance, out of fear of punishment or scolding by parents or teachers indulge in prevarication or falsehood and avoid admitting the truth. This tendency results in due course in vitiating their entire life by making them lead double lives. Having regard, therefore, to their future, they should learn from their boyhood to admit their mistakes and speak the truth. There is nothing wrong if they are punished by their parents or teachers for their misdeeds. Through such corrective measures, they will learn to behave properly in their later years. If from the beginning you learn to speak the truth, you will find it easy.

But once you take to lying, to return to the ways of truth is very difficult. Hence, when you are still young and your minds and hearts are pure and untainted, you must cultivate the habit of sticking to truth. By speaking the truth always, your minds will be filled with good thoughts. You should not give up truth, whatever difficulties you may encounter, whatever troubles or trials may come your way. This is the lesson to be learnt from the inspiring story of Harishchandra, who won undying fame because of his preparedness to sacrifice everything for upholding truth. Material prosperity or positions of authority may come and go. But the reputation for truth and integrity will last for ever. If you install truth and righteousness in your hearts, your lives will become eminently meaningful and worthy.

Cultivate freedom from envy

Next to truth, you must cultivate forbearance. Forbearance endows you with the strength to face "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." A man without forbearance easily succumbs to reverses and difficulties.

Together with truth and forbearance, you have to cultivate freedom from asuuya. Envy is like the pest that attacks the root of a tree. It can destroy one's entire life. We may be enjoying many things in life - Knowledge, wealth, position, power and the like. But if the virus of envy enters our minds, it can

pollute every thing. We should not give place to envy even in the smallest matter. If a fellow-student scores more marks than you, you should not feel envious. If others do better than yourself, you should feel happy rather than allow yourself to be consumed by envy. If some one is better dressed than yourself or is more wealthy, you should feel that he is enjoying what he has and you should be content and happy with what you have. To be free from envy is a divine quality. It makes you feel happy over others' happiness or success.

Learn to make sacrifices for those in need

And, then, there is Discipline. Without discipline, your life will be beset with pitfalls. Children of Sathya Sai Educational Institutions must set an example in discipline. In big gatherings, they should observe silence and order and restrain their enthusiasm. If children who have gone through the Bal Vikas course indulge in chatter and frequent clapping of hands, they bring discredit to the movement. Whatever the situation, you should observe strict discipline and obey the orders of your teachers or elders. You should also learn to make sacrifices for the sake of others in need. Sacrifice means going to the help of others to the extent of your capacity. If you are not in a position to help others, you must at least refrain from doing any harm. Even that is a form of sacrifice (giving up the tendency to do harm to others.) Those in power today are engaged in many activities which inflict burdens on the people and create hardships for them. But they are doing precious little to provide facilities for the improvement of children. Even the so-called developed countries are wasting crores of rupees on all kinds of projects, but they do not pay enough attention to the health and welfare of the younger generation. They try to exploit the young in one way or another for their own selfish purposes, but have no concern for the long-term future of these children. What the big powers spend on armaments for six days will be enough to keep in comfort lakhs of children in a whole year.

Remember that children have tender hearts

It is highly important to take care of the health of children. Good health is the

basis of everything else in life. The condition of the children in the backward countries is pitiable. Most of them lack nourishing food, proper clothes and roofs over their heads. They are undernourished and weak and suffer from many ailments. Every day 40,000 children are dying on account of malnutrition in the third world countries. I wish the affluent people did something to help these hapless children. They should not be satisfied with their own prosperity and welfare. They have a duty towards those less fortunately placed than themselves. They should go to the help of the poor and the weak not in a spirit of condescension or of extending patronage. They must offer help out of genuine sympathy and fellow-feeling. They must regard such sympathy as one of the primary aims of meaningful living.

Dear teachers! When you teach the children, you must remember that you are engaged in a noble task for the sake of the children entrusted to your care. You must feel that you are educating yourselves when you are educating the children. For instance, when you impart some knowledge to the children, your own understanding of the subject improves. Even when you study books for teaching the children, you also derive joy from the study. Hence you must always have the feeling that whatever you do for others is in reality a service done to the Divine that resides in every one. When teachers do their duty in this spirit, they will be imbuing the children with the spirit of Universal love. Remember that the children have tender hearts and innocent minds. Only if you fill their hearts with love will the world have genuine peace.

Prasanthi Nilayam is children's native home

You have brought these children from distant places, away from their parents, out of your devotion to Bhagavan. This testifies to your devotion. The children have put up with many difficulties and discomforts out of their devotion to Bhagavan. They have all come to Prasanthi Nilayam, out of their love for Bhagavan. Prasanthi Nilayam is their native home. Here they can experience a bliss they can find nowhere else. Bhagavan is more than a mother for all of them. I want you all to go back with joy and with the feeling that you have spent a blissful period in your mother's home. All the expenses of your stay will be borne by the Sai Trust. You may use the money you have brought for

the Bal Vikas activities. I bless everyone who has contributed to the success of this great conference the Sai Organisers, the Seva Dhal volunteers, the teachers and students, with long life and all health and happiness. Discourse for Bal Vikas and Pre-Seva Dal Students, and teachers at Purnachandra Auditorium

32. Devotion and Divine Grace

Date: 31 December 1983 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: New Year

EVERY second is a new moment in your life. Do not wait for a whole year to celebrate the new year and make new year resolutions. Utilise every second to purify your heart and fill it with love. You will then realise that God is yours and you are with love. True devotion is the means to realise the Divine. Devotion means love of God without any desire for reward. Such devotion can be developed only through good conduct. There can be no devotion without righteousness. Purity of mind is an essential for enjoying Divine Bliss as purity of body is essential for bodily health. Higher than all the knowledge that can be acquired in the world is the Atmajnana (knowledge of the Self). There is nothing equal to the bliss that comes from Self-realisation. It is attained only when the ego-sense is destroyed and there is prayerful submission to the Divine. Prayers must issue not from the lips but from the heart. Prayers from the lips are like a telephone number call. They will not reach the person you want. Prayers from the heart are like a "particular person call." They will go straight to God. Prayers, again, are used for seeking fulfilment of material desires. Out of the millions who offer prayers, very few seek God Himself with pure hearts. The happiness derived from material benefits is lost when these are lost. Life is a constant succession of happiness and sorrow. To be free from these opposites one has to cultivate detachment. This detachment is Vairagya.

Relationship between nature, man and God

In a life filled with desires, the pleasures one seeks are inevitably followed by grief and disappointments. All unrighteous actions lead to sorrow. It was for this reason that Buddha emphasised the need for discrimination. The, first prayer, "Buddham Sharanam Gachchami" is a call for cultivating wisdom and discrimination, the Buddhi (intellect). But unless the power of discrimination is Used for doing fight action for the good of society it is of no use. Hence the second prayer, "Sangham Sharanam Gachchami" (I surrender myself to society). What is this right action that must be done? That is indicated by the

third prayer: "Dharmam Sharanam Gachchami" (I take refuge in Dharma). To reach your goal, **the royal road** is Dharma (righteousness). It is only when these three are combined - Wisdom, social service and righteousness that there is fulfilment in life. Everyone should realise the integral relationship between Nature, Man and God. They are inextricably interrelated. Take a simple example. Here is a tumbler. It contains water. It is on the table. The tumbler has been placed for the sake of the water. If one does not need water, there will be no need for the tumbler. If there is no table, the tumbler cannot be placed on it. You may ask the questions: Is the table important, or the tumbler, or the water in it? Water is important. The water needs the tumbler as a container. Nature is like the table. The Jeevi (individual) is the tumbler. The Divine exists in the form of Nara (water). There is no use for the tumbler unless there is water.

"Nara" is the water that cools the heat generated by the agitations arising from the body, the mind and the life-spirit (the Adhibhouthika, Adhyathmika Adhidhai-vatha factors). This Nara (human) is Narayana - the Supreme Universal Consciousness. Narayana is present in every, one. If man did not have the cooling power of the Divine, he would not be able to bear the heat generated by the body, the mind and the vital air.

How far is the Divine?

Where is Divine? The shastras (revealed ancient scriptures) say the Divine is twenty feet away from the Brahmachari (the bachelor). The reason is a youth suffering from the fever of adolescence cannot perceive the Divine. He relies on his mental abilities and the ; power of his muscles and heart. He has no faith in the power of Dharma or God. Hence, one who is remote from Dharma is also distant from God. For a Sanyasi (the ascetic), God is said to be three feet away. Wearing the yellow robe and having a shaven head cannot make a man a genuine ascetic. He must have renounced all bodily attachments and all material desires. Although he may have renounced many things, because the sanyasi (renunciant) has still some delusions regarding the body, God is said to be three feet away from him.

Only in the case of the Grihastha (householder) is God said to be residing in his heart. But even if God dwells in his heart, till the Grihastha sheds vices like greed, hatred and envy, the Divine will not be visible to him. Attachment and ego will make him blindfolded. To secure the grace of the Divine, it is not necessary to seek knowledge, wealth, power or position. Purity of mind alone is enough. Every cell of one's body will be filled with the Divine when God is worshipped with pure and single-minded devotion. To the self-sacrificing devotee, the Divine will be Omnipresent.

Devotion has been reduced to a pompous show

The Lord is ever ready to answer the prayers of the devotees. But what passes for "devotion" nowadays is only "deep ocean" (submergence in the ocean of worldly life). People talk about the "Divine," but are interested only in "deep wine." They talk of "compassion," but are concerned only with "fashion." They mouth the word "Co-operation," but indulge only in "operation." Devotion has been reduced to a pompous show. True knowledge can come only when one is confronted with an extreme moral crisis. This was the situation Arjuna faced when he was placed between the two opposing armies. Pareekshith faced a similar crisis when he learnt he had only one week to live. It is at times of such crisis that one thinks of God and seeks Divine help.