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1. World needs spiritual transformation

Date: 14 January 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi

THE four Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha) are regarded in common parlance as the purposes of human life. They are given a worldly meaning. But their real meaning is spiritual. The foremost purpose of the four Purusharthas is to make man realise that his primary duty is to divinise himself (to transform himself from Man to Madhava). The word Purusha does not signify the masculine gender as is commonly assumed. It refers to the Atma, the Supreme Consciousness, which has no gender and which is immanent in all beings. Of the two terms Purusha and Prakriti, the latter represents the gross element in Nature. It refers also to the body. Purusha is the Consciousness, the Indweller in the body. The two are interdependent. The sastras have declared that the body is jada (gross) and the Atma is chaitanya (consciousness) and that the body is feminine. Every being can be considered as made up of both elements and therefore everyone irrespective of sex, is entitled to pursue the Purusharthas.

The true meaning of Purusharthas

Of the four Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, the first one, Dharma, is regarded in common usage as referring to actions like charity, the duties of one's ashrama (stage in life), going on pilgrimages and such other good deeds. But these relate only to external actions. The true Dharma of every human being is to make every endeavour to realise the Divine. The process by which this consummation can be reached constitutes Dharma. The observance of the duties relating to different ashramas (Brahmacharya , Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa) is incidental to the particular stage in life. The duties do not constitute Dharma proper. Dharma should lead to Self-realisation. Similarly, Artha does not mean, as commonly understood, the accumulation of property and wealth. They may well become anartha (calamitous). They are not lasting. The acquisition of such wealth cannot be considered as Purushartha. The real wealth that the man should acquire is the wisdom that is related to the Divine. The word Kama is generally associated

with worldly desires and sensual pleasures. But, when it is considered as the Purushartha - as one of the purposes of life - it relates to the yearning for God and not to mundane desires. The term Moksha is generally understood as referring to the means by which one reaches God or Heaven. But one can be in Heaven only for the period earned by one's meritorious deeds and at the end will have to be reborn again. But Moksha in the true sense refers to a state in which nothing is lacking and there is no incoming or going out. It is a state without name or form. It is not a specific place to go to. It is the attainment of unity with the Divine.

For every human being, the first task, among the four Purusharthas, must be to determine what is permanent and what is transient and seek the Eternal Madhava. The second objective is the acquisition of the Divine Wisdom as the real wealth. The third is to develop faith in God and yearn for realisation of merger in God. The fourth is Moksha, the state of Self-realisation in which there is no change and there is no movement.

Herald of big change

We celebrate this day as the holy day of Sankaranthi. Nature wears the garb of Supreme Peace. The day is pleasantly cool. This is the last day of Sun's southern journey and the first day of his northward course. It is the last day of Dhanurmasa (the month named after the constellation Dhanus or Centaur). It is the beginning of Makaramasa (when the Sun enters the constellation Capricorn).

We bid farewell to Dhanurmasa and welcome the Makkala. The day of Sankaranthi has a special significance. Sankaranthi means San (coming together; Kranthi (a big change). Kranthi also means knowledge of the past, present and future. That is why Kavi (a poet is described as Kranthi-darshi (one who knows, the past, the present and the future). The term cannot be applied to one who dabbles in mere words and rhymes. It can only apply to God, who presides over time, space and causation.

The entry of the Sun into Makararasi (Capricorn) heralds the beginning of a

great change from this day. It marks the entry into a Divine phase. It signifies the attempt to turn man's mind towards God. It is a day when we pray to the Sun, who is presiding deity for the eyes, to direct our vision to the pure and the holy, the sacred and the Divine.

Spiritual transformation will bring peace

The Makara month is holier than all the other months. All auspicious ceremonies and activities are embarked upon only from this month. For the performance of the Upanayanam {sacred thread-wearing ceremony) people wait for the Uttarayana. In this period Nature is vibrant with joy. The harvest is brought home and the farmers enjoy the fruits of their labours. Young girls decorate the fronts of their houses with flour designs and pumpkin blossoms. They celebrate the season with group dances. Newly-wed bridegrooms are sent to the houses of their brides for celebrating the festive season. Cattle are given a new look and taken round for display of many tricks. Man should recognise the change in season and reform himself to discharge his duties appropriately.

The real meaning of Purusharthas is to make use of the time and the circumstances as they arise for making one's life meaningful and sublime. We have to effect a remarkable spiritual transformation in the world today. Only then the observance of Makara Sankaranthi has a meaning. External changes with no change in one's outlook and attitude will not signify Kranthi (radical change). When we bring about a great spiritual transformation, then there will be real peace.

Discourse in the Purnachandra Auditorium on

The only way of hope in the enveloping gloom of fear violence and cruelty, of enforced conformity, of hatred and persecution, is the Peace that one can win through self-control and Sadhana. That peace will pervade and purify the inner consciousness as well as the outer atmosphere. Sadhana is the life-

breath of man; struggling for power and pomp is but the breath of poison. Poor silly man craves for the air that will destroy him, the food that will torment him and the drink that will defile him!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. Seva is the highest Sadhana

Date: **January 1985** / Location: **Chennai**

HUMAN beings have forgotten their true nature and are behaving like demonic creatures. Though they call themselves as human beings, they do not know the essence of human qualities. Today's educational system emphasises textbook knowledge and ignores morality and character. Seventy percent of the world's population consists of 'youth,' who are the potential leaders of tomorrow. Unless they are properly trained to take up their role in the future, the society, the nation and the world will not progress in peace.

In order to train the younger generation in the proper way, the Sai Organisation has prescribed the five guiding principles of their movement - Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence. We should understand first, the real import and significance of these five principles. *Sathya* (Truth) is not just relating events exactly as seen, heard or experienced. It is the eternal Truth which is beyond time and space, which does not ever change. If Love forms part of your nature, Sathya will be there.

Love is the common denominator

When your thoughts emanate from a mind purified by love, they will result in Right Action, which is *Dharma*. When Love becomes part of your experience, thought and action you get *Shanthi* (Peace). When we comprehend Love clearly, *Ahimsa* or non-violence will result automatically. So Love is the unseen undercurrent binding all the four values. It can be summarised thus:

Love plus thoughts is Sathya,
Love plus feelings is Shanthi,
Love plus action is Dharma, and
Love plus understanding is Ahimsa.

Love is the common denominator for all these values. It is the form of God, for God is love. One who gives Love is a man and one who fails to nourish this love is a beast. Love, or absence of Love makes one an animal, man or God. The nurturing of Love is possible only in a tender heart. Because of attachment to worldly objects, that tenderness is lost. When the mind is directed towards the sensual world, life becomes artificial. When you go to your office, you greet people artificially. The *namaskaram* is done with *ahamkaram*. Respect is given artificially for the position and does not emanate from the heart. That which emanates from the heart is Truth. When you see a person doing service to others with Love, you have to respect him. It is not the formal action that counts. Only the good heart behind the action is entitled to respect and regard. So we should develop a tender heart filled with love rather than act mechanically. If there is no love in the heart, there is no use in doing anything whatsoever.

The role of teacher

The teacher is like a water storage tank. If there is clean and good water in the tank, you will get good water in the taps. Students are like the taps and will prove to be good only when the teachers are good. Teachers should have lofty ideals so that these can be reflected in their students, who are the future citizens and leaders. Teachers should first practise themselves what they want to teach to the students. They should have a feeling of *Thyaga* (sacrifice) for the sake of the well-being of the nation so that the students will have a similar ideal. Before they try to correct the students, they should first correct themselves. Human values are not commodities sold in the market. They should be reflected in one's behaviour and one's way of life. They should be taught not as academic subjects but as the basis on which right living should be built up. The teacher should do *Sadhana* to ensure control of senses and achieve harmony in thought, word and deed. When you achieve this harmony, you will become an ideal teacher.

- Address to the Bal Vikas teachers from Tamil Nadu at Abbotsbury, Madras, 20-1- 85.

Seek God in the temple of your heart

The temples play a vital role in awakening the spiritual impulse in man and directing him towards the realisation of his inherent divinity. The real temple for man is his heart, and forgetting this fact, man goes after temples outside. Temples are erected to remind men about God, but the Divine dwells in the heart and should be sought there. Men go through any amount of difficulties, hardships, trials and tribulations in life, but few try to understand their essential Divinity, which should be the primary aim of life. Men devote considerable care and attention to the preservation of the body which is perishable. But they do not cultivate good thoughts and do good deeds through which they can attain enduring bliss. Temples serve to provide the company of the good and the godly and should be used for cultivating such company and acquiring mental peace. It is not enough merely to go to temples as a mechanical ritual. You must cultivate good thoughts in tune with the sacred atmosphere of the temple. Even in uttering the names of the Lord, the words should come from the depths of the heart and not merely from the lips. Acquiring the name of the Lord is like getting a precious pearl from the deep ocean. Having got it, you should not let it go out of your hands.

Faith in the Lord must be strengthened by the repetition of the name. Faith is the foundation of all activity. Spiritual effort is needed to develop faith in God, just as curdling and churning are necessary to obtain butter from milk. The fire in the matchstick will be seen only when it is struck. Likewise God can be realised only through spiritual effort. The residents of this colony should live in harmony, cultivate a fraternal spirit and cooperate with each other for their material and spiritual betterment.

(The residents of Thirumangala expressed their unanimous desire to rename the colony as Sathya Sai Nagar in commemoration of Bhagavan's visit and the varied services rendered by the Sai Sevaks).

- Discourse at the consecration ceremony of the idol Thiruveedhi Amman at Thirumangala Colony, on the outskirts of Anna Nagar, Madras, 21-1- 85.

Serve Daridra-Narayana

God has two forms - Lakshmi-Narayana and Daridra-Narayana. Most people prefer to worship Lakshmi-Narayana for ensuring their personal prosperity and welfare, but few chose to worship Daridra-Narayana (the Lord in the form of the poor and the forlorn). Members of the Sai Organisations should think only of service to Daridra-Narayana. If the hungry are fed, they are easily satisfied. Service to Daridra-Narayana can never go waste. It is the highest form of sadhana. Man is the product of the society and service to society is real service to God. Such service should be rendered without regard to caste, creed, race or nationality. The essence of all religions is one and the same, like the current that serves many different purposes but is the same energy.

In serving society, they should bear in mind the four ideals of Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi and Prema.

Service is like a bulb, which cannot shed light unless there is a wire to convey the current.

Sathya is the current. Dharma is the wire through which the current flows.

When the wire of Dharma is connected to the bulb of Shanthi, then you have the light of Love.

One may encounter difficulties in rendering service. But one should not be overwhelmed by them. The Pandavas have become immortal because of the sufferings they underwent for the sake of Dharma. Jesus sacrificed his life for the sake of those whom he came to serve. Prophet Mohammed had to face similar troubles in his mission. Do not aspire for comfort. Greater than all other forms of worship is *Seva* (service to one's fellow-men) done in an unselfish and dedicated spirit. There is an element of selfishness in forms of worship like Japa Dhyana etc. But when service is done spontaneously, it is its own reward. It must be done as an offering to God.

- Address delivered to Active Sai Workers of 300 adopted villages of Tamil Nadu, at the Prayer Sundaram, Madras, 22-1-85.

True Seva

Seva is a small word but is filled with immense spiritual significance. Hanuman is the supreme exemplar of the ideal of service. When the Rakshasas asked Hanuman, during his search for Sita in Lanka, who he was, he replied simply: "Dasoham Kosalen-drasya." He was content to describe himself as the humble servant of Rama. Seva must be viewed as the highest form of sadhana. Serving the poor in the villages is the best form of sadhana. In the various forms of worship of the Divine, culminating in *Atma-nivedanam* (complete surrender to the Divine), Seva comes before Atmanivedanam. God's grace will come when Seva is done without expectation of reward or recognition. Sometimes *Ahamkaram* (ego) and *Abhirnanam* (attachment) rear their heads during Seva. These should be eliminated altogether. In speech what matters is the inner feeling. The purpose of speech should be to promote heart-to-heart understanding. Develop the love of God in your hearts. The heart is like a musical chair in which there is room for only one. Give in your heart place only for God.

- Address delivered to Seva Dal workers at the workshop on Health and Hygiene at Abbotsbury, Madras in '85.

See God in everyone you meet; see God in every thing you handle. His Mystery is immanent in all that is material and non-material; as a matter of fact, it has been discovered that there is no matter or material. It is all God, an expression of His Mystery! Derive joy from the springs of joy within you and without you; advance, do not stand still or recede. Every minute must mark a forward step.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



3. Thyaga and Bhoga

Date: 21 January 1985 / Location: Chennai

MAN should not behave like animals which pursue a mirage in the hope of quenching their thirst. Man's primary duty is to realise his divinity. The delusion that he is the body is the cause of his bondage. Atmajnana (Self-realisation) destroys that delusion. As a seed finds fulfilment by growing from a sapling into a tree blossoming with flowers and fruits, man should find fulfilment by achieving fullness and ripeness as a human being. God is the seed for creation. The cosmos is the tree. Humanity represents the fruits in that tree. In each of these human fruits, there is a seed. That seed is the Atma That Atma is the Primal Cause. It is Divine. In each individual the divine seed of Atma is shining with effulgence. This profound truth is not being realised by every person. Man is an amalgam of body, mind and Atma. Without the existence of all three man cannot accomplish anything. Both the body and mind are associated with the Atma, without which neither of them can function.

Reconcile sacrifice with desire for comforts

To comprehend the unity of body, mind and Atma is to realise a fundamental truth. The body is gross. The Atma is subtle. It is the mind that links the two. If the Atma is ignored, man is reduced to the level of the animal. When the body and the Atma are ignored and the mind alone is active, the humanness comes to the fore. When the body and the mind are kept out and the Atma alone is experienced, Divinity is attained. How is this to be achieved? An essential requisite is Thyaga, the spirit of sacrifice. How is sacrifice to be reconciled with man's incessant activity and his desire for comforts and conveniences? The gulf between Thyaga (sacrifice) on the one side and Bhoga (enjoyment of material comforts) on the other, seems to be unbridgeable. The Vedanta has resolved the conflict between the two by pointing out that material objects can be enjoyed with a sense of detachment and a spirit of renunciation.

If the ego is eliminated in the performance of actions and attachment is renounced in the use of material objects, there will be no difference between Thyaga (renunciation) and Bhoga (enjoyment). Pleasures which are experienced with a sense of detachment cease to be bhogas and become a form of Yoga. After enjoying all the pleasures and comforts we seek, what is it that remains? The body decomposes into five elements. What is basic is the Atma principle that sustains the body and **all** the senses. When the Atma leaves the body, neither the sense organs nor the mind can function. The Atma is eternal and omni-present. It is self-existent. The spiritual quest is to understand and realise the nature of the Atma. This is Brahmajnana (knowledge of the Brahman). Every individual should regard the enquiry into nature of the Atma as the primary purpose of life. Purity of thought, word and deed is essential for this enquiry.

Rejoice that it is given to you to recognise God in all and welcome all chances to sing His glory, to hear His chronicle, to share His presence with others. God has His hand in all handiworks; His feet on all attitudes; His eyes beyond all horizons and His face before every face.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4. From Creation to Creator

Date: 26 January 1985 / Location: Mumbai

ALTHOUGH science and technology have made rapid strides, man has not acquired the divine qualities. Technology is the child of science. But very much anterior to science is the Veda. Science seeks to know all about creation, but the Veda reveals the knowledge about the Creator. All the natural sciences are concerned with knowledge about created things. But there is a Creator who is the source of all of them. In the quest for understanding the objects in creation, man is forgetting the Creator. By forgetting the Creator, man is failing to develop the quality of love. Why? Because God is Love and Love is God. When we forget Love, we forget God. When God is forgotten how can Love grow? Science has been enormously helpful and has achieved many wonders. But, simultaneously, it has done incalculable harm. Science as such is not to be blamed for this. It is the wrongful use of science that is responsible. Science discovered for man the secrets of nature and the cosmos. But what is the benefit we derive from knowing these secrets? Knowledge is one thing; its proper utilisation is a different thing. Of what avail is it to know the power of the atom if we have not learnt how to put it to good and beneficial use? The knowledge derived from science should be used for sacred and righteous purposes.

Man has lost respect for life

We need today a science that can promote love. Instead of Spirit of Love, we are witnessing today a "splitting of Love." The Spirit of Love is being broken up and destroyed. Thereby love is receding to the background. Imagine what should be the state of man in an age in which science and civilization have advanced to such a degree far beyond anything conceivable in an earlier era. Yet, in the so-called dark ages of man, without much knowledge, man led a purer and nobler life. Man today indulges in greater cruelty than wild animals. It would be an abuse of language to regard as human beings people who indulge in large scale killing of each other. Man has lost respect for life. Where, then, is our boasted progress? Man has explored the secrets of Nature

and has even acquired control over the five elements. But he is not aware of his own true nature. Long time ago, in an earlier epoch, the young lad Prahlada told his father, "In a brief period you have been able to conquer all the worlds; but you have failed to master your senses and your mind." Likewise, today we are acquiring mastery over the external universe, but are unable to control our senses. It is only when we use science for control of the senses will we be able to bring Science and Spirituality together and integrate the two. Today love seems to be absent even between parents and children, between husband and wife. Science must seek to discover means of promoting love and turning mankind away from the path of self-interest.

Science should be linked to spirituality

There is an internal relationship between Nature and Divinity. The ocean, the moon and man are interrelated. The ocean swells on Full Moon day. What is the connection between the ocean and the moon? The mind and the moon are inter-related. Without our being conscious of it, our minds are affected during Full Moon days. Mental afflictions are aggravated during those days. The scientist should develop an integral approach towards Nature, Man and Spirit. Only then can he realise the underlying divinity that unites the man and the cosmos. Men today act upon what is stated in an almanac. But when the Vedas declare "Thath Thwam Asi" ("Th at Thou Art") they are not prepared to believe in it. Men who are prepared to believe in some tale in a newspaper or a novel, will not believe in the Vedic pronouncement of their inherent dignity.

Many scientific inventions are extremely useful to man. But if they are not properly used they can cause great harm.

For instance, television can be valuable means of educating and entertaining people. But how is it being used today? As soon as a boy returns from school, he throws away his books and starts looking at the TV. His mother serves him food near the TV set. Both mother and son keep watching TV without regard to their other duties. Several hours of precious time is wasted in watching TV. The fault lies not with the television, but with the excessive and wrongful use

of the instrument. It is like a knife which can be used for slicing vegetables or stabbing a person. It is only when science is linked to spirituality that the results of science can be fully harnessed for the good and elevation of mankind.

People who have a wavering mind cannot be true yogis, even though they may pass off as good devotees in external appearances.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5. Practise what you learn

Date: 30 January 1985 / Location: Mumbai

A STUDY circle does not mean only just reading and discussing and taking information into the head, but also putting into practice what is learnt. If knowledge is stored in the mind, it causes confusion and confusion leads to blowing of the fuse. How will real jnana develop if there is too much confusion? For instance, if you go on eating all the 24 hours, it will result in indigestion. This will lead to disease. What is eaten should be digested and then only you should eat again. In the same way, you should listen {eat) in the Study Circle and put into practice (digest) what you have learnt. Again you can have another round of listening in the Study Circle. Now what you are doing is only loading and loading and no unloading. How much can you sustain like that? So, you should go on loading and unloading, listening and practising. You have to practise whatever you have learnt. Then only it becomes a real Study Circle.

It is important to learn your true nature

In the Study Circle, whatever we listen and assimilate in the mind should be distributed to others. In that way we show gratitude for what we have received. We should not listen and keep it to ourselves only for our benefit. Whatever we hear and practise should also be distributed to society at large, Such gratitude is very important for man. If one does not have gratitude, he leads the life of an animal. Even a dog shows gratitude if you give a little rice. In the Sathya Sai Organisation,. keeping this in mind, we should maintain unity and help the world. Other organisations may not know the inner meaning of this, but in our organisation we should know the inner meaning and we should practise it, otherwise it is of no use. You should therefore be an ideal to others.

In the study circle you can learn a lot of things, but the most important thing to be learnt is your own true nature - your Atma-tatwa. Learning all about external things without knowing your real self is like studying the branches of

a tree, ignoring its roots. There are many fruits on the tree. We can see the fruits. What happens if you water those fruits? They will fall down. But if you water the roots down below, the tree flourishes and will give fruits which can be enjoyed. You have to develop self-knowledge and self-confidence and then only you can help others.

Address to the Study Circle for industrial workers at Shanti Deep, Dharmakshetra, Bombay.

6. Unity : key to rural progress

Date: 02 February 1985 / Location: Thiruthani / Occasion: Seva Samiti of Thiruthani

SAMSKARAS (right actions) make human life meaningful and edifying. The goal of man is to realise the divinity that is in him. This can be achieved only by getting rid of all bad qualities and filling one's mind and heart with love and compassion. "Love is God and God is Love." A life without love is sterile and barren. Whatever one's difficulties or troubles, one should try to help others to the extent possible. Selfless, loving service to others, is the highest form of sadhana. It represents true devotion - Bhakti. Such Bhakti is not affected by the reverse of fortune or changes in circumstances. One should not be concerned only about one's own welfare, career and prosperity. It is not for the enjoyment of personal possessions and comforts that man has taken birth. He has greater goal to achieve, something more permanent and lasting. It is the realisation of oneness with the Divine, which alone can give lasting bliss. Even while being engaged in the activities of the secular world, we should strive to sanctify all actions by dedicating them to the Divine.

There must be unity and harmony among the villagers in the reconstruction of their social life. Look upon each other as brothers and sisters and develop the sense of unity, just as all the fingers in the hand combine to work together, all the individuals in the village should combine to strive in unison for the welfare of the village and the progress of the nation. Petty differences over minor matters should not be allowed to create divisions amongst them. By recognising the divinity that is in everyone, they should come together and act as one, whatever their differences may be.

There must be heart-to-heart unity

For people consuming rajasik food, it may not be easy to control anger or passion. But such feelings should not be allowed to grow into hatred or bitterness. There are in Bharat more than seventy crores of people. If all of them were to feel as one and act as one what is it that cannot be achieved by them? Unfortunately there is no unity amongst them. If four persons in a

house have four different opinions, how can they achieve anything? Without unity, we cannot have either peace or happiness. Life will be meaningless like that of jackals and dogs. You have been waiting in the hot sun for my rival. It shows your devotion to me and your yearning to see me and listen to me. The patience with which you have borne the heat of the sun is a form of tapas (penance) which you have performed out of your love. Your yearning for Swami and the joy I have given by my visit and address represent real unity of spirit. There is no use in mere talk about unity. There must be heart-to-heart unity based on mutual love. Promote love. Wake up with love. Do every act with love.

Love is divine in its essence

Love in different contexts is called by different names. The love between a husband and wife is called moham (fascination). The love between mother and children is known as vatsalyam (maternal affection). The love of relatives and friends is described as anuraga (mutual regard). The love of God is described as Bhakti (devotion). Although these forms of love are described differently, essentially love is one, divine in its essence. Love of anyone is a recognition of the divinity in everyone, When we become conscious of the omnipresence of divinity, our thoughts, speech and actions will become pure. We will not use offensive language against anyone or think of causing harm to anyone.

Engage yourselves in social service for the uplift of your village. Banish all differences and unite in the cause of promoting the welfare of everyone in the village. When the villages grow, the cities and the States grow and the nation on the whole prospers. The progress of the nation is based upon the progress of the villages. Everyone should be interested in the welfare of the villages.

What has been done in your village so far is gratifying, but much more remains to be done. You will have my blessings and support for all your undertakings in a spirit of service and dedication. After the day's labours, everyone of you should devote some time to thoughts on God and purify your hearts by sacred actions. From today you must cultivate unity of spirit and

work harmoniously for the prosperity and the progress of your village. You have the assurance that the Sai Organisation and Sai Sevaks will help you in every way. Discourse delivered to residents of Nallathur village near Thiruthani, when Bhagavan declared open a number of buildings constructed by Sathya Sai

The world and all its trappings encourage the fostering of the quality of ignorance and inertia; they can never raise man to a higher level of purity, balance and equanimity.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Cultivate love, faith and humility

Date: 17 February 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

SHIVARATHRI is a day when one tries to establish friendship between the mind and God. Shivarathri makes one aware of the fact that the same Divinity is all-pervasive, that It is to be found everywhere.

In our daily experiences, there are a number of instances which reveal the existence of Divinity in every person. Consider a cinema; on the screen we see rivers in flood, engulfing all the surrounding land. Even though the scene is filled with flood waters the screen does not get wet by even a drop of water. At another time, on the same screen we see volcanoes erupting with tongues of flame, but the screen is not burnt. The screen which provides the basis for all these pictures is not affected by any of them. Likewise in the life of man, good or bad, joy or sorrow, birth or death, will be coming and going, but they do not affect the Atma. In the cinema of life, the screen is the Atma. It is Shiva, it is Sankara, it is Divinity. When one understands this principle, one will be able to understand, enjoy and find fulfilment in life. Sankara (Easwara) refers to the one who is endowed with all types of Aiswarya (wealth). The types of wealth that we enjoy in the worldly sense are not what we mean by Aiswarya. Everything in the phenomenal world, every person, every bit of matter that you see, has this principle of Aiswarya in it. This Aiswarya is nothing other than Easwara. In other words, the entire phenomenal world is made up of Easwara. This has also been described as Sathamatra Chaitanya (Pure Consciousness). This principle of Chaitanya cannot be directly seen; it exists unseen. It is eternal, it is permanent, it is all-pervasive.

The Trinity and Omkara

This is the Aiswarya that permeates and fills this world. This is the very embodiment of Easwara itself. For this principle of Easwara there are two aspects. One is Saguna (attributeful) and Sakara (formful) and the other is Nirguna (attributeless) and Nirakara (formless). Associated with the mind and thoughts, and responding to the joys and sorrows, the pain and sufferings of

human beings, various forms of Divinity have been visualized. These are the Saguna and Sakara aspects of Easwara.

In this context we have the Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. These are associated with the three Gunas or attributes - Rajas, Satva and Tamas. Rajas is associated with Brahma, Satva with Vishnu and Tamas with Shiva. The rajasic attribute, associated with Brahma, is represented by the sound 'A'. The sound 'U' is the manifested form of Vishnu. And 'M' is the form of the Shiva principle.

These three forms, composing the Trinity, are not permanent. They are not permanent because they have taken form. Anything which has a form cannot be permanent. In the worship of the Dime with attributes the Trinity exist in each individual as auspicious witnesses. But there is one syllable consisting of 'A', 'U' and 'M', which is the One underlying all the three forms; that is the Omkara. It is an expression of the Nirguna Akara the attributeless Divine Principle.

Get rid of action and be freed from Maya

Whatever number of births we may take and however long we may go on worshipping these three forms, we will never be able to free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. If one wants to get rid of birth forever, one has to worship the Nirguna Nirakara , the formless and attributeless principle, which is represented by the Omkara. Only when we get rid of action, will we be free from the delusion that the world is real. When we are rid of delusion, then we will also be free from the illusion of Maya. And only then will we be free from sorrow and will finally be able to reach the Paratatva, the transcendent principle. This may also be described as Paramatma, the transcendent principle within us. As long as we have the mind and the tendencies, we can only be described as Jivatma. Jivatma and Paramatma are not two different entities. The characteristic of Jivatma is to waste the entire life in worldly things and associate the mind with this phenomenal world. This is the externalised vision, which is full of illusion and delusion. If you turn your mind inwards, it will be free from delusion. When it is associated with delusion, it is

Jiva Tatva. When it is free from delusion and illusion, then it is one with the principle of Paramatma.

Cure the boil of "I" in the body

If there is a boil on the body, we put some ointment on it and cover it with a bandage until the whole thing heals. If you do not apply the ointment and tie the bandage around this boil, it is likely to become septic and cause great harm later on. Now and then we will have to clean it with pure water, apply the ointment again and put on a new bandage. In the same way, in our life, there is this particular boil which has come up in our body in the form of 'I', 'I', 'I'. If you want to really cure this boil of 'I', you will have to wash it every day with the waters of love, apply the ointment of faith on it and tie the bandage of humility around it. The bandage of humility, the ointment of faith, and the waters of love will be able to cure this disease that has erupted with this boil of 'I.' With the help of the mind a man can rise from the level of the human to the highest level of divinity. But he can also descend to the animal nature or demonic level. Once you turn the mind towards worldly objects it tends to become animal and demonic in nature. If the mind is turned upwards towards God and freed from the thought process, it tends to merge with the Nirguna Nirakara and thus become liberated. The most important reason for bondage is giving too much freedom to the mind. For example, when an animal is tethered to a post, it will not be able to go to another place and spoil it. It will not be able to show anger or violence or do harm to any person. But if it is unwed and let loose, then it can roam over various fields, destroy the crops and cause loss and harm to others. It gets beaten for the mischief done by it. Similarly, the mind must be bound by certain regulations and limits. As long as man lives within certain limits and disciplines, certain rules and regulations, he will be able to maintain a good name and lead a happy and useful life. Once he crosses these limits he will go astray.

Conduct yourselves as true human beings

You want to study well. You want to pass and get a first-class. After that you want to get a good position and you want to get married and live a happy

family life. And then you want to have children and you want them to be intelligent and do well in life. For these kinds of desires there is no limit. They will keep on multiplying. The reason for this multiplication of wants is that you think you are simply a man. But that is not sufficient to keep you free from suffering. In addition to considering yourself a man, you have to put a number of questions to yourself: "To what caste do I belong? Am I an educated person or not? Where am I staying?. Am I conducting myself in keeping with this sacred privilege of staying in this most sacred Prasanthi Nilayam, in the immediate presence of Swami?" Only when you put all these questions to yourselves, will you be able to conduct yourselves as true human beings. If one merely thinks he is a man and is entitled to pursue all kinds of desires and enjoyments, he is likely to behave like an animal or even like a demon. "My caste is the caste of humanity. I live in the sacred land of Bharat. I am born of a good family. I am an educated person, not an ignorant one. And I am here in this sacred Prasanthi Nilayam in the presence of Swami." When you have such answers and use them as guideposts for conducting yourselves, you will not go astray.

Wisdom exists in the midst of ignorance

Today is described as Shivarathri. 'Rathri' means night. What is the significance of night? Night is another word for darkness. 'Shiva' means auspiciousness. So, Shivarathri speaks of an auspiciousness which is inherent in darkness. It refers to the wisdom which exists in the midst of ignorance. Ignorance and wisdom are not two different things; they are basically the same. They are associated with Dwaita; they are the opposite polarities of the same underlying principle. The state that transcends both wisdom and ignorance is Paratatva. It is a stage which is not associated with any comings or goings, where birth and death do not occur. So long as there is birth for the body, death has to follow. What is it that has taken birth? Is it the Atma? No. It is only the body which has taken birth. You are Atma. You are the permanent entity. We consider this body as inert, but truly speaking, this body is not inert. Even in the physical matter making up this body there is the Divine Consciousness. The form of the body is constantly changing. That is why the phenomenal world is described as Jagat. In the word Jagat, 'Ja'

means taking birth; 'Gat' means dying. "Jagat" means that which has birth and death, a process which repeats itself over and over again. In this world there is nothing which is free from this birth and death, be it a body, any object or thing. All are continually undergoing changes.

Develop purity and sacredness

This Shivarathri is a day when one tries to establish friendship between mind and God. Shivarathri makes one aware of the fact that the same Divinity is all-pervasive and is to be found everywhere. It is said that Shiva lives in Kailasa. But where is Kailasa? Kailasa is our own joy, our own bliss. It means that Easwara lives in the Kailasa of delight. If we can develop that sense of joy and delight in our mind, that itself is Kailasa. How can one get this joy? It comes when we develop purity and steadiness and sacredness. Then the heart becomes filled with peace and bliss. Then your heart itself will be Kailasa and Shiva will be there in the sanctum sanctorum of your heart, within the temple which is your body. At first look, everyone appears to be a devotee, but individuals respond differently to different circumstances. If you keep a ball of iron and dry leaf side by side, when there is no wind both of them will be firm and steady. But when a breeze blows the dry leaf will be carried away for miles together. The iron ball will remain firm and steady. If one has true love and firm faith in God, one will be like an iron ball, steady and undisturbed. If one is like a leaf running away on account of difficulties and problems, it is a travesty to call such a person a devotee. We should develop pure and steady love and faith.

Think of Divinity every minute

There are no permanent mothers in the world, the only permanent mother is the Divine Mother. Swami often reminds you of your spiritual family where Truth is your father, Love is your mother, Wisdom is your son, Peace is your daughter, Devotion is your brother, and Yogis are your friends. In the spiritual path these are your true relatives, who will always accompany you. When you have this kind of relationship, when you treasure this kind of friendship, you will be able to break the bonds of the world and become free. Light has value

only when there is darkness; otherwise it has no value by itself Therefore, in times of trouble and sorrow, whenever problems arise, evoke the principle of Divinity, which will shed illumination and light in moments of darkness.

There is no use in just thinking of Shivarathri once a year. Every minute, every day, every night, you should think of Divinity and sanctify your time, for the Time principle truly speaking is Shiva. You yourself are Shiva. Try to understand and recognize this principle of Shiva Tatva which is your own Reality.

Discourse delivered on Shivarathri day before a large gathering of Indian and overseas devotees

8. Face the challenge of Krodhana

Date: 22 March 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ugadi

GOOD and bad conduct are present among men but will not be apparent to others. The results of each one's good and bad deeds, however, will be reflected in each one's future life. Man's waking life begins everyday with sunrise and closes when he goes to sleep. This is the pattern for all beings and in the process men attempt to discover the purpose of life. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west and on this basis the other directions, north and south, are determined. Similarly, on the basis of sun's appearance and absence, day and night are experienced. The different seasons are also based on the apparent movement of the sun. This is the ordinary experience of man in daily life. When this matter is seen from a different view point, on a recognition of the fact that the earth is a globe revolving round sun itself, neither sunrise nor sunset nor east and west has any reality. The real truth is one thing and what is apparent from an experience is another. When you are going in a bus, you are moving with the bus though you seem to be in the same place. Likewise, although the earth is revolving at the rate of several hundred miles per minute, people are not conscious of its movement. They feel that the earth is stationary and they are making all movements. Even scientists, who know the truth, behave on the basis of their daily experience and not on the basis of the deeper reality. They know that neither sunrise nor sunset, nor east and west have any basis in reality. But they regard them as facts of life. Likewise our daily life is based on the apparent facts of day-to-day experience. Our days and nights, weeks and months, the changing seasons and the yearly rounds are all based on these recurring experiences. The science of astrology is based on this recurring phenomena relating to the movements of the sun, the moon, the planets etc.

Krodhana is the year of Anger

In the Hindu almanac there is a cycle of sixty years starting with Prabhava and ending with Akshaya. For each year there is a presiding ruler, a minister and a team of nine officers. Together they have a powerful influence over the

course of human affairs during that year. For the new year Krodhana, which commences today, the ruler is Sukra (Venus). His minister is a malefic deity Sahi (Saturn). Among the nine officers, five are malefic and the other four are not so well disposed. Hence, according to the science of astrology, the indications for the new year from its very commencement presage trouble and turmoil. The name of the year is Krodhana, which means Anger. This year is likely to be full of manifestations of anger. Even in trivial matters it will be difficult to restrain people's anger.

The primary obligation is to restrain anger

Today differences between man and man, village and village, one state and the other and one country and another are growing. According to astrology, the new year is filled with so much hatred and anger that its heat will burn even green grass. In view of this, we have to be extremely vigilant in all our actions. Fire disasters are likely to be numerous in this year. Except in the month of Sravana, rains are likely to be meagre during the rest of the year. The reason for this is that the succeeding year, Akshaya is going to be a prosperous and bountiful year and will be preceded by a period of scarcity and trouble. In the cycle of Nature, bad is likely to be followed by good and vice versa. Hence, we must cultivate the strength and equanimity to face difficulties and troubles. Only the grace of God can give this strength and courage. Even in our daily life, we will have to conduct ourselves with great care during this year. Every word we utter must be spoken with due deliberation. We have to restrain our pride and anger to the greatest extent. We must eschew anger and hatred towards anyone. Even if there is some provocation for such feelings, it should be kept in check. If one succumbs to such provocations, grave consequences may follow. The primary obligation this year is to restrain anger in our own interest. ill-will towards anyone will not do any good.

Methods to control anger

When you find anger rising within you, you may withdraw from the place to provide time for cooling your emotions. Or you may drink a glass of cold water

and sit quietly in a place. Or, take a brisk walk for a mile to get over your anger. Or, stand before a mirror and look at your face. By any one of these methods, your anger will gradually come down. Do not, however, stay near the person who has provoked your anger, because there is no limit to what anger may lead you to. Owing to anger and agitation the blood gets heated up. It takes three months for the blood to cool down. Within that period, the nerves become weaker and even the blood cells get destroyed. Weakness is aggravated and the memory power is reduced. Old age sets in prematurely.

All the aberrations that we witness today among men arise from anger. Our entire daily life is filled with anger. When the contribution of the Krodhana year is added to this, the situation becomes intolerable. Therefore, you must meet this by presenting a smiling face all the time. That will demonstrate the presence of divinity. Happiness is union with God. We must link our happiness with the Divine. It is by such efforts, that we must confront the challenges of the year Krodhana.

Again, when you feel angry, start reciting some song in praise of the Lord. Then there will be no fear of what Krodhana portends. Let the entire family join in prayers at least for a few minutes in the morning and in the evening. (Here Swami sang a song sweet and soothing as a lullaby): When the mother and children gather round To sing the Bhajan of Sainatha Loving Sai will stand beside them. Where, then, is the room for Anger? And why despair when Sayeesa is there? Why despair when Partheesa is beside you? The name of the year does not matter. What is really important is how we think and feel. If we do not fill our hearts with pure and sacred thoughts, any year will be unfavourable to us.

Realise the divinity in man

We should not be preoccupied with the external world. Where, in reality, there is only One, it appears to us as two. One is Jiva and the other is Deva. The Jiva is absorbed in the external. This is a sign of forgetfulness (marupu). To turn the vision inwards is real awareness (eruka). It reveals God. The process by which the divinity in man is realised is known as Tarakam. This

divinity can be realised only by Thyaga (sacrifice or renunciation of the worldly things). Thyaga is a supreme virtue in man. One who has no spirit of sacrifice will be sick in body and mind. What thyaga does to a man is to eradicate his selfishness. As long as self-interest is dominant, one cannot understand Reality. The self-centered man cannot attain the Supreme. Hence, we must cultivate a broad mind and seek to serve the fellow-beings who need help. Even in the pursuit of Mukthi (Liberation), there is no place for concern with one's self. To be concerned about Na Mukthi (My Salvation) will lead only to na mukthi (no salvation). Those who are concerned only about their liberation, will not achieve it.

Prema is the basis for every thing

To understand the true meaning of Paratatwa (Self-realisation), the first step is to grasp the significance of the Love-principle. For everything, Prema (Love) is the basis, the cause and the consummation. If there is no love, there is no life. When love is developed, anger automatically ceases. When you feel angry, sit down with a hearty laugh. Limit your speech. Too much talk leads to heated exchange of words. The lesson to be learnt in the year of Krodhana is the cultivation of peace by keeping anger under check and developing a large-hearted love for all. The values a man must cherish as his lifebreath are: Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteousness), Shanthi (Tranquility), Prema (Love) and Ahimsa (non-violence). Of these five vital principles Prema is the foremost. It is Prema that flows as the under-current for the other four values. How does it flow this way? When Prema is associated with feelings it produces Shanthi. When Prema animates actions, it results in Dharma. When Prema is combined with understanding it becomes Ahimsa (non-injury). Therefore whenever you feel angry, think of Prema {Love}, develop thoughts of love in your heart. You will have peace.

This is the way you have to develop human values. Anger and hatred are demonic qualities. Asooya (envy) is worse than either of them. You must get rid of these demonic qualities and attune your life to dignity. When anyone realises you, do not retort in the same way. You then descend to the level of the other man. You should not do yourself what you consider bad in others.

You must strive to develop sacred qualities not for this year alone, but for your entire life. Awareness is life. You must know everything that needs to be known, but make only the good things part of your life.

Call to women to be on their guard

All must be careful about their behavior during this Krodhana year. Women in particular must be on their guard, because women are capable of making great sacrifices either for good or bad purposes. So, make all your sacrifices for good causes. Develop good traits and eschew all that is evil. When the housewife has such good qualities, the house becomes a miniature paradise. When the mistress of the house indulges in bad deeds, there will be no peace in the home. Controlling their tendencies to quarrel over petty differences, women should try to behave like sisters, developing harmony and mutual regard. Men also should learn to behave like brothers, believing in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Young people should realise that the nature of their actions will determine the nature of their future. Bad actions will only result in bad consequences. Moreover, in this year, it is advisable for everyone to practise the virtue of mounam (reticence). Control of speech is highly desirable. Whatever thoughts may arise in the mind, let them not find expression in words. It has been said that restraint in speech gives abundant peace. Excessive talk harms the mind. Even in restrained speech, there should be sweetness and joy. Apart from warning against giving vent to anger, the Krodhana year is fraught with some unwelcome happenings. Poor harvests are in prospect. Scarcity of food is likely. Excessive rains in some parts and poor rainfall in some others are likely.

Karma is inexorable

These occurrences are the result of Karma (past misdeeds). Hence everyone should be continuously vigilant regarding every one of his actions. When the actions are bad, even a stick can turn into a snake. There is no escape from the consequences of one's actions. Only by vigilance can disasters be avoided. (Swami then recited the following poem): Can you escape from Karma oh man? Whatever your scholarship, Whatever your daily worship,

Whatever penance you may perform Can you avoid the results of Karma?
Whether you fill your vessel In a small pond or the vast ocean It will be filled
only

Upto its capacity.

Therefore if you watch over your actions, the results will be appropriate. You cannot indulge in sinful deeds and hope to realise the fruits of meritorious actions. Hence embark on good deeds and sanctify your life. Do not get needlessly agitated over the name of the year. Shed all fear and, placing your faith in God, transform even a dreadful year into a divine one.

Consider how far man has succeeded in overcoming the animal inheritance of lust, greed and hate, when he spends time, energy and money for the so-called "adhyathmic" exercises. What progress does he make by listening to exponents of texts? Has man become any less bestial? This is the enquiry, this is the assessment for the man to be engaged in, but this is the very task which is ignored by him at present! The spiritual exercises and disciplines now adopted, promote only pride and pompous display, envy and egoism. They do not uproot them in the least.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. The Primal Cause

Date: 23 March 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

LIVING implies the operation in the individual of the life principle that activates all beings. The attributeless Divine assumes certain qualities as Its nature and becomes saguna . The individual thus formed seeks to know and experience the variety of names and forms that are exposed to Its senses of perception and its mind. This is, in short, the process of living, the project of "knowing", of expanding one's awareness. The process has a beginning and an end, it involves success and failure, good and evil. "I am Jivi , a live individual", "I am a spark of Consciousness", "I am embodied Atma " - declarations such as these do not reveal a knowledge of the life-principle. The Jivi is Divine Consciousness, installed in a chariot. It is not a bundle of inert stuff moulded into a form and labelled with a name. There is only One all-pervading Consciousness but man experiences It in fragments and, mistaking It as Many, he gropes in the confusion caused by his own ignorance. Many scriptures instruct men the truth that God dwells in his body along with the Jivi, God inducing him to aspire for the heights and the self advising him to be content with the low. The Jivi has faith in the reality of the world and of itself. The Divine Principle, on the other hand, asserts that It is present, both close to man as well as far from him. The fact is, people feel It is far, because they are not aware of Its being near, nay, in their own hearts. The Truth that the scriptures teach is, that God is everywhere, near and far, above and below, inside and outside. God is One, indivisible, omnipresent.

Four categories of wakefulness

In order to awaken to this truth, one has to attain higher levels of wakefulness. Indeed, there are four such levels. The first is, the apparently wakeful attentiveness with which we move about and busy ourselves everyday. We are very much like others, alert and aware, when thus awake. But, Vedanta reveals four categories of wakefulness: the fully awake, the wakefulness of mind only - as while dreaming, the wakefulness of the self alone - as in deep sleep, and the illumination of the self awakening into the

Over-self These are named Sthoola Sookshma, Karana and Mahakarana (The Gross, the Subtle, the Causal and the Super-cause). The gross body that is activated in the waking stage is the composite of many items - the five senses of perception, the five senses of action, the five inner instruments, the five elements in creation, the five vital airs and the self - 26 in all. This is the Jagrath stage, wakefulness. The subtle body that dreams has only five vital airs, the five senses of perception, and five fundamental elements - fifteen items in all as the Sookshma (the subtle), the Yathana vehicle which according to Vedanta, undergoes the consequences of good deeds and bad.

Brahman eludes all the three bodies

Karana (Causal) body is the third. It possesses only one nature, namely, Prajna (consciousness), pure and unmixed with the subjective and objective worlds. Since the Sthoola (gross) body is fully invoked with the objective world, the Viswa it is called Viswa; the sookshma body or the dream body is illumined by the mind and the Tejas (inner light and so it is called Tejas; the body in the deep sleep stage, when it is latent in the cause, subsumed in the Consciousness, is called Prajna. The truth, namely, Brahman, eludes all these three bodies. They are all invoked in bhrama (illusion), not in Brahman , the Absolute. What appears true in the dream is falsified when one awakes; what one experiences while awake is distorted and devalued in dreams; sleep wipes out of memory both the dream-world and the wakefulness-world. The awareness that survives these three passing stages is the Maha Karana, the Super conscious. The Super or Supreme Consciousness is the Thought that became all this - the Hiranyagarbha the Golden Womb, the primal urge, the first concretisation, Easwara. When Being "thought," it became the Many, or rather, it put on the appearance of Many. The Maha Karana, is beyond Consciousness; the Sthoola, Sookshma and the Karana bodies into which it proliferated are beneath Consciousness. The former is true knowledge (eruka in Telugu). The latter is illusory experience (marupu in Telugu). God is the Lord of eruka, the Jivi is the slave of marupu (forgetting).

The One appears to the split vision as two

The Maha Karana the Cosmic Consciousness, is often denoted as "Param" (beyond), in Vedanta; since the concept is obviously contentless, it does not arise and fade; nor does it originate and disappear. It has no name and form, for it cannot be defined or limited or identified as separate. It is understood as Brah- man - the unmoving, immovable Totality (Poorna), the Eternal, the True, the Pure, the Attributeless. Just as the unmoving road enables the car to move along it, the Brahma principle is the basis for the existence and activities of Jivi. In fact, there is only One. The One appears to the split vision as two. Look outward! It is Jivi Look inward, it is God. The outer vision makes you forget; the inner makes you remember. When man seeks to rise to the divinity which is his reality, he is remembering, struggling to know and experience. When he grovels in the lower levels of consciousness and is entangled in disease, he is caught in the coils of forgetfulness. Removing selfish desires and expanding one's urge to love and serve are the most effective means to succeed in merging with Supreme Consciousness, the Primal Cause, the Cosmic Thought, the Maha Karana.

10. Revere Truth and Love

Date: 06 May 1985 / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

The body is impermanent All one's wealth is transient Children and Wife are shadows Only one's good deeds are lasting companions Who realises this truth is a true man. EMBODIMENTS of love! All beings in creation, except man, live according to the laws of nature and carry out their functions. Without any concern for the morrow, they lead their lives, content with whatever they can enjoy. Nature sees to it that they do not lack anything needed for their existence. Man, on the contrary, is never contented, however much he may acquire and whatever comforts he may enjoy. He yearns for various things and looks upon the desire for these objects as love. But if such attachment to objects is fostered, there is no end to the process. He does not realise that such love is based upon self-interest and self-centredness. It should be clear that what passes for love today in the world is really selfishness and self-interest. In every thought, every word, every action of his, the demon of self-interest is present. Man has become a plaything of selfish impulses. Caught up in the coils of selfishness, his entire life becomes a delusion and a snare. He is prisoner of his selfishness. Such a person can never experience what is real freedom.

True love will remain unaffected

What, then, is true Prema (love)? Pure, unselfish love towards **all** living beings, considered as embodiments of the Divine, with no expectation of reward, is true Love. "Adweshta sarvabhootha-nam. Maitrah, Karuna evacha" ("Free from dislike, friendly and compassionate towards all beings"). With this attitude, when one regards divinity as present in all beings, only then he can have true love. Whatever be the vicissitudes one may face, whatever be the personal sorrows and privations one may undergo, true love will remain unaffected. Today, when any difficulty arises or when some trouble crops up, love turns into hatred. True love is the sweet fruit that grows out of the fragrant flower of good deeds. Love rules without recourse to the sword. It binds without laws.

Only one who has such true love can be described as human. The man without such love is only human in form. Like the lotus which blooms when the sun rises, the heart of man blossoms when love enters it. Like the glow of the flame in a fire, like the rays of the sun, like waves in the ocean, divine love is the basic quality of a true human being. It is only when one is filled with pure, unselfish love that he can be called a human being.

Understand the nature of Divine Love

It is the association of such pure, divine love with the desires and concerns of the body that affects its purity. Who are one's parents? Who are one's children, relations or friends? Who are we? What were we in our previous lives? What will be our future? Immersed in thoughts of these impermanent relationships, we are losing sight of the Divine Love that is everlasting and unchanging. Even in experiencing temporary relationships, the nature of Divine Love should be understood. Human birth implies the existence of parents. But the relationship between a son and his parents is corporeal. The parents are instrumental for the birth but they are not the cause. However, even as instruments, elements of the Divine are present in them. It should be understood that human birth is the progeny of Truth as father and Love as the mother. Even if one's natural parents are absent, one should not forget the real parents - Truth and Love. When Truth and Love beget dhana (Wisdom) as son, the true lineage of man is established.

Truth is sacred. It is valid for all time; past, present and future. It is unchanging. Love is eternal. It is indescribably sweet like nectar. Can such Truth and Love beget an unrighteous and evil-minded son? Only one who is wise and free from illusion and ignorance can be a true human being.

Ignorance is not the inherent characteristic of man. There is no room for aberrations in him. Egoism is out of place. He should revel in the ecstasy of dhana (the consciousness of the Divine). His true form should be bliss. Discrimination should be natural to him. Today this true nature of man is being forgotten.

It may be asked whether Truth and Love have begotten only a son (Jnana - wisdom) and not a daughter. There is a daughter, who can be identified as Shanthi (peace). Hence, wisdom should be the characteristic quality of men and peace and serenity should be the distinguishing quality of women.

Students' duty to their parents

Who are to be regarded as friends and relatives? The Yogis should be looked upon as friends and good qualities should be considered as true kinsmen. Yoga does not consist of meditation and austerities or various forms of breath-control. True Yoga is the mergence of the individual soul in the Omni-Self It is the withdrawal of the senses from external objects and turning them inwards. To allow the senses a free rein is not Yoga but bhoga (sensual enjoyment). Such indulgence will lead to roga (disease). Yoga implies self-control and renunciation, leading to the experiencing of Ananda (bliss).

You owe a supreme duty towards your parents who are responsible for all that you are. You will be less than human if you do not show your gratitude to them for all that they have done to you. Parental love. means for the children what the sun's rays mean for the blossoming of a flower. Wherever you may go, whatever you may achieve, whatever position you may occupy, you must always remember your mother with love and reverence. The man who fails to remember the mother and the motherland (the land of his birth) with affection is a veritable demon. There is nothing human in such persons. One should cherish one's mother and the land of his birth with the deepest regard. There is no birth without a mother. Because the mother is responsible for one's existence, devotion and love for the mother are the marks of a true human being.

Develop unselfish, unbounded love

To have the qualities and lead the life of a human being worth the name, one must develop pure, unselfish, unbounded love. Man derives many kinds of benefits from animals, birds, plants and trees. They do not confer these benefits out of any self-interest or the desire for reward. Man enjoys these

benefits without displaying any sense of gratitude. Today man not only does not help others but even harms himself by his actions. He is thereby dehumanising himself. There is, therefore, a compelling need for youth to develop the true spirit of love through the Sadhana of Seva (service) and sublimate their life. They should not fritter away their life-span in the pursuit of ephemeral pleasures and comforts. They make no effort to understand the basic purpose of human life, what is permanent and enduring. They are promoting dissensions and differences instead of cultivating unity and harmony. Selfishness is the root cause of these undesirable tendencies. Without abjuring selfishness there can be no true ahamkaram (selfconceit). Adambaram (ostentation) is the son. Those who are filled with envy and ostentatiousness are really the children of conceit. The first requisite is to get rid of ahamkara (egoistic conceit). All evil traits arise from this ahamkara.

Royal road to secure God's grace

What is the basis for this conceit? If one is conceited, there must be something which justifies the feeling. If there is nothing in one which warrants his conceit, what is there to gloat over? You may be a scholar or a wealthy person, or very clever and intelligent. But all these do not help you to secure God's grace. Saint Tukaram sang: "Oh Swami! I am not endowed with knowledge. I am incapable of performing Yajnas and Yagas or doing severe penance. Here is one easy path that I know to win your grace. That is the path of Divine Love. It is the royal road that will lead me to the Presence of Rama." Tukaram declared emphatically that Rama cannot be realised by any other path except the path of love. This is the inner meaning of the statement: Love is God and God is Love.

Hence, in this precious period of your youth, in this sacred golden time, you must cultivate sacred thoughts and holy attitudes. You must be filled with a sense of selfless dedication. This can come only through seva (service to others) in which there is no egoistic pride. You must revel in giving rather than receiving. When the Divine is there to give all that you need, why seek or receive anything from others? All your actions must be aimed at purifying your minds and hearts to experience the Divine. When the heart is pure, the

light of wisdom shines. The illumined heart becomes the receptacle of pure love. Love is everything. A person without love is a living corpse. Love is not the relationship between man and man, or between man and other objects. It is inherent in every being. "Mamatma Sarvabhootatma" ("I am the Spirit immanent in all beings"). The Divine Atma is present in all beings. The Atma has no form. It is experienced as Love. If there is no Love, there is no Area. hence, love is our life-breath. Love is our soul. Love is our everything. It should be unchanging. Young people should cultivate unwavering love and a steady vision.

Bhrama and Brahma

The basic things we should know are: Karma is the root cause of our birth. The root cause of Karma is sorrow. Ignorance is the cause of sorrow. Ignorance itself is the result of Bhrama (the delusion which makes one regard the real as unreal and the unreal as real). And as long as Bhrama persists, the Brahman cannot be recognised. When we are rid of this delusion, then sorrow will cease. When sorrow goes, ignorance disappears. Daivapreethi (Love of God) and Papabheethi (fear of sin) are the two requisites for sanctifying our life. You have to strive constantly to please your parents. If you do not show your gratitude to the parents who have brought you up with so much love and labour, to whom else are you going to be grateful? You must cultivate a broad heart and develop love towards all beings as emblems of the Divine. You have to live up to the Upanishadic injunctions to regard your father, mother, guru and guest as God. Your love should not be based only on the physical forms. Bodies are perishable and impermanent. Beyond the biological parents, there are permanent parents whom you should revere. They are Truth and Love. Though the body may go, Truth remains as the permanent father. Likewise Love is the eternal mother. It grows with the passage of time and never diminishes. By regarding Truth and Love as your parents, as essential for your existence as your eyes or as the two wings for a bird or the two wheels for a cart, lead worthy lives. On this sacred day of remembrance, firmly enshrine in your hearts reverence for Truth and Love, and make your lives sublime by rendering dedicated service to your fellowmen and women. Discourse at Prashanthi Mandir on

11. Students and Seva

Date: 13 May 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE process of education involves the process of self-control and self-denial. No person is free to live as his impulses prod him. Even the impulses are the products of unseen and unknown impacts, of previous lives and the pressures - social, cultural and economic - of this life. The impulse for action and the nature of action are determined by various hidden factors. As a result, when one claims that he has achieved or accomplished something, he is only revealing his pride and his ignorance. Man is so bound by circumstances and conditions that he cannot act independently of society, of cultural traits and of the will of the Supreme. This world belongs to God. It has not been mortgaged to Man to be used as he likes. It has to be used for advancing His glory and demonstrating His Love and Power. Man has been endowed with senses, mind and intellect for this very duty. He has therefore to keep them pure and efficient. Of the eight steps laid down by the science of Yoga in order to succeed in this effort, Sama is the first and foremost. Sama means mind-control; the mind, if properly trained and directed, can liberate man; or else, it can degrade him to the level of beasts. Sama is a great exercise in tapas or asceticism. An ascetic is not a person who flees into forests, lives on leaves, and spends his time in God-centered thoughts. True tapas lies in the mastery over the intellect, the mind and the senses. Now, why are they to be mastered? For achieving constant awareness of Brahman, and be immersed in the Ananda which It is.

Examine every thought rigorously

The Sadhana for achieving this goal is to concentrate on co-ordinating one's thoughts, words and deeds and directing them along holy paths. Every thought has to be examined rigorously., can it promote love, joy, peace in us, in the society, in the nation, in the world? Thoughts arise from bursts of emotion or passion. These must be tested and rejected if they would cause evil later or bring ill-fame, if acted upon. Dhyana (meditation) is the only saviour for such. Meditation is of two types - meditation on the Personal and

on the Impersonal. The first is centered on an idol or picture or an object with form. The mind, while engaged in such meditation, is liable to waver or wander. The second type does not depend on name and form. It dwells on the Universal and the Infinite Cosmic Consciousness, Brahman. Its consummation lies in mergence, as heat penetrates an iron ball, immanent, totally and inseparably. Mergence is the result of selfless surrender, as gold surrenders to the smith who melts and rolls, hammers and hits to turn it into a jewel.

Service activity opens the mind and heart

Education has to endow you with this eagerness to surrender. The uneducated may assert that his desire must prevail, he must be allowed to correct himself and he ought to shape his career as he wills. But the learned must be humble and eager to follow the Lord's will. These virtues can be discovered in man only when he engages himself in some activity, say, service of his fellowmen. The activity will reveal to him his plus points and faults and help him to improve himself and advance spiritually.

Since you are entering upon intensive social service in the villages of the Sathya Sai Taluk, I must tell you that this activity must open the doors of your minds and hearts, in order to let in the Divine Light. Your minds and hearts are now moved by gusts of emotion and waves of thought. There is no stability or fixed loyal. You are led hither and thither by desires that delude and pleasures that are phantoms. So, you must take refuge in the Divine and recognise the Diane in every object and event.

Know that nothing can exist or happen without berg willed by God. Egoism and envy are blinding men from this Truth. Bhakti (devotion) is defied as the awareness of the Lord being one's Reality (Swa swarupa anusandhanam). The ego prevents the awareness of this fact. Utilise the time allotted to you in attempts to acquire the awareness and live in that ecstasy. Time flows fast, regardless of circumstance. Time has no friend or foe, no kith and kin, no favourite or competitor. So long as man is bound to the relative world of name and form, he is bound to the wheel of time. But, he can transcend the relative world, if he sanctifies time by good Karma.

Seva is the best of all good deeds

of all good deeds, the best is Seva, intelligent and loving service to those in need. The body is the Temple of God. He resides therein; the intellect, the mind and the senses which constitute the Temple are His, not ours to be handled as our whims dictate. They are His Instruments, to be used by Him, for Him. In the Gurukulams of ancient India, the sages, saints and scholars communicated this message to their pupils and imprinted it on their hearts. They implanted the seed of dedication to the Divine in the heart, ploughed by faith. The sapling was to be helped to grow by seasonal showers of Dhyana. In time, the flower of Shanthi (peace) turns into the sweet fruit of Ananda. The seed has to be firm; the dedication has to be unconditional. Really speaking what right has man to desecrate the Temple of God? His duty lies in maintaining the holiness of the Temple and use it for puja prayer, dhyana and devotion. The intellect, mind and senses are the furniture that belongs to the Temple. They have to be revered as such and used with care. God, residing therein, is the master, the maker and the motivator. You have to worship Him with pure unblemished thoughts, words and deeds. How can a person escape from blemish? By watching the antics of the mind as a witness and not allowing the body to assist the mind to fulfil its foul desires. The mind by itself cannot commit theft; when it longs to commit it, do not allow the body to obey. When the mind is foiled in this way when it calls upon the body, the mind will give up its evil tendencies. When the child runs forward, the mother tries to catch up. Hence, the child tries to elude her grasp and, falling, hurts itself. Instead, if the mother turns her back, the child too will return to her side. Cultivate this Sadhana. You can master the mind and keep it on the Godward path.

Make good use of mind and intellect

When a festival involves large-scale feeding, people borrow for the occasion cooking vessels from rich persons. After using them, they clean the vessels spic and span before returning them. The rich man will be greatly disturbed and disappointed if the vessels are returned, damaged and unclean. God has

lent us, for use in the festival of life, vessels like intellect, mind and senses. We have to use them with gratitude and return them in clean condition. While in the stage of earning Vidya, you should not yearn for Vishaya. Vidya (study) is spiritual exercise. Vishaya (objects) allure and deceive. Cultivate a steady mind and a fixed vision. This is the Tapas that has to supplement studies. Vidya and Tapas are the very breath, the sadhana of inhaling and exhaling, the proper Pranayama. Social service is also a tapas, a spiritual exercise. It promotes the practical application of your knowledge, skills and virtues. Wealth, scholarship, power and prestige are all despicable if they are not directed towards moral ends. Ravana tried to win Sita by parading before her, while she was a captive, his might and wealth. But, Sita threw a blade of grass in his direction and said that he was worth much less. For, he had no mastery over his mind. The mind had rendered him a mean coward and a thief.

Youth alone can transform youth. The youth of the villages will be inspired when they find you, graduate and post-graduate students, in Khaki work clothes, evincing practical interest in the cleanliness of the environs, the health of the villagers and in fulfilling their needs. You must bring the youth together and form them into a group which can, with the guidance of the elders, maintain and expand the work done by you. Discover what their needs are, so that you can attend to them. We can, for instance, open gruel centers for the aged poor and their dependents. You have to win their hearts through love. When Love is planted and fostered, factions will disappear from the villages.

Villagers are basically good-natured, God-fearing folk. But politics as well as attractions for city life, have led them to the present impasse. When they hear wise counsel from the lips of the children, they are bound to be affected. Train yourselves to speak in their own language to gatherings of villagers.

When you have offered service for some days, I shall proceed to those villages with you and bless your work and the villagers you have served. Address to the students of the Sathya Sai Institute, at the Mandir.

12. Install Rama in your hearts

Date: **26 May 1985** / Location: **Kammavaripalli village** / Occasion: **Discourse to a mass gathering of village residents**

WHATEVER qualities a man may possess, he cannot make proper use of them if he lacks company of good people. Through the Satsangam (company of good persons) one can develop good qualities, good thoughts, good feelings and do good deeds and thereby transform his human nature into divine nature. This, in fact, is the primary duty of every individual. To develop good qualities, one has to get rid of one's bad traits. If you want to cultivate unity, you have to give up hatred. If you wish to develop a sweet temper, you have to rid yourself of bitterness. As long as hatred remains, unity cannot grow. Even if there are differences of opinion, these should not be allowed to stand in the way of united action for promoting the welfare of the village as a whole.

A village is made up of an aggregation of families. Therefore every householder has an obligation to the village as a whole, just as the five fingers of the hand have to act together to carry out any work efficiently, all the villagers have to work in cooperation for the welfare of the village.

Indian culture and civilisation have been built up from ancient times on rural communities. Even today this culture survives predominantly in villages. The national life is sustained by the villages. It is wrong to ignore the interests of the villages or to allow them to decay.

Lack of unity prevents progress

Our ancients built temples to help the people to cultivate right feelings and act righteously. They felt that there should be no village without a temple. A school without teachers, a temple without a deity, a wire without current and a field without water are of no use. Every one should regard his heart itself as a temple and strive to realise the divinity that is in him. Villagers should seek to share all the amenities available in the villages. They must learn a lesson from the behaviour of the crow. When a crow sees an edible, it cries, 'kaw,

kaw', to attract other crows to the place. Likewise, when ant sees a piece of jaggery, it does not start eating it alone. It brings other ants to the place. Rows and rows of ants can be seen coming towards the lump of jaggery and eating from it. Look at the unity and cooperation among the ants and crows. Such unity is not present among men. Personal differences are ruining the life in the villages. Enormous progress can be made by the villagers if there is unity among them. There will then be no need for approaching the Government for help. If the villagers are united, there is nothing which they cannot accomplish.

The first requisite is to promote the love of God. The Lord is the real and sole protector. Many powerful men are, in the ultimate reckoning, unable to protect themselves. Hence, you should put your faith in the Lord, who is the protector of everybody. Every morning and evening, and on every occasion when you have time, you have to go to the temple, recite the name of the Lord and pray to the Lord to fill your hearts with love and enable you to lead a right life.

The mark of a true human being

You must see that every action of yours is pure and sacred. It should be based on truth and should be intelligent and purposeful. The ancient Rishis used to pray, "Tasmai-Namah Karmane" (I bow to the all-powerful Karma). We tend to waste our precious life in activities devoted to worldly matters and petty pleasures. No time is devoted to the achievement of the enduring and sacred bliss that is delved from the enjoyment of the Self. Time is not anyone's exclusive property. It is common to all whether he is a multi-millionaire or a destitute. All are subject to the dictates of Time.

All must cultivate the spirit of equal-mindedness. This is the mark of a true human being. It is the spirit of serenity in which one looks upon praise or blame, honour or dishonour, pleasure or pain alike. We tend to shrivel up when somebody abuses us. The whole world looks gloomy. We swell with pride when anybody praises us. What we should cultivate is an attitude in which we remain unaffected in both the situations. Shanthi (mental

tranquillity) is necessary for experiencing the truth of the Self. There is no greater thing on earth than peace of mind. Every effort must be made to acquire Shanthi.

Lead a life of unity and cooperation

The villagers lack many things. But they should not think that it is enough if they have clothes to wear, houses to live in and food to eat. How many, who have all these, are really happy? For real happiness you must have a large and loving heart. If you cultivate fraternal feelings towards all the people in the village, you will not only acquire real happiness but will also help to make the village a prosperous and harmonious community. Whenever I see such villages I feel extremely happy. There is generally more peace in the villages than in the cities. There is hardly any peace in the cities, with their hustle and bustle. Rural life should not be considered lowly and contemptible. The atmosphere in the villages is pure and healthy. With proper housing and good water supply, life can be very enjoyable in the villages. This village has been visited by many political leaders but because of lack of unity in the village, it has not received any aid from the Government. If you have unity, I shall be prepared to render any amount of help for your improvement. From today you must lead a life of unity and co-operation. The idol of Rama has been installed in your temple today. You must feel that Rama has been installed in the hearts of everyone of you. When you have this feeling, you will begin to follow the path of righteousness. Righteousness protects those who act righteously. As farmers, you know the gains from sowing a bushel of seed to reap a harvest of a bag of grain. Likewise if you devote five minutes to prayer in a day, the Lord will give you fifty-five minutes worth of grace. You must cultivate unity, co-operation and mutual trust. Love is the basis of all other human qualities like Truth, Righteousness and Peace. If the four qualities of Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi and Prema are present in a person, he will manifest the divinity that is in him. Not many of you may know that I first visited this village nearly 35 years ago. I have looked upon Ammagondapalem and Kammavaripalli as my two eyes and that is why I decided to initiate the installation of the Rama idol in the temple here. This village is at the periphery of Sathya Sai Taluka and is very backward. I shall be prepared to

help you and promote your welfare in every possible way.

13. Live the values and lead the children

Date: 01 June 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Erudition is of zero value, When man has no truth, right conduct, peace, non-violence;

Generosity is of Zero value, Powerful position is of no worth, Praiseworthy action is valueless When man has no truth, right conduct peace, non-violence;

For these four are the walls of the hoary mansion of Sanathana Dharma. The life within, the vital force of all the four, Is Prema - Love, selfless, steady, sublime. EMBODIMENTS of Love! All living beings on each have bodies composed of physical elements, but the human body is unique in many respects. This makes man the crown of Creation. For instance, man has his spinal column erect and not horizontal like the rest. As a result, he can, by Yogic exercises, awaken the latent vital energy, the Kundalini, and train it to ascend to the Sahasrara, the thousand-petalled lotus that crowns the brain. The gross impulses become subtle; they unite and are sublimated thereby. Another feature of the human body, another boon man has been blessed with, is his buddhi (intellect), which enables him to analyse and determine what is right and what is wrong, what is lasting and what is ephemeral. The head is the most important part of the body (Sarvasya gathrasya siram Pradhanam). The head discriminates and decides upon action and behaviour, which build up habits which shape one's Seelam (character). This too is possible only for the human species.

The animal in man

But man is unaware of these boons. He spends his years of life as a beast does. Beasts are deluded by the desert mirage; they run towards it in order to quench their thirst; they die of despair and exhaustion. Men, too, are deluded by the objective world; they run towards it in order to quench the thirst of the senses for pleasure and happiness. They die, disappointed and exhausted. The dream is real until one awakes. The pleasures delved while awake are

known to be unreal, when one awakens into the light of one's Divine Substance. However, man is not allowed to know his glory, by the six thieves who hide in his mind - lusty desire, anger, greed, undue attachment, pride and hatred. They pollute his values by their emanations. There are also eight waves of pride which obstruct his attempt to know himself - the pride of caste, of physical strength, of scholarship, of youth, of wealth, of personal charm, of overlordship and one's spiritual attainments. No one discovers that these are liable to disintegrate very soon. Sankara has warned men against placing faith in any of these sources of pride. "The All-Powerful Time robs you of these in a trice," Sankara has said. Even while laughing and playing as a boy, youth overtakes you, and old age creeps in even while you imagine that youth is still with you. Death waits round the corner, even as old age overtakes you.

The basic principle of the human nature

Just as the rays of the sun absorb water vapour from the sea, gather them into clouds, drop them as rain on earth so that they may flow as rivers back into the sea, the senses of man contact the world and collect experiences out of which the sacred and sustaining ones are selected, stored and utilised by the mind, as values, as instruments for individual and social uplift. They are Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Non-violence and Prema. For the first four, the last value, Prema, is the life-giving spring. They can be achieved most quickly by Prema. Prema (Love) is the basic principle of human nature. That short two-syllabled word has immeasurable potentiality. Too often, it is confused with the affection of the mother for the child, the attachment between husband and wife, the dependence of friend on friend or the relationship of teacher and pupil. In every one of these, a trace of egoistic need can be discerned. Love untainted by ego is genuine Love. It is all-inclusive, pure, full and free. It is the Love that urged Meera to walk away, Tukaram to sing and Chaithanya to dance. Love can emerge from the heart and brighten with delight only after anger (the mastiff), pride (the boar) and the ego-sense (the buffalo) are put out of action and removed from the heart. So long as these beasts occupy the heart, man cannot escape being a beast. Being a human, what does he aspire for? Absence of grief and presence of Ananda and freedom to follow one's

will. Grief and joy are like night and day, inevitable phases of life. Freedom for one's will can cause disaster to oneself and others. Man must know that he is the Atma; that knowledge is all that is needed for one's Ananda.

As the King, so the subjects

You are dealing with tender children, as their teachers, guides and example. You have to equip yourselves for those roles by living the values that distinguish man. Establish the values in yourselves, practise them and derive Ananda therefrom yourselves. "As the king, so the subjects," says the proverb. Live the ideals and lead the children along. Let the urges for Truth, Right conduct, Peace, Non-violence blossom in their hearts. These spiritual treasures alone can ensure happiness and joy. Or else, why did Dasaratha, the heroic emperor who fought on the side of the Devas and granted them victory, seek guidance from sage Vasishta, or Emperor Janaka welcome the sage Yajnavalkya to his court? Why did the indomitable five, the Pandava brothers, seek Krishna's counsel and cure for their ills? And consider how Shivaji sought the advice of Samartha Ramadas, for ruling the empire he founded.

Values that are key to human progress

These authentic human values cannot be learnt from books or from lessons given by teachers or gifted by elders. They can be acquired only by experience and example. You must be the examples and the children have to experience. You have come to Prasanthi Nilayam for this seminar and workshop, from long distances, spending large sums of money, and taking days of for the journey. Gather from here in return all the information and inspiration you can. For, these values are the goals, the bases, the roots, the keys of human progress. Truth is unity of thought, word and deed. When action is saturated with Truth, it becomes Dharma (Righteousness). When all actions are right, Peace reigns and one's mind is free from traces of violence. Love is the sustenance for all the four. Love as thought is Sathya, as action it is Dharma, as feeling it is Shanthi and as understanding it is Ahimsa (Non-violence). When these four fundamental values that raise man to even Divine

levels are practised and propagated by you, in school after school, in village after village, Bharath will justify the meaning of that name: Bha (light) rath (delight) - drawing delight from light.

Spiritual arithmetic

The subjects that you teach at school may be different but, through everyone, you can emphasise human values. The human body is a vastly busy, well organised chemical laboratory. Every limb is activated by rasa. When you hit the table, the table too hits you with equal force. Learn from this that every action has to meet with reaction. While teaching mathematics, you can explain the role of plus and minus as affecting, even in life, the fate of man. In arithmetic three minus one is two. But in the mathematics of the spirit, three minus one is one. God mirrored in Nature is seen as the Image, Man. There are three entities here, but remove the mirror and what remains is not two but only One, the One God. And, above all, be always aware of the two meanings of the Sanskrit word for man Manava. (1) Ma means 'not' and nava means 'new.' Man is not new. He has come trailing the impact of countless lives. (2) Ma (Ignorance), na (without), va (acting). Man should act with full jnana, with no trace of ignorance. Model your lives on the lines of these two meanings and be blessed. Inaugural discourse at the National Seminar cum-Workshop on Education in Human Values,

14. God is the only Sadguru

Date: 02 July 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

Brahmanandam Paramasukhadam Kevalam Jnanamurthim
Dvandvathitham Gaganasadrasm Thathwamasyadi Lakshyam
Ekam Nithyam Vimalam Achalam Sarvadhee Sakshibhutham
Bhavatheetham Trigunarahitham Sadgurum Tham Namami

The Rishis of ancient times were revered with the utterance of this laudatory verse as gurus by those who approached them for spiritual guidance. This day being Guru Purnima, when aspirants for spiritual illumination pay homage to the gurus who lead them to the goal, we shall probe into the implications of this authentic summary of the credentials attributed in this verse, to the Sad-Guru or Proper Preceptor.

Brahmanandam:

The Guru is the embodiment of Brahma-Bliss, since he is merged in the Ananda which Brahman is. It is not imported or acquired or attained. It is inherent in every heart. The world, the cosmos, every particle, is Ananda itself but being ever in it, with it, of it and for it, man is unable to be It, on account of the darkness that misleads him and deludes him.

Brahmananda and Man:

The Upanishads attempt to give men a faint idea of the measure of that Brahma-ananda . The Taithireeya Upanishad assumes the height of human ananda as the unit for estimation. A person having all the wealth he desires, all the renown man can earn, all the learning that can be gained, perfect health, perpetual youth, and undisputed sovereignty over the entire globe - his Ananda is an understandable base from which to proceed. A hundred

times this Manushi-ananda is the Ananda of celestial singers (Gandharvas); a hundred times that is the Ananda of the souls of departed beings dwelling in heavenly regions. Hundred-fold of this is the Ananda of the divine entities (Ajanma-ja). A hundred times is the Ananda of the gods (Deva); the Lord of the Gods, Indra, is ever in Ananda that is a hundred times more than that of the Gods. Brhaspathi , the preceptor of Indra, has Ananda a hundred times more than Indra ; and Prajapathi , the Lord of Creatures, has a hundred-fold Ananda when compared to Brhaspathi. Hiranyagarbha (the Cosmic Golden Manifestation) is the source of a hundred times more Ananda. The Supremest Ananda, the Brahma-Ananda, which is the characteristic of the Guru, is that of Hiranyagarbha.

Eliminate the "I" to experience the Ananda

Man has the potency to elevate himself to this Ananda. Only he has to get rid of the obstacles that deny this experience. He is Brahman and so his nature is Brahma-anandam. But, he does not know that all he believes he knows is known only as distorted or deluded. His waking experiences are as unreal and self-contrived as his dream experiences. The I-sense, the ego, constructs the world it is after. It shatters the One into many and takes pride in deceiving itself. It reduces the Ananda by resorting to polluting desires and actions. When 'I' is eliminated, Ananda is experienced fully. One becomes truly and genuinely One's Self when this 'I' does not intrude. 'I' sets one apart and establishes Dwaita (Duality). No 'I' brings together and establishes Unity, One-without-a-second, Adwaita (Non-dualism). 'I' sense arises, persists and disappears. It is Kshara , liable to deteriorate. The One-without-a-second is AKshara , it is symbolised by OM, the Pranava , the Ever-alive. The Guru who is ever in this consciousness has Brahma-ananda. Such a one is the Guru to be sought.

Parama-sukhadam:

The Guru grants the highest joy. What exactly constitutes this joy? Is it physical well-being? Mental poise? Intellectual alertness? Sharpness of the senses? No. The rishis declare that words return crestfallen after attempting

to describe that state. Even the mind with its fast-moving wings of imagination cannot reach that state. The highest joy has its source and spring in the Atma , the spark of the Cosmic Splendour. The person who is ever aware of the Atma in him and in all is therefore the Sadguru.

Kevalam:

Beyond all limitations of time and place the guru is pure chaithanya , Is-ness; his consciousness is all pervasive; that is to say, God alone is the Sad-Guru.

Embodiment of Wisdom

Jnana Murthim:

What is meant by Jnana?

"Advaitha Darsanam Jnanam": the awareness of the One, without a second, is Jnanam (the supreme wisdom).

And the sadguru is the embodiment of that wisdom, having unbroken experience of the One. Those who are commonly known as gurus are signposts, name boards. They have not travelled the entire journey and reached the goal. But the Jnanamurthi is with you right through, beside you and before you, smoothing the path until the journey ends in him.

Dvandvathitham:

The Sadguru is unaffected by the inevitable dualities of life: joy and grief, profit and loss, ridicule and respect.

Gaganasadrsam:

Untouched by happenings and incidents but forming the perennial base, like the sky enveloping the nature.

Thath-thwam-asyadi-Lakshyam:

The living exponent and experiencer of the four crucial axioms of the Vedic thought - **That-thwam-asi** (That Thou Art), **Ayam Atma Brahma** (The Self is verily Brahman), **Aham Brahmasmi** (I am Brahman) and **Prajnanam Brahma** (Consciousness is Brahman).

Ekam:

The One; though apparently passing through varied experiences and even no experience while awake or dreaming and in deep sleep, The One is unaffected and remains as One - the guru is firmly established in the One.

Nithyam:

Eternal, untouched by time, the Sadguru is eternally pure, aware, serene.

Vimalam:

Faultless, nothing can tarnish its purity. The Guru has no desire or sense of want. He is perfect.

The Eternal Witness

Achalam:

The Sadguru, which is another name meant for God, knows no change in his primal perfection, whatever form he may assume. The motion picture film projects 16 pictures a second on the screen in the cinema but they give transitory and counterfeit experiences. The Achalam is the unmoving screen.

Sarvadhee:

All-pervasive, all-activating intelligence.

Sakshi Bhutham:

That which has become the witness of everything, everywhere, like the sun which activates but is only witness of the activity.

Bhavatheetham:

He is beyond all urges, emotions, feelings and thoughts.

Trigunarahitham:

Not bound by the three modes of qualities that divide living beings into categories - the serene mode, the active mode and the dull. When bound, you are human, when you are free from entanglements and limiting characterisations, you are divine.

Sadgurum:

The worthy Guru.

Tham:

To Him

Namami::

I offer my reverential homage.

Who is a genuine guru?

The Guru who deserves homage must possess these attributes. This is only another way of saying that God alone can be the guide, the path and the goal. Gums available for aspirants are themselves deluded into foggy paths

and faltering faith. The genuine Guru must have overcome Maya and the ego; he must be free from desire and need. When a person yearns for some benefit or profit and is engaged in sadhana with that view, he cannot be accepted as Guru. The verse which speaks of Guru as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara is quoted often. But, the One has not broken into three, one part in charge of creation, another who fosters and maintains and the third who dissolves and destroys. The Pranava mantra OM is symbol of the One; it is composed of three sounds A (as in far), U (as in push) and M (as in hum). Brahma is A, Vishnu is U and Shiva is M and all three are indivisibly united in OM. The problem this verse poses is whether Guru is God or God is Guru. The answer is - God is Guru, the ever-present, evercompassionate, the Witness who resides in the heart. This day is celebrated as Vyasa Poornima, the full moon day dedicated to the memory of sage Vyasa. There are four full moon days holier than the rest in the Hindu calendar - the full moon which occurs in the month of Vaisakha, Ashada, Sravana and Magha. This is the month of Ashada. On this day, the day when the moon (the presiding deity of the mind) is full circle and the moonlight cool, pleasant and clear, Sage Vyasa completed the composition of the immortal scripture, the Brahma Sutra. Sutra means string. He revealed that the Brahma principle interpenetrates and holds together the many in the ONE. That principle does not wax or wane, it is Poorna and it projects Poorna, in spite of that projection. The passing cloud cannot act on that fullness. This was what Vyasa, the Guru, taught mankind. Just as God projects Himself as Man, Man too can concretise God, and persuade God to become Man by sincere prayer and agonised yearning. Prahlada's prayer induced the avatar of Narasimha. Prayer and personification are complementary, like the positive and negative poles in the electricity. The dark fortnight and the bright fortnight alternate like grief and joy, pain and pleasure, by God's decree to foster equanimity, to lead man towards reality beyond both.

Four directives for sanctifying life

The reality is cognisable everywhere; why, it is evident most in oneself, when you earnestly seek it. You can experience it, even while performing selflessly your duty to yourself and others. I shall indicate to you today, four directives

for sanctifying your lives and purifying your mind, so that you can contact the god within you.

Thyaja durjana samsargam (give up the company of the wicked);
Bhaja Sadhu Samagamam (welcome the chance to be among the good);
Kuru punyam ahoratram (do good deeds both day and night);
Smara nithyam-anithyatham (remember which is lasting, which is not).

When one does not attempt to transform oneself thus, he is apt to blame God for his sorrows, instead of blaming his unsteady faith! He blames God because he announces himself as a devotee too soon, and expects plentiful grace. Grace cannot be claimed by such; God must accept the devotee as his own. One has to use his talent of discrimination to sift the trash and discard it in preference to the valuable. Doing punyam or good deeds means doing selfless service to others. One has to flee from bad persons to search for and win the friendship of the good, who can cleanse us and heal us. Man is consumed by time; God is the master of time. So, take refuge in God. Let God be your Guru, your path, your Lord. Adore Him, obey His commands, offer Him your grateful homage, hold Him fast in your memory. This is the easiest way to realise Him as your own reality. This is the one and only way.

15. Sadhana and Seva

Date: **07 July 1985** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Discourse to Ashram residents**

YOU have worked very hard in your life discharging worldly duties and come to Prashanthi Nilayam, seeking rest for the body and peace for the mind. That being so, it might look strange if you were asked to undertake some kind of work here also. In the olden days the Guru would collect his disciples in the forest and give them different types of work, sometimes for 10 to 12 years. This was done with a purpose. One important object of work is purification of the Chitha (heart). Once the heart is purified one is ready to receive the teachings of the Guru. Therefore, in the olden days the disciples were given work in the beginning, and after the disciples were purified by doing work, and the teacher was satisfied regarding the student's ripeness for receiving spiritual instruction, the teacher would start teaching Brahma Vidya.

The five Yajnas to remove sins

Besides this, there are other reasons why one should undertake work. Every family man is engaged in a number of activities in the course of which a number of small creatures and insects may be destroyed. In these and other ways, sins may be committed, knowingly or unknowingly. For removing such sins, the Sastras have prescribed five types of Yajnas' Brahma Yajna, Deva Yajna, Pithru Yajna, Manushya Yajna and Bhuta Yajna. Brahma Yajna includes the study of sacred books and scriptures. Deva Yajna includes offering worship, Bhajans, Upasana etc. Pithru Yajna refers to ceremonies to departed parents. The fourth one, Manushya Yajna, refers to extending hospitality to guests, 'invited and uninvited. Bhuta Yajna refers to offering food to animals, birds and insects, etc, and looking after wild animals. By engaging in acts of service and fulfilling the requirements of these Yajnas, we will be atoning for sins of various kinds that might have been committed. Service activities undertaken in other places, such as construction of roads in villages, or in the construction of temples or feeding the people, help to serve only that village or town; but by undertaking service activity in Prasanthi Nilayam one would

have an opportunity to serve God directly. Any work done here is an offering to Swami Himself. Work has to be taken up in this spirit. One should not be idle. Whatever work is done here, should be done out of a feeling of love. You can take up whatever work is appropriate, in keeping with your aptitudes and capacity. While doing such sacred work, residents can carry on their own Sadhana, whether it be Sravanam, Kirtanam, Vishnusmaranam, Padasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam or Atmanivedanam.

Obstacles should be taken as tests

Sometimes people say that many obstacles occur during Sadhana. When obstacles come they should be taken as tests. Tests are intended not as punishment, but they are given for ascertaining one's fitness for promotion. Frequent tests mean frequent opportunities for promotion. If there is a big time-lag between test, it only means that promotion is not possible for a long time. The obstacles in Sadhana should be taken in this spirit, and you should try to overcome them. While practising Sadhana one has to follow the rules laid down in the scriptures or follow the command of the Guru or that of God. While following these rules or commands, one should not worry whatever obstacles come. One should continue with one's prescribed Sadhana and achieve success, even at the cost of one's life. Some people say that they are following Swami's commands, but they are getting so many obstacles in their Sadhana. This is not the correct attitude. In fact, if one follows Swami's instructions carefully and correctly, no obstacles will come. If obstacles come it means one has not followed the commands correctly. Before undertaking Sadhana there are certain things which one should know. Sadhana refers to an activity undertaken for achieving one's goal or purpose in life. The Sadhana has to decide what he wants to achieve, what his purpose is. Then Sadhana has to be carried on until one achieves that goal. If one undertakes Sadhana without knowing these aspects one will falter, face obstacles and problems. Then one may lose faith in the Guru, which could result in a total fall and destruction of oneself. So, one must be very careful in doing Sadhana.

Six steps in spiritual efforts

In Sadhana there are six steps; Sama, Dama, Titiksha, Uparathi, Shraddha and Samadhan. Sama, Dama and Uparathi have to do with various aspects of mind and sense control. Titiksha refers to having equal-mindedness in gain or loss, in pain or pleasure, and in praise or censure. Shraddha is very essential in spiritual life. Only the one who has Shraddha {faith}, will get illumination and wisdom. So whatever work is undertaken, one should do it with interest and faith. Samadhana refers to contentment. He who has the least desires is the richest man in the world. He who is filled with desires is the poorest man in the world. Therefore, one should have contentment and self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction comes from self-confidence. Self-satisfaction can lead one to self-sacrifice and through it to Self-realization. These three are important for man: Knowledge, Skill and Balance. If one approaches knowledge with skill, one will get balance. Balance is very important. It means equipoise in praise or censure. For balance, skill is necessary. For skill, knowledge is necessary. If you lose balance, suffering will soon follow.

Winning the Guru's grace

When you are given some work, you should put your heart and soul into it, and do the work with the utmost sincerity and dedication, to the limit of your capacity. Take for example a person who is entrusted with planting trees and developing a garden. If he does the work wholeheartedly the plants will come up well, and the garden will grow into a thing of beauty. When Swami comes to see that garden and feels happy with the condition of the plants, then Swami's joy becomes the Grace He bestows on that person; and that Grace will confer great happiness on that individual. Here is an example of this: Sri Sankaracharya had a number of, disciples, of whom 13 were considered important. Of these, four were the closest to the Master. They were Hasthimalika, Thotaka, Suresha and Padmapada. The first three chose to study the scriptures under their Guru, but the last one said that he would be most happy just serving the Guru. Sankara asked him what service he wanted to perform. The disciple replied that he wanted to wash the Guru's clothes and have them ready for the Guru each day. The other three would ridicule him for choosing only service to the Guru, while they were learning the great scriptures, but the fourth disciple was not at all bothered by that. Every day

he used to take the Guru's clothes to the middle of the river so that they could be washed in the purest water available. One day there was a flood and he was caught in the middle of the river. He was not worried about losing his life, but he was greatly concerned about getting the clothes to the Guru, in time. He began rushing across the river, which was now in spate. Wherever he placed his foot a stone lotus sprang up. Thus he got the name of Padmapada. When he brought the clothes to the Guru, the guru was so pleased with the disciple's devotion that he showered his Grace on him, and immediately Padmapada became a great scholar. This is the greatness of service to the Guru and the Grace it can evoke from him.

Always use polite language

If you can earn Swami's Grace then everything will be added unto you and you will be happy here and hereafter. Whatever work is being done by you, do it with utmost sincerity. Always use polite language and speak sweetly. During Swami's 60th Birthday Celebrations, lakhs of devotees will come here. They should be treated as guests. Show them all possible courtesy and consideration. Do not hurt their feelings. They have not come here for your sake, but for the sake of Swami, in the same way as you came here for the sake of Swami originally. If you are in charge of accommodation and someone wants room, but none is available, then you should politely tell him so. He may repeat the request but you should not shout back at him. You should politely tell him that there is no accommodation. There are four stages in the journey to God: Salokya, Samipya, Sarupya and Sayujya. Now you have entered the first stage of Salokya which is coming into the Divine Presence. You should progress forward to Samipya, which means coming nearer; then move on to Sarupya where you shine with the very form and splendour of Dignity. Finally you enter the stage of Sayujya complete mergence, where the bubble bursts and finds itself to be the Sea. Service will give you the opportunity to progress along these steps and come nearer to Swami!

If you have to be told in a manner that you can understand, one can say "Do

into others as you want them to do unto you" - that is Dharma. Dharma consists in avoiding actions which would hurt others. If anyone causes happiness to you, then you in turn should do such things that would cause happiness to others. When we recognise that what others do will cause difficulties and if we do the same things, that would be Adharma.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16. God, Nature and Man

Date: 11 July 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE Cosmos has one Source, one Support, one End. That is an eternal entity, self sufficient, totally luminous. The Chandogya Upanishad, while narrating the instruction given by Sanat Kumara to Narada, reveals that though we deal with different numbers as three, five, seven, nine, eleven, thirteen, fifteen, seventeen, nineteen and twenty-one, there is only One in reality, the Brahman.

Multiplicity is how the One appears when It assumes Name and Form. Then It becomes the Jagath, the Flux, the Cosmos, the Universe. God was alone before the Cosmos appeared. He projects, He protects, He dissolves and draws it into Himself This is the Truth. Man has the rare good fortune of adoring Nature as the Body of God and offering grateful worship to God. But, is he conscious of God being the source and sustenance? Does he give God the first place in his thoughts which is His due? Or, is he engaged in the activities of life in total disregard of God? It is a pity that, instead of paying attention to God, Nature and Man, in that order, men today are concerned most with themselves, more with Nature and very much less with God. From birth to death, from dawn till night, man pursues fleeting pleasures by the exploitation, the despoiling, the desecration of Nature, ignoring the truth that it is the property of God the Creator, and any injury caused to it is a sacrilege which merits dire punishment.

Ravana's ego earned him eternal disgrace

Ravana ignored God and coveted Nature, courting disaster. This story is the subject of the famous epic, Ramayana. He desired to own and master Sita (personified Nature; she was the child of Mother Earth, found in a furrow) and brought her away from Rama, the incarnation of God, who was her lord and master. His own brother reminded him of the inequity and advised him to seek refuge in Rama and restore Sita to her rightful Lord. Ravana was so proud of the success he had achieved in imprisoning Sita that the warning fell

on deaf ears. Hanuman, who discovered Sita and conveyed to her the message of hope and the assurance of hope, managed to enter the Audience Hall of Ravana. He revealed to him that Sita was the Mother of all the worlds and his own mother. He described the might and majesty of God in the Rama form and drew ominous pictures of the destruction that was in store for Ravana. He advised him to restore Sita and surrender to Rama. He said that eternal disgrace was the fate of every one who thrusts his ego forward and keeps God behind, beyond consideration. All the twenty-four hours, all the days of life, men are active in worshiping their bodies and minds, catering to the senses, submitting to the clamour of carnal desires, earning the wherewithal to feed themselves. They have no time to spare for meditation on God. How can men secure peace of mind, when men have no contact with the Vast, the Timeless, the Almighty Providence? When God is last, life is lost.

A lesson to be learnt from Mahabharata

The Mahabharata Epic teaches the same lesson. Arjuna was third among the five Pandavas. Duryodhana was the eldest of the hundred Kauravas, their cousins. The Kauravas developed such deep envy, greed and hatred against the Pandavas that a fratricidal war was rendered inevitable. Both sides started gathering allies and resources. The Pandavas adhered to righteous norms and were loyal to Sri Krishna, whom they revered as God. On their behalf, Arjuna hurried to Dwaraka to secure the most precious armament they knew, namely, Krishna's blessings. When Duryodhana knew that Arjuna had left for Dwaraka, he wanted to forestall his enemy and journeyed to Dwaraka as fast as he could. The Divine Play-actor sensed the approach of the rival claimants for his favour. So, he quietly laid himself on the bed and pretended to be fast asleep. Arjuna reached the place. Since he was not only a devotee but a companion and a kinsman, he tiptoed into the room and, drawing a three-legged stool from a corner, sat reverentially near the Lotus feet. Duryodhana barged in very pompously. He had the air of a ruling monarch. He was too proud to sit and wait like Arjuna. He found a high-backed chair near the head of the cot. He plumped on it with a sigh. When ego swells the head, man becomes unruly and wild. Duryodhana fretted and fumed at the delay.

Arrogance versus Faith

Krishna was amused at the restlessness of the Kaurava supplicant,, who dared to eject a few fake coughs in order to awaken him. Arjuna, however, was struggling to breathe softly and silently. At last, Krishna sat up and noticing Arjuna facing him with folded palms accosted him with his characteristic sweetness. "Oh! when did yogi arrive? How do you do? How is Draupadi? And your brothers?" Duryodhana was consumed by envy, anger and pride. Krishna stoked the fire. He enjoyed the scene, this picture and that. "An Emperor has honoured his home! Yet this bundle of conceit talks to that commoner so long and so fast, as if I am nonexistent," thought Duryodhana. "Is this the way of treating his guests?" he asked himself. At that moment, Krishna turned to him, with the question, "When did you arrive? Are your parents doing well? How are your brothers faring?" Duryodhana replied, "The war, will soon be on. I seek your help." On hearing this, Krishna questioned Arjuna, "What are you seeking?" Arjuna replied, "I seek your blessings." Krishna designed a dilemma for both. Krishna proposed to give his army of ten thousand warriors to one party and himself alone to the other. "I shall not wield any weapon. I will not fight. At least, I can serve as a charioteer. Now, announce your choice", said Krishna to Arjuna. Duryodhana was furious. "This is a calculated insult, allowing him to choose," he said to himself. "The ten thousand will be his and I will be burdened with a dark-skinned log," he feared.

Preferring Lord's grace ensures victory

Krishna wanted Arjuna to decide which of the two he wanted. "I saw you first, so you choose first", Krishna prodded Arjuna. Duryodhana was on tenter-hooks. Arjuna placed his head on the Feet of Krishna and said, "You are all we need." He knew that Krishna was God, the embodiment of power, wisdom and Love. He pleaded, "Be the Charioteer of my vehicle and, I pray, for the journey of my Life as well." Duryodhana was relieved. He preferred Nature to Nature's Master. He led the ten thousand to his camp. Arjuna had God, installed before him in the chariot, guiding him to Victory. Duryodhana was

punished with defeat, death and disgrace for preferring the world to God who is its life-breath. During the battle, one day, when Krishna brought the chariot at sunset to the Pandava Camp, Arjuna was so intoxicated with pride at his exploits on the field that he appropriated for himself the first place, relegating Krishna to the second; he was the Master and Krishna was a charioteer holding a whip and the reins, he felt. So he insisted on the driver alighting and pulling the steps down for him to land. Krishna knew what he suffered from; he was determined to cure him. So, he commanded Arjuna sternly to get down. Arjuna could not disobey. He required Krishna's service for a few more days! When he had moved a few paces away, Krishna rose and jumped down from his seat. The gems on the jewels he wore on the ears, shoulder and chest flashed in blinding brilliance when he leaped. The moment he stood on the ground, the chariot was enveloped in flames and turned into a heap of ash! Krishna explained the reason to the astonished Arjuna. The enemies had shot many arrows of fire at the chariot that day in order to kill Arjuna but Krishna had held them in check. If he had left his seat on the chariot with Arjuna still in, he would have been caught in the conflagration. Luckily, Arjuna had yielded and was saved. He learnt the lesson that man should endeavour to please God first, the world next and his self last. During worship at the domestic altar or in temples, you offer God 'naivedya' (eatable items) in the form of fruits and sweets. Sour or bitter things are not offered, for God is sweetness personified. Earn His Grace by avoiding sour temperament and bitter behaviour. Fill every thought, word and deed with the sweetness of Love. Then, you can enter the battlefield of the world, sure of Victory, since God has promised to serve as your charioteer.

17. The Victory

Date: 15 August 1985 / Occasion: India Independence Day

The Motherland which bore children who earned immortal renown all around the globe; The Battleground, which witnessed the fight of heroes from the West who ruled; The Bharatha-land which shone so brilliant with seers and scholars, each a gem; The Happy land which fostered and brought to fame songsters and poets, thinkers and teachers; The Birth-land of the beauty and charm divine through master artists of brush and chisel; This mother Bharath to guard her Dharma treasure, O! student! yours is the bounden task. THE world is the manifestation and expansion of the five fundamental elements. Its innate nature is duality - the entity and the result, the cause and its effect. This duality is evident in the alternating experiences of joy and grief, praise and blame, victory and defeat, profit and loss. These are the consequences of the right and wrong we indulge in. It is not wrong, if you slip into wrong; repeating the wrong is the thing to be condemned. One must learn lessons from the mistake, repent and resolve not to commit it again. The history of India holds forth before us the folly of repeating the wrong already done. The French, the Portuguese, the Moghuls and the Afghans have all warned Indians against this characteristic. Duplex has recorded that he was able to establish French rule in the then Karnataka region with the help of the Nizam. Mir Jaffer helped Clive to conquer Bengal. Raghunatha Rao Peshwa helped the foreigner to conquer Maharashtra. Foreign rule was established in India, with the help of Indians themselves. Inhabitants of an island, eleven thousand miles away, were able to conquer India, sixteen times its size having eight times its population, and rule over it for one hundred and ninety years, because of one basic defect, disunity caused by mutual suspicion, selfishness, jealousy. Union is strength; disunion brings disaster.

When Gandhi was twenty-four years old, he proceeded to South Africa at the invitation of an Indian Business House to conduct a Court case. There he witnessed the humiliation being heaped upon Indian settlers by the Whites. Differences can exist between man and man in health, education, wealth and temperament. But, fundamentally, all men are equal and should be treated as

such. But racial animosity was the accepted policy of the White rulers in South Africa.

The advent of Sathyagraha by Gandhi

Gandhi stayed on among the oppressed Indians and native blacks and devised the strategy of Sathyagraha (passive resistance or civil disobedience) to end the exploitation. When the movement showed signs of quick success, General Smuts invited Gandhi for discussion. Gandhi explained to him that he had to resort to non-violent Sathyagraha since the inhuman policy of insulting and injuring humans having black skins had to be resisted and exterminated. General Smuts retorted by pointing out to Gandhi how millions of Indians - human beings like the rest - were kept out of villages and condemned as untouchables. The General's word acted as a bullet shot right at the heart of Gandhi. Gandhi felt that he had no right to correct another while he was himself infected with the same evil. He decided to return to India and practise the strategy of Sathyagraha for the removal of untouchability and other social evils and to free his Motherland from exploitation by foreigners. Sathyagraha was the path of Truth and Love, of the means being as pure as the ends. Verily, he who accepts criticism gladly and thanks the critic for his remarks is the one really human. Since Gandhi was willing to learn and had the humility to acknowledge criticism, he could mould the people of his land and be hailed as the Father of the Nation. He looked upon the country as one. He planted the seed of unity of all faiths and all communities, which under his guidance grew quickly into a big tree. He built a great movement on the basis of Atmabhalam (soul-force) that strengthened unity and self-confidence. Selfishness that had possessed the nation as an evil genius and mined its progress in material, moral, political and spiritual fields, was suppressed while the movement was on. The people suffered much but sufferings is the prelude to success. There is no rose without thorns. Without giving, no one can gain. How can anything great be achieved without overcoming internal and external obstacles?

The birth and meaning of Swatantra

The independence we celebrate today was finally achieved and proclaimed at midnight on August 14/15, 1947. What exactly does the word 'independence' mean? It means we are not dependent on anyone, any longer. We are dependent on ourselves alone. The Indian word is Swatantra for 'Independence.' It means "our Tantra." The word Tantra means "the Heart" (Hrudaya, Hridaya, in the Heart, Hrd. The yantra (the machine, the apparatus) is the body. The Mantra (saving formula is the Breath and the Tantra (the heart, the source of life is the Atma. So, Swatantra means independence from everything except the Atma. The resident of the heart is the only Guru. There is no dependence on the others. He is the only Master, the only God. This is the stage of Swarajya, sole monarch of oneself. The word Swaraj, commonly used for an independent state, connotes only absence of worldly dependence. Independence can be enjoyed by man only if he gets rid of bondage to the senses which drag him into tantalising ventures. The attainment of Yoga, involving sense-control, expansion of love, and cleansing the consciousness, so the God's glory may be reflected therein, is the goal.

Purity, Unity and Divinity

You have to be leaders of this country in a few years time. So I insist on the development of the sense of Unity, a bond of Brotherhood, and an awareness of Dignity. One should strive for unity of minds, unity of hearts, not the temporary association of the moneyed people or persons in positions of power. Unity must result in unity of thought, word and deed. Love for one's motherland is good. But it should not lead to hatred towards the mother land of others. Your prayer has to be, "May all the world be happy and peaceful." For, only when the world has peace and prosperity, can India be peaceful and happy. It is only when India is peaceful and happy, that Andhra Pradesh will be peaceful and happy. It is only when Andhra Pradesh has peace and happiness that Anantpur District can have peace and happiness. It is only when Anantpur District has peace and happiness can Puttaparthi be peaceful and happy. It is only when Puttaparthi has peace and happiness can you have peace and happiness! Your peace and happiness are linked with the world's peace and happiness. Any act of hatred or violence committed by you will pollute the atmosphere of the world. Adore any living being; the adoration

reaches God, for He is in every being. Insult any living being; the insult too reaches God. So, expand love towards all, everywhere. The flag is the symbol of victor, of the joy of Independence. Each nation has a flag for itself. Pay attention to another flag to symbolise another laudable victory over one's lower instincts, impulses, passions, emotions and desires, the flag that has to be unfurled on every human heart. When you achieve that victor, you will become the true inheritors of Bharatiya Culture. Discourse at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute for Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam, on 15-8-

Do not waste all your years with stone images, pictures or idol. Learn to see in every living vital active person, the embodiment of all energy, all beauty, all beneficence, namely, God. God is subtler than ether, filling the smallest crevice with His majesty. Know this and serve His manifestations wherever you meet them.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18. The Royal Road to God

Date: 28 August 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

THIS land is made holy by many saints and seers. kings and scholars who have enriched its culture and brought joy and peace to the lives of people. It is a source of inspiration to remember their teachings on days set apart for the purpose and to resolve to put them into practice. Sankaracharya was one of the greatest of these. At very young age, he mastered the scriptures, and composed elaborate commentaries on the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutra and the Bhagavad Gita (three basic treatises of Sanathana Dharma). He journeyed by foot all over India, visited the famous shines and holy places, and spent some years on the Himalayas, before his death at the age of 32. He revealed that the fundamental message of the seers and sages was Adwaita (Nondualism). The Vedic axioms, Aham Brahmasmi (I am the Absolute), Thath Thwam Asi (That Thou Art) etc. are expressions of Truth which are validated by scriptures, logic and experience. The individual is the same as the Universal. There is never any two; all are One, the omnipresent Cosmic Consciousness, the Formless, Nameless, Impersonal, Attributeless Being.

Man, Nature and God are One

Adwaita did not encourage or inspire devotion to a Personal God. There was no room for surrender to a master figure. The masses who longed for the removal of an inner thirst had to be led, step by step. Ramanuja interpreted the basic texts and discovered that man can realise God through worship, using the gift of Nature as instrument. God is the kernel, the shell is man and the fibrous stuff is Nature (as in the coconut). They are intimately intertwined, as limbs in the body, parts with their own peculiar characteristics. Man, Nature and God are One without a Second (Adwaita) in a special and unique sense (Visishta). So, Ramanuja's philosophy is named Qualified Non-Dualism.

However, qualified Adwaita was an experience not easily accessible to ordinary men. They would put their faith in a compassionate, all-knowing, all powerful God to whom they can pray and offer life and love. Madhwacharya,

whose original name was Ananadatheertha, declared that man is totally distinct from God, that man is neither God nor Divine. Man's highest destiny is to serve God, as Radha adored Krishna. Longing for the service, yearning to see and fill one's eyes with the beauty and majesty of the Lord - that is the most potent Sadhana. The aspirant would much rather be an ant nibbling molecules of sugar than becoming a lump or a mountain range of sugar.

This process of devotion and dedication is the royal road, the smoothest path, to spiritual success. This day, people of Kerala state, wherever they are, do experience this holy process. The Kerala region is today, the Onam festival day, refreshed by the monsoon rains; forest, lowland and coast are bright and burnished; the earth has a carpet of golden blossoms. The country is resplendent with an atmosphere of worship. A wonderful story, explains this widely spread expectation, hope and gratitude.

The golden empire of Bali, the Emperor

Hiranyakasipu is described in the Puranas as a demonic ruler. He denied God and terrified his subjects. While he asserted that God is nowhere, his son Prahlada affirmed that God is everywhere. As a consequence, God was nowhere for the father, though He was everywhere for the son. Prahlada's son was Virochana and the hero of the story behind the Onam festival, was the son of Virochana. He was named Bali, Balichakravarthi (Bali, the Emperor). Being the grandson of the devout Prahlada, Bali too was engaged in the glorification of God and in the material and spiritual uplift of his subjects. There was no trace of poverty or ill health in his empire. Every home was lit with joy; every day was festive occasion. He decided to celebrate an elaborate sacrificial rite called Viswajith, which would propitiate the Gods so much that, with their blessings, he could extend his beneficent rule over the entire world. The Lord utilised this opportunity to shower Grace on him. He incarnated as Vamana and proceeded to the sacrificial altar in the form of a mendicant student, just initiated into spiritual life. Bali was happy to welcome Him. When Vamana was asked, which gift he would accept, He replied that he needed only three feet of ground, measured by His feet. Bali was surprised at this answer. For a short second, he doubted the intention and identity of the

strange visitor. His preceptor, Sukra, warned him against promising to agree. But, Bali stood by his word. He permitted Vamana to measure for Himself the three feet of ground.

Why the Lord incarnated

The Lord had incarnated to bless Bali, not to destroy him. So, when He had measured the earth with one stride and the sky with the second, He placed his foot on Bali's head and accepted the Emperor as the third foot of ground. That foot released Bali from the recurrent cycle of birth and death.

But Bali made one last, lingering wish, which the Lord agreed to fulfil. He prayed, "Allow me to come to the Kerala I ruled over, one day in the year, so that I can see people I love and the land cherish in my heart." Onam is that day. The word Sravanam, when it is applied to this month, has become Chingore and when applied to the star with which the moon is associated this day, has become Onam - Sravanam, Vanam, Onam. Bali chose for his annual visit the day of the Sravanam star, in the Sravanam month.

Arrival of Bali is a day of rejoicing

The people of Kerala celebrate the arrival of Bali with great rejoicing. It is a holy day, when they prepare delicious sweets and offer them to the Lord. Everyone wears new clothes (Ona-Kodi), every home is decorated with festoons, garlands and floral designs. The atmosphere is fragrant with incense from every domestic shrine. Villagers spend the day together in dance and song. Lamps are lit in front of each home; they are placed on door sills, held before temples by rows of children. The lighted lamp symbolises the jiva (individual) whose self is but a tiny flicker of the Cosmic Light. Old and young, rich and poor, are all equally immersed on Onam Day in grateful adoration of the Lord and of Bali who earned the grace of the Lord by sacrificing his ego. The lesson that Onam imparts is: A lifetime spent without devotion to the Almighty Lord is a pitiful waste. Ridding oneself of identification with the body and its adjuncts, one must involve oneself with the Spirit. This alone can reveal to him his reality, the Atma. Once the Atmic core of oneself is

contacted, it needs only one step more to discover that all else have the same Atma as their reality. Thus, man becomes aware of the Unity that is the Truth, that is God. Man is now suffering from a totally topsyturvy, view of things. He believes that Man is real, Nature is Real and God is a figment of the imagination. But God is the seed which has expressed itself as Nature, of which the human body is a part. Just as in every fruit that the tree yields, the primal seed is evident, Paramatma (the Cosmic Consciousness) is the core of every being too. The lower self or ego acts like a fog to hide this truth, which when known can make man free. The ego is the unseen cause for the ups and downs which one struggles with all his life. To remove the fog, to cleanse the mind of desire and distress, man has to engage himself in positive activity. Man is prompted towards activity by the better nature rooted in him. But, out of sheer perversity, he pursues ruinous activity which pollutes his thoughts, words and deeds.

God exists and can be experienced

The ear ought to be eager to listen to. the glory of God. The tongue ought to love the taste of His story only. Every action must be worthy enough to be an offering to Him. I have told you often, "See good; hear good; speak good; do good; be good. This is the way to God." I often add, "See no evil; hear no evil; speak no evil; do no evil; be not evil. This is the way to God." There are today people who affirm that there is no God. But Hiranyakasipu who belonged to this category was confronted by his own son, who asserted even as a child, that God exists and can be experienced. Those who deny God cannot prove that He does not exist, except by their limited reason and logic. The experience of God earned by sages in all ages and all lands cannot be argued away with the help of reason, which can be affected by prejudice, pride and even illhealth. There are many truths which are too stable to be dismissed. The magnet attracts iron, three plus three add upto six, a green betel leaf with white lime on it when chewed with a brown nut produces red coloured salsa, a sapling hung with the roots above grows nevertheless upwards as is its wont - these facts cannot be negated at all. The awareness of God, which is the very purpose of human existence, has to happen - however long the time taken, however difficult the process. When the heart is purified and the

consciousness is illumined, the task is easy.

Message of Onam festival to all

God is minuter than the minutest. When you are unable to see air which you know is all around you, how can you see God who is minuter? God is vastest. When you are unable to picturise the Cosmos which astronomy has not succeeded in unravelling how can you see or imagine the vaster than the vastest? Emperor Bali, who is welcomed into their hearts and home by the people of Kerala on Onam Day, had unwavering faith in God. He served his subjects, as if he was commissioned by God (Narayana). He offered all he earned, all he was, himself most gladly to God. He overcame the clouds of ignorance and rose to the heights of supreme wisdom. His self expanded so vastly that it merged in Divine Consciousness. Purity leads to Unity and Unity to mergence with Divinity. This is the Message that the Onam festival and the story of Bali conveys to mankind.

Discourse at Purnachandra Auditorium on

19. The Yoga of Samathvam

Date: 07 September 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

God is a word on the tongue for all. But, what do they gain therefrom? Until they grow godly goodness. How can they see the word as Vision? THE Reality which sustains the Cosmos and the Cell is one one, the all-pervasive Consciousness, named Brahman. When this infinite vastness is spoken of in relation to Cosmos (Jagath, the Superflux), It is the Paramatma (the Overself) and it is the Atma (the Self) when it is conceded as the core of individual beings. All three are one entity, but they 'appear' different and delude the short-sighted. This characteristic is known as Maya. The Reality is Sath (Existence, Is-ness), Chith (Knowledge, Awareness, Consciousness) and Ananda (Bliss). The appearance or the power of diversification uses the three gunas or modes to embody itself differently. The gunas are satwa (serenity), rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia). The gunas urge man towards either knowing or desiring or working. When the "urge to become," namely Maya impels Brahman to project itself, it appears as Eswara or God when associated with satwa guna, as Jivi (man and living beings) when associated with rajo guna and as Prakriti (Nature) when associated with tamo guna. Brahman is the basis of all three, just as the rope is the basis of the snake for which it is mistaken. Maya is the mirror in which Brahman is reflected as Personalised God, Man and Nature. We are able to know Brahman, through Nature, which is saturated with it or identifiable with it.

God can be known through His words

The snake is the product of the mind. The external is the creation of the internal. Brahman has manifested Itself as all this. How can an image occur with no object? How can a person be a father without a child? God created the world; the world conferred on God the glory of 'Creator'. Man, through his yearning, imagination and intensity endows God with a form and name, and a large bunch of attributes from which he hopes to benefit. But, God is above and beyond human traits and characteristics known as Gunas. Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, "I have no need to engage myself in any

activity. But yet, I am busy acting, in order to promote the well-being of the world and its inhabitants." Through His works, He can be known. The Gita refers to each of its chapters as a Yoga. Yoga means union, union of the self with its source. How do the eighteen chapters, each a Yoga, help man to fulfill the destiny? The Gita provides the answer. "Samathvam Yogam uchyathe" (equal-mindedness, equanimity, sense of balance, unaffectedness is what yoga means). We can distinguish five fields in the attainment of this Samathvam (equalmindedness).

Samathvam in five fields of activity

(1) The field of natural ups and downs (Prakrithika): One has to welcome both summer and winter, for they are both essential for the process of living. The alternation of seasons toughens and sweetens us. Birth and death are both natural events. We cannot discover the reason for either birth or death. They simply happen. We try to blame some person or some incident for the injury or loss we suffer but the real reason is our own karma (action). When the background of the event is known, the impact can be lessened or even negated. (2) The field of social ups and downs' One has to welcome with equal-mindedness fame and blame, respect and ridicule, profit and loss, and such other responses and reactions from the society in which one has to grow and struggle. Fortune is as much a challenge to one's equanimity as misfortune.

(3) The field of knowledge with its ups and downs' Until the summit of knowledge wherefrom one experiences the One which has become this vast make-believe, there are many temptations and obstacles that lead the seeker astray. The student is inclined to give up the climb altogether when he feels exhausted or when he feels that he has reached the summit. The Gita defines a Pandit or learned man as a Samadarsi - he who has gained the awareness of the same One in all beings. The Jnani has gained Samathva when he is convinced of the One being the Truth of all and when his thoughts, words and deeds are guided by that conviction. (4) The field of devotion with its ups and downs: Here too there is a great deal of rascality and fanaticism, prejudice and persecution, which arise out of ignorance of the One, the sameness of the

God whom all adore, through various rites and rituals, modes and methods. There is only One God and He is Omnipresent. (5) The field of activity with its ups and downs must be sanctified by divinising the purpose. When work is sublimated into worship, defeat and disappointment will not dishearten. Success will not promote pride; it will lead to humility and gratitude for grace. Work performed as duty, as due from us to society brings the reward of joy, for we have utilised the knowledge and skill, endowed by God through society, for serving society itself. The Samathvam (equal-mindedness) that can sweeten and lighten life is best exemplified in Radha and her devotion to Krishna. It is the awareness of the unity of the river and the sea, the individual self with the Omniself, the Atma with the Paramatma. Reaching the Source is the Destiny; desire to flow steadily and straight towards the Source is Devotion. The pang of separation, the agony arising from neglect, the yearning to overcome obstacles, the joy of contemplation, the ecstasy of self-annihilation - these add up to the supreme identification of Radha with her Lord, Sri Krishna.

Jayadeva's portrayal of Radha Bhakti

"Geetha Govindam", the Book of Songs of Govinda (Krishna) by the great mystic and poet Jayadeva of Orissa, is the immortal portrayal of Radha Bhakti in its manifold manifestations. Jayadeva could express it with such charm and clarity that even the man behind the plough sang those songs and filled his heart with divine delight. The ruler of the land, Lakshmana Sena, was stricken with envy. He prepared a parallel book of songs and ordered that they be sung, instead of Jayadeva's outpourings, in the temples of the land, including the greatest of them all, the Jagannath Temple at Puri. When his order was receded with universal protest, the king laid both the books at the Feet of Lord Jagannath and the shrine locked and kept under strict vigilance. When the doors were opened in the morning, the king saw the Lord having Jayadeva's 'Geetha Govindam' in His hand, while his rival book written out of envy and pride was thrown into a far corner. The Lord had announced that He showers Grace on inner purity, not outer pomp. When one has established himself in equal mindedness, Krishna installs Himself in his heart: His voice becomes the conscience that guides him at every step. Through Yoga,

fortitude must be acquired; through Japa, sense-control must be earned; through Sadhana, the mind should be filled with peace. But, these effects are not noticeable, though the causes are practised. People close themselves in their shrine-rooms and perform puja, offer flower and fruit and later, emerge from the place, only to shout and swear, frighten and fight with all and sundry. Man must be a yogi always, under all circumstances (sathatham yoginah), says the Gita. This means he will be ever in Ananda. Faith in God can ensure equanimity and balance. Knowledge must develop into skill, which must be directed and regulated by a sense of balance. Or else, skill degenerates into 'kill'.

Education for Samathvam

There are many assembled here, who have joined the University in search of knowledge and skill. They must endeavour to know the Atma resident in them in order that faith in Atma can grant them wisdom, which is knowledge of the Highest. Now, seekers of knowledge are concerned only with what they think they are and what others think they are, ignoring the genuine quest of what they really are. Therefore, they are their own enemies! They are caught in the coils of anxiety, fear and misery. They are fascinated by the trivial tinsel that they see. They believe whatever is seen and waste their life struggling, succeeding and losing. Pasu {animal} is the name given to such beings who put faith in pasyathi (what is seen). People raise the clamour, "I want peace", but they do not discard the "I" (the ego) and the "want" {desire}. How then can they get 'peace'? They will only go into 'pieces.' Though education by itself cannot confer Atmananda on you, you have to acquire education, in order to serve the world. It should not be used for collecting monthly wads of bank notes and for selfish revels. The process of teaching and learning should not be reduced to vomiting what the teacher has learned and the student consuming what has thus been vomitted. It has to be creative, positive, productive.

Crores of rupees are spent on 'research' in this country. When one examines the value of the result achieved, it has to be judged as a big waste. Those engaged in research must try to give back to the country the sum spent

multiplied a thousand fold. Or else, it would be tantamount to treason.

Plough and Cattle of Balarama and Krishna

Consider the ideal placed before mankind by Sri Krishna and His brother, Balarama. Balarama had the plough as his inseparable weapon. The plough is not a destructive weapon; it is a tool for the production of food. Krishna tended cattle, also essential for every agricultural operation, from preparation of soil to transporting the grain, after harvest. The message they convey to you is 'Produce, put your knowledge into practice and produce things that can fulfill essential, elevating needs - domestic furniture, agricultural implements, school accessories, home building materials, clothing fabrics, etc., etc. Always question yourself: "What have I contributed to the happy living of my fellowmen?" Expand your heart; let your love enfold more and more of fellowmen. Therein lies divinity.

These are the years when you have to use time most beneficially. Teachers must cultivate knowledge and develop it by sharing it with their students. Students must accept, treasure and expand that knowledge by putting it into practice.

Be proud of your motherland

Earn Ananda for yourself, promote prosperity for the country and peace for the world. The motherland should be freed from dependence on others for its welfare and progress. Declare proudly and fearlessly, "this is my mother tongue; this is my motherland. I shall serve her and honour her. I shall preserve and promote the heritage handed over to me." The name Krishna means, He who attracts, He who cultivated the heart-land, He who is ever in Bliss. Students have to bear this in mind. Krishna draws people into His presence, sows, grows and harvests Love in barren broken hearts and confers supreme delight. Balarama asks for dedication to Bhoomatha (The land) and Krishna, to Gomatha (The cattle). They have raised agriculture, the process of providing food, to the level of a sacred sadhana. Srinatha, the highly patronised court poet, was brought home in a palanquin borne by palace

servants. He noticed the son of Pothana, the author of the immortal Telugu epic 'Bhagavatham', ploughing his bit of land. Srinatha ridiculed him and called out 'Farmer!' The son replied, "This is much nobler than your profession of mendicancy, flattering a human being and feeding on what he drops into your palm." Maintain selfrespect. Develop self-confidence. Proclaim aloud, "This is my Bharath. The people of Bharath are my brothers." Krishna is worshipped as Gopala. The word 'go' means jivi (living beings). So, when you serve fellow-men and other beings with selfless love and total compassion, you are offering to Krishna the worship He accepts most gladly and with full grace.

Resort to the recitation of the Name when your mind is agitated by fear, anxiety or grief. To make a cup of coffee, it is not enough to have decoction in one cup and milk in another. You have to pour one into the other and mix well. Mix the decoction of the Vairagya (sense-control, detachment) with the milk of Bhathi-Shraddha (Devotion, steadfastness). And you will get the drink that satisfies.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20. Qualities of the Sadhaka

Date: 1985

When the "Sanathana Sarathi" was launched in '57, Bhagavan 'began a series of articles entitled "Prema Vahini". The message which He gave to spiritual sadhaks then are even more relevant today. The following extracts show how vital Bhagavan's message is to all aspirants and seekers.

THE Sadhaka should note the distinction between the conduct of the natural man and the aspirant. Sahaja man is one without. Sahana (Fortitude), with aham-kara (conceit), and one who is full of desires relating to the Jagath by which he is trying to have a contented Janma. The Sadhana man is he who is engaged in Sarveswarchintha as ceaselessly as the waves of the Sagara (sea), who accumulates the DHANA (treasure) of Equality and Equal love to all, who is content in the thought that all is the Lord's and nothing is his. The Sadhana man will not, like the Sahaja man, easily bend before grief or loss, anger or hatred or selfishness, hunger, thirst or fickleness. One should master all the above things as much as possible, and journey through life with fortitude, courage, joy, peace, chatty and humility.

Sadhana is necessary to realise God

Realising that the tending of the body is not all important, one has to bear patiently even' hunger and thirst and be engaged uninterruptedly in the contemplation of the Lord. Instead, quarrelling for every tiny little thing, losing one's temper, becoming sad at the slightest provocation, getting angry at the smallest insult, worried at thirst, hunger and loss of sleep, these can never be the characteristics of a Sadhaka. Rice in its natural state and rice that is boiled, can these two be the same? The hardness of natural rice is absent in the boiled one. The boiled grain is soft, harmless and sweet. The unboiled grain is hard, conceited and full of delusion. Both types are Jivis and Men, no doubt, those who are immersed in external illusions and Avidyamaya are "Men"; those who are immersed in internal illusions or Vidya Maya are "Sadhakas", and God is immersed in neither, devoid of both. He who has no

external illusions, becomes a Sadhaka and when he is devoid of even the internal illusions, he can be termed a God. Such a person's heart becomes the seat of God. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that all is pervaded by God. Though, of course, the Lord is situated in every heart, Sadhana is necessary so that they may discover it for themselves. It is not possible for us to see our own face! We must have a mirror to show us its image! So too, a basic Marga (Path), a sadhana (method) is necessary to become devoid of Gunas.

Lord Himself is the harvest of a Sadhaka

There is, in this world, no tapas higher than fortitude, no happiness greater than contentment, no Punya holier than mercy, no weapon more effective than patience. Bhaktas should consider the body as the field, good deeds as seeds and cultivate the Name of the Lord, with the help of the Heart as the ryot, in order to get the harvest, the Lord Himself. How can one get the crop without the cultivation? Like cream in milk, like fire in fuel, the Lord is in everything, more or less. Have full faith in this. As the milk, so the cream; as the fuel, so the fire; so also, as the Sadhana, so the Sakshathkara. Even if the attainment of Mukti is not directly realised as a consequence of taking up the Lord's name, four fruits are clearly evident to those who have had the experience. They are: (1) The company of the great, (2) Truth, (3) Contentment, (4) The control of the senses. Through whichever of these gates one may enter, whether he be a householder or recluse, or a member of any other class, he can reach the Lord without fail. This is certain. Men crave for worldly happiness. Analysed properly, this itself is the disease and sufferings are but the drugs we take. In the midst of these worldly pleasures, one rarely entertains the desire for attaining the Lord.

Anger is the first enemy of a sadhaka

Besides, it is necessary to analyse and discriminate every act of man for, the spirit of renunciation is born out of such analysis. Without it, renunciation is difficult to get. Miserliness is like the behaviour of a dog; it has to be transformed. Anger is enemy No. 1 of the Sadhaka; it is like spittle and has to be treated as such. And untruth? It is even more disgusting; through untruth,

the vital powers of all are destroyed. It should be treated as scavenging itself. Theft ruins life; it makes the priceless human life cheaper than a pie; it is like rotten smelling flesh. Moderate food, moderate sleep, Prema, Fortitude, these will help in the upkeep of the health of both body and mind.

Whoever he may be, in whatever condition he may be, if he gives no room for dispiritedness, if he has no fear at all, and if he remembers the Lord with unshaken faith and without any ulterior motive, all suffering and sorrow will fall away from him. The Lord will never enquire at any time the caste to which he belongs or the Achara which he traditionally follows. Bhakti does not consist in wearing Kashaya cloth, the organisation of Uthsavas, the performance of Yajnas, the shaving of hair, the carrying of Kamandalu or Danda, the matting of the hair etc. With a pure Anthah-karana, uninterruptedly contemplating on God (whatever one may be doing), feeling that everything is the Lord's creation and therefore One, unattached to sense objects, embracing all in equal Love, dedicated to True Speech, this is indeed, the characteristic of Bhakti.

Of the various types of Bhakti, Namasmarana bhakti is the best. In the Kaliyuga, the name is the Path for saving oneself, Jayadeva, Gouranga, Thyagayya, Tukaram, Kabir, Ramdas, all these great Bhaktas attained the Lord through just this one Nama. Why speak of a thousand things? Even Prahlada and Dhruva were able to enjoy the Darshan, Sparsan and Sambhashana of the Lord through Nama only.

Ensure that evil is minimised

Therefore, if every Sadhaka will consider the name of the Lord as the very breath of his life and have complete faith in good deeds and good thoughts, if he will develop the spirit of service and equal Love for all, then there can be no better Path for Mukthi. Instead of this, if one sits in some solitary nook and holds his breath, how can he master his innate qualities? How is he to know that he has mastered them? Ambarisha Bhakti, and Durvasa activities, the combination of these two will result in the fate of Durvasa himself; at least, in the end, Durvasa must fall at the feet of Ambarisha. May you avoid becoming

such Thrisankus; may you experience the eternal Truth, achieving the genuine State.

Every person is apt to commit mistakes, without being aware of it. However bright the fire or light, some smoke will emanate from it. So also., whatever, good deed a man might do, there will be mixed with it a minute trace of evil. But, efforts should be made to ensure that the evil is minimised, that the good is more and bad, less. Of course, in the present atmosphere, you may not succeed in the very first attempt. You must carefully think over the consequences of whatever you do, talk, or execute.

You must be, as you want others to be

In whatever way you want others to honour you, or to behave with you, in the same way, you should first behave with others and love and honour them. Then only will those honour you. Instead, without yourself honouring and loving others, if you complain that they are not treating you properly, it is surely a wrong conclusion. Besides, if only those who advise others about "Which principles are right, which are true and good, which conduct is best etc," themselves follow the advice they give, there would then be no need for giving that advice to all. Others will learn the lesson simply by observing their actual behaviour. On the other hand, if Vedantha is spoken parrot like to others, without any attempt to put into practice in one's own conduct, it is not only deceiving others, it is even worse: it is deceiving oneself. Therefore you must be, as you want others to be.

It is not the nature of a Sadhaka to search for faults in others and hide one's own. If your faults are pointed out to you by any one, do not argue and try to prove that it is right or do not bear a grudge against him for it. Reason out within yourself how it is a fault and set right your own behaviour. Instead, rationalising it for your own satisfaction or wreaking vengeance on the person who pointed it out - these are certainly not the traits of a Sadhaka or Bhakta. The Sadhaka should always seek the truthful and joyful; he must avoid all thoughts of the nature of the sad and the depressing. Depression, doubt, conceit, these are Rahu and Kethu to the spiritual aspirant. When one's

devotion is well established, even if these appear they can be easily discarded. They will only harm one's Sadhana. Above all, it is best that the Sadhaka should be under all circumstances joyful, smiling-and enthusiastic. Even more than Bhakti and Jnana, this pure attitude is desirable. Those who have acquired it deserve to reach the goal first. This quality of joy at all times is the fruit of the good done in past births. When a person is ever worried, depressed, doubting, he can never attain bliss, whatever Sadhana he may do. The first task of a Sadhaka is the cultivation of enthusiasm. Through that enthusiasm, he can derive any variety of Ananda. Never get inflated when you are praised; never get deflated when you are blamed. Be a spiritual Lion, regardless of both. One must oneself analyse and correct one's faults; this is most important.

Use one Name and Form for meditation

Now, even in matters relating to the realisation of God, one has to be careful. Whatever inconveniences one may encounter, one must try to carry on one's Sadhana, without any break or modification in the disciplines. One should not be changing the Name that one has loved and cherished and selected for Smarana. Concentration is impossible if the Name is changed once every few days. The mind will not attain one-pointedness. All Sadhana has this one-pointedness as its ultimate aim; so avoiding constant adoption and rejection of Names and Forms of the Lord, one single name must be used throughout for Japam and Dhyanam. And, one has also to get the strong conviction that all the Lord's Names and all the Lord's Forms are but the Name and the Form which one is repeating in Japam and meditating on, during Dhyanam. That Name and that Form must not give any slightest feeling of dislike or disaffection. Taking all worldly losses, sufferings and worries as merely temporal and transitory, and realising that all his Japam and Dhyanam is only to overcome such grief. the Sadhaka should keep the two things separate, without mixing up that with this, and this with that. He must understand that the loss, suffering and worry are external, belonging to this world, and that Japam and Dhyanam are internal, belonging to the realm of the love for the Lord. This is what is called Pathivratha Bhakti (Chaste Devotion); the other valery, where the Sadhaka selects one Name and Form and after sometime

discards them for another Name and Form, is called Vyabhichara Bhakti (Unchaste devotion).

Stick to the time and place for Dhyanam

It is not a fault if it is done in ignorance; but having once known that it is wrong and harmful, and after continuing Dhyanam and Japam with that Name and Rupa faithfully, if they are subsequently changed, it certainly is wrong. Sticking faithfully to the Name and Rupa is the highest vow, and the highest austerity. Even if elders advise you, do not give up the Path approved by your mind! Of course, which elder will suggest to you that you should change the Name of the Lord and give up the Name that you adore? Do not consider those who tell you to do so as an elder: consider them as dullards. Again, see that as far as possible, the time and place of Dhyanam and Japam are not changed and shifted. Sometimes, as while travelling, even if it becomes necessary to change the venue the time at least should be kept unaltered. Even if one is in a railway train, or a bus, or some such inconvenient surrounding, at the specified time, one must, at least, recall to one's mind the Dhyanam and the Japam done by oneself at the same time in the past.

In this way, accumulating spiritual wealth, one can surely become the master, and attain the Atma.

The Dharma of Man

Every man should so lead his life that no pain is caused by him to any living thing. That is his supreme duty. Also, it is prime duty of every one, who has had the chance of this human birth, to spare a part of his energies occasionally for prayer, repetition of the Lord's Name, meditation etc. and must devote himself to living with Truth, Rightfulness, Peacefulness and to good works which are of service to others. One must be as afraid of doing acts that are harmful to others or deeds that are sinful, as one is afraid to touch fire or disturb a cobra. One must have as much attachment and as much steadfastness in carrying out good works, in making others happy, and in worshiping the Lord as he now has in accumulating gold and riches. This is

the Dharma of Man. It is to strengthen this type of goodness that the Lord incarnates Himself in human form. But the question may arise, how can non-existent thing be strengthened and developed? Indeed, these qualities are not non-existent; they are there in man! When these existing qualities decline and whither, the Lord comes with the purpose of promoting them and bringing about the decline of the forces that work in the opposite direction. It is to make clear this purpose that Sri Krishna, in the Dwapara Yuga while teaching Arjuna, said: Parithranaya sadhunam Vinasaya cha dushkritham Dharma-sam-sthapanarthaya Sambhavami yuge yuge.

That is to say, all incarnations of the Lord are for the protection and promotion of Sadhus. This word Sadhu does not rear to any single religion, caste, or family or stage or life, or community or even any single species, like the human! It refers to all religions, all stages of life, all races, and all creatures. The Lord has revealed in the Gita His Universal Mind. It is because of this universal message that the Gita has become so essential and so famous. Why! Sri Krishna Himself has declared in plenty of situations and places that He is the dutiful servant of His devotees. An example of this is His accepting to be the Charioteer of Arjuna. If the culture of the ordinary man himself results in such elevation, each one can judge for himself how much more purified and holy will be the character of those who are engaged in spiritual exercises and the incessant contemplation of God! For both these types of people, the quality of the character is the important criterion.

21. Significance of Ganesa worship

Date: 18 September 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ganesh Chaturthi

No one knows all that has to be known. There is none who knows nothing of anything. Many there are, knowing something of some things. Sai alone knows everything of all things. THE five-element body of man equipped with five senses has as its life-breath the five-lettered formula, enshrined in the Namaka section of the Yajur Veda "Namah Si-va-ya". It is a basic mantra which means "that which can save, when meditated upon." Every mantra has a seedsound (bijakshara) which precedes it and provides it with additional potency. Sound emanated first through the will of God. So the bijakshara is fundamental for the mantra and its efficacy. The Akshara is sanctified by the Vedas or by the Tantra texts. The bijakshara for the fivelettered Namah Sivaya is the Vedic sound, OM.

The sound OM arouses energising vibrations

OM is how A, U and M are jointly pronounced. Each of these letters is devoid of spiritual force but, together, they arouse energising vibrations. 'Sivaya' in the mantra means 'to Siva'. 'Siva' is That which confers good fortune, wealth, prosperity and happiness. Pandits have commented on this formula and explained it in various ways. They have interpreted Na as indicating Nandivahana, the God who has Nandi (the Bull) as Vahana (vehicle). They take ma as the pointer to another Name of Siva, Mandaramalin (wearing a garland of Mandara flowers) and Si as Surya (the Sun which when it dawns on earth unfolds the Lotus of the Hearts of Beings etc). Each one allows his imagination to lead him along. But, the formula contains a more universal and abstract concept. It has to be pronounced always with OM. The namah (prostration) is for OM which is denoted as having the Siva attribute (being the source of peace, prosperity and success, of Mangalam in short). The process of worship is best described by Pothana in the Bhagavatha he has rendered in Telugu. Pothana speaks of "Chethulara Sivuni Puja" (worshipping Siva with the hands). By 'hand', he means, the 'five-fingered', representing the five-lettered mantra. Siva is the five-element-lord and so He has all the

power and wealth the five can yield to man who is himself a composite of the five!

The Vedas assert, "Atma Vai Putranama asi " (Oneself is the person known as son). One repeats himself in the son. Ganesa is therefore Siva Himself expressing certain aspects of Siva on certain occasions for certain purposes. Ganesa means the leader of groups. Ganapathi too means the same.

The elephant head is the symbol' of wisdom

The elephant-head of Ganesa is a symbol of intelligence, discrimination and wisdom. The elephant is ever alert and eminently conscious of its surroundings. Its memory is strong and deep. It treads through the thick forest imprinting huge foot marks on the track. One such print can subsume the marks left by scores of other animals, both wild and tame. It moves majestically through thick jungles; its very passage blazes trail for other animals to go through. It is a pathmaker, helping others without being aware of it, because it is its nature. Ganesa guides the stars, the communities of men and their homes. He is Lord of Obstacles, causing them when needed and helping men to overcome them, when that boon will promote the well-being of the supplicant.

There is astronomical support also for the Ganesa festival, celebrated on the fourth day of the bright half of Bhadrapada month. A constellation with the appearance of the elephant-head becomes brightly visible on this very night. Ganesa is the embodiment of buddhi (intelligence) and siddhi (achievement). He was approached by Sage Vyasa with a prayer to write down the Mahabharata, even as he composed the hundreds of thousands of its verses! Ganesa agreed immediately; He brooked no delay, even to secure a writing tool: He broke his sharp-pointed tusk and was ready to start!

Lessons that Ganesa teaches men

Ganesa can teach many a lesson to man. That is the reason for His being adored by people of all ages and professions. Take the problem of food.

Thygaraja invites Ganapathi most endearingly, and delights in offering Him sweet satwic items of food - coconut kernal, sweet fruits of various types, steam-cooked rolls and balls of modak etc. The elephant feeds on grass, sugar cane, bamboo-shoots, and twigs and leaves of the banyan tree. Devotees offer Ganesa, while worshipping, leaves, grass blades and flowers gathered from meadows and valleys. Ganesa, the Elephant-headed, is adored as the source of Love, Faith, Intelligence, Guidance and Grace. Take into consideration another role assigned to Ganesa. When Siva is moved to supreme ecstasy and it is expressed as the Cosmic Dance of Nataraja, Ganesa, Master of Tune and Time, leads other Gods, marks time on the mrdangam (drum). No wonder, the Gods are pleased when puja is offered to Ganesa even before any of them is propitiated. Man is bound by three tendencies. The first is Kama (the longing to possess). When that longing fails, Krodha (anger) raises its hood. When the desire is fulfilled and the thing is gained the third tendency, Lobha (greed) overtakes him. If one's desire is beneficial, the Divine will shower Grace. Ganesa has no desire, no anger, no greed. His Grace is available for all who seek good and godly goals. Look at the vehicle which He has chosen, the mouse! The mouse is a creature that is led, even to destruction, by Vasana (the smell of things). Men are all victims of Vasana (Preferences and predilections stamped on our minds during the past lives). Ganesa smothers and suppresses the Vasanas which mis-direct man and create misfortune. Since the mouse has been honoured so, it shares the worship offered to Ganesa. Association with Gods, as vehicles, ornaments, accessories or servants of Gods, endows objects, animals and men with specially sacred status. Elephants, Lions, Eagles, Snakes, Primates - all these and many more have been divinised thus. This day is Ganesa festival Day. Since Ganesa leads when gods are invoked, installed and adored, this Festival leads the long line of festivals 'for other forms of God - Navarathri, Dipavali, Sankranthi, Sivarathri. The duty this Day is to contemplate on the Universal and Eternal Truth embodied in Ganesa and worship Him with purity and faith, praying for the Grace which can prevent lapses and promote progress in all efforts to achieve the highest goal.

22. Practise what you preach

Date: 17 November 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE quest for God does not mean doing bhajans, japa worship and the like. These are merely means for achieving mental concentration and subduing desires and aversions. Why cry out, asking: "Where is God?" He resides in the heart. Offer service and receive Love. Thereby experience the bliss of Self-realisation. In the land of Bharat two great streams of Higher Wisdom have been flowing from ancient times. One is Vedic wisdom. In this, the Karma Kanda (rituals) is primary. It has its origin in Bhrahman. The Rishis receded the Vedic intimations and propagated their message. The second stream is the scriptural heritage of the Puranas. In this Duty is paramount. The Rishis acquired them and spread their message. Both these streams are of equal validity. The goal of karma is Jnana and for Jnana, karma is the base. To combine the two in practice constitutes Seva. Through right conduct, the mind is purified and a pure mind leads to Atmic bliss. Hence, the duties that are enjoined on one have to be discharged. The foremost duty of man is to do good deeds with a pure heart. There should, however, be no egoistic feeling. "I have done these good deeds." It is not right to entertain the slightest desire for enjoying the fruits of these actions. Egoism and desire are the cause of bondage to Karma. Desire is the barrier between the pure mind and devotion to the Self. To regard the performance of right action as one's duty and to eschew egoism in one's conduct and desire in one's motives is real sacrifice.

True meaning of Karma Yoga

Karma yoga teaches how actions should be performed. It enjoins duty for duty's sake. "Yogah Karmasu Kausalam" (Yoga is excellence in action). It enables man to recognise the image of the Divine in him. Righteous action and control of the senses are essential for the cultivation of universal love and goodness. It is the foundation for the good life. Not all realise the true meaning of Karma yoga. Many look down upon acts like cleaning of streets, relief to the sick, feeding the hungry, and service to the poor and the destitute as undignified. This is a grievous mistake. The supreme Lord of the

three worlds, Sri Krishna Himself when He came down to proclaim the divine destiny of man, rendered service to beasts and birds. He tended horses and cows with love. In the great Kurukshetra war, disinclined to wield the sword, He was content to figure as a mere charioteer. He made known thereby the ideal of selfless service.

Service to the society is the highest good

The underlying truth of Karma Yoga is the demonstration of the unity that subsumes the diversity in the universe. Nishkama Karma (desireless action) demonstrates and promotes the Love principle. There is no greater spiritual sadhana than service. The tendency to distinguish between the spiritual path, the path of service and the path of knowledge and regard them as separate is wrong. The three are not distinct; they are one. Seva (service) is spiritual knowledge. Seva is the primary means to acquire Divine Grace. Without being a devoted follower you cannot become a worthy leader. Without being a Kinkara (one who is ready to do any work) you cannot become a Sankara (The Divine). Each one has to realise this truth. Service to society is the highest good. It adds to the joy of life and enhances its savour like salt. Universal love sweetens life like nourishing food. The joy of giving makes life blissful. The Dhyana (meditation) that is sustained by life is the real lifebreath. Life requires four elements. Ruchi (sweetness), pushti (strength), sugandham (fragrance) and prana (vital breath). The unity of these four makes up the human entity. When you sit down for a meal, if there is no salt in the dhal, you keep it aside. If that is the case, should not there be some sweetness and taste in a life led for sixty or seventy years? What is it that gives savour to human existence? Good qualities alone impart savour to life. Good conduct alone is the right source of strength to a man. A man without good conduct becomes a weak and pitiable creature. Again, good qualities like forbearance and sacrifice lend fragrance to the life of a man. Without good qualities, righteous actions and the attitudes of forbearance and sacrifice, life is worth nothing.

The Light of Seva

Sai's philosophy does not lie in encouraging devotees to sit in a corner, control their breath and go on uttering, "Soham! Soham! Soham!" "Oh, Sadhak! Arise! gird up your loins! Plunge into social service!" This is the Sai message. No room should be given for laziness and indifference. Controlling your senses you should take to social service. A life not dedicated to service is like a dark temple. It is the abode of evil spirits. Only the light of Seva can illumine the spiritual aspirant. Therefore embark upon service to your fellow men without any expectation of reward. Do not waste your time in profitless talk. Of what avail is it to mouth expressions such as: the Lord is All-knowing, Omnipresent and Omnipotent? You clap your hands when these epithets are used, deriving pleasure from simply hearing them. How many act according to the word they speak? There must be harmony between what is said and what is done. All spiritual exercises like japa and dhyana are efforts to control the mind and prepare it for the journey to the Divine. Knowing the way is not enough. The path must be traversed to reach the destination. That journey is service to the society. This service must be done with the awareness that the Divine dwells in every heart, in every individual and in every living thing. In the Bharatiya tradition one of the beautiful names of Bhagavan is "Sarvabhootha-antaratma" - the Self is the indweller in all living beings. To worship this Supreme Self residing in all beings and to experience this Self no separate temple or shrine is necessary. The body is verily the temple of God. The eternal Self resides in this temple of the body as the Divine that sustains the individual Jiva (self). Forgetting this truth men beautify only the temple and are concerned only about its external appearance. They do not consider the basic Divine Indweller who sustains everything.

Gram Seva is Rama Seva

The body is not primary. What is important is the Indwelling Spirit. Keeping the goal of selfrealisation in view, you must engage yourselves in service till the destination is reached. Selfless, dedicated, purehearted service is the means. When the entire life is devoted to this purpose, direct experience of the Divine can take place. Eschew as far as possible attachments and aversions. Every effort must be made to keep the mind and body unpolluted. Know, oh man, Gram Seva is Rama Seva! When love overflows it is Rama

Rajya There is no progress without Love Without Service there is no hope for man. It is through service that man can expect to redeem his life. He is not a man at all who has no kindness and love in him. The path to Self-realisation lies through Love and Service. Cultivation of love is the first step. Faith is the basis for Love. When Faith and Love are combined Peace is attained. And in that Peace resides Truth. Truth reveals the power of Thyaga (sacrifice), which alone holds the key to immortality. Self-confidence is the basis of faith. How can a man who is not sure about his own future over the next few days, have faith in God? Only the man who has faith in himself can have faith in God. Nara (man) is Narayana and Narayana is Nara. Love is the link that binds the two. With love as the motive force and seva as the means, the aspirant should seek to attain the supreme goal of life.

Practice and Precept

Embodiments of love! You have participated in many conferences, but what have you accomplished thereby? Without putting into practice the decision taken, what is the use of endless debates and long resolutions? Conferences of such a nature are a sheer waste of time and money. You must try to implement at least one or two of the decisions. There is no use in listening to talks if you do not make use of knowledge gained from them after you go out from the Conference.

Nowadays even avowedly spiritual organisations are involved in business. Sathya Sai organisations should never become such commercial institutions. The only kind of commerce in which they can indulge is from heart to heart, from love to love. It is in such a sublime exchange that they should take part. They should have no financial or other material involvement. Organisations which get entangled in money or property do not grow. We should be concerned with genuine, God-oriented, heart-to-heart association. Seva must be done hand in hand in comradeship. This will demonstrate the unity of the Cosmic Being. The heart does not blossom out through the mere study of books or by listening to discourses. It is only the cultivation of love that breaks the knots binding the heart. One who does no service himself has no right to call upon others to serve. The right to speak has to be earned by

doing service. Seva must be regarded as sadhana and service rendered to any one must be looked upon as service to God. To develop such an attitude of spontaneous love towards those whom one serves should be the primary aim of Sai organisations.

Selfless Service

If there is no spirit of sacrifice in the Bhajan or meditation you do, however earnestly you may do it, it becomes a self-interested exercise. There is self-interest in seeking one's Moksha (salvation). To seek only your future is equally selfish. To be concerned about your own Ananda (bliss) is also selfishness. Only the man who gives up his self-interest and regards the happiness of others as his own and devotes himself to their well-being, is a truly selfless person. The Lord will love only those who love others. If you seek to win the Lord's Love, you must have to love others. You cannot win the love of others if you do not love them. Without worrying about what has happened in the past and without concern for the future, strive to make the best use of the present by cultivating love and doing service. Many reasons are given for the problems in the world which we face today. But the root causes are really two. The old ruminates over the past and spend their time expatiating on the good old times when they were young and recalling all their achievements and enjoyments. As for the youth, they are engaged in imagining fanciful plans for their future after their studies and their service careers. The future is in fact unpredictable. No one knows for certain what the morrow will bring. What use is there in worrying about the unknown? The old, absorbed in the past, and the young, concerned about the future, are both ignoring the present. This is the real problem. We should really be concerned about the Diane present. Only if you make the present holy and pure, can you attain goodness and purity in the future.

Experience divinity through Seva

Hence, avail yourself of the golden opportunity that has come to you now, without misusing it, and redeem your lives by engaging in service. Through Seva you can experience dignity and inexpressible bliss. You can be an ideal

to others. Sathya Dharma, Shanthi Prema and Ahimsa are in us like the pancha pranas (five vital airs). We think that the five pranas (Prana, Apana, Udana, Samana and Vyana) are protecting this body. But it is Truth, Right Conduct, Love, Peace and Non-violence which give real happiness to the body. These are the real Pancha Pranas. In no circumstances should these five vital principles be departed from or given up. Render service to society with these principles in your mind and with broad-minded dedication to the well-being of all. That alone will please Sai. Sai rejoices when seva is done. All that Sai does or says is Seva. By acting according to what Sai says and does, I hope you will delve the joy of the Self. You have come here from distant parts of the world, at great expense and personal inconvenience. Having come, you should try to imbibe good thoughts and noble feelings so that you may go back with the determination to lead exemplary lives and engage yourselves in worthy deeds which make your lives sublime. This is my benediction for you all. Before I conclude, I wish to give you two directives which will make you understand the significance of this Conference. One is: Practise what you preach. Act according to what you say. The other is: Don't preach what you do not practice. If you talk about something which you do not practise yourself it is deceit. If you do what you say, it is an index of greatness. Vyasa has said: "If you cannot do what you talk about, that is sin. To do what you say is pu ri ty." Remember the significance of these two statements and carry on your work in a spirit of dedication. Remember that world welfare and peace cannot be achieved without selfless service to mankind.

23. Love is the only offering I accept

Date: 21 November 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

We have here at the World Conference delegates from many counties, wedded to different cultures and traditions, languages and styles of dress, food etc. But, this variety should not hide from our vision, the unity of Divinity inherent in all of you. The world today is afflicted with formidable problems and fast-spreading fear-fear of war, of famine, and of demonic terrorists, problems of racial, religious and regional conflicts, of economic recuperation and survival, of student indiscipline, of credal clashes, of frenzy and fanaticism, of power-grabbing and extreme egoism. The only remedy for this creeping fear is an attitude of *Vairagyam* (non-attachment). When one is attached to the body-mind complex and the I-and-Mine limitation, fear is inescapable. The *Adhwaithic* awareness, that what we witness is but a superimposition of our own mind on Reality; it is the best cure; and service is the most effective sadhana. **Our deeds reveal our motives; our motives design our habits; our habits decide our character; our character determines our destination.**

Service should be rendered without egoism

Deeds are the very root of our fate. They sprout as birth, after death. The family and society into which one is born, lead us through their moral code and the journey ends when the goal is reached. Jaya and Vijaya the door keepers of Vaikunta, the abode of God, fell into demonic careers in the world, as the result of an impertinent gesture against holy sages. Prahlada, though a demon by birth, attained the presence of God as a result of his total dedication to Divinity. The mind-stuff of the former two was polluted with the poison-of egoism, while that of Prahlada was cleansed by surrender to His Will. Service rendered without egoism, however small, can be highly beneficial. It must emanate from a tender heart which responds to every sob and groan and is ready to renounce and suffer gladly. One must have the eagerness to get involved with others to feel fullness thereby. One must cultivate forbearance and inner strength, in order to avoid resentment at

criticism and ridicule while one is engaged in joyful service. The scriptures speak of *Pancha Pranas* (five vital airs) that energise the functions of the human body. More vital than these are the five sustainers of the of inner health and strength, the *Upapranas* - *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthi*, *Prema*, and *Ahimsa*. Of these, *Prema* (Love) is the basic element, the motivator of the other four. Man is certainly the crown of creation, but, nevertheless, he is born weak and dependent. The culture and traditions of the society, family, country and religion, that is to say, history has its impact on his life and thought. It moulds his individuality and endows him with loyalty and affinity, with a nationality. Thus, he grows not as an isolated being, but with the consciousness of the divinity in all, which culminates in the experience of unity.

Seva is the highest form of worship

The four *Purusharthas* (life-goals) - *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and Moksha, have been laid down to teach man that he should earn Artha (wealth) through Dharma (right means) and direct Kama (desire) towards Moksha (release from bondage). But man ignores Dharma and Moksha and struggles to direct Karma towards Artha. His sense of values has become topsy turvy; for example, he is delighted when the sun rises and happy when it sets, for he can work during day and rest at night. He does not realise that the sun is, with each passing day, shortening the time allotted to him for earthly existence. He does not remind himself that the earth is but a caravanserai and that he has to leave behind all that he claims to possess. The wise ones use money, strength, intelligence, skills, aptitudes and opportunities for helping others and making their lives happier. Thus, they win Divine Grace, for Seva is the highest form of worship. There are millions who are hungry, desperate and miserable. **I am directing you to limit the intake of food to actual need, so that you can share it with the poor. Do not waste food. Do not fritter away money for harmful purposes; use it for helping others. Do not waste time and energy; allow others to benefit by your skills.**

Human Family

Though desires have not been curtailed sixty lakhs of rupees have been collected from the States in India, as an offering to Swami, ostensibly as the sum so saved. **I accept only one offering from the World, Love - sacred selfless Love, manifested as service, as brotherhood, as tenderness of heart, as compassion.** Not this day, but all days in the past and for all days in the future, money does not attract me or affect me. My hand is for giving, not receiving. Therefore I am returning this amount to the State Presidents themselves, so that they may give back the money to the districts which have contributed it. Let them utilise it for some service activity under the supervision of a Special Committee and the guidance of the State President.

I am emphasising another point today. You are using the name Sai family while addressing devotees, and referring to yourselves as members of the Sai family. This is a narrow, restrictive expression. I have no limits or restriction. I am in all, for all. There can be no distinct Sai family. Whatever the Name and Form they address, Rama, Krishna, Sai etc. they all belong to me, to God. To assume that God responds to one Name only and can be adored in one Form only, is a sacrilege.

The Ten Directives

Cultivate love and cleanse your hearts with that Love. Spend that Love in service and that will make it grow.

I am now giving you, members and workers of the organisations, ten directives for you to follow.

The first is: Love and serve the Motherland. At the same time do not hate or hurt the motherland of others. Do not defame or dislike other countries.

The second is: Adore all religions; they are all pathways to the one God.

The third is: Treat all men as your brothers. All men are of one caste. Have

faith in the Truth that Mankind is one indivisible entity.

The fourth is: Keep your homes and the environs clean. This will ensure health and joy to you and society.

The fifth is: Do not promote beggary by throwing coins at an outstretched palm. Help the beggar to earn a livelihood for himself. Provide food and shelter, in every town and village, for those who are too weak or aged.

The sixth is: Do not get things done by offering bribes; do not accept bribes from others.

The seventh is: While engaged in worldly activities, it is dangerous to pay attention to the caste or creed of people, for this will breed hatred and envy. Keep your caste strictly at home; do not parade it before society.

The eighth is: Do not depend on others for serving your personal needs. This will make you lazy. Be self-reliant. How can a person so dependent serve others?

The ninth is: Adore God. Abhor Sin.

The tenth, which is relevant for all the nine, is: Observe the laws, rules and regulations laid down by the State and be ideal citizens. Follow these directives with enthusiasm and with love and be examples for others, wherever you are.

The Ten-Fold Path to Divinity

(For members of the Organisation and others)

1. Love and Serve the Motherland; do not hate or hurt the motherland of others.
2. Honour every religion; each is pathway to the one God.

3. Love all men without distinction; know that mankind is a single community.
4. Keep your home and its environs clean; it will ensure health and happiness for you and for society.
5. Do not throw coins when beggars stretch their hands for alms; help them become self-reliant. Provide food and shelter, love and care, for the sick and the aged.
6. Do not tempt others by offering bribes or demean yourself by accepting bribes.
7. Do not develop jealousy, hatred or envy on any account.
8. Do not depend on others to serve your personal needs; become your own servant, before proceeding to serve others.
9. Observe the laws of the State and be an exemplary citizen.
10. Adore God. Abhor Sin.

24. Cultivation of Love is the Greatest need

Date: 22 November 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 4

Modern education develops the intellect and imparts skill, but does not promote good quashes in any way. Of what value is the acquisition of all the knowledge in the world, if there is no character?

Knowledge has multiplied and with it desires have grown. The result is that one is a hero in words, but is a zero in action. What is the use of acquiring intelligence and skills if even a small fraction of what is learnt is not put into practice?

SATHYAM Ekapadam Brahma. Sathye Dharmo Prathishtitah. Sathyameva vak-hridayam. Sathyam Sarvam . (The one word Sathya is Brahman. Dharma is rooted in Truth. Truth is the heart of speech. Truth **is all**). Embodiments of Love! Truth is the beautiful mansion of God. Dharma is firmly established in Truth. The Vedas which represent Jnana and Vijnana (Knowledge and the Higher Wisdom) are the embodiments of Truth. Those who seek to achieve higher stages in life must follow the injunctions of Truth.

The nine gems to be cherished

Truth, charity, penance, sacrifice, friendliness, purity, straightforwardness, service to the Guru and study are the nine gems which every seeker of knowledge has to cherish. Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are to be found in the state in which Truth and goodness prevail. The basic Truth is one, but the sages have called it by many names. The ideal man is one who adheres to Truth and does not give it up in any circumstance. He lives the true life. Truth does not exist for the sake of any one person. It transcends the limitation of time, place and personalises. It is the life-breath for all countries, for all people, at all times. The grand sire of humanity, the great Manu, after deep enquiry, analysis and experience, gave this as his boon to mankind: "Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, Na bruyath Sathyam Apriyam." (Speak the truth, speak what is pleasing. But never speak truth that is unpleasant). You should

not utter an untruth because it may be pleasing. Nor should you utter truth which is unpleasant. This great advice was given by Manu to mankind.

Knowledge does not mean book-lore

Man can make genuine progress only when the idea that education is for earning a living is given up. The link between education and jobs should be totally snapped. Education should be for life, not for a living. Only one who realises this truth is a truly educated person. From ancient times this truth had been recognised by the sages of Bharat, who preserved the nation's cultural heritage. Knowledge does not mean mere book-lore. It is not the transference of the contents of books to the brain.

Education is intended for the transformation of the heart. Man today is proud about the little knowledge he has acquired about the physical world and boasts that he knows all about the universe. True knowledge is that which establishes harmony and synthesis between science on the one hand and spirituality and ethics on the other. Man, therefore, should at the outset determine the true value of education. Today, because of the striking growth of the physical sciences, man tends to feel he is highly knowledgeable. But only when man tries to understand knowledge of things beyond the physical sciences can he fully benefit from the latter. Beyond physics lies metaphysics. Of late some are beginning to realise this fact and are embarking upon spiritual exploration.

Great sages like Vasishta, Vamana, Jamadagni, Vishwamitra, Gautama and Parasara were among the Saptarishis who achieved the distinction because of their spiritual greatness. Do we have such sages today? It cannot be said that the accomplishments of modern science are not prodigious. There is no question about the necessity of scientific knowledge. But it must be realised that it is necessary as much to develop our sense of discrimination for the proper use of science pari passu with the development of scientific knowledge. It is because this discrimination has been lacking in the use of science we find that the world is facing many dangers and difficulties.

Our company determines our character

But even today there are some noble minds, who, even in the pursuit, of science, are exploring spiritual truths, analysing them and trying to see how these can be used for transforming man. Newton, after discovering the gravitational power of the earth, declared: "Although I have discovered the force of gravity, the gravitational force itself has been existing always before my discovery." He also admitted that while "I have been able to identify the force of gravity, I did not create it." He was convinced that there was a creator for the force of gravity. Einstein also, after his scientific studies of the working of nature, turned his mind to spiritual matters. He realized that for spiritual pursuits the company of good men was necessary, and that the association of good men can transform the human condition. He declared, "Tell me your company and I shall tell you what you are." This shows that what we are is determined by the character of the people with whom we are associated. Heisenberg, a great philosopher, after studying various sciences, embarked on an investigation of the link between the physical sciences and spirituality. He discovered the great secrets contained in the Yoga- sastras. He observed, "Master the mind: be a mastermind." Another great scientist, Schroedinger, found that science and spirituality were integrally connected and that in fact spirituality was the basis for science. He also noted that the growth of science had led to a multiplication of wants, which brought about a weakening of man's will and intelligence. He declared: "More desires, more despair."

To help others is meritorious

There was another great thinker, named Dirac. He sought to know the connection between science and spirituality. He tried to discover the one entry underlying all things in creation and conducted experiments for this purpose. He found the truth to consist in the statement: "Love ever; hurt never." Dirac's conclusion is nothing but an echo of Sage Vyasa's pregnant pronouncement, after completing his works of the 18 Puranas: "To help others is meritorious; to hurt others is sinful." We have yet another modern thinker - De Broglie. Having begun as a critic of spirituality after serious enquiry, De

Brogie confessed that his criticisms were due to ignorance. He proclaimed from his own experience that divinity was at the core of everything in the universe. Such seers of the truth are not absent in the world of science. These great scientists, who have examined, explored and declared the truth, are akin to the ancient Saptarishis (Seven Sages). Newton declared that the universe is a manifestation of God and everything revolves through the power of God. Fritzof Capra, at the present day, has explored the link between the atom and vibrations in nature. In ancient times, Vyasa declared that the universe emanated from the vibrations of the sound. 'Sita' and all things in creation - living and non-living - were the outcome of these vibrations.

Ideal children of ancient India

Here is an episode from the Mahabharata. Once, when his wife, Subhadra, was enceinte, Arjuna, not knowing that the child she was bearing was the future hero Abhimanyu, began telling her all about war-fare and the Padmavyuha, an intricate type of military formation, Krishna came in at that time and pointed out to Arjuna that the child Subhadra was carting was being influenced by what he was telling her. It is an ancient practice in Bharat to relate to pregnant women stories about heroes and saints so that the child in the womb may be influenced by the vibrations produced by such sublime stories and the thoughts produced in the mother. The ancient Rishis knew this truth. No wonder that the children born under such conditions had noble nature and heroic virtues. It was a common practice to relate stories of exemplary children like Markandeya, Dhruva and Prahlada. They provided the inspiration and ideals for the children of those days. What do we find today? Pregnant women are engaged in seeing Television, Cinemas and other deleterious media which play up crime and sex. The result is the children who are born develop undesirable tendencies.

What Krishna told Arjuna might have been dismissed as meaningless previously. But today, scientists in the West are realising that what was said in the Mahabharata is true. The Institute of Child Health and Human Development, attached to the Carolina University in America, has been conducting experiments on the factors influencing development of children.

An eminent scientist in this Institute, Anthony Casper after various experiments, came to the conclusion that what Sri Krishna had said was true, though our ill-equipped minds cannot fully understand the profound truth underlying Krishna's statement. Anthony Casper announced his findings on 3rd January 1984 at a conference of scientists. Casper's experiments showed that the food taken by the pregnant mother, the thoughts she had and the words she listened to had their impact on the child she was carrying.

The link between science and spirituality

It is a welcome sign that there are open minded scientists today who are prepared to explore the truths declared by our ancient sages and to seek the link between science and spirituality. On the other hand, it is a pity that people born in this great country with such a precious heritage, are leading lives contrary to its ideals and wasting their opportunities. The American cosmonaut, Mitchell, after landing on the moon, had a look at the earth from the moon. He saw the earth as a huge brilliant diamond set against a vast carpet of blue velvet. Experiencing this spectacle, he shed a few tears. He was stricken by the feeling: "Born on such a beautiful and brilliant land, why are men behaving like ignorant, evil minded beings? Only a diamond can come out of a diamond and not a mere piece of stone. Why should evil men arise from the pure, holy soil of Mother Earth?" he asked. And he found the answer in man's fascination for material things, ignoring the cultivation of good qualities.

Right conduct is the only thing that matters

It should be realised that whatever scholarship one may possess, whatever position or name one may have, without righteous conduct all these are meaningless. Right conduct is the only thing that really matters. What you do determines what you get. Hence you must concentrate on right conduct. Give up narrow feelings. Broaden your outlook. True education can be summed up in one word: Love, all-encompassing love. A life without love is worse than death. Worldly knowledge is undoubtedly necessary. But it is not all. You must also know the basic Truth about life and the human destiny. Along with the

acquisition of knowledge, you also have to cultivate the disciplines of right behaviour such as respect for elders, love towards parents and affection for friends. The affection you show must be constant, continuous and unchanging like your breathing.

Education today is a process of filling the mind with the contents of books, emptying the contents in the examination hall and returning empty-headed. True education consists in the cultivation of the heart. What you learn should become a part of your whole being. Only then will you have a sense of fulfillment, and establish complete harmony in thought, word and deed. The country needs today, persons who lead such integral lives.

Cultivation of Love is the greatest need

People in all countries talk about peace but their actions are contrary to their professions. They talk of peace on the one hand and keep the atom bomb on the other. The entire world is suffering from environmental pollution. The talk of star wars contains the threat of polluting even the outer space. The desire for peace must be built in the hearts of men. The cultivation of love is the greatest need today. This vast gathering is a manifestation of love in action. Here are assembled lakhs of people. Were any invitations sent to them? They have come out of love of and for Sai. There is no use in acquiring all kinds of knowledge and performing of japas and mediation if there is no love in the heart. It is love alone which can save the world. Students, teachers and lovers of education! I wish that in your attempt to perfect the system of education you provide for love, dharma and moral values, for these alone can take the country forward and enable it to regain its past glory. Bhagavan's Benedictory Address to the Fourth

25. I will be closer to Devotees

Date: 23 November 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 60

ON THE occasion of Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday, He began His discourse with a poem in which He declared His avataric advent as the continuation of all the earlier avatars from Narasimha to Sri Krishna.

He alone is a real man
Whose thought, words and deeds
Are in perfect harmony.
How can he be a genuine man
When his mind is divorced from speech and deed
And all three are not in harmony?
If birth, old age and death don't happen,
If desires don't fail and gain isn't lost
If the world isn't the fleeting flow it is,
How could man have affection, compassion, love?

The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save Prahlada, the Supreme Person came;
The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save the elephant, the Lotus-eyed came;
The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save the poor Kuchela the Lord of Veda came;
The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save the boy, Dhruva, He came from Heaven;

Now, with all the attributes, all the qualities has come,
He whom the gods adore, the Refuge of the Rejected.
The Lord of all the worlds, the Lord of Infinite Glory,
As all Existence, as all Knowledge and All Bliss in one Form embodied
As Puttaparthi Sathya Sai, the Over-lord of all that Is.

God is known as *Easwara*, since He is the source and store of prosperity and power. He is known as *Sankara*, for He is the embodiment of sanctity and auspiciousness. God has no birth or death. He has no wants, no desires. There is no single thing which He lacks and longs to acquire. But, man ignores God who is the very basis of his life and refuses to recognize things as mere things. His mind has become a bundle of desires.

Direct Kama towards spiritual progress

In Vedantic parlance, this striving and yearning, this desire which prompts men, is called *Kama*. When the spirit of inquiry gets sharper and deeper, it leads man beyond realms of the senses and even the feeble faculty of reason, beyond the stars and space, and helps him to dive into the boundless ocean of Bliss. Instead, if Kama gets bogged down in the distracting objective world, it plunges man into misery. When Kama is directed towards spiritual progress, it rewards man, filling his heart with Divine Delight. For, the Divine is free from mental modes or physical forms; It has no likes or dislikes; It is not bound by time or space. It is ever pure, ever conscious; It is free from the blemish of duality.

Only persons endowed with *Satwa guna* (unruffled serenity) can have a Vision of the Divine (*Sakshathkara*), and achieve the heroic victory. In money, there is no evil. In scholarship, there is no evil. In knowledge and intelligence, there is no evil. But evil arises from the activities which man carries on with their help. Pure water has no colour. Poured into a black bottle, it appears black. Poured into a red bottle, it appears red. The water does not become red or black; the colour is due to what we have done to it.

When money, scholarship, cleverness and intelligence are possessed by persons in whom *Rajas* (passion, emotion, extrovert qualities) predominates, they promote hatred, ambition and lust. When possessed by persons in whom *Thamas* (sloth, dullness, conceit) predominates, they promote miserliness, greed and envy. When possessed by persons in whom *Satwa* (equanimity,

balance, purity) predominates, they promote love, compassion, urge to serve, the unity of all mankind and World Peace.

The sublimation of character into the stage of Satwa is the duty which everyone owes himself. This is the path; this is the real goal. You must try ceaselessly to tread the path and reach the goal.

Man's Dharma and duty to be fulfilled

God is the sole sustainer of human life - the basis, the structure, the consummation. Money cannot help man to cultivate godliness and merge in God, the source. Scholarship too is equally powerless. The Upanishad proclaims that release from death can be achieved neither through entanglement in works, nor through one's progeny, nor through the accumulation of riches. It can be gained only through *Thyaga* (acts of renunciation, detachment, unconcern, giving up). It is a pity that this warning is not heeded and man is engaged in mere grabbing and grasping. As a result he suffers from more and more bonds that get tighter and tighter. The best means to escape from this fate is to take refuge in the company of the good and godly, and journey along their beneficial path. This is the valid vesture (*Dharma*) that can protect man. One must take delight in wearing it and becoming worthy of it. Dharma also indicates the unchanging genuine nature of every entity - its essential characteristic.

Man has to recognise his divine core

Consider a car, for example. Its shape is not its is-ness. It needs steering wheel and ball-bearings, tyres, lights and wires. These, however, do not constitute the Dharma of the car. Its Dharma is to transport the person safe and swift to his destination. The Dharma of man is to transport himself safe and swift to his destination, namely, the Divine. That duty has to be fulfilled. That destiny has to be realized. All the rest - attainments and achievements - are of secondary value, complementary, at best, to the main purpose. One must pursue this Dharma without faltering or failing in that duty. Of what avail is the length of years spent in living, if man is unaware of the meaning

and purpose of life? It is not enough if one passes off as a human person and parades oneself as a good specimen of the race. He has to be judged on the basis of the motives of his actions and the ideals he follows. He has to recognize his divine core, and attempt to unfold it in thought, word and deed.

Man cannot exist without God sustaining him. God too needs man in order to announce Himself. With no son, how can the father announce Himself as such? The word *Nara* (man) implies the concept of *Narayana* (God). Man creates God in his own image by the intensity of Sadhana and God creates man in His image by willing it to happen. Most people are too weak to concede of Godhead, too weak in intellect and imagination. Egoism freezes flowing water into hard blocks of ice, but when the Sun of wisdom shines, they are softened and resume their real nature. Egoism prevents Sadhana and promotes intransigence and ignorance. Intelligence gets perverted and the man becomes a fool. You may succeed in squeezing oil from sand or count the horns of rabbits, but you can never discover any notable virtue in such fools. Their greatest defect is their ingratitude to providence.

My Love-the Greatest Treasure

Among the 1008 Names for the Sun, which the scriptures recommend for use during solar worship, are found four very meaningful names - the destroyer of darkness (external and internal), the dispeller of fog (hesitation, doubt etc.), the destroyer of the enemy (darkness dare not face the Sun) and the destroyer of the ungrateful (ingratitude is the consequence of wrong outlook, distorted vision). The Sun is the light that makes the eyes see. So, the Sun punishes the ungrateful, by keeping away from such (that is to say, by rendering them blind). The good they received from the world is fast forgotten by the ungrateful; their hearts are rock on which it does not produce any impression. The grateful person will treasure as a gift even the smallest service, but, the ungrateful forgets the gift, however valuable, and even renders disservice to the giver. It is the nature of the world that every person has to encounter some one opponent or enemy. Sai alone does not find even a single enemy in the whole world. Some people, following their own fantasy, may assume that I dislike them. But, in my view, there is no one

I do not love. All are dear to me. Let me tell you that no one else in the world today has as much wealth, as much property, as much treasure as I have, not even the World Bank, not even the richest emperors and kings.

What is that wealth, that property, that treasure? It is my selfless, universal Love. That uniquely potent Love has kept this body radiant and young. As the world goes, at the age of 60, the physique becomes weak and the mind loses its alertness. But, I skip along as fresh and active as ever. I see and hear, I play and sing as bright and busy as a youth of sixteen. This sacred nature I have assumed will not allow physical or other weakness to hinder me.

"Being with Me earns higher respect"

Some people are misled by happenings that do not affect my Reality or my Purpose. They observe, with their feeble understanding, that a few have left my presence and they clamour that thereby, my works are bound to be affected! Those who have left have done so, not because they do not like me, but because they did not get from me what they desired. Or, they could not receive here the status and respect available in the outer world. When they are questioned, they invent other reasons to explain their conduct. They do not realize that being with me and shaping their lives under my direction can be the source of even higher status and respect. I am glad, however, that they are contented with their lot, though they impute faults in me to buttress their action. That, too, is an act of service, a boon from which they draw 'benefits'. Does the ocean depend on rivers for its existence or do rivers depend on the ocean for the rains that feed them? My status and success are based on my own will, my goodness, my love. They do not grow or decline, when a few stay or depart. They alone are the beneficiaries or losers.

There was a garden of grapevine, with thick bunches of ripe fruit. A fox which was passing by was delighted at the prospect of eating the juicy grapes. But, though it leaped high many times, it could not reach a single cluster. It was so exhausted that it dragged itself slowly away. A crow saw its plight. It cawed a question: "Brother Fox! Have you eaten grapes a stomach full?" The fox replied, "Disgusting! I didn't eat a single one. They are awfully sour." This is

the explanation for their leaving the Presence. They have the same foxy cleverness. They couldn't reach up to the standard set by Sai and so, they invent excuses.

The Sai Realty will be clear to all

No one, in fact, has the right or reason to point a finger at any blot in me. My total selflessness, my compassionate heart full of eagerness to serve and save, my resolve to establish peace and prosperity, my determination to shower Ananda on the world - these are being manifested more and more from day to day, and I am at all times in immeasurable Ananda. I am not affected by anxiety even for a moment. Consider, is there anyone in this world who can announce this? It is sheer ignorance that induces people to comment otherwise. When they experience my Love and witness the unfolding of my mission, the comments will cease, and the Reality that Sai is, will be clear to them. That knowledge can bear fruit by transforming your human-ness into Divinity, into Sai.

"Brahma Vid Brahmaiva Bhavathi"

(The Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman itself).

Keep a ceiling on desires

This project of transformation involves consideration of the problems that afflict the individual, the society, the nation and mankind. The rules and regulations laid down by Government cannot cure certain deep-rooted defects. So, the Sai Organization was commissioned to promote among the members a ceiling on desires. People now yield, on account of weakness of will, to the temptations that clamour for their money. The richer they are, the more wasteful are the ways in which they spend them. Even a struggling middle class family attempts to adopt the spending habits of the reckless rich and suffers. A worker drawing ten rupees as daily wages spends two rupees

on drink, three on the Cinema and two more on some spree or the other, forcing his family to starve.

The message of placing a ceiling on desires and utilizing the money thus saved into a fund was to use the money for social service among the villages, for the poor and the illiterate. But, the underlying principle was generally neglected. What was offered to the fund was not savings derived by desisting from desires. The old, deleterious habits were not given up. Smoking, drinking, etc., continue undiminished. The object of the programme was to put a brake on harmful desires and not the collection of money.

The power of Sai Sankalpa

Of course, money is an essential requisite and those who have assumed responsibility for service projects do need it. Six thousand villages have been adopted by the units of the organization and facilities for education and medicine are provided therein, besides roads and wells. When I decide on a project, the wherewithal for accomplishing has to be spontaneously available without any fund raising campaign. My will has the power to concretize my plan. I willed that a College must rise in Puttaparthi; the Rajmatha of Nawanagar built it. In order to feed it with properly trained boys, I willed a Higher Secondary School; Bozzani from America asked that he be given the chance to build it. I thought that at this place education on Sai lines must be available to children from the Primary stage itself. Craxi, the brother of the Prime Minister of Italy, offered to build the School. At Bangalore, when I decided on a plan for a College and Hostel, Mrs. Elsie Cowan asked that she be given the privilege of completing it. Such is the might of my Sankalpa my Will.

Another small event. For full eight days, hundreds of thousands of people are treated as guests and breakfast, lunch and dinner are provided in festival style. When ten persons are fed free, the host desires that it should appear with huge headlines in newspapers. But, who craves for publicity when one's dear relatives gather for meals at home. Though lakhs of people share in the hospitality, one finds no hurry and no parading. When I entertained the idea

of granting this boon to every one drawn to the Birthday festival, Dr. Bhaskara Rao from West Godavari District and Karunyananda from East Godavari District arrived at Kodaikanal and prayed that they be blessed with the sacred responsibility. I warned them that the lakhs would be too big a burden, but they persisted, saying: "With your blessings, we can take on even crores." And, promptly, without any fuss, 5000 bags of rice reached here from those two districts and from Krishna, Guntur and Nellore districts. Hundreds of bags of wheat, flour and suji arrived from Punjab, followed by the same number of sugar and jaggery bags from U.P. From Madras huge quantities of pulses were brought by members of the organization. Did any one demand or ask for these? Can you get them by asking for them or demanding that they be given? Try and see what happens. Everything was offered spontaneously, silently, sincerely, with so much love and humility. This is their homage of Thyaga, of service through sacrifice.

Circulation of money should ensure health

A man should own only as much wealth as is essential. It is like the size of his shoes. If the shoes are too loose, he cannot walk; if they are too tight, he cannot wear them. Too much money is a torture; rich people will agree with this judgment. It is foolish to accumulate money and sit on the pile, which turns into garbage. Spread garbage over the corn field, it will fertilize the crop and multiply the harvest. After all, how much and how long can a man enjoy?

A dog can only lap up water, even from a huge lake. Like blood, money too should circulate to ensure health. Members of the organization should understand and follow these ideals set before them. In fact, no other organization has such selfless workers engaged in loving service. If you watch with an open eye, you find them cheerfully and enthusiastically labouring in the kitchens and serving the meals, cleaning and sweeping, though most of them are unaccustomed to manual work, and accommodating themselves in open grounds. Their faith has given them this fortitude. The volunteers and Seva Dal members, men and women, have toiled in the true spirit of dedication and surrender.

When the festival was just on, Kasturi repeated to me what he had heard over the radio. A cyclone was about to cross the coast, and enter Nellore and Ongole and cause heavy rains in Rayalaseema too, But, it did not happen. The devotion of the people gathered here and anxious to reach here was the shield that turned away the cyclone into insignificance. If it had swept in, devotees would have suffered much. Their devotion touched my heart and I willed that they should not be inconvenienced in any way. I have a heart, soft as butter, but butter too has to be warmed up in order that it may melt. Your devotion was the warmth. None has yet announced where the cyclone has gone! How can any one gauge the wonder?

Transform into heroic messengers of Dharma

Your disciplined devotion, your love, your fortitude are examples. It is not proper that I praise my own people. Westerners have come in large numbers, though everything here is discomfort for them. They are braving through all this. It is real Tapas for each of them. You must devote your days, your actions, your intelligence and skills for transforming yourselves into heroic messengers of Dharma and Karma.

I desire one thing from you. Develop brotherhood with all. Adopt right conduct always. Give up selfish activity. Welcome all chances to serve the illiterate and the poor.

As part of the sixtieth Birthday Celebrations, I am prescribing a test which you have to accept. When you undergo it and emerge victorious, you can be pronounced as real humans. The farmer ploughs the field, sows the seed and watches the crop grow, until the grain is harvested. The next process is winnowing. The light chaff will then be carried away by the wind and the hard grain will stay. I shall start winnowing from now; the test will remove the chaff.

Sai and Sai Sevaks are bound by Love

Man justifies himself and proves his claim to be a worthy individual only

though *seva* (service), undertaken sincerely, selflessly, and with no thought of worldly reward. Seva is the only path to self-realization. It is the highest expression of love and of the sacrifice love involves. You have to expend yourselves in Seva unto the very last breath. You cannot retire after a certain years of Seva or when you reach a certain age. When you have such a Lord and Master, there should be no dearth of *Sevaks* (servants). The servants are the glory of the Lord. The Ahalya rock of steady Tapas had to earn the contact of the Divine Feet of Rama, to get Life, Love and Light. The resurrected Ahalya is the Glory of Rama.

The Sathya Sai Prabhu (Lord) and the Sathya Sai Sevaks are inseparably bound by Love and Loyalty. Sai exists for you and you exist for Sai. We cannot be apart from each other. One other point. A misgiving has spread, and it is causing confusion in people's minds, that after the sixtieth birthday, Swami will not be available and that there will occur a change in Swami. Mine is not a changing nature. I will never be distant from devotees. I will be available to devotees more and more from now. **Sathya Sai is Sathya (Truth)**. How can Truth change? So, give up all such guesses and imaginations and engage yourselves in the service of your fellowmen.

Selfless service alone will please Sai.
Do not preach what you do not practise.
Act according to what you say.
Remember the significance of these directives
and carry on your work in a spirit of dedication.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

26. Truth and Love - The goals

Date: 05 December 1985 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

He hides his faults, the pseudo-wise, And highlights the faults in others galore. He knows naught of himself or his self And the rest that he knows is best unknown. STUDENTS! Teachers! Birds, beasts and trees do service to man, without anticipating any recompense, but man seeks help from his kind, from his parents, preceptors and even God, offering in return only insult and injury. He parades his loyalty to Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Non-violence - virtues arising from self-less love - but it is only for exhibition and not for experience. He longs to recede respect and affection from others but is reluctant to treat others in the same manner. His concern is centered on the body-mind complex. He ignores the fact even a hundred-year long life has to end in the cemetery. The Reality that is latent, that he has heard about, that he gets glimpses of he ignores, for he is immersed in egoism and selfishness. In order to free himself from the ego, man has to recognize the One Dignity that temporally wears different forms and names to distract him by apparent multiplicity. The basic ignorance of man lies in his identifying himself with what is not genuinely he. Removal of this mistaken view and attainment of the awareness of the Unity in Divinity - this is the true purpose of education.

As you sow, so shall you reap

Education is a process of culture. One has to plant healthy and potent seeds in the inner field, so that a plentiful harvest of valuable fruits can be gained. A great deal of discrimination and preparation have to precede the sowing. What is happening today is indiscriminate choice of seeds leading to a harvest of disturbance - contingency that can be avoided only by rigorous inquiry into values and their promotion. Another point. When some friends, well-wishers or relatives place a gift-article in our hands, we accept it gladly, though it does not please us, because our acceptance pleases them. When the gift pleases us, our reaction is hearty. We treasure it and are filled with it. Know that God too reacts in the same way to what man offers Him. When the

offering is tainted, He may accept it in order to satisfy the longing of the devotee or sadhak. But when the offering pleases Him by its purity and sincerity, He welcomes it and His joy translates itself as abundant Grace. So, one has to discover and decide on the offering that gives Him delight and one is blessed thereby with Grace.

Offer the Flower of Prema to God

Let me tell you - the offering must be the Flower of Prema, the Flower of Sathyam. Sathyam has two facets: (1) Untouched by the flux of Time, Eternal, Unblemished, as Stable and Pure as Brahman Itself (vide the Upanishad Declaration: "Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma") (2) Sathyam in practice, as elaborated in the Upanishads - Sathyam vada, (Speak Truth), that is to say, voicing the seen exactly as seen, the thought exactly as it formed, the deed exactly as done. Who was it that laid down the guidelines for this practice of Truth? They were prescribed by the great grandfather of a long series of grand-fathers, the Sage Manu, the ancestral lawgiver after whom 'man' is referred to as Manuja - (the child of Manu). Truth is man's long-treasured heritage. Truth sustains the world and protects mankind. It is at the basis of justice and morality, peace and purity, faith and freedom. It has to be revered and activated by man at all times, under all conditions.

The Gita advises us to adopt "inoffensive speech, which is truthful, pleasant and beneficial" (17- 15). In order to solve many problems that arise when one practises the sadhana of Truth, Manu directed man not to speak out unpleasant truth or pleasant falsehood. When it becomes necessary to reveal an unpleasant truth, one has to soften and sweeten its impact by consciously charging it with Love, sympathy, and understanding. "Help ever; hurt never" - that is the maxim. Philosophy means the love for Truth which leads to the understanding and awareness of Truth. Today, it has become a superficial acquaintance, not a constant Vision of Truth, not a discipline to which one is devoted, nor a path along which progress is achieved. The various faculties of Science have also to be collated and co-ordinated, so that the scientific discipline might reveal the Truth. The Truth when known, has also to be used beneficially. Newton lamented that his famous Laws were liable to be used for

disastrous ends.

Vow of Truth should never be broken

Instances abound in the history of Bharath of sages and rulers who sacrificed their lives in order to fulfill their plighted word. Emperor Harischandra stuck to Truth in spite of travail and temptation. He refused to deny the word he had spoken, though he had to sell himself and his queen and son as bondslaves and reduce himself to the position of a watchman in a burial ground. Lakshmana too stuck to his promise to accompany Rama during the years of his exile though he had to leave his mother and wife and palace behind. Emperor Bali carried out his promise to Vamana though the Guru whom he revered predicted that he would be destroyed, if he stuck to Truth and gifted three foot-lengths of land to Vamana. So he won God's Grace, as Harischandra won it and both gathered immortal renown. Attention to selfish interests will obstruct the path of Truth. Note how those great persons honoured their promises and compare it with the fate of promises today. Now, they appear as if they are inscribed on water. Students! You must free yourselves from this hypocrisy. Your promises are sacred bonds. The Vow of Truth should never be broken. This and the adherence to selfless love have to be your ideals. See how Nature adheres to Truth by God's command - the regularity of the seasons, the rule of law, the orderly orbital gyration. Man too has to learn this Truth and live accordingly, with the heart attuned to Truth and the Mind saturated with love. Speech must be the flow of Truth. Truth must be revered as one's very breath. The Triple purity - speech free from the pollution of falsehood, mind free from the taint of passionate desire or hatred, the body free from the poison of violence - has to be attained by all. Conflicts and factions, violence and upheaves are caused by the neglect of human values in daily life. Man becomes fit and functionally valid only when, along with scholarship and expert skills, he has imbibed these values. The person who is wedded to Truth and Love would need nothing more for peace and happiness. When Creation is witnessed through these values, it becomes a holy scripture, an inspiring lesson and guide. There, I exhort you: "Let Truth and Love be the goals for all your efforts and studies."

27. The quest for peace

Date: 09 December 1985 / Location: Brindavan

THE world has to be brought back to the rails. Only love and peace can achieve this. Fill your thoughts, speech and actions with love, truth and peace and engage yourselves in service actions. We aspire for peace and comfort all the time, but where can we find it? Is it to be found in the material world around us? Experience shows that the peace or happiness got from external objects is not enduring. It is like a mirage, which cannot quench the thirst of the deluded animal that runs towards it. The real source of peace is within every individual and it is this inner peace that can confer real joy. Saint Thyagaraja proclaimed to the world in his song that there can be no happiness without peace. Such a peace can be got only through achieving equal-mindedness on all occasions, whether one is subjected to pleasure or pain, praise or blame, gain or loss. One should not be affected by criticism arising out of ill-will, envy or hatred. Reacting to such criticism in a like manner will destroy one's peace of mind. We should rectify ourselves if the criticism is justified. We should ignore baseless criticisms motivated by ill-will or jealousy. We should be true to our own good nature and maintain our equanimity.

Sadhaka should radiate happiness all around

What every sadhaka needs to secure and should strive for is this Shanthi (peace). It is the fragrant flower which is born out of pure Love. It is the fragrance which is delved as a result of one's good deeds. This noble and fragrant quality of peace, if you lose it, then you have lost everything in life! Right from ancient times, in this country, there have been rishis and sages who have striven to proclaim the greatness' of this Shanthi (peace). They were criticised, ridiculed and deeded and they were subjected to untold ordeals, but they never lost hold of this Peace of theirs.

You must be like the sandalwood tree which transmits its fragrance even to the axe that is used to cut it. When an incense-stick is lighted, it is burning

itself away, but it radiates its perfume all around. In the same manner, a true Sadhaka, a true devotee, should see to it that he keeps his peace intact under all circumstances. He should radiate happiness all around. THIS IS THE PRIMARY SADHANA. Through Sadhana, try to get that peace. Peace cannot be obtained in the world outside. Our kith and kin, our material possessions or name or fame will not give us peace. Peace is something which swells from within you. It is not something which is gathered from outside.

We desire peace, but we keep doing things, which, far from giving peace, cause anxiety and worry. Trifles are allowed to upset one's peace of mind. The true sadhak should remain unaffected by what others say about him.

Threefold Shanthi

The word Shanthi is pronounced three times at the end of every prayer, ritual or offering. What is the meaning behind this? The first Shanthi means: "May we enjoy peace for the body." It means that the body should not get heated by feelings of jealousy, hatred, attachments and the like. Whatever news you receive about any event, you should receive it with calmness and serenity. The second Shanthi pertains to the mind. You should not get worked up when someone says something about you which is not true. You must simply dismiss it as something which does not concern you. If you get angry or irritated, you are losing your peace of mind. You should say to yourself: "Why should I lose my peace of mind just because someone says something about me which is not true?" You resolve to stick to your truth and be true to your own nature. The third Shanthi refers to peace of the soul. This peace has to be realised through love. This world has to be brought back on to the rails and it is love and peace alone which can achieve this. Fill your thoughts, actions, emotions with love, truth and peace. There may be people who may hate us but love them too. Workers in the Sathya Sai Organization should be filled with this spirit of love and peace and take to service activities. There should be no room for ego or hatred. Whatever the difficulties, we should not become despondent or dejected. You must be bold and courageous and plunge yourselves in the service of society. This is what Sai would like everyone to do. This is the ideal before you. Develop forbearance, patience,

peace and love and carry on your work. This is your true Sadhana.

The nine different types of bhakti have two essential elements: love and peace. The great Mahabharata hero, Bhishma, was a supreme example of Shanthi Bhakti. For 56 days he lay calmly on a bed of arrows bearing all the pain with patience and peace, waiting for the propitious moment to come to surrender his soul to the Divine.

The best Guru is the divine in you; yearn for hearing His voice, His Upadesh. If you seek worldly Gurus, you will have to run from one to another, like a rat caught inside a drum, which flees to the right when the drummer beats on the left, and to the left when the drummer beats the right.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

28. Equality through Love

Date: **11 December 1985** / Location: **Bengaluru** / Occasion: **Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Malleswaram**

REAL equality among men has to be achieved not by the equal distribution of material things but by the cultivation of love, which promotes a sense of the divinity that is inherent in all beings. In this land of Bharat, through all the vicissitudes of history, Truth has been regarded as the highest value to be cherished by man. This is the essence of the cultural heritage that has been given down to us as Sanathana Dharma. The ancient sages emphasized the importance of Karma Yoga, the discharge of one's duties in life in a dedicated spirit. Through Karma Yoga man achieves control of the senses and develops the qualities of universal love, forbearance and compassion.

Everyone should realise that the body has been given to us for performing selfless service. It should also be realised that nothing in creation is intended for the exclusive use of any one person. We should therefore discard the feeling: "These things have been given for my exclusive use, they are my own."

A life without love is meaningless

There has been talk of achieving equality in society. The equal distribution of wealth through socialism is declared as the ideal, but is it possible to bring about such equality? Even if material wealth is distributed equally, can you ensure equality in desires and aspirations? Only when you have equality in terms of desires and aspirations can you get true equality. By taking away a part of a rich man's property and giving it to a poor man, you may give satisfaction to the latter, but what about the dissatisfaction caused to the man who has been deprived? You must look beyond material things to the Supreme Being who is the provider of all things. When you recognise the One as present in all beings and respect everyone as a manifestation of the Divine, you will achieve equality in the true sense of the term. All those who claim to be Bharatiyas should strive to bring about this kind of equality

through love for all beings. A life without love is meaningless. The more you love, the more it grows. True love should be distinguished from attachment either to persons or things. Attachment is based on selfishness. Love is based on selflessness. Love is the fruit which is born from the flower of your good deeds. Only when we engage ourselves in selfless service can we experience the essence of this pure love.

Unity comes only through sacrifice

There is considerable progress today in various fields - scientific, economic, political and so on, but all man's actions are motivated by selfishness. Man has become a plaything in the hands of his own selfishness. There is no unity among men. Unity can come only through thyaga (sacrifice), not through the pursuit of desires and comforts. You must cultivate chatty, which does not mean giving some money to a person in need or to an organization. Chatty calls for the removal of all evil thoughts that are within you and development of a largeness of spirit. Chatty will confer Purity, and through Purity, Unity will be achieved. Once you have Purity and Unity, you can realise Divinity.

When you look around today you find that there is little evidence of sacrifice for the sake of society. A person may call himself a great devotee, or sadhaka or scientist, but without a spirit of sacrifice there is nothing great in him. Seva (service) is the salt which lends savour to life. The spirit of sacrifice imparts fragrance to living. One may live for 60, 70, or 80 years but it will have no meaning unless his life has been devoted to the ennobling of one's character and rendering devoted service to others. What you must aspire for are not buildings, positions or factories or industries. A good character is the greatest wealth you can acquire. More vital than the five pranas (Prana, Apana, and others), Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are the vital life-breath for every one. Of these the greatest is Prema (Love). Fill yourself with love. Love should express itself in service to society. You should look upon society this way. We exist for society and society exists for the good of all. Try to sanctify your life by doing service and spreading joy and comfort all around.

Do not proclaim that this name of God is superior or more efficacious than the other. To assert that Rama is superior or that Siva is superior, or even that Sai Baba is the avatar that is fullest of all - all this only reveals that you have not understood what Divinity is. Rama is a Name that combines the 'ra' of Narayana and the 'ma' of Namassivaya, the mantras of the Vaishnavas and that of Saivites. So, Rama means the quality of Siva and Vishnu.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

29. Reform should start primary stage

Date: 15 December 1985 / Location: Brindavan

EDUCATIONAL institutions have the responsibility to give to society well educated persons who are competent and who are men of integrity and who can be relied upon to serve society with devotion and competence. The crisis in the educational field is well-known. Many attempts have been made to bring about changes in the educational system but it is forgotten that what gives education its true value and significance is its moral and spiritual content. In a world in which many technical and scientific changes are taking place, a balance has to be maintained between modernity and spiritual traditions and heritage of the country. The link between education and employment which has remained from the days of Macaulay has to be broken. Education should be for life and not merely for earning a living. Without emphasis on character, educational institutions have become the abodes of indiscipline and disorder. Who is responsible for this condition? Teachers who are unable to understand the workings of the minds of the students are worried about how to deal with the situation. The students have no sense of discipline or respect for teachers. Both students and teachers are confronted with managements who are not primarily concerned with the real purpose of education. The result is we have students who indulge in agitations and teachers who are discontented. The managements for their part complain against the Government, but it is not the teachers alone or the students or the management or the government who are to be held responsible for this state of affairs.

The parents' duty in shaping students' character

The parents of the students have forgotten their own responsibility for developing in the young the right attitudes and behaviour. In the past, the family was the first institution in which the students imbibed the culture and traditions of the nation through stories about the great sages, saints and heroes of the past. By too much indulgence the parents are also allowing the students to have their own way and ignore what is good, noble and virtuous.

The teachers do not impart to the students the essential values of life to enable them to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false. Most of the problems in our country are created not by the uneducated or the illiterate but mainly by the educated persons. The reason is the educated persons have not had the right type of education.

The change should begin at primary level

There is too much interference by the Government in the educational system which accounts partly for the prevailing evils. Attempts to tinker with the system by altering the number of years at school and the number of years at college do not effect any fundamental changes. Whether it is 10 + 2 + 3 or 10 + 3 + 2 makes no difference to the end product of the system. The change in fact should begin from primary level when the children are in their most impressionable years. It is at that stage that discipline and moral values should be inculcated. Students who have been moulded on right lines in the early years by being filled with examples from our cultural heritage would develop into ideal citizens. At the higher levels of education the major problem is caused by politics and the holding of elections in college associations. Elections to student bodies should go. They invoke not only considerable waste of money but result in divisions and conflicts between students. Changes are needed also with regard to examinations. Frequent postponement of examinations has become the bane of the educational system. The educational authorities should see that all examinations in colleges are completed by the first week of April so that the results are announced in the first week of June and all colleges are re-opened for the new academic year by the last week of June. Only then will students be able to plan their further studies. Teachers for their part should regard their vocation as a sacred duty. They have the responsibility to mould the future generations of young students both by what they teach and by their example. These teachers should inspire the students by example, by the way they live outside the classroom. 'If there are such teachers there will be no cause for students to go assay. One of the principal aims of education must be to make students self-reliant. They should not become degree holders going around begging for jobs. I hope that you will devote yourselves to your duties with

greater vigour and enthusiasm and bring about a transformation in the students. It should make them useful and worthy citizens of this great country.

The secret of the liberation lies, not in the mystic formula that is whispered in the ear and rotated on the rosary; it lies in the stepping out into action, the walking forward in practice the pious pilgrim route, and the triumphant reaching of the goal.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30. One God : basic truth of all faiths

Date: 25 December 1985 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Christmas

ALL religions, all scriptures, all spiritual teachings point only to one truth - the Unity of Dignity. You may profess whatever faith you like. But you should not disparage another's beliefs. It is a travesty of devotion.

The propaganda, indulged in by some propagators of Christianity, casting aspersions on other faiths, does great harm to the personality of Jesus.

Oh man! Through good deeds and sacrifice
Foster the feeling of Love
Get rid of evil traits
And lead a worthy life.

Embodiments of Love!

There is nothing more precious in the world than Time. You should not waste even a single minute of it. Men today tend to waste their time in selfish pursuits instead of devoting it to selfless service. They are eager to receive help from others, but have no desire to render help.

There are two types of human beings - the degraded and the sublime. The degraded are those who seek or receive things from others and not only forget to repay the obligation, but even try to harm those who have helped them. The sublime are those whose natural trait is to go to the help of others. If they give a word they will try to honour it whatever the difficulties and obstacles. They will not go back on their pledges, regardless of what others may say or do.

Journey to the Diane

The Bharatiya Culture which laid emphasis on the four *Purusharthas* (the basic aims of life - *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*), looked upon life as a journey to the Divine - the attainment of Moksha (Liberation). But how can men caught up in the quest for wealth and sensuous pleasures develop the desire for Moksha? Man today makes no attempt to discover his true nature or his real destiny. Forgetting the great truths given to the world by Bharatiya sages and seers, men are leading utterly meaningless lives, unaware of the potentiality of the human to become the Divine.

There is, for instance, the simple gesture of folding hands when one greets another in offering "*Namaskar*." What is the inner significance of this gesture? For one thing, the coming together of the two palms is a demonstration of the unity that subsumes the multiplicity. For another, it represents the offering of the five sense organs and the five organs of action to the Lord as an act of surrender.

The Muslims use the term *Salam* as form of greeting. What does the word mean? "Sa" refers to "Sat", the Lord who is the embodiment of Truth, Awareness and Bliss (Sat-Chith- Ananda); "La " means "layam " (mergence). Salam means merging in the Supreme who is also the embodiment of Truth and Bliss. The Christians also have similar expressions for indicating submission to the Divine.

The Basic Truth

All faiths have emphasized one common factor - that there is only One God and Truth is His form . There are no differences between Hindus, Muslims and Christians on this basic concept. All religions, all scriptures, all spiritual teachings point only to one truth - the unity of Divinity. Instead of realising this, men are lost in wrong paths. Jesus sacrificed his life for the regeneration and welfare of mankind.

Today there are some who exaggerate the so-called differences between different faiths and, for their own selfish purposes, exploit these differences

and thereby bring a bad name to the great founders of these religions, who were spiritual giants. No prophet or messiah asked his followers to hate other religions or the followers of other faiths. Every religion has declared that God is One and that the Divine dwells in every being.

Jesus also proclaimed the truth that the One Spirit resides in all beings. When Jesus was addressing the Jews, an ethereal voice declared: "All lives are one, my dear Son. Be alike to everyone." When Jesus was being crucified, the same ethereal voice declared that the human body is only a vesture for the Spirit.

The body is subject to constant change. But the indwelling Spirit is immortal. This was the truth proclaimed by Vedanta when it said: "The body is a temple in which the Eternal Spirit resides as the Indweller." The inner meaning of this is that wherever you may go, the Eternal Spirit remains with you. You must regard the body as the temple of the Spirit; bear in mind that Divinity is ever within you. Only when you realise this truth can you begin to experience the Divine.

Do not decry other religious faiths

Whether in Hinduism or Buddhism, Jainism or Sikhism, Christianity or Islam, Divinity is One and ONE ONLY. Those who profess great love for their particular religion are indulging in make-believe when they assume that their religion is superior to that of others. Hindus regard Hinduism as the greatest religion. Wherein lies its greatness? If you declare that the God of all religions is One, why claim superiority for Hinduism and decry other religions? Does that bespeak your love for Hinduism? This applies also to those professing Christianity. They say: "We are Christians. We believe in the unique divinity of Jesus. There is no other divine Saviour." One may claim that Jesus is Divine. But is he entitled to deride other religions? No religion should allow decrying of other faiths. It is not a religion at all that cavils at other religions. It is a form of arrogance. The great saints who worshipped Christ or Rama or Krishna or Allah were inspired by their profound teachings. But how many of the followers of these faiths live up to these teachings today? If the teachings

of the Founder of a religion are not followed, can it be called a religion? Those who, in the name of religion, further their selfish interests are bringing discredit on the founder of the religion.

The first thing to be learnt is that THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD. Men may be different in form and name and colour and their country and historical circumstances may vary. But, God has no such differences. Hence, you should not cavil at any religion or attack it or deride it. You may profess whatever faith you like. But, you should not disparage another's beliefs. It is a travesty of devotion. Sri Krishna says in the Gita that the mark of a true devotee is absence of illwill towards anyone (Adweshta Sarva-boothanam). We must respect the divine that is in every creature.

Religious intolerance

It is a characteristic of the Kali Age that one religion is pitted against another. This only reveals the small-mindedness of the followers and is not the fault of the founders. It stems from envious intolerance and egoistic conceit. These afflictions prevent one from understanding his own religion, while condemning that of others. No one should cast aspersions on the deities or founders of other faiths. All of them are worthy of worship. It is narrow-minded pettiness to say Jesus is great and Rama or Krishna is small or vice versa. Such misguided propaganda is puerile and demeaning. It is not an index of true devotion. It is a kind of mental aberration. We are all aware of the kind of selfless service which birds, animals and trees are rendering to man. But we see many men who out of selfishness are not only ungrateful to their community, their parents and their Gurus, but even to God. Such persons can never come to anything good. They do not realise the truth of the saying, "As you sow, so shall you reap." If you have good thoughts and do good deeds, they multiply like good seeds sown in a well-manured field. But if you fill your heart with bad feelings, bad thoughts will multiply many-fold.

The meaning of true devotion

You must make continuous effort to cultivate your heart on right lines. *Karma*

Yoga and *Jnana Yoga* are considered important for this purpose. But these disciplines are not easy to practise. Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion, is superior to these. The devotee seeks to enjoy the bliss of continuous contemplation of the Divine and does not even desire Moksha merge in the Divine. Devotion means giving up all other desires and dedicating all actions and thoughts to God. When you offer every act of yours to God, it becomes worship. Everything you do must be done as an offering to God. The body has been described as the temple of God. You must fill yourself with the feeling that God is in you, beside you, around you, and with you wherever you go. When you love God with this consciousness, the love results in Self-realisation. There are two forms of Love. One binds you to God. The other binds you to the world. The mind is responsible for either of these states. It is like a lock. If you turn the key to the right, the lock opens. If you turn the key to the left, it gets locked. The heart is the key to the lock of the mind. If you turn the key towards the world, you have attachment (bondage). You must see that desire and hatred do not get lodged in the mind. Bear no ill-will towards anyone. Avoid the company of those who are evil-minded. By cultivating the company of the good, you can raise yourself, because your bad qualities get diluted by association with the good, like sewage water when it enters the sea.

Good company takes one near to God

In the Ramayana, we see that by his association with Hanuman, Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana, was transformed into a devotee of the Lord. On the other hand, Kaikeyi, because of the influences of the evil-minded Manthara, brought infamy and widowhood upon herself and estranged herself from her noble son Bharata. In the Mahabharata, we have the example of Dharmaraja, who had to endure many difficulties and humiliations because of indulgence in gambling with dice during a brief association with the wicked Kauravas. Association with the evil-minded can lead to endless troubles. Pay any price to avoid the company of the bad. Pay any price to acquire the company of the good. The company of the good takes you near to God. Sadhana makes you dear to the Lord. When you are near and dear you become one with God. When you have realised God, you have secured everything. Without God,

everything else is valueless. There are many who are deeply devoted to Jesus. Their duty is to glorify the great message of Jesus.

The most important message of Jesus is the establishment of "Peace on Earth and goodwill among men." Without peace, mankind cannot achieve progress in any sphere - material, spiritual or moral.

Jesus's vital message to mankind

In the Treta Yuga, Sri Rama came to establish the reign of Sathya and Dharma (Truth and Righteousness). In the Dwapara Yuga, Sri Krishna came with the mission to promote Prema and Shanthi (Love and Peace). In the Kali Yuga (the present yuga), Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, and Prema are the purposes of the Divine Mission. Hence you must make these four the guiding principles of your life. When you adhere to these four principles, Ahimsa (Non-violence) issues as a natural result. There is no use in merely invoking the name of Jesus and praying to Him without regard to His most vital message: **"God is in everyone. Do not revile anyone. Do not cause harm to anyone." This was Jesus's greatest message.** At present there is a growing tendency among propagators of the Christian faith to cast aspersions on other religions. Money is being spent lavishly to spread Christianity. None of you should have any part in such activities. This type of propaganda does great harm to the personality of Jesus, Jesus was a supremely pure and sacred person. To forget Jesus's teachings and to profess love for Him is no love at all. You must all remember: "God is One. Love is God. Live in Love." Only by this means can humanity, despite the many divisions that exist at present, be unified. Absorb the teachings of all the great seers and prophets. Do not despise anyone. Everyone is entitled to accept what is good from any source. Differences of creed and caste are irrelevant. There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one religion, the religion of Love. There is only one language, the language of the heart. There is only one God, He is omnipresent.

Develop a broad outlook

No quarter should be given for propaganda which sets up one religion against another. All the diverse communities in the nation should be united. Mankind should become one family. The world will then become a paradise. If differences are allowed to grow, the nation will disintegrate. It is said that atom bombs will reduce the world to ashes. But those who are promoting religious bigotry and hatred are doing worse damage than what the atom bombs can do. They are destroying the love and compassion in human hearts. They are breaking up mankind into fragments. There is no greater sin than this. What the world needs today is the redeeming and unifying force of love - love which continually expands and embraces more and more people. By giving up narrow ideas regarding one's religion, nation or caste, by developing a broad outlook and cultivating the company of the good, you can elevate your life and make it meaningful and satisfying. Many of you have come from distant countries at great expense. You must make good use of your stay here by cultivating good company, imbibing good thoughts, developing a large-hearted attitude towards all, taking to heart the wise words of elders and trying to put into practice at least some of their teachings. Otherwise, you will have wasted both life and money. I wish you all happiness.

The word Dharma, which is really bound up with an infinite variety of meanings, is being inadequately described by one word, duty, in modern age. Duty is something which is connected with an individual, a predicament, or with a particular time or country. On the other hand, Dharma is eternal, the same for everyone, everywhere. It expresses the significance of the inner Atma. The birth place of Dharma is the heart. What emanates from the heart as a pure idea, when translated into action will be called Dharma.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

31. Students and Satwic Purity

Date: 29 December 1985 / Location: Brindavan

A son without virtue
An education without aim
A life without justice
A community without morality
And a night without the moon
Are of no use to the world.

DEAR students!

Moral education is the primary requisite in life for every student. It is his basic duty. In the Sanskrit language, personality is described as *pourusham* - the hallmark of a purusha. Although "personality" and *pourusham* may have the same meaning, they are words pregnant with significance. People who do not know the inner meaning of these terms, use them casually. Only the one who manifests the indwelling, invisible divine principle in him is qualified to describe himself as a *purusha* (a person). He should manifest the divine power in him. The Sanskrit term *Pourusha* means a quality associated with moral behaviour. The English word "person" is delved from the Latin term "persona." In the post-Christian period, the term "persona" came to be used to refer to the Divine assuming a human form. In due course, it was applied to all human beings as persons who were inherently divine.

The primary duty of man

The term *Pourusha* is commonly used to mean hatred or anger or strength. The true meaning, however, is: it is a quality associated with *Purusha*. *Purushatva* does not refer to externals like dress or other physical features. The sage Narada referred to *Purusha* as *Puman* and declared that whoever

realises Puman (the Supreme person) becomes saturated with Divine Bliss. Thus the terms Purusha can be applied only to the Divine. Hence it is the primary duty of man to manifest the divinity in him in his life. One's life-story is regarded as made up of his childhood, growth, achievements, his thoughts and ideals. But what is fundamental to a man's life is his moral stature. *Neethi* (Morality) is derived from the Sanskrit word Nitha. Neethi means right conduct. It is the path that leads one to the sublime. Good character, purity of thought and selfless sacrifice are all covered by Neethi. It comprehends all good deeds. "Only a community devoted to morality is a true community," says an adage. The ancients regarded Neethi as fundamental, without which the society will be mined. To promote Neethi the divinity that is in each one must be manifested. For this purpose, even the body has to be made pure and hence good health is essential. The word 'Health' is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'helig,' meaning *paripoornamu* (wholeness) or inner spirit. What is the wholeness that is to be achieved? The body consists of the sense organs, the mind, the intellect, the consciousness, and the indwelling Spirit. "Wholeness" means that all these elements should be whole. The mind should be in a state of fullness. It should not be in a state of "jumps and bumps." There should be no room for confusion or depression.

Practise sadhana to discipline the mind

To achieve such a state of mind, it is necessary to understand the meaning of everything and every situation. For instance, if a student has failed in an examination, he should not get depressed. Instead, he should examine the reasons for his failure, whether he had not studied properly or understood the subjects correctly. If he finds that his failure is due to inadequate preparation, he should resolve to do better in the future. To develop one's moral and mental strength, one should practise sadhana for disciplining the mind.

For this purpose, one has to promote ten kinds of purity (Satwa).

The **first** is purity of the place in which one lives. It is necessary to fill the room in which one resides or studies with a satwic atmosphere. The pictures or other objects you see should fill you with peace and pure thoughts. Objects

which arouse agitation and bad thoughts should have no place. The room should be clean and free from anything that is impure.

Second: In the family in which you live, there should be mutual understanding and cooperation, and a sense of harmony. There should be no discord in the family that will create a bad atmosphere. A harmonious atmosphere will give you true peace of mind.

The **third** need is satwic food. This means that none of the edible items should be excessively sour, bitter or hot. You should eschew rajasic food like fish or meat. Even good satwic food should not be taken in excess. Some people consume so much of satwic food that even though it is satwa, it develops rajasic qualities. It is only satwic when you sit for the meal with a light stomach and get up from it with a light stomach! If you sit with a light stomach and get up with a weighty stomach, it becomes ramona.

Fourth: Whatever fluids you take should also be satwic. You should not drink whatever water is available. It should be pure water. Alcoholic spirits should be eschewed.

Fifth: Satwic thoughts and feelings are of great importance. Students tend to neglect this factor. Only if your thoughts and feelings are pure, can you get the full benefit of a clean room, a good family and pure food.

Sixth: If you want to develop satwic feelings and thoughts, your vision must be pure. All Srishti (creation) is based upon drishti (sight). It is only when you have wrong vision that you have wrong thoughts. You must look upon every elderly woman as your mother and all women who are younger as your sisters. When you are filled with such pure thoughts, you will have pure feelings. It is because you are students, you have to be told this. Imagine how offended you will feel if someone looks at your mother or sister with an evil eye. Realising this, you have to entertain pure feelings towards other women. You should not commit the sort of offences which you will not tolerate in others.

Seventh: Whatever books you read or whatever you write should be pure. This is the Sadhana relating to study - Sahitya Satwika. If you read or write that which is not pure, it warps your mind. A good book makes for a good mind. Any book you may study about Physics or Chemistry or other subjects, does not affect your character. But books which are literary, are not always good literature. If improper books are prescribed for study, treat them as mere text-books and do not attach any high value to them as guides for life.

Eighth: Pure Satwic service. With regard to service, you have to decide what is satwic and what is rajasic. We go and clean streets, build roads in villages or dig wells and do them all as a service to the community. But the kind of service which we do should give real happiness to the people. In the name of 'Social work' you go to a hospital and approach a patient. This is not real service. Any person whom you wish to serve, you should regard as an embodiment of the Divine. Going to the help of the destitute and the neglected is rendering service to God. Narayana has two forms: one is 'Lakshmi Narayana', the other is 'Daridra Narayana'. This 'Lakshmi-Narayana' is full of wealth. He is able to help any number of people. He will be able to get many persons to serve him. But, for 'Daridra Narayana' there is nobody to serve him. It is to such persons that we should do satwic service.

Ninth: Sadhana. This is spiritual discipline. This must be satwa. Some people do Hata Yoga. Some strive to develop the Kundalini Sakthi Some invoke evil spirits, to do harm to others. These forms of sadhana are not sadhana at all. The individual is Chith (Consciousness), God is Sath (The Eternal Absolute). When Sath and Chith combine, you have Ananda Sath-Chith-Ananda. Only the sadhana undertaken to realise Satchidananda is true sadhana. Where is this Sath? This Sath, the Diane, is in everybody. So, you must be prepared to serve everybody, regarding everyone as the Divine. You may have normal relationship with your kith and kin. There is nothing wrong in this. You must perform sadhana in the spirit that the One pervades the many. In this process, you must cultivate the feeling of Love. There is no higher sadhana than the cultivation of Love!

Gopikas' devotion to Krishna

Uddhava was an adept in the path of Jnana Yoga (Knowledge and Wisdom). He wanted to teach the gopikas (the cowherdesses) the path of Wisdom. So, he approached Krishna. Krishna told Uddhava: "The gopikas are totally devoted to me. Their devotion is fundamental to their life and reaches My heart! Their purity and devotion are like a light that shines! You cannot understand the hearts of such devotees! I am completely enshrined in their hearts." Uddhava doubted whether ignorant illiterate gopikas could understand the Divine. To dispel the doubts of Uddhava, Krishna sent him to Repalle. Uddhava summoned the gopikas and told them: "I will teach you the path of dhana to realise the Divine." The Gopikas came to Uddhava and told him: "We are not interested in learning any sastras! Teach us one simple means by which we can realise Krishna! We are not aware of any yoga or bhoga or mantra. Krishna is everything for us, our yoga or bhoga. Please, therefore, tell us the means by which we can obtain Krishna! We do not want to waste our time on yoga. Uddhava asked the gopikas: "How can you become one with Krishna?" One gopika answered: "If Krishna were a flower, I would be a bee whirling round Him. If He were a tree, I would be a creeper twining round him. If He were a mountain, I would be a river cascading from its top! If Krishna were the boundless sky, I would be a little star, twinkling in the firmament. If He were the deep ocean, I would be a small stream, joining the ocean. This is the way I would be one with Krishna and merge with Him." Another gopi said: "If Krishna were a flower, I would be a bee which goes on sucking every drop of honey in the flower rasing the nectar that is there! This is our approach to God." So, spiritual sadhana means to regard a mountain or a tree, or a flower, or the ocean, as a means of God-realization.

Tenth: Your occupation or profession. What is the kind of work you should take up? It should be work which can benefit the nation, the community. The nation enables you to earn a living. You must see what you can give to the nation, in return. You must ask yourself: "What is the service, what is the help I can do for the community?" You must see that there is no untruth in any work you do, no unfairness, no fraud, no evil motive.

Ensure freedom from birth by present karma

These are the pure things which you have to observe in your life. If you engage yourselves in right action, you will not be bound by the consequences of karma. Because of past karma, you have got the present life. By your present karma you can ensure freedom from birth. Through love, you develop faith; through faith and earnestness, you acquire knowledge; through knowledge, you develop sadhana, and through sadhana, you achieve the goal. So, for practising sadhana, you require wisdom, and for acquiring wisdom, you require Sraddha (earnestness and faith) and for Sraddha you must cultivate love. So love is the means and for this you must acquire control of the senses. If gradually you reduce your desires, you will be able to bring the senses under control.

Every student should prepare himself to serve as an ideal for the community. There should be no discord among your college-mates and no room for hate or ill-will. You should discharge your duties and please your parents by your conduct. Strive to bring credit to your educational institute. Above all, try to earn the grace of God by being helpful to your fellow-beings. Only these constitute true education. Different branches of knowledge are like rivers, while spiritual knowledge is the ocean. Even as the rivers merge in the ocean, all types of knowledge merge in spiritual knowledge. You must bear in mind the company you keep. Kabir said, "I salute the bad and also the good!" Kabir was asked: "We can understand your offering salutations to the good, but what is the point in offering salutations to the bad?" He replied, "When I salute the bad, I am saluting them, saying, please remove yourself from my presence. I salute the good, saying, please come to me!" You must avoid the company of the bad and cultivate the company of the good. Association with the good is pure yoga! I desire that you should pursue this kind of yoga and confer happiness on all people with whom you are associated! You should strive to get rid of all your bad thoughts, give up all your bad traits, discharge your obligations to your parents, render self-less service to the community and thereby redeem your lives and earn the grace of God. This is my blessing for all of you.

The best way to gain happiness is to choose God as the leader and guide. Then, He will guide and guard, from the heart itself.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba