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1. Time is God

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All things happen according to the dictates of Time; Both good and bad depend on Time; Prosperity and poverty likewise depend on Time; Time is the determinant of all things, There is none who is not subject to Time In this entire world; that's the Truth. EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! Time is the embodiment of God. Hence Time is called Samvatsara (year). The sages have described God as Kalaroopaya (the embodiment of Time). All things in the Cosmos, moving and unmoving, are permeated by God. Hence, God is characterised as Kalagarbha (the One who holds Time in the womb). Sages have also described Him as Dheerothama (Supreme among the valiant). The term Dheera should not be understood as meaning one who is a great intellectual or highly intelligent person. Dheera is the appellation given by the Veda to a man who turns his Dhee (intelligence) towards God. The word Kalam (Time) is derived from Ka+alam. This means that God, embodiment of Time, is the One who rewards people according to their deserts. God does not submit to worldly offerings, worldly authority or worldly power. He responds only to spiritual aspirations.

Realise the true goal of your life

In the world, we are continually experiencing the same round of days and nights. You perform the same ablutions and indulge in the same process of filling the stomach. Thus you go on from year to year. But what efforts are you making to lead a purposeful and ennobling life? You are going through the same mill of experiences again and again, doing the same things again and again. If you go on in this way, what is the worth of your life? What is the goal of life? What is its primary purpose? Few care to enquire into this basic question. Hence what we have to examine is how we can lead an ideal, bliss-filled, spiritually-oriented life which will serve as an example to others. People are engaged in sadhana. But when the outcome of these exercises is examined, it is found to be without meaning. All these exercises are purely designed to provide some sort of mental satisfaction and nothing more. In my

view, neither Sadhana (spiritual endeavour) nor Sadhyam (fulfilment) exists independently and apart from each other. Sadhana and Sadhyam are one and the same. It is a trick of the mind to make Sadhana as the means to Sadhyam (the Goal). True Sadhana consists in giving up the anatma bhava (the idea that one is not the Spirit but the physical body). To turn the vision from the physical to the spiritual constitutes real Sadhana. Today, we have knowledge of many sorts in the world. All these categories of knowledge do not constitute what is regarded as Jnana in Vedantic parlance. Atma Jnana (knowledge of the Spirit) alone is true knowledge. Ordinary knowledge may be knowledge of material objects, sensory knowledge, or any other kind of knowledge acquired by investigation. But none of these can be Atma Jnana. In the highest sense Atma (the Spirit) and Jnana (Knowledge) are not two different things. They are one and the same. That is why the Vedas declared: Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham Brahma (Brahmam is Truth, Wisdom and Infinite). Truth, Wisdom, Infinity and Brahmam are all different names for the Paramatma (Omni-Self). They are synonymous. They are not different from each other.

Jnana and Bhakti lead to the same goal

What is Jnana? The awareness of Swaswaroopa (one's real nature) is true knowledge. Devotion is the means to achieve oneness with this knowledge (when Self-knowledge becomes one with the Self). Jnana implies freedom from all thoughts. The Jnana-Marga (the path of Knowledge) calls for the control of thoughts by appropriate efforts. Whether one takes to the Jnana-Marga (the path of Knowledge) or the Bhakti Marga (the path of Devotion), the resulting illumination is the same.

For instance, the light of the sun is reflected by the moon. The light from the sun is warm and effulgent. When the same light is radiated by the moon, it is cool and soothing. It is the same light that is present in the sun and the moon. The principle that illumines both the sun and the moon is the Spirit (Atma-tatwa). The sun's light has been compared to Jnana and the moon's light to Bhakti. Jnana is effulgent, while Bhakti (Devotion) is blissful. Thus Bhakti and Jnana are the beginning and the end of the same process.

God accepts all that comes from a pure heart

In the phenomenal world, we recognise three entities - Kartha, Karma and Kriya (the doer, the act of doing and the goal of the action). This is characteristic of devotion. The Sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) is the Kartha (doer). The Sadhana (spiritual exercise) is the Karma (what he does). Getting the vision of the Divine is the Kriya (goal). The same process is described as Jnana (knowledge), Jneya (that which is to be known) and Jnatha (the knower). In the highest sense all these are one. They appear in three different forms at different stages. People are carried away by what they imagine are their spiritual experiences in their sadhana. But what they should really seek is Anatma. bhava (the giving up of the attachment to the non-spiritual). You should not rely on the power and pelf of the world. God accepts only what comes from a pure heart. He does not yield to any mundane offerings. There is a historical illustration for this.

How Shiva accepted Parvathi as Ardha

Both in the Vishnupurana and the Sivapurana, Parvathi is described as the most beautiful goddess. Conscious of her own exceptional charms, Parvathi desired to win Siva as her spouse. But all her efforts proved fruitless. Learning a lesson from this experience and shedding her ego, she embarked on a severe penance. Facing the rigours of heat and cold, wind and rain, she allowed her body to waste away by her penance. Her mind was solely concentrated on Siva. Seeing that she had completely got rid of her ego, Siva agreed to accept Parvathi as Ardhagini (one half of Himself).

What is the inner meaning of this episode? Nature is symbolic of Parvathi. It is exceptionally beautiful. Feeling proud about its charms, it seeks to attract everybody. As it succeeds in its attractions, its ego grows. Man, who is a child of Nature, also develops the ego and leads a life filled with egoism. The ego gets puffed up on the basis of knowledge, physical strength, power and position, handsome looks and such other accomplishments. Even the pride of scholarship takes one away from God.

Persons filled with such conceit can never realise God. Only those free from self-conceit can be God-realised souls. Valmiki, Nanda, Kuchela, Sabari, Vidura, and Hanuman are examples of devotees who realised God, but who could boast of no great lineage, wealth or scholarship. Their supreme quality was freedom from ego. Hanuman, for instance, was content to describe himself as a servant of Rama, despite his great prowess and knowledge. All the accomplishments and acquisitions in this world are transient and impermanent; lured by them, men get inflated and ultimately court ruin. Hence, giving up the notions of one's own doership, man must regard God alone as the doer. He is the giver, He is the recipient and He is also the object that is given. Time is the very form of God. Birth and death are encompassed by Time. Everyone, therefore, should regard Time as Divine and utilise it for performing sacred actions. You should not waste a single moment. Time wasted is life wasted. The fruits of your actions are determined by Time. All your experiences are the results of your actions, whether it is happiness or sorrow, affluence or poverty. Hence, good and bad depend on what you do. As are your actions, so are the fruits thereof. The way you utilise your time determines the outcome.

God is the origin for all Yugas

Hence, this new year, which is a form of the Divine, should be put to right use. You have heard about the four aeons called Krita Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. These are not distinct from each other. The divisions are based on experiences. Whether it be Krita yuga or Kali Yuga, it has no separate form. According to the conduct of the people at the time, the name is given for the Yuga. Even during Krita Yuga there were people filled with attachments and aversions. There are even in Kali Yuga people wedded to truth and leading virtuous and peaceful lives. For all Yugas, God is the origin. Hence one of the names bestowed on God is Yugadi (One from whom the Yuga begins). The Yugadi festival is celebrated for this reason. Everything is a manifestation of the Divine.

Not realising this, man becomes elated when he gets something and feels depressed when he loses something. You should develop the state of

equanimity which leaves you unaffected by gain or loss.

The story of white and black

Once a King summoned an assembly to find out who is the most intelligent person. He posed a question before the gathering: "What is the whitest thing in the world? What is the blackest?" There were varied replies from the intellectuals in the assembly. One said, it is milk, another said it is cotton, yet another said it is the sky, and so on. There was one great devotee in that gathering. When questioned by the King, he said, "I am not a learned or intelligent person. Whatever little intelligence I possess is gift from God. All the intelligence that every person has, comes from God. There are some who misuse that intelligence and others who make good use of it." Then, after offering a prayer to God, he declared: "The day is whiter than all things, the night is blacker than all other things. This is what is evident in this world. Day is white, night is black. All our lives are passed through this procession of days and nights, of white and black. Who is the one who has overcome this cycle of days and nights? Only God. The combination of white and black is described as one day. The one who has conquered this cycle is God. The difference between dinamu (day) and daivamu (God) is that for God there is neither day nor night while they exist for the world." He concluded: "Only God can give men the grace by which they can transcend day and night." All the scholars present in the assembly felt outraged by the impudence of an unlettered man coming forth to give an answer to the King's question. Arrogance of other types can be subdued, but the arrogance of Pandits (scholars) cannot be easily put down. This is the basic malady of scholars. They study any number of books and are steeped in bookish knowledge. But they do not practise even a fraction of what they know, with the result that only their ego gets inflated. The scholars approached the King and said: "You should not take this illiterate man at his word. He must be asked to furnish the proof for his statement. In the world today, proof is required for anything in any field." The King thereupon asked the devotee to provide the proof for his statement. The latter asked for one day's interval to furnish the proof. He also stipulated that during that period, no one should question or oppose anything he did or restrain his movements in any way. The King granted him

his two requests and announced that no one should interfere with the movement or actions of the devotee in the palace or elsewhere. The next day, the King was resting in the palace after lunch. The devotee filled a cup with milk and placed it at the threshold of the King's bed-chamber. He then brought a suckling infant near the door and went on beating it, thereby making it cry so loud that the King's nap was disturbed. The King got up in a rage and came out of the door to ascertain who had the temerity to disturb his siesta. As he stepped out, he knocked down the cup of milk. He could not see the milk-cup. The devotee told the King: "Because the day is brighter and whiter than the milk, you could not see the milk. Oh King, if milk is the whitest object, how is it you could not see it? The whiteness of the milk is less than that of the day. Daylight is whiter than milk. You have to accept this fact." The devotee added: "The stars are present in the sky during day time also. But they cannot be seen because of the powerful light of the day. When night descends, the stars become visible."

Divine is the embodiment of knowledge

The whiteness of day represents Jnana (the higher knowledge). The darkness of night represents Ajnana (ignorance). Divinity transcends both knowledge and ignorance. Forgetting the Divine, people are immersed in the experience of the things of the world. The Divine can be experienced only through the Divine.

God is described as "Sat-Chit-Ananda." Sat is truth. Chit is Paripurna Jnana (supreme knowledge). When Sat and Chit come together, there is Ananda, Divine Bliss. If you separate Truth and Knowledge, you cannot experience Bliss. Truth may be compared to sugar Chit (Jnana) may be compared to water. As long as sugar remains sugar and water as water, you don't experience anything special. But when the two are brought together you have a syrup, an enjoyable panakam (sweet drink). Likewise, only when Sat and Chit come together Ananda (bliss) is experienced. Sat (Truth) can be attained only through Truth. Chit (Knowledge) can only be acquired through knowledge. Bliss can be experienced only through bliss. The Divine as the embodiment of knowledge can only be realised through Jnana (the path of

Knowledge). What is Jnana, the Supreme Knowledge or Wisdom? It is to know your own true self. That is true knowledge. Self-knowledge is Self-realisation. Constant contemplation on the Self is the means of experiencing the direct vision of God. What is the Self?. That is the Atma. When you refer to the "I", that is the Self. Who is this "I"? Is it the body? Or is it the mind? Or the Buddhi (intellect)? Or the Atma (Indwelling spirit)? When you enquire into this question, you realise that the Atma alone is "I". Wherefrom has the Atma come? The word Nara (man) means Atma. It is the Atma that permeates the sky and everything else. Hence, the sky and other basic elements were called naras (Naramulu, in Telugu). The one who is the source of these elements is described as Narayana. The man who is constituted by the five elements is Divine (Narayana). Atma means that which is filled with bliss. You cannot secure this bliss from the things of the world. All the pleasures you experience are fleeting.

The three states of consciousness

You can experience bliss only when you have overcome the processes of the mind. When is this possible? It is in the Sushupti (deep-sleep) state. Sushupti is described as the Karanaswaroopa (causal form). Jagrata (the waking state) is the bodily form. Swapna (the dream state) is the sookshma (subtle) form. Sushupti (deep-sleep state) is the causal form. When the reasons for action and the actual actions are forgotten, the causal body alone exists. These states of consciousness have to be grasped only through enquiry. If you want to control the mind, you have to engage yourself in good deeds. As you go on doing good deeds, you develop good thoughts and feelings. As you think, so you become. When you have good thoughts, you acquire true understanding of the real. The reflections may change, but the object itself does not change. As for instance, the sun's reflections in a moving stream, or a still lake, or a muddy pond may vary, but the sun itself remains the same. Your body is like a vessel. Your mind is the fluid in it. The Atma that is reflected in it is an image. The image is clear, unsteady or muddy according to the state of the mind. Most people cannot easily understand these spiritual truths.

God is moving and also unmoving

Vedanta, for instance, has declared: "Acharam chameva cha" (The One who is non-moving is also moving). This means that He is both unmoving and the moving object. How is one who is non-moving to be described as moving? And how is one who is moving to be described as unmoving? There is an apparent contradiction in this statement: "God is unmoving; He is also moving." The Vedanta has given a beautiful explanation for this. In the dream state, we experience ourselves in all kinds of movements. But the body that is seen in the dream as moving is in fact lying motionless on the bed. The physical body is motionless. The body in the dream is moving. Both the bodies are one and the same. In one state of consciousness it is still and in another it moving.

Vedanta declares that in the physical state, there is movement but in the Brahmic (spiritual) state, there is steadiness. Hence, the purpose of Dhyana (meditation) is to achieve the Brahmic state of steadiness. Vedanta has revealed many such profound truths. For instance, when a person is asked, what is his dwelling place, he may give a particular address in a particular area. But according to Vedanta, the true dwelling place of every one is God. Likewise, people may describe themselves in terms of their caste or community. But all these are only worldly attributes, useful for worldly purposes. All the physical distinctions are not fundamental. The basic reality is the Atma in everyone. The Vedas have described all as "children of Immortality." People talk about the spirit, but behave in a manner that belies their belief. There should be unity in thought, word and deed. To achieve this triple Unity, one has to understand the truth about the Atma (Spirit).

Engage yourselves in godly actions

This Atma is Time and Time is God. Therefore, you should not waste time. Fill your time with good actions. There is no greater sadhana than this. Sanctify the time given to you by good thoughts and good actions. For this, you need to cultivate the company of the good, which will in due course lead you to liberation. Fill your mind with thoughts of God. Engage yourself in godly actions. This is true sadhana. People claim to spend hours in meditation. But

of what use is it if there is no concentration of mind? It is better if you engage yourself in your regular duties or render social service or participate in bhajans. By these means try to bring the mind under control. Also, such work will be transformed into worship. Dedicate all your thoughts and actions to God. "Sarva Karma Bhagavatprityartham" (All actions are done to please God). Then your acts get purified. If you want to experience God, you have to do it through your duties and actions. This is not so easy. You have been listening to Me for many years. You take down notes and listen to tape records. Has there been the slightest change in you? Such is your life. Only when some change takes place in you, that alone is the fruit of your sadhana. You go on spending your days and nights in the same routine, but are you making any efforts to sublimate your life? Endeavour to lead an ideal life. In the absence of any change for the better in your daily conduct, all your so-called sadhana (spiritual practices) will be futile.

God resides in the temple of human body

Jnana is God. Jnana is Atma. Prakriti (Nature) is Jneyam (the thing to be known). Man is a combination of Jnana (God) and Jneyam (Nature). The Bhagavad Gita says that the Kshetra (the field, namely the body) and the Kshetrajna (the knower of the field, namely the Atma) together constitute the human personality. Similarly, the scriptures refer to the human body as the temple and the indwelling Spirit as the God installed in that temple. Even a mere intellectual understanding of this fact will make us happy. But we shall be much more happy when we put this understanding into practice in our daily lives. However, it is a pity that we content ourselves with pious resolutions in such matters, without a strong determination to put them into actual practice. Here is a story relevant in this connection. Once upon a time all the deer in a forest met together in a conference. They arrived at a consensus that they were superior to the dogs in several respects; they could run faster and jump higher than dogs; they ate satwic food unlike the dogs which ate Rajasic food. Therefore they passed an unanimous resolution amidst loud cheers that thereafter they should never be afraid of the dogs. They had hardly finished passing the resolution when they heard the loud barking of a dog in the forest. They lost no time in running away for their

lives; their resolution was gone with the wind; not a single deer remained at the site of the conference. Similar is the fate of the conferences and resolutions made by the so-called sadhakas (spiritual aspirants).

Have your hands in society and heads in forest

Without the courage of firm conviction and strong determination, no purpose is served by routine sadhanas undertaken by aspirants who oscillate from moment to moment like the pendulum of a clock. On the contrary, a person who never swerves from his determination even under trying circumstances, is called a Dheera (a hero) and such a person wins the grace of the Lord. We should try to seek fulfilment in our day-to-day life by basing our mundane activities on spiritual values. As I have been telling you off and on, you must have your hands in the society and head in the forest. That is to say, whatever be the activities with which you are preoccupied in society, you must be steadfast in holding on to the spiritual ideal. This alone is the true sadhana which will bestow lasting peace on you. Whatever may be the change in the various Pratibimba (reflections) there will be no change whatsoever in the Bimba (Original). Remember that you are that changeless original - the Atma. All your sadhanas should be directed towards establishing yourself in this firm conviction and unwavering faith, culminating in your life's fulfilment.

Bhajan and Japa are one and the same

All your sense organs should be sanctified offering all the actions performed through them as dedication to God. This is true Bhajan. "Bha" means that which is Bhavyam (sacred or holy). What is Bhavyam? The Atma Tatwa (principle of Atma) which is Divyam (Self-effulgent). The letter "Ja" in the word Bhajan connotes Japa (chanting the Lord's Name). Thus Bhajan and Japa are one and the same.

There is a Japa (which means constant remembrance of God) that goes on incessantly and automatically within you in the breathing process, whatever be the work in which you are engaged. And that is So ham. This is the real

Sadhana, because it goes on without any conscious effort on your part, in the same manner as the process of breathing, beating of your heart and circulation of blood within you, which take place without any effort by you. These are all natural processes which go on without any volition on your part. In contrast to this there are some activities which also become involuntary or automatic but because of prolonged practice. For example, the fingers of one who is in the habit of taking snuff, will unconsciously be moving towards his nose. Similarly, because of habit, some people will be engaged unconsciously in Japa, with their minds wandering somewhere. This is not real Japa. That alone is real Japa which goes on in the super-conscious (but not unconscious) state of mind. Do not entertain any doubt about your ability to reach that stage. You can surely attain that state beyond the shadow of doubt, provided you have a strong determination. Unfortunately, you do not evince such a firm determination and tenacity of purpose in respect of spiritual matters, as you do for the sake of mundane things. Man is prepared to put forth any amount of effort to undertake a journey of millions of miles into outer space but he hardly ever endeavours to go even an inch into his own inner Self. What is the use of all your intelligence and all your worldly acquisitions when they cannot give you Atma Santhi (the untrammelled peace of the Atma). God alone can confer such enduring peace on man.

Therefore, O Embodiments of Divine love! Recognise that the Samvatsara (new year) connotes God who bears several appellations relating to Time. Sanctify the new year by engaging yourselves in pure, selfless and ennobling activities. As far as possible, avoid causing harm or pain to others. As you sow, so you reap. Whenever you feel disturbed by a sense of anger, envy, pride, jealousy and the like, be alert and resort to the contemplation of the Lord.

2. God as friend

Date: **14 January 1991** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Sankranthi, Sports Meet**

Do not brag about your learning, Nor proclaim your affluence; Don't lose your head over your wealth, Nor boast about your progeny; Do not proclaim you are a donor, Nor feel elated because you are Swami's sevak; Do not exult over your valour, Or over your accomplishments; When you win the approbation of a few The Lotus-eyed Lord will bless you. His feet are everywhere; His eyes and Heads are everywhere; With His ears in all directions, Encompassing everything, stands the Lord. DEAR Students and teachers! Embodiments of Divine Love! The Lord pervades everything in the cosmos with His myriad feet, hands, eyes, faces and ears. But man, not recognising the fact, imagines he is the doer and indulges in all kinds of speculation, thinking that no one knows about them. The Lord sees everything. No one can conceal anything from Him. He dwells inside and outside every living thing. Hence nothing can be hidden from Him. God dwells in all beings in one and the same form. Although living beings may vary from each other, God is One and indivisible. The sun shines over the water in the lake, in a well, in a vessel, in a river or over the ocean. Although the sun is one, he is reflected in different ways. The containers are varied, but God is one' and the same in all beings. Anthike Sath (The Divine is the nearest). There is nothing in the world nearer to one than the Divine. God is very much nearer to you than your mother And dearer to you than your father. You cannot afford to forget such a God. Bear this good counsel in mind.

How God reveals Himself

However, men in their ignorance ask the question: "If God is omnipresent and all-pervasive, why is He not visible to us?" When the sun is shining, clouds which have been caused by the sun's heat hide the rays of the sun. When the sun is not visible because of the clouds, can you say that there is no sun? Likewise, the clouds of doubts and delusion, which arise in man owing to his conceit and ignorance, hide the Divine from him. When a strong wind blows,

the clouds are dispelled and the sun is visible. Similarly, when the winds of love and faith blow, the clouds of doubt and egoism are scattered and God reveals Himself. Thus, though God is omnipresent, man's lack of faith and his self-conceit prevent him from seeing God. To get rid of this disbelief and egoism, certain spiritual disciplines have to be observed.

Three stages in a man's life

In this context, three concepts have to be understood: Jnanam, Jneyam and Jnanagamyam (knowledge, that which is to be known, and the fruit of knowledge). These have been expounded under different names in Vedantic parlance. The primary requisite in the quest for Jnana is Asakthi (intense yearning). The second requisite is the undertaking of spiritual exercises. Thereby one achieves the fitness for acquiring the knowledge. In terms of the career of a student, these three stages may be described as follows: Vidhyarthi (student), Adhikari (holder of an office) and Pensioner (superannuation). As a student, one has to pursue his studies diligently and acquire knowledge. Then, as an official, he has to use that knowledge in the most effective manner. This is Udyogalakshanam (the mark of an efficient officer).

When one discharges one's duties properly, observes the prescribed rules, engages himself in selfless activities, does his work with discipline and devotion and, on reaching superannuation, retires on a pension, he is bound to experience peace and happiness. In the spiritual field, the acquisition of intense interest represents the stage of studentship. But interest alone is not enough. Efforts to realise the spiritual objective have to be made. He has to recognise the basic truths of the spiritual quest. And those truths have to be practised. Only then the fruit of Jnana, in the form of Realisation of the Divine, is secured. The pursuit of Jnana (supreme knowledge) calls for Bhakti (devotion). Jneya (the object to be known) corresponds to Udyogam (the office to be occupied). Pension corresponds to Jnanaphala (the fruit or fulfilment of knowledge). These three stages can be compared to Sat-Chit-Ananda. Bliss is the fulfilment of what began with studentship.

Accept God as your only true friend

It should be realised, however, that there is no greater friend for anyone than God. He is beyond the reach of praise or censure. He does not give up man on the ground of the latter's failure to come up to His expectations. That is why God has been given the appellation, Suhrid (a good friend). God desires no offerings from any devotee. God is the only one friend who confers benefits on devotees without expecting any return. Nevertheless man does not readily accept such a friend. Only the man who accepts God as such a friend and is guided by His advice can understand the full meaning of Divine friendship. Faith of this nature alone constitutes true Jnana.

In the comprehension of the truth about the Divine, there are four different approaches. These are: Yasthika, Asthika, Asthika-Nasthika and Nasthika. Yasthika is one, who, on experiencing a Divine fragrance, seeks to find out the source of the fragrance and after a diligent search, gets at the flower which is the source. In spiritual terms, this means that the seeker studies the Vedas, the Puranas and other scriptures and tries to realise the Divine as revealed by them. Yasthikatva means embarking on a diligent search to discover the source of the Real and to experience it. Asthikatva is devoting one's entire life to the search for the source of the fragrance. Asthika-Nasthikatva means, making the search for the source of the fragrance and, on failing in the attempts, giving up the search out of frustration and despair. Nasthika is one who denies the existence of the fragrance, because he is afflicted by a disease which prevents him from smelling the fragrance.

Recognise the basic purpose of life

Caught up in one or other of these approaches, men spend their lives in a wayward manner. This is the plight of students today. Some of them recognise the fragrance (of the Spirit), some others make the efforts to search for the source, some others are content to enjoy the fragrance without seeking the source and yet others declare that they are quite satisfied with the material comforts of the world and are not interested in anything beyond them, This last category of persons are unable to recognise the basic purpose

of life. They seem to consider that the sole aim of life is to acquire wealth, eat and drink and enjoy material comforts. This surely cannot be the main purpose of life. To recognise the primacy of human birth among living beings and yet fail to realise one's inherent divinity is supremely unfortunate. Man needs a healthy body for a healthy mind, filled with good thoughts. It must be recognised that sports and music have been designed to confer health and happiness on man. But physical fitness alone is not enough. Mental health is equally important. Together with the gross physical body everyone has a sookshma sarira (subtle body). One has to take good care of this subtle body also. For this, spiritual exercises will have to be performed which will help one to realise the Divine.

There are three benefits to be derived from sports and games: team spirit, mutual understanding and joy. Even if men speak different languages and differ in their habits and cultures, in the field of sports they have a common bond, a spirit of camaraderie.

Face with courage all ordeals in life

True education consists in the acquisition of good qualities, cultivation of good thoughts, truthfulness, devotion, discipline, and dedication to duty. These are also the qualities that should be acquired through sports and games. These qualities serve to impart to the subtle body health and joy. Seek to acquire the friendship of God, than whom there is no greater friend in the world. You witnessed the daring manner in which motor cycle riders rode through a blazing tunnel. Similarly you have to face with courage the ordeals in life. When our Institute students go out into the world, they should be able to face all challenges and overcome them. For this purpose, all our Institute authorities and staff have been offering encouragement to our students. You all know the work of Prof. Saraf during the past five years. He is a great devotee. Even before coming here, he had been engaged in propagating education in human values. He came here to earn the grace of Bhagavan and not in search of a job. He was anxious to spend the evening of his life in a sacred way, imparting joy to others. Moving among students as a student, among teachers as a teacher and among devotees as a devotee, he infused

enthusiasm in one and all. It was the good fortune of the students that such a person should come here as Vice- Chancellor There are, however, some government rules which have to be complied with. In conformity with these rules, he has decided to retire from the Vice-Chancellorship from today.

The Trinity of Sathya Sai Institute

The person to succeed him should be equally pure-hearted and dedicated. Our Sampath is such a person who has come here to spend the rest of his life in Swami's presence in a dedicated manner. (Prof. Saraf and Prof. Sampath were garlanded). He will assume office from today. The Principal of the Brindavan campus, Anil Kumar will speak a few words about both of them. (After Prof. Anil Kumar's speech, Swami continued His discourse). Both Prof. Sampath and Prof. Saraf have come here to render service and not to earn a salary. Both are honorary workers, giving up high offices Sampath has undertaken this assignment in order to turn out ideal students in the Institute. It is a great piece of good fortune for our students to secure such worthy and eminent Vice-Chancellors.

At the time our Institute was set up, we had as Vice-Chancellor Prof. Gokak, who was a renowned scholar, a literateur, poet, educationist and eminent in many other fields. He was our first Vice-Chancellor. After him, Saraf succeeded him and rendered service with devotion and dedication. From today Sampath who has distinguished himself in various fields and been eminent in the scientific world, is taking over as Vice-Chancellor. These three may be regarded as. the trinity for our Institute All the three are without any selfinterest or expectation of reward. Hoping that you students will follow the example of these pure-hearted and eminent men and achieve in life equally eminent positions, I am blessing you all and concluding My discourse.

Swami's love comes and grows

Dear Students! Vice-Chancellors come and go. But Swami's love comes and grows! Any number of Vice-Chancellors may come and go, but the loving bond between them and Swami and the heart-to-heart relationship will only

grow and not weaken. Vice-Chancellors may change places and chairs, but their hearts will remain unchanged! As Saraf is filled with this attitude, we do not propose to let him go. As he decided to devote the rest of his life to Swami and to-social service, we have made him a member of the Central Trust and we will continue to avail ourselves of his services for the Institute. Hence, you need have no apprehension that Saraf may go elsewhere. He will stay among us and continue to help us. These two - Saraf and Sampath are both devoted to Swami and I expect they will work together as Rama and Lakshmana to serve the Institute.

The last sloka of the Gita says: "Yathra Yogeswarah Krishno Yathra Partho Dhanurdharah, Thathra Sreer Vijayo Bhuthir Dhruva Neethir Mathir Mama" (Where there is Krishna the Supreme Yogi and where also there is Arjuna bearing his bow, there victory for truth and justice is assured). This verse assures victory not only when Arjuna wields the bow in the presence of Krishna. Every one of you can be Arjuna and wield the bow and achieve victory. For the bow is but the symbol of courage and faith, of high resolve and undaunted action. How can you become Arjunas? Arjuna means white, pure, unsullied, without blemish. As soon as you become that and hold the bow (the Upanishads declare that the Pranava or Om is the arrow and God is the target), Krishna is ready with His presence, for He is everywhere at every moment. There is no need to invite Him or install Him. He will answer from your very heart.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3. Goodness is Godliness

Date: 12 February 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Creation proclaims the Easwara ichcha (Will of the Lord). It is called Prakriti (Nature or Creation). This means that the whole of creation is a manifestation of the Will of the Lord. Every being existing in Creation has necessarily to bear the qualities of the Divine. Man has taken birth in this world to manifest the Will of the Divine. A seed sprouts into a plant and puts forth a flower. The plant and its different constituents like branches and leaves are all the basis for the blossoming of the flower. God is the seed for the whole of creation. God is present in every human being as a seed, which sprouts into a plant, develops leaves and branches in the form of gunas (qualities) and blossoms into the flower of Sat-Chit- Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). For a seed to become a plant, earth and water are necessary. Likewise, for the divine seed in man to grow into a tree and blossom into the flower of Sat-Chit-Ananda, it needs Bhakti and Sraddha (devotion and earnestness). Humanness does not consist merely in turning the mind towards God. The Divine has to be experienced within him. The human estate is the manifestation of the infinite potential of the Divine. Man is the individualisation of the infinite rays of the Divine. Not recognising his divine essence man is wasting his life in the pursuit of transient and trivial pleasures.

What is spirituality? It is the resolute pursuit of cosmic consciousness. Spirituality aims at enabling man to manifest in all its fullness the divine chaitanya (cosmic consciousness) that is present within and outside him. It means getting rid of the animal nature in man and developing the divine tendencies in him. It means breaking down the barriers between God and Nature and establishing their essential oneness.

Goodness is a synonym for God

To realise such a state of divine consciousness, devotion is essential. Devotion aims at awakening consciousness of the Easwara (Divine) in man.

All activity aimed at turning the mind towards God is a form of devotion. To think of God for attaining worldly desires and physical comforts is not devotion. To envisage and experience the Divine Sat-Chit-Ananda within him is the true mark of devotion.

Anil Kumar said in his speech that God does not dwell in some foreign place, but resides within everyone. Because from ancient times man went after external material objects, he forgot the Eternal Divine Reality within him. Imprisoned within his qualities, man forgets the Divine. The one who is immersed in spirituality, is indifferent to the Prakriti (phenomenal world). Spiritual transformation calls for changing the mind from a prisoner of the three gunas (qualities) to one that is bound to God. You have to acquire the firm conviction that the Divine is the basis and sustainer of the Universe. Goodness is a synonym for God. The power of the cosmic consciousness consists in making the good qualities manifest in a man.

Pure mind is the abode of the Lord

Almost everyone in the world is unaware of what is true spirituality or devotion. When one is submerged in worldly desires, how can he recognise the Divine? It is only by persistent effort that this can be done. One has to endeavour to experience the presence of the Divine in every particle and at every moment. A devotee must regard a pure mind as the abode of the Lord. He must fill the mind with pure, sacred and Divine thoughts. Thereby he redeems his entire life. The Chataka bird endures many ordeals to secure unsullied raindrops from the clouds. The moment it espies a dark cloud in the sky, it embarks on its adventure. There is water aplenty on the earth in lakes, ponds and rivers. But the Chataka bird has no use for these polluted waters. It waits for the pure raindrops in the month of Karthik and does not seek any other water. It is undaunted by thunder and lightning. It seeks only the pure raindrops falling from the clouds, without fear or concern. It sings in joy as it drinks the raindrops. The Chataka bird is an example of pure love. The true devotee should perform a similar penance (to realise God). He must have the same determination. He must go through similar ordeals to experience the ultimate ecstasy. He must not succumb to the wiles and attractions of the

world.

Man is not merely a human but verily a God

The golden life of man should be tested on the touchstone of the Lord's name. Instead of following this easy path, man involves himself in multifarious troubles and wastes his precious life. Man is not merely a human. Verily he is God. He is submerging his inherent divinity in worldly desires. He should utilise the pure and sacred thoughts that arise in him to turn away from the transient attractions of the world and to set him on the path towards the Divine. "Whether it is described as Chaitanya (Cosmic Consciousness), or the Kshetrajna (Indwelling Knower), or Jnana (Supreme Wisdom) or Ahamkara (I-am), or Easwara (the Supreme Lord), or Vishnu, or Ananda (Pure Bliss), or the Paramapadam (Supreme Abode), or Prakriti (Nature), or the Adi Sakthi (Primal Energy) - all these are only different names given to the Atma (the Supreme Spirit). Originally It had no name." (Poem) The effulgence of the Atma exceeds the splendour of a multi-faceted diamond. The diamond may have a myriad facets, but it is one and the same. Likewise, the Atma radiates infinite number of rays, but is only One.

Man today is like a horseman riding two horses at the same time. He aspires for the Divine, but also yearns for worldly pleasures. He forgets that the creator contains the creation. Forgetting this truth, he goes after the phenomenal world, regarding it as different from the Divine. He is foolish like the man who cries for ghee while having milk in his hand, not realising that ghee is latent in the milk. Today's devotees study the Vedas and other scriptures as a ritual, but do not put into practice any of the injunctions contained in these.

Scriptures are guides for practical living

Of what avail is it merely to know how the Vedas or Upanishads have described the Divine? This book lore is not reflected in his life. He is like a blind man who hears about the existence of the world, but cannot see it. There is no difference between this physically blind man and the spiritually

blind person who merely studies the scriptures. The scriptures are intended to provide guides for practical living and not merely to be learnt by rote. Everyone knows the word God, But that does not mean they know God. The meaning of 'God' has to be known Only by serving those who have realised God. Everyone utters the word God, but how many really seek to know God? What efforts do they make to know God? Goodness is another name for God. How much of goodness is there in you? When there is no goodness, how can God be understood? For understanding anything subjective experience is essential. In the fast-flowing Ganga, a small fish is able to swim freely and joyously, without fear of the depth or swift flow of the river. But in the same river, a big elephant is likely to be swept away by the current. One should know how to keep afloat in the current and protect oneself.

A tiny ant, for instance, is able to get at the sugar that is mixed with sand, because it has the ability to distinguish between sand and the sweet sugar in the mixture. But another animal, however big it may be, if it does not possess this ability, it cannot separate the sugar from the sand. Likewise, if a man has experienced the bliss of the Divine, will he go after worldly pleasures? Only the person who has not tasted the nectar of Divine love will seek these pleasures. This Divine love is within man. All Divine feelings and thoughts emanate from within him.

The Creator and the Cosmos are inseparable

Today, people think that spirituality has no relation to mundane life and vice versa. This is a big mistake. True divinity is a combination of spirituality and social obligations. National unity and social harmony are founded upon spirituality. It is the Divine that links spirituality and social existence. The Creator and the Prakriti (Cosmos) are inextricably associated with each other. Hence, God should not be regarded as separate from the creation. See God in the cosmos. For instance, here is a tumbler made of silver. The one who notices the silver in the tumbler, thinks only of the material base and not the form of the tumbler. The one who sees it as a tumbler, does not note its silver base. Only the person who can recognise both silver and tumbler can recognise that it is a silver tumbler. Likewise, without the Omni-Self there is

no creation. Today, most people see only the creation. Very few recognise that the creation is a projection of the Creator. It is essential that every human being should have the realisation that without the Brahman (Supreme) there can be no cosmos. Unfortunately, man today adheres to a different view. The reason is, he has become a slave of the senses. It is high time he recognised the truth about his inherent nature and started exercising control over the senses. Only when man has mastery over the senses can he perceive the ultimate reality. It is disastrous for man to be dominated by his senses. He forfeits peace and forgets the Divine.

Every man is inclined to ignore his own defects and see the faults of others. The root cause of this tendency is selfishness and self-centredness. All his attachments are based on self-love. And this applies also to man's love for God. Men pretend to love God, but one who truly loves God will forget himself. Loving anyone for your own sake is anuraga (affection). But loving God for His own sake is Prema (true love). Man fails to recognise the power of the Divine because of his selfishness and self-centredness. Only when he can get rid of the impurities encrusted in his heart will man be able to experience his divinity.

Eschew ostentation and self-conceit

Ingratitude is a great sin, which brings in its wake a host of troubles. To forget what one owes to others for his position and prosperity is to forfeit the grace of the Divine. He is as good as dead. You have to be grateful to those who have helped you to achieve position, power, wealth and prominence. By forgetting the good done by others, the ungrateful person is setting at nought the highest human values and strutting about as a vainglorious creature. Embodiments of Divine Love! Eschewing ostentation and self-conceit, cultivate selfless love towards all. There must be a limit to one's self-interest. Selfishness carried to extremes leads to disaster. Excessive selfishness can cause loss of friendship and honour and ultimately result in utter ruin. Reverence for one's parents is a sacred obligation.

"Kesava" symbolises the oneness of the Trinity

Whatever be the school of thought in which one believes - whether it is Advaita (non-dualism) or materialism (as expounded by the Charvaka school) or Mayavada (the doctrine of the illusory nature of the phenomenal world) - one thing common to all of them is belief in the power of the Lord's name as "Kesava." This name is regarded as cardinal principle. What is the inner significance of this name? It is made up of the three terms: Ka + eas +va. "Ka" stands for Brahma, "Isa" stands for Easwara and "Va" for Vishnu. Together, the name symbolises the oneness of the Trinity, who represent the powers of creation, dissolution and protection of the Cosmos. Men today do not understand the inner meanings of such terms as "Kesava." Embodiments of Divine Love! It is necessary to study the scriptures, the Upanishads and other sacred books. But this should not be done as a mechanical ritual. The religious preachers today merely prescribe the reading of the Gita or other spiritual texts as routine exercise. Of what use is mere reading of scriptures if their precepts are not put into practice? The sacred names of different deities are repeated as a daily routine (parayana). Is it of any use? Instead of reciting a hundred slokas mechanically, it is better to put one sloka into practice after grasping its full import. For instance, there is the expression, Sat-Chit-Ananda. Sat refers to the Paramatma (Omni Self). Chit refers to the Jivatma (the individual soul). When Sat and Chit come together, there is Ananda (Divine Bliss). If Sat and Chit are apart, how can there be bliss? There can be only sorrow. You must strive for the union of Sat and Chit. You can have light only when the current is switched on to the bulb. All are embodiments of the Divine Spirit. But because of their submergence in worldly desires, they are leading mundane existence. Experience the Divine in all your activities. In worshipping God, do not make distinctions between one name or form and another. All names - Rama, Krishna or Govinda - are Divine. Some fanatics adoring the name Vishnu will not like to utter or even hear the name of Siva at all. Such an attitude should be given up. You must regard the entire Cosmos as the embodiment of the Divine.

Significance of Sivarathri

Today is celebrated as Sivarathri. Si-va-ra-thri consists of four syllables.

Numerologically, the three letters, "Sa" "va" and "ra" together make eleven. These eleven represent the five Jnanendriyas (sensory organs), the five Karmendriyas (organs of action) and the mind. These eleven are governed by the eleven Rudras. These eleven organs involve man in sensual desires and drag him down to worldly existence. Beyond these eleven is the Paramatma, the OmniSelf. When one relies on the Supreme, he can master the other eleven. No one should make any distinction between Siva and Ranga or Rama and Krishna, because the Divine is One, under whatever names it may be worshipped.

The essence of all Divine names is the same

To worship one name and revile another is not true devotion. Most devotees today are narrowminded and sectarian in their attitudes. There are some who go about glorifying the name of Rama and collecting money in Rama's name. No quarter should be given to such commercialisation of the Divine name. Do not lend your ears to such preachers. Recognise that the Divine dwells in all beings. Love all. Realise that the essence of Divine names is the same. Chant the name of the Lord in this spirit. When you perform bhajans in this way, you will realise the oneness of all mankind. In community singing, all have the feeling of oneness. Sivarathri is an auspicious night. On this night, of the 16 aspects of man, fifteen are merged in man's Divinity. One aspect remains. It is an easy and convenient time for experiencing the Divine. If at least on this one night, the eleven senses are kept under control, one is bound to experience the Divine. If on this night, all bad thoughts are kept out and the mind is concentrated on the name of the Lord, it will experience the consciousness of the Divine. This process has been described as Jagarana (nocturnal vigil). Most people claim that they have observed Jagarana on Sivarathri night by keeping awake witnessing two or three cinema shows at night. Observance of sacred wakefulness on Sivarathri night is not achieved by playing cards the whole night. It is a caricature of Jagarana. This is the kind of religious observance that is practised in the Kali age. During the twelve hours of this night, if all the senses are kept under control and the mind is wholly concentrated on the Supreme, that alone constitutes Jagarana (spiritual vigil). If such a vigil is observed by even one in a million, that is

enough. Seek to observe such a pure, holy and Divine vigil this night and experience Divine bliss.

Krishna as the Guru gave the Gita to the world through Arjuna because He found a worthy disciple in him. Your lives will become blessed when you develop faith in God, reverence for His words and the resolve to implement His sacred teachings in your daily lives.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4. No global disaster to be apprehended

Date: 13 February 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

Message of Bhagavan Baba repudiating certain reports circulated in various countries attributing to Him predictions of various disasters facing the world in the following years. SAI will never do or suggest anything harmful to anyone. Some persons in overseas countries as well as some people within India have been distributing pamphlets in which they have published that Swami has stated that in a short while the world will be deluged by a great flood and that large areas will get submerged and that other disasters will overtake the world and many countries will suffer very much. Such thoughts have never occurred to Swami and will never occur. These are the fancies of some idle minds. Do not give any credence to them. In some of these pamphlets, it is stated that parts of this country will get submerged and that Swami will send 12 students for rescuing people and listing a number of points in the pamphlets. Some devotees appear to have been taken in by these pamphlets which are being distributed by mischievous elements. In no circumstance should devotees believe in such stories. Nor should they give them currency by passing them on by word of mouth. You should not lend your ears to such ridiculous reports. It is a sign of weakness to listen to such stories or discuss them.

No disaster is imminent

No disaster is imminent for the world. Over the vast globe, there may be some mishaps here and there, from time to time. The Iran-Iraq conflict lasted ten years. You should not consider it a major war. Even in India, terrorist activities have been going on in the Punjab. Is it a major struggle? Some disgruntled individuals have been resorting to these methods. Whether it is Bharat or any other country, its security lies in the promoting of right attitudes. Who are our friends and who are our enemies? Our own good thoughts are our friends. Our evil thoughts accompany us like shadows. When our thoughts are purified, our lives will be transformed into ideal ones.

The mind is a bundle of thoughts. Actions ensue from thoughts. From actions flow the fruits thereof. Hence thoughts are the seeds which ultimately yield fruits in the form of good fortune and misfortune. Man is thus the architect of his own life. As thoughts determine actions, it is essential to cultivate good thoughts. Even bad men have been transformed by the influence of good and godly men. Ratnakara is an example of such transformation. Contact with sages turned him into the immortal author of the Ramayana. When the mind is turned towards God the entire life becomes purified. What is needed is control over the senses through devotion and steadfastness.

Do not postpone the spiritual quest to old age

I congratulate the students, boys and girls, on the way they had maintained the singing of bhajans all through the night. However, there was not full accord between the boys and girls sections in singing, the bhajans together. While the girls did not join the bhajans when the lead singer was from the boys section, the boys did not respond to the bhajans when the lead singer was from the girls side. There should be no room for such differences in singing the Lord's name. The observance of Sivarathri is for purifying the heart by contemplation on God. When the heart is purified, the entire life becomes sanctified. There will be no need for elaborate social reconstruction if people develop good qualities and act righteously. Young people should, get rid of bad thoughts and bad habits. The spiritual quest cannot be put off to old age. The time to start seeking the Divine is now itself. Dear students! Strive from now on to purify your thoughts and actions. In most educational institutions elsewhere, you cannot find students, boys and girls, chanting the Lord's name, Only in the Sathya Sai Institute do you find the entire student community filled with sacred thoughts. You must constantly endeavour to develop this purity and sacredness.

Prayer is of supreme importance

Remember that there is nothing in this world as powerful as the Lord's name to protect it. It is not arms and bombs that will save the world. Only God's grace should protect the world. It is man's foremost duty to pray for God's

grace. Prayer is of supreme importance. Together with melody and rhythm, you have to impart feeling to your singing to make the bhajan a sacred offering to the Divine. A ragam (tune) without bhavam (feeling) is a rogam (an infliction). Giving up conceit and exhibitionism, you must sing the bhajans in a spirit of humility and devotion. That is the right way to perform bhajans. Thyagaraja in one of his songs adjured the mind to chant Rama's name with full awareness of the power of the name. In daily life also awareness is needed at every step and in every prayer. When all the participants in a bhajan sing in unison, what sacred vibrations are produced and what Divine energies are released! When these vibrations fill the world, what changes cannot they bring about! When one sings alone, the heart is merged in the song. But when many sing together, it acquires a Divine power. That was the reason why Guru Nanak commended community singing.

Poornachandra Auditorium.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5. Time and the timeless

Date: 17 March 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ugadi

Love shines radiantly throughout the Cosmos The Cosmos is permeated by the Lord The Lord and the Cosmos are inextricably united like friends.

This is the Truth declared by Sai. Not visible in the phenomenal world, The Atma that is immanent in it is the Cosmic Consciousness.

That sustains the Cosmos like the string Running through a necklace of gems. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Common folk look at the visible universe as it appears to them physically. This is a common experience. To view the universe as Divine, calls for a supreme exercise in spirituality. "Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" (All this is Brahman); "Viswam Vishnuswaroopam" (the Cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine); "Easwarassarvam" (The Lord is everything). On the basis of these Vedic pronouncements, the whole universe should be regarded as a manifestation of the Supreme Lord.

Strive to develop the upward vision

In the eyes of the ancient Bharatiyas, there was nothing in the world that was not Divine. Ignoramuses who were not aware of this truth, looked down upon Bharatiyas as worshippers of trees, stones, snakes, etc. Unfortunately, the awareness of this basic truth (about the immanence of the Divine in the Cosmos) is declining even among Bharatiyas today. Such recognition (of the divinity of everything in the universe) is not to be found in any other religion or country elsewhere.

There are three levels of potentiality in man the animal, the human and the Divine. At the lowest level is the animal nature. The animal is always looking downward, towards the ground. This means that the animal nature tends to go after what is low and trivial. The human level is in the middle stage. From here man should strive to develop, the upward vision. Only then will he be able to understand his divinity. Unfortunately, man today tends to develop

the downward animal vision rather than the upward vision. Failing to see the Reality that underlies the changing visible world and mistaking the unreal for the real, man is wasting his life. The human birth and body have been conferred on man to enable him to realise the Atma (his true-Self). But what has been offered for realising the Atma is being used for seeking Annam (food) and forgetting God. As a result, man, instead of advancing towards the goal, is receding from it. The scriptures have indicated what is the path that should be esteemed and pursued. The sastras prescribe that those worthy of honour and even the unworthy should be respected. But the hallmark of the Kali age is to honour the dishonourable and dishonour the honourable. There is no greatness in doing good to those who do you good. The superior being is one: who returns good for evil. It may be asked whether, doing good to the one who does you harm will not mean encouraging him to do more harm. That is not so. If you return harm for harm, how can you be called a good man? You become one like the evil-doer. Only by returning good for evil can you elevate yourself to a higher state.

There is no escape from work for anyone

Men today do not cultivate such attitudes. They treat, untruth as truth and truth as untruth. For instance, a man wants to enjoy good food and live an easy life without having to do any work. This is a wholly wrong attitude. A man is engaged in work even when he breathes, eats and moves about. There is no escape from work for anyone. Likewise, it has been said: "Pasyannapi na pasyathi moodho" (Even while seeing, the fool does not see). That is, even while seeing God, experiencing God and enjoying God, he says, "I want to see God "All that a man sees is a manifestation of God. Is not everything that he enjoys an expression of the Divine? Is God to be found in any distinct place? Bliss is the very form of God. Everything that is seen is Divine. The Cosmos is God. To see all this and not to experience God is sheer foolishness.

Three root causes for mental aberration

There are three causes for this aberration: Mala, Vikshepa and Avarana. Mala

refers to a mental state comparable to a dust-covered mirror. The mind can see clearly only when the dust is wiped away. The heart that is naturally pure is covered by impurities created by the three gunas - Satwa, Rajas, Tamas. Instead of removing these impurities, man is adding to them. Consequently he is failing to perceive the unsullied Spirit within him. Vikshepa refers to the vacillations and unsteadiness of the mind caused by doubts and suspicions arising from attachment and hatred. Man is perpetually haunted by doubts and apprehensions. The root cause of this is the lack of full faith even in himself. Doubts give rise to likes and dislikes, which infest him like snakes. Man, therefore, has to cultivate firm faith, if not in God, at least in himself. Faith in himself will lead to faith in God, because he and God are not different. Avarana refers to that which envelops man. What is it that has enveloped man? The answer is Desires. Man is covered by desires all over. He cannot get away from desires in any situation. He is bound by every kind of desire - for wealth, health, power, position and fame ad lib. Desires are not bad in themselves. But there should be a limit to all of them. Desires should be gradually reduced. Recognise the Divine in all that you do and dedicate the fruits of your actions to God. Man today needs not the highest system of Vedanta (metaphysics) but the basic methods of being truly human. He has to be taught the alphabet of the good life. He is a prey to the desire for wife, children and wealth. Bound by these three desires, he cannot see anything beyond or above them. In the final reckoning, he does not have faith even in his own human estate. He does not seek to know what are human qualities. It is not the physical form that makes one a man. Without the spirit of enquiry and the practice of right conduct, one does not become a true human being. The humanness is revealed only when there is harmony in thought, word and deed. Divergence among these three reduces man to the animal level.

Fill your devotion with sweetness

The ancient Bharatiyas laid down some regulations as indices of right behaviour. From days of yore, Bharatiyas observed certain sacred days as festivals dedicated to the Divine. For instance, on these festival days, they used to make a naivedyam (an offering of food to the Divine). These offerings consisted only of sweet edibles. If nothing else was available, they would offer

a piece of jaggery or sugar candy or a plantain. The inner significance of offering these sweet things to God is the recognition that God is full of sweetness. Hence, devotion should be filled with sweetness. "Your words are sweet. Your looks are sweet; your heart is sweet. Oh Lord of Mathura (Krishna)! You are the personification of sweetness." (This was how a devotee addressed Krishna). In offering sweets to the Lord man today is often motivated by selfishness. He consumes himself the sweets (instead of sharing them with others). Another significant observance on festival days is the breaking of coconuts as an offering to the Lord. The meaning of this practice has to be rightly understood. A coconut has three constituents. The outermost constituent is the hard fibrous cover. Inside it is a very hard shell. Inside the shell is the pure copra. To remove the fibre, you need a sharp knife. To break the shell, you require a stone or some other hard instrument. After breaking the shell, you get at the pure white kernel. The symbolism behind the offering of the coconut should be properly understood. Our body itself is like a coconut. The outer body made up of the three gunas is comparable to the fibrous covering of the coconut. It is the gross body. The subtle body, which constitutes Avidya or ignorance of the Real, is comparable to the hard shell of the coconut. To remove the fibre of the physical body, you need Vairagya or detachment. The subtle body represents the mental process. To eliminate the limitations of this mental process, you have to engage yourself in good deeds and entertain good thoughts.

Develop detachment to realise the bliss within

The gross body is Annamaya (made up of food). Of the five sheaths composing man's body, the sheaths of Pranamaya (life-breath), the Manomaya (mental) and the Prajnanamaya (intelligence or wisdom) make up the subtle body. The fifth is the Anandamaya (bliss-filled sheath) - the Causal Body. The causal body is comparable to the kernel inside the coconut. This represents the Atma. It is pure and unchanging. For the sake of the Atma (the Indwelling Spirit) the outer casings in the form of the gross and subtle bodies have to be nourished. But men today are more concerned about the physical and mental bodies than about the Spirit within. The significance of the breaking of the coconut is that man should get rid of the attachment to the

physical body and purify the mind to realise the bliss represented by the Spirit within. Thus, to experience the bliss of the Divine, you have to get rid of the shell of sensory desires. To break the shell, you have to develop detachment towards the body (symbolised by the removal of the fibrous cover of the coconut). Vairagya (detachment) does not mean renouncing the world but experiencing the Divine in everything you do and giving up all evil tendencies. Although Bharatiyas have been observing these sacred festivals over centuries, internally there has been no significant spiritual transformation. People have been listening to Swami's discourses for years and enjoying them. But how far have their daily practices been improving? Without this transformation, of what use are all the teachings? Every object in Nature performs its specific function. The sun and the moon are ceaselessly doing their duty. God is also carrying on His duties without any rest or pause. The rivers (by flowing towards the ocean) convey the lesson that you should not give up your effort until you reach your destination.

Life is a mixture of good and bad

Man should involve himself in righteous actions in a spirit of equanimity. Life is a mixture of good and bad, of ups and downs. Ignore the bad and enjoy what is good. If you buy a basket of mangoes, there may be some overripe and rotten fruits in it. You ignore them and consume the good ones. Likewise, in life you should forget the bad experiences and make use of the good ones. Instead, man broods over the bad experiences and spoils even the good that comes his way. This is a sign of weakness in man. Human life is a procession of good and bad experiences, of joy and sorrow. These experiences depend on the changing conditions of time and place. The new year which begins today is called Prajotpathi. The name means, "creation of people." There is no impediment to the growth of the population. It goes on irrespective of the name of the year. Another name for the year is Prajapathi. This name refers to the form of Brahma (the Creator). Although the name sounds good, the prospects for the year are not so good. The name is not always an index of what might be expected from it. A man may be named Dharmaja, but in fact he might be the embodiment of Adharma (unrighteousness). An ugly looking person might be bearing the name Soundararajan.

Difficulties my be overcome with faith in God

Although this year bears a good name, it is likely to witness many calamitous events. The danger from thieves is likely to increase. Many natural calamities are likely. Political turmoil may exceed all bounds. Many drastic changes are likely. But there is no need to get panicky over these portents.

Fire accidents and earthquakes are likely to be more numerous this year. These are incidental to Nature. They have to be turned into proper account by right response. Heat and cold are natural phenomena. They should be treated according to their nature and not considered as good or bad. In the month of March, the weather will be hot in Rayalaseema; it will be cool in Ooty and Kodaikanal. These differences in climate are natural to the places concerned and should be treated on that basis. If a person has a woollen coat and a muslin shirt, he must use the coat during the cold weather and the shirt in summer. Skill is needed for adjusting oneself to the climate.

In the Prajotpathi year, people should know how to make proper use of impending events. Whatever difficulties or trials may occur, they can be overcome with faith in God. People may not readily accept this, but there is no surer recipe for peace than this faith. Even if they do not have full faith, a small fraction of it will be of help.

Cycle of yugas as they appear every day

This day is called Yugadi. It is related to the Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yugas. These yugas are believed to last some thousands of years. But they are continually coming in a cycle like the days of the week. Nor should they be considered as coming one after the other after long durations. If the matter is properly examined, it will be found that the yugas appear in a cycle every day. From 4 a.m. to 12 noon, it is Krita Yuga. During this period, man can devote himself to Dharma (envisaged as an animal with four feet). From 12 noon to evening 6.00, it is Treta Yuga. During this period, Dharma is said to have lost one of its legs. This means that a part of the powers in man has

been lost. During this period, Dharma survives on three legs. From 6 p.m. to 12 midnight, it is Dwapara Yuga, during which Dharma has only two legs. This means that man's capacities have suffered a further decline and only the manomaya and Vijnanamaya capacities are present.

From midnight to 4 a.m. it is Kali Yuga. In this period Dharma has only one leg to stand on. Dharma in this period means to be plunged in sleep, oblivious to everything else. There are four Purusharthas (goals) in life for man: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. In the period from 4 a.m. to 12 noon, man has the capacity to pursue all the four Purusharthas. In giving the duration of the different yugas and estimating the life of Brahma (the Creator) in terms of the yugas, the scriptures have given the life-span of Brahma as extending over many crores of years. As these crores convey no meaning by themselves, the scriptures have described Brahma as Anadi (without a beginning). Scientists today are trying to fix a date for the beginning of creation. Instead of declaring that creation began so many billions of years ago, is it not more sensible to say that it is Anadi (beginningless)? If Brahma is described as Anadi, it is treated as superstition, but if some fabulous date is given, it becomes science! This passes for knowledge today. These are futile exercises. What is relevant for man is the awareness of the changes taking place in a single day.

God presides over Time

God has been envisaged as the embodiment of Time. He is the source of the Yugas. He presides over Time. He is the Time-Spirit and the Kalagarbha (container of Time). Time is the devourer of the physical. The Lord is the devourer of Time itself. When there is faith in God, man transcends the physical.

The New Year is an expression of the Divine, who is the Master of Time. Among the names of the Lord are Samvatsara, Yugadi, Kalatheetha, Kalaswaroopa and the like. The New Year Day festival is therefore associated with the name of the Lord. There is no need to entertain fears about the troubles and difficulties that may occur during the year. When God Himself is

coming down as the new year, anything may happen, good or bad. The Lord (Mahavishnu) may come down to protect devotees like Prahlada and Dhruva. He may also destroy demons like Hiranyakasipu and Bhasmasura. He confers bliss on some and He destroys some others. The Lord acts according to the deserts of the persons concerned - whether they should be protected or punished.

The inner meaning of Narasimha Avatar

This is the inner meaning of the story of Prahlada. "Where is God?" asked Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada replied that God is omnipresent. "You can find Him wherever you seek Him." Hiranyakasipu asked: "Is He in this pillar?" "There is no place where He is not," said Prahlada. Hiranyakasipu smote the pillar with his mace. Out came the Lord in the form of the Narasimha Avatar - half-man, half lion. It is a combination of the human and the animal. All human beings today are cast in the same mould: a combination of animal and human nature. Hiranyakasipu was a hater of Hari and hence the form of Lord Narasimha appeared dreadful to him. But Prahlada was a great devotee. Hence the Lord appeared to him as full of love. Although the form was the same, it inspired fear in one and love in another. Wherefrom did Narasimha emerge? From a pillar. What does this pillar signify? Our body itself is like a pillar. When the body-consciousness is shattered, the Divine emerges from it. When the coconut shell is broken, the pure copra within it is seen. As long as the coconut is not broken, you cannot get at the copra. You must look at the deha (body) as the residence of the Dehi (Indwelling Spirit). God does not reside at any distant place. He is within your body He is the Hridayavasi (resident of your heart). Krishna responded to Draupadi's call the moment she appealed to Him as the Indweller in her heart.

To get at the Lord in the shortest possible time, it is necessary to address an appeal to the right place. Once Narada asked Vishnu which is the place to which he should address his appeal to get at the Lord soonest. The Lord said: "Wherever my devotees sing my praise, I am there." The Lord dwells in our hearts. They must be kept pure and holy Then the heart becomes heaven itself, filled with joy. Heaven and hell are not elsewhere. When you are happy,

that is heaven. When you are miserable, that is hell. If you wish to experience joy, fill your mind with thoughts of God. Where there is God, there is bliss. This Divine bliss is described in many ways, but it is one and the same thing. Likewise, God is called by different names according to the context and the role played by the Divine. It is the one Supreme Who is worshipped in different names. Today when you are celebrating the advent of the New Year, you have to fill your minds with the name of the Lord. There is no greater joy on earth than acting up to the injunctions of the Lord. All troubles arise when you act against the commands of the Lord.

6. Ideals of the Rama Avatar

Date: 24 March 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Rama Navami

Whenever you look, you must only see God; 'Tis folly to see anything else. When you walk, you must walk with God; 'Tis foolish to take any other path. When you speak, speak only the Truth; All other talk is futile. When you sing, sing about the greatest truths; All other singing is an aberration. When you hear, you must listen only to the Lord's bhajans.

You must seek only to see God. God must be your only Goal. What greater truth is there than this, Oh good people that are assembled here? Sweeter than sugar,

Tastier than butter

More sweet than pure honey, When you utter the Name It is like nectar itself: Reflect on it always Oh mind! On the name of Rama.

Life is impermanent in this world Youth and wealth are also transient; So are wife and children, Only Dharma and Fame endure for ever. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! All objects in the world are liable to change. All living beings must pass some day. But ideals and sacred objectives established in human hearts shine forever.

If one has to live upto an ideal, he must be prepared to face many ordeals, difficulties, calumnies, trials and tribulations. These ideals have continued upto the present day to glow in the hearts of the people because they have been upheld inspite of vicissitudes and ordeals. Aeons may come and go, continents may appear and disappear, people may pass away, but ideals and values remain a perennial source of inspiration to the world. What cannot be achieved through physical prowess, the strength of numbers or the power of wealth, can be accomplished through the power of Buddhi (intelligence). Viveka (wisdom) is the hallmark of intelligence. Man acquires wisdom only by adherence to Truth and the pursuit of Dharma (righteousness). Wisdom

cannot be nourished without following Truth. The sun and the moon are shining in the world. People imagine that each of them is shining by its own luminosity. They do not realise that there is an effulgence which transcends the light of the sun and the moon and accounts for their brilliance. The physical sun is regarded as selfluminous. The moon shines because of the reflected light of the sun. The moon is not selfluminous; it derives its light from the sun. Likewise, people imagine that Viveka and Buddhi in man are sui generis. But the light of wisdom is derived from the Buddhi. The illumination of the Buddhi is due to the Atma (the Indwelling Spirit). Human beings in their ignorance consider only the illumination emanating from wisdom and intelligence, forgetting the basic source of their effulgence, the Atma; as a consequence they forfeit their essential human quality. That Atma is the foundation. It is Brahman. It is Paratatwa (Supreme Cosmic Principle). It is the Paramatma (Omni-Self). It is the Avataric principle.

The Divine appeared in human form

The common people can derive no benefit if the Formless Absolute remains in Kailasa or Vaikunta. It is not possible to worship the Formless Absolute. Hence, the Rama-Avatar appeared in human form to enable humanity to experience the Formless in a form which is accessible to them and helpful to them. An Avatar assumes the form that is beneficial to and within the reach of human beings. Men cannot comprehend the Formless and the Attributeless Absolute. Unfortunately, even when the Formless Absolute assumes a form, there are persons, who impelled by their own attitudes, attribute their own human foibles to the Avatar. "When he has the same form as ours, the same physical features, and eats, talks and moves about like any of us, what is the difference between the Avatar and ourselves?" they ask. Because of this narrowminded approach, these persons are distancing themselves from the Divine. An effort must be made to understand the nature of divinity. "Daivam manusharopena," declares the scripture (God in human form). It is only when God comes in human form can human beings have the full opportunity to experience and enjoy the Divine. When human life is sublimated, it gets divinised. Life X Infinity is God. Virata Swaroopa (the Cosmic Form) is: Body X Infinity. Mind X Infinity is Hiranyagarbha (the Cosmic Consciousness). God,

Virata Swaroopa and Hiranyagarbha are not distinct entities located in specific places. They are immanent in man. All religions have come into existence to make man realise the source from which he has come and to which he should return.

Aim of religion is to unite man with God

By all kinds of misinterpretations and wrong meanings, the great religion of the Bharatiyas has been rendered meaningless and valueless by sectarians and perverse exponents. The basic meaning and purpose of religion is to lead man to his source. Students should grasp the root meaning of the word Religion. It consists of two parts 'Re,' meaning 'again,' and 'ligio' meaning 'come together' or 'unite.' That is to say, "Reuniting with God" is Religion. People consider religion as a bundle of doctrines and of rigorous do's and don'ts prescribed for people. This is totally wrong. The sacred aim of Religion is to remind man of his divine origin and help to lead him back to God.

This profound truth is contained in the Upanishadic dictum: "Tat Twam Asi" (That Thou Art). "Uniting That with This" is the meaning of this declaration. "Prajnanam Brahma" (Brahmam is Cosmic Knowledge) is another declaration which is designed to remind man of his divine essence and enable him to merge in the Divine. "Ayam Atma Brahma" (This Atma is Brahmam) is another declaration expounding the same basic purpose of Religion, namely, to make the individual realise his oneness with the Supreme. The dictum "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahmam, the absolute), is the final declaration by the Self-realised person, that in reality, there is no difference between him and the Absolute. The essence of the religion of Bharatiyas as proclaimed in the Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana Vedas, is the attainment of the unity of the individual with the Divine by the recognition of his inherent divinity. The Avatars come to teach humanity this principle of oneness so that they may get rid of the idea of diversity and manifest their inherent divinity, realizing their basic spiritual nature.

Avatars come to teach principle of oneness

The descent of the Avatar means the Divine coming down to the level of the human. No blemish attaches to the Divine as a result of this descent. There is no diminution in His puissance. Here is the example of a child playing on the ground. If the mother feels it is beneath her dignity to bend and calls upon the child to leap into her arms, the child cannot do so. But out of her love for the child, the mother herself stoops and picks up the baby. By bending down to take the child, does the mother bow to the child? Likewise, the Avatar descends to the level of the human to bless and rescue those who cannot rise to the level of the Divine. The ignorant assumes that because the Divine has descended with a human form God has lowered Himself to the human level. This is a case of bending and not kneeling down. It is an act of benediction and not of submission.

The manifestation of Divine Powers

The attributes and powers of the Divine remain unaltered in their pristine amplitude. The Divine manifests His powers according to the needs, the circumstances and the conditions prevailing at a particular time or place. Take, for example, the case of a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He has the power to inflict the supreme penalty on any number of persons, according to the law. He has also the power to protect the rights of citizens. He has both the power to protect and to punish. These powers can be exercised only when he sits in his judicial chair. The same Chief Justice, when he is at home, confers joy on his grandson by letting him ride on his back! By allowing this grandchild to play in this manner, does he forfeit his powers as a Chief Justice? Similarly, the Avatar does not forgo any of His supreme powers merely because He lives and moves among human beings as a man. Narrow-minded persons view these things differently. This phenomenon could be noticed in several instances in the case of the Rama-Avatar. In the Ramayana, Rama is depicted as one who, like other ordinary human beings, experienced the pangs of separation from Sita. For what reason did Rama exhibit such feelings? Rama behaved in this manner to serve as an example to the common people how individuals should behave in similar circumstances.

The Ramayana is a work which holds out ideals for every home and every

family. What should be the relations between a father and a son, how should a husband and wife conduct themselves, how should brothers behave towards each other, what should be the relations between the rulers and the citizens, how should sisters-in-law conduct themselves - all these are exemplified in the story of the Rama-Avatar.

Sri Rama's example of an ideal life

Rama was prepared to honour a boon given by his father to his step-mother in fulfilment of an old promise. He renounced the throne at the moment of coronation and elected to go to the forest as an exile. Eminently qualified as he was to become the ruler, nevertheless he chose to go to the forest to honour his father's plighted word. This is a glorious example of an ideal life. Today people would set at nought promises given by the father and place their self-interest in the forefront. Rama demonstrated to the world that men born in the Ikshvaku dynasty were unflinching in honouring the pledges of the fathers. Rama was prepared to face any ordeals and troubles in upholding this sacred principle. Rama was ever active in fulfilling the wishes and responding to the opinions of the people. Highly sensitive even to the remarks of a petty washerman, Rama sent away Sita to the forest out of a feeling that the washer-man's comment might be an indication of the unspoken feelings of many others among his subjects. Rama stands out as an ideal ruler intensely responsive to the wishes of the people. Today persons who are incompetent and unworthy are aspiring for positions of power. This is utterly wrong. This is the reason for the nation finding itself in the doldrums today. The disastrous decline of Bharat is entirely due to the incompetence of those in power. Men of character, who are totally free from self-interest should occupy the seats of power. Rama demonstrated the ideal relations that should exist between the ruler and the ruled.

Lakshmana's devotion to his brother

Turning to the harmonious relations that existed between the brothers' Complying with his stepmother's words, Rama might don the bark of trees, wear the mantle of an ascetic and leave for the forest. There was no such

obligation on Lakshmana's part. But as a younger brother he felt that it was not proper for him to stay and enjoy life in Ayodhya when his brother was leaving for the forest. He was ready to renounce his mother and wife and accompany Rama, whom he considered as his life-breath. Thus he followed Rama as an ascetic, treating Ayodhya without Rama as a jungle and a forest with Rama as Ayodhya. Indefatigably he served Rama and Sita night and day. The behaviour of brothers today in similar situations would be entirely different. They are likely to indulge in litigation over the sharing of property and lose them all in carrying the dispute upto the Supreme Court. They will not agree to enjoy the property in common and will ruin themselves through litigation. To such brothers, Rama should serve as an example.

How Sita convinced Rama

Rama also exemplified the ideal relationship between husband and wife in a family. When Rama decided to leave for the forest, Sita wanted to accompany him to serve him. Rama tried in many ways to dissuade her, telling her about the dangers in living in the forest, infested by wild animals and demons on the prowl. Sita replied: "When I am with the lion among men, what can any animal do to me?" Rama argued with her that the Rakshasas were capable of assuming any form and that it would be difficult to safeguard her. Sita retorted: "Can't you, who are the protector of the fourteen worlds, protect a lone Sita!" By these arguments, Sita tried to make Rama agree to her going with him. Rama then employed a different argument. He told her that she should stay behind to render service to his aged parents. Earlier Sita had listened to the advice Rama had given to his mother Kausalya when she wanted to go with Rama to the forest. Rama had told her about her duties towards her husband and said that in no circumstance should she leave him and follow Rama. He had told Kausalya: "For a wife the husband is the Lord. The son cannot take the husband's place. The husband is primary. Your first duty is to serve my father and not come with me." Sita reminded Rama of the advice he had given to his mother and told him that he could not lay down one rule for his mother and another for herself with regard to a wife's duties towards her husband. She urged Rama to act upto his own words and take her with him. "You are going to the forest to honour your father's words. I am

following you to act up to my husband's words," she said. In this manner the Ramayana demonstrates the proper relationship between husband and wife and their respective duties.

Example of Bharata to stand by traditions

If you consider the conduct of Bharata, you find that even though the kingdom was offered to him by his father and mother, he did not desire to enjoy what belonged by right to the eldest son, Rama. He considered it immoral and opposed to the traditions of the Ikshvaku family to accept the kingdom in such circumstances and firmly renounced it. When Dasaratha decided to take Kaikeyi as his third wife, with the consent of Kausalya and Sumitra, so that he could have a son to succeed to the throne, Kaikeyi's father imposed a condition that he would offer his daughter in marriage only if the son born to her would be made king, without regard to the claims of the son that might be born to the eldest queen. Dasaratha was not willing to accept this condition, but Kausalya and Sumitra persuaded him to accept it, saying that no one born in the Ikshvaku line would go against Dharma. This was amply borne out by the conduct of Bharata.

Bharata not only refused to ascend the throne, but he took a vow to stay out of the capital till Rama returned to the kingdom. He declared he was not prepared to sully the good name of his great ancestors for the sake of the throne. "When Rama has gone to the forest to honour his father's command, I shall also go to the forest," said Bharata. Ultimately, he secured the sandals of Rama, installed them on the throne and himself led the life of an ascetic in Nandigrama, a village outside the capital. Is it conceivable that anyone would give up a great good fortune that came his way in the manner Bharata did? Will anyone spurn the windfall that comes to him? But, Bharata did not regard the kingdom as a blessing. He felt that it would be infamous to succeed to the throne.

Lessons that the Ramayana teach

The Ramayana, thus, must be looked upon as a great work from which one

can learn how each member in a family should conduct himself or herself righteously and lead an ideal life. Take, for instance, the example of sisters-in-law. In families today, there is no harmony between the wives of brothers. But, look at how Lakshmana's wife, Urmila, behaved. She told Lakshmana that he was fortunate to have the opportunity to serve Rama, which had been denied to her. She said: "I would also like to come with you. But if I come, my presence will detract your singleminded service to Rama and Sita. I shall stay back, while you dedicate yourself whole-heartedly to their service." Urmila thus made a greater sacrifice than even Sita. Lakshmana's mother, Sumitra, when her son fell at her feet and sought her blessings before leaving for the forest with Rama and Sita, rejoiced in giving him her blessings. She told him: "The forest where Rama is will be Ayodhya for you." Will any mother send her son to the forest in this manner? These examples show how pure-hearted were the members of Sri Rama's family. How did Kausalya bless Rama when he prostrated before her prior to leaving for the forest? She declared: "May that Dharma for protecting which you are going to the forest protect you always. May you have for your protection all the raksha (amulets) which Gouri and other great mothers gave to their sons when they went out to fight the forces of evil!" Thus Rama received the blessings of his mother, step-mother and all others when he set out for the forest to honour his father's word.

Unity in family leads to nation's prosperity

The foremost lesson to be learnt from the Rama-story is how to foster unity and harmony in a family. When each family is united, the village enjoys unity. When the villages are united, the nation basks in prosperity. "Be ready to sacrifice the son for the sake of the village and the village for the sake of the nation." This was the dictum taught by Vidura in the Mahabharata. The reign, of Rama was marked by concern for justice and morality. Today the people are bedevilled by distrust and suspicion at every step. "Why should God do like this?" Such questions are asked out of narrow-minded doubts. There will be no room for such doubts if the infinite nature of the Divine is properly understood. The petty-minded folk who cannot grasp the omniscience of the Divine raise such questions. Their entire life is wasted in this manner. Hence, people should get rid of such pettiness. God can protect as well as

punish. He may impose trials or confer joy. Krishna destroyed Dantavakra and Sisupala. He protected the Pandavas all through. God (in His earlier Avatars) destroyed Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu and protected Prahlada. In the Rama-Avatar, He punished Ravana and Kumbhakarna and crowned Vibhishana as King. As Krishna, He teased the Gopikas and made them weep. He gave delight to His gopala companions. All these are different aspects of the Lord's leelas (sport). "Why should He do this and why should He behave differently?" Such questions are irrelevant in the context of the Lord's utterly selfless actions. God's deeds are free from blemish. There is not an iota of selfishness in the Lord.

Preceptor and the faithful disciple

There is a story which points out the difference between a genuine disciple and others who behave in one way when they are with the preceptor and differently when they are away from him. The preceptor, when he was nearing his end, sent word to all his old disciples to come to the ashram for a last meeting with them before he passed away. All the disciples had arrived except one who had to come from a long distance. While he was coming, he had to cross a river in spate before reaching the guru's village. Despite warnings from the villagers not to get into the swollen river, he walked on, in his anxiety to reach the guru, reciting the mantra the guru had taught him. Miraculously the river was only knee-deep while he was crossing it. Everybody was struck by the miracle. On reaching the ashram, the other disciples felt that the guru had imparted a different mantra to this disciple which had enabled him to wade through the swollen river with ease. They even accused the guru of partiality. The guru told them that the mantra imparted to all of them was one and the same, but there was a difference in the spirit in which it was uttered by the disciples and that made all the difference in its protective efficacy. The disciple who had crossed the river was saved by his faith in the guru. There was no difference in the message imparted to the disciples.

Strengthen your faith to acquire bliss

If the name of the Lord is not recited in the proper spirit, of what use is all the sadhana? Faith is the primary requisite. Chanting the name endlessly without faith is utterly useless. Where there is faith, there is Love. Where there is Love, there is Peace. Where there is Peace, there is Truth. Where there is Truth, there is Bliss. Where there is Bliss, there is God. If faith is lacking how can Bliss be experienced?

Therefore, strengthen your faith. Alas' this is the Kali age. People are blind, lacking the eyes of faith. A rich man will trust a gurkha watchman for the safety of his home. One will trust a driver for the safe driving of his car. A man will trust a dhobi for washing valuable clothes. One submits his head for tonsure to a barber wielding a sharp razor. But, unfortunately, in spite of all their studies, educated persons do not have faith in God. People are prepared to place their trust in an array of inferior beings, but have no faith in the Supreme. That accounts for all their troubles. Above all, develop faith in the ideals of Rama. Faith in these ideals has been responsible for their survival after aeons. What you must aspire after is a life governed by ideals. Everyone must aim at becoming an ideal person. Ideals, not ostentation, should be the watchword. The Rama-Era will come into existence from the moment we give up ostentation, develop faith in the Self, and lead a godly life. Then everyone will be a lover of Rama. Rama does not mean the son of Dasaratha. The Atma is Rama and hence Rama is referred to as Atma-Rama.

Celestial spheres are revolving and disintegrating; time is fleeting; age follows age; era succeeds era; bodies that have taken birth, grow and end; but, the urge to sanctify life with good works and good thoughts is nowhere evident; the fragrance of sincere sadhana is not traceable anywhere. Through the process of 'giving up' great things can be achieved. Cultivate detachment, and the Lord will attach Himself to you. The past is beyond recovery; those days are gone. But, tomorrow is coming towards you. Resolve to sanctify it with Love, Service and Sadhana.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

7. Bhagavan's call to students

Date: 20 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

THIS is the age of science and technology. On the one side astonishing progress has been made in the fields of plastics, electronics and computers. Scientists have also made wonderful discoveries in the spheres of atomic energy and space exploration. Moreover man is sending out into space artificial satellites. Enormous energy and expenses are being devoted for investigating the mysteries of the atom. But there is no comparable concern for developing human behaviour. In the competition for over-reaching each other, men are immersed in selfishness and are pursuing wrong courses. Politics and economics are bedevilled by crises. Men are riven by caste and religious conflicts. The appetite for power and position has become insatiable. These are causing the disintegration of the sacred land of Bharat. Indiscipline is rampant in the student world.

What is the reason for the divergence between scientific progress on the one side and the social and moral decline of man on the other? What the world needs today is a large number of purehearted boys and girls, who are utterly selfless and are prepared to offer their lives to the service of the nation. Unfortunately, men today are lost in the pursuit of fleeting sensuous pleasures and material possessions. Has this any meaning? Take the example of Emperor Sivaji. He lacked nothing by way of wealth. What, then, is the secret of his approaching Samartha Ramadas as a suppliant? Similarly, King Janaka had all the wealth he needed. Why did he resort to the Sage Yajnavalkya? The reason is that from ancient times it was the practice of the kings to seek the advice and guidance of sages who were the repositories of spiritual wisdom. Thereby they secured peace of mind and security for their kingdoms. They realised that man can get enduring peace and happiness only by spiritual realisation and not by any other means.

Students should develop social consciousness

Students should strive to awaken in the people a recognition of their inherent

divinity the loss of which accounts for the degradation of humanity today. Students should develop social consciousness. It is not enough to acquire academic knowledge and technical skills, which are all that present-day education is concerned with. If there is no love of God, fear of sin, and practice of social ethics, how can there be peace in the world? Scientists and political leaders are teaching all kinds of things to the youth. But of what use are these teachings? Slogans on the walls, lectures on the platform and pontifications in the press are not what the students need. They need the example of leaders who stand up for integrity and morality. All things in the world are perishable. Mortality is the inescapable destiny of every man. But the ideals for which men live and for which they are prepared to give up their lives last for ever. Hence every student should have great ideals and try to live upto them. That is the secret of immortality. By their exemplary lives, they should transform the world. This was the role of Bharat in ancient times.

Strive to become human to reach the Divine

Students should realise their great responsibility to the nation. They must eschew selfishness altogether. Men today are immersed in selfishness, which is the cause of many other evils in society. Every thought, every action is prompted by self-interest. Desires multiply and peace of mind is lost. Man should be rescued from this deplorable state. Mankind's problems today cannot be solved by science and technology alone. Only a transformation in the character of man can serve to solve the present crisis. Men should strive to become human and progress towards the Divine.

Education which does not serve to develop character and foster virtues is of no use. Science and technology are undoubtedly necessary. But they should be utilised properly. Scientists are trying to discover everything about the external world. But they make no attempt to understand the truth about themselves. They have not learnt to control their senses. This was the lesson which Prahlada taught to his father, who was a master of the elements and wielded immense power. Prahlada told Hiranyakasipu: "You have conquered all the worlds, but have no control over your senses."

Self-control implies control over desires

In the educational process today, it is essential to inculcate among students the need to control the senses. It is the absence of self-control that is at the root of all the violence and conflict in society today.

Self-control implies control over desires. I have often impressed on students the importance of setting limits on desires. "Nasreyo niyamam vina" is an ancient saying. (Nothing ennobling can be realised without observing restraint). There is a need to acquire wealth for living. But excessive wealth is harmful. What men have to aim at is not sampada (wealth) but right samskara (conduct). Life is governed by restraints at every stage. The eye cannot tolerate the glare of blazing lights. The body cannot bear a rise in temperature. Anything in excess is a cause of trouble.

Students should seek to follow great ideals and serve as examples to the world. They should make use of their knowledge for the service of the motherland instead of going abroad to earn high incomes. Indian culture has esteemed the mother and the motherland as greater than heaven itself. Loving service to parents, reverence towards elders and respectful behaviour towards everyone are the marks of Indian culture. Students of the Sai Institute should exemplify these traits in their conduct wherever they may be. Inaugural address as Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning to the

8. The perennial quest

Date: 21 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

The Lord shines throughout the Cosmos, He is immanent in everything The friendship between the Lord and the Cosmos is inseparable This is the truth declared by Sai.

ISAAVAASYAM idam jagath. (The Lord is the indweller in the entire world). Jagat refers to the world in which beings are born, grow and pass away. The basis for this world is the earth. The wind blows ceaselessly everywhere. But this is not visible to man. We have day and night. During daytime all kinds of activities take place. When night comes, Nature seeks repose in silent sleep. Man has to find out the relationship between day and night, between light and darkness. When man looks up at the sky during day, he sees the sun shining with all his effulgence. In the boundless firmament, the Sun alone shines. In this world, all the time, every moment some activity or other is going on: Meritorious actions and actions in the discharge of Purusharthas (the four goals of human life); marriages and festivities; births and deaths. All these take place all the time and life goes on in merriment or sorrow. There is no end to this. From the moment of birth, man is pursued by hunger. After the umbilical cord is cut, the newborn babe cries. When milk or other food is given, the crying stops.

The expansion of human life and needs

The first affliction for man is hunger Man needs food grains for appeasing his hunger. Food grains can be got only through the use of water (for growing food). As food production goes up, the population also increases. In this process of growth, agriculture develops and villages and cities come into existence. In this way, human life expands, the needs of people increase and men start enquiring into the problem of how to meet these needs. Mankind

discovers in the process some secrets of Nature. It also recognises that there are many things beyond its ken. There is always an awareness that what is not known is far more than what is known. Man cannot create the earth. Nor can he create water. Fire emerges when two sticks are rubbed against each other, but man cannot inject the latent heat into the stick. Examining in this manner, man realised that there is a power at work which cannot be seen by the eye or heard by the ear or conceived by the mind. That this power transcended the human was dimly inferred.

For every kind of power, proofs may be sought by Pratyaksha (direct perception) or by the Anumana (process of inference). Men sought to find out by what direct proof they could experience this transcendental power. They found the proof in the Sun. Without the Sun there will be no light at all. Nor is that all. All activities will come to a standstill. In this world hydrogen is essential for the growth of plants and of living beings. The Sun's primary components are hydrogen and helium. Without hydrogen and helium, the world cannot survive. Hence, the ancients concluded that the Sun was the visible proof (of a transcendental power). They also found some subtle secrets about the Sun. Hence, they adored the Sun as the principal deity in the Gayatri mantra.

The Gayatri mantra is the Mother of Vedas

"Dheeyo yo nah prachodayath." (May the Sun illumine our intellects in the same way he sheds his effulgence). This is the prayer addressed to the Sun in the Gayatri mantra. In this way, they came to regard the Gayatri mantra as Veda Matha (the Mother of the Vedas). This Gayatri mantra is not related to any particular time, place or person. "Bhur Bhuvah-Suvah" (occurring in the mantra) indicates that it relates to the three aspects of Time - the past, the present and the future. "Tat Savitur Varenyam, Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi, Dheeyo yo nab Prachodayath" (Light dispels darkness). Without light darkness will not go. "Bhargo devasya" signifies that the Sun is the dispeller of darkness. In this manner, the ancients believed that there was a supreme power and looked upon it as God. In course of time, they started studying numbers: one, two, three, and so on upto ten. Among these numbers, the

primary number is one and the others are derived from it by a process of addition. Thus they found that all numbers are based on One. They regarded one as the primary number.

The One has become many

"Ekam Sath Viprah bahudha vadanthi" (The Ultimate Reality is one, but the wise call it by many names). This is one of the declarations of the scriptures. The same truth was proclaimed by the Vedas in the statement: "Eko-ham bahusyam" (I am One, let me become many). Without one, there cannot be other numbers. Through the study of numbers also, the ancients came to the conclusion that God is one only. Thus the faith developed among men that there was an invisible power in the universe and that it was One without a second. The One has assumed innumerable names and forms and permeates the entire universe. On the basis of this truth, the ancients declared: "Isavasyam idam jagath" (The Divine is the indweller in the Cosmos). The ancients gave the name Aditya to the Divine. Aditya, as one of the 12 Adityas, was worshipped as Vishnu. Vishnu here does not mean the deity bearing a conch and discus. Vishnu refers to the One who permeates the entire Cosmos. For this omnipresent principle, a form was conceived: Vishnutva means that which is all pervading. How was Aditya looked upon? You have vessels made of gold, silver, brass, copper and clay filled with water. In all of them the same reflection of the Sun is perceived. The vessels may be different, they may vary in value, but the Sun shines in all of them equally. Innumerable vessels may be kept, but the Sun's reflection will be one and the same. The ancients concluded that the contents may vary in value, form and name but the image is the same in all of them.

Divinity is the only One Reality

Proceeding from this, they considered the body as a vessel made of mud. In this vessel made out of mud, they found that Chinmaya (consciousness as Spirit) was present. This spiritual entity was called Hiranyagarbha. Expanding his comprehension in this manner, man came gradually to realise that there was only One Reality and that was Divinity. Another name given to this Divine

entity was Easwarah. That is, the Divine was regarded as the possessor of infinite and inexhaustible wealth. What is this wealth? Health is one kind of wealth. Material riches are one kind of wealth. Knowledge, virtues, wisdom, are all included in the term Aiswaryam (wealth). They realised the truth that Easwara is the embodiment of every kind of wealth.

Probing further into the mystery of the Divine, they described Him as Siva. Siva means the One who is free from three gunas (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas). He transcends these three qualities. As one who is without qualities, He was also called Suddha-Satwah. Siva is that pure untainted Satwa quality. It represents the principle of Mangala (auspiciousness). This means that only when the gunas are absent, auspiciousness appears. When qualities are present, it is inauspicious. Hence, Siva is the Mangala-swaroopudu (embodiment of Auspiciousness). As their comprehension developed, they began to describe the Divine as Sambhavah. Sambhavah means the One who can manifest Himself at any place, at any time, in any form, according to the requirements of the situation. This is borne out by the sloka in the Gita where Krishna says: "Whenever Dharma faces decline and Adharma rears its head, I manifest Myself. For the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked and establishment of Righteousness, I make my advent from age to age." Because He can manifest Himself whenever necessary, He is called Sambhavah.

Thus, the ancients gave different names to the Divine after ascertaining the mysteries of the Divine. Another name given to the Supreme was Isa. It is essential to understand how the ancient sages sought to explore the innumerable facets of the Divine. The term Isa refers to the possession of the six forms of Aiswarya by the Divine. These are wealth, riches, wisdom, fame, glory and vairagya (non-attachment).

God is immeasurable, all-pervading and infinite

As man's comprehension of the attributes increased with the growth of the intellect, he described God as Aprameyah - One who is beyond any kind of proof and who is immeasurable. It may be possible to measure, the vastness

of the ocean or the boundless sky. But there is no measuringrod by which God can be measured. God transcends the three kinds of proof: Pratyaksha (Direct Perception), Anumana (inference) and Sabda (the authority of the spoken word). Hence he was called Aprameyah. They concluded that this infinite and immeasurable Divine entity is allpervading. If such a Divine Principle did not exist, the cosmos will not exist. Whether man believes in it or not, this Divine power is present everywhere. Many sages started performing penance to have direct experience of Divinity They felt that realisation of God should be the primary goal of life. Some of them gave up the quest after many efforts, feeling that it was beyond their capacity to experience the Divine. Some of them, from the very start, came to the conclusion that the wide gulf between the human and the Divine ruled out the possibility of man realising the Divine. This is totally wrong. The human has come from the Divine. Krishna has emphatically declared in the Gita: "Mamaivamso jiva loke jiva bhutassanatanah" (The human being in the world of beings is a fragment of Myself). A son has to recognise his father. On this reasoning, some sages declared that whatever the odds and ordeals, man should not give up the quest for God.

Realisation of the Divine by the sages

Ultimately, by the power of their penance the sages were able to realise the Divine. Not content with their own realisation, they proclaimed to the world their great experience. They called upon men to "Wake up! Stand up and stop not till the goal is reached!" They exhorted mankind: " Oh ye who are wallowing in ignorance, wake up! wake up! Behold this divine effulgence. We have seen It. Where did we see It? Inside or outside? We saw It everywhere." "Antarbahischa tatsarvam vyapya Narayanas-sthithah" (The Supreme Lord is present inside and outside, pervading the entire universe). How does He appear? "Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adityavarnam Tamasah-parastath" (We have known the Purusha the Supreme Lord, effulgent like the Sun, who is beyond the darkness).

Get rid of Tamas to realise the Divine

We cannot realise the Supreme unless we get rid of Tamas (the darkness of ignorance). Without giving up Tamas, How can you become Satwa? Unless you give up the Rajoguna You cannot acquire Bhakti. The Satwaguna is itself the Divine discipline. Do not forget the Divine discipline. Do not forget this good counsel. You must get rid of Tamas at the very outset. The body has not been given for indulging in eating, etc. Such a life is only animal existence. There is only one quality which transcends this Tamas. It is Discrimination. Without the removal of Tamas, this Divine Jnana will not come to man. When Tamas goes, Rajas remains. This Rajoguna fills a man with innumerable desires. So, this also has to be given, up. Only then, the Satwic quality will emerge and then the effulgence of the Divine will be experienced. The mystery of the Veda is unfathomable. But it will become clear to those who have Sraddha and Bhakti (earnestness and devotion). For a man who opens his eyes, the myriad stars will be visible. But for a blind man or a man who has closed his eyes, nothing will be visible even if the most powerful light is placed near their eyes. You have to open the eyes of Sraddha and Bhakti, not these physical eyes. When you have acquired the Eye of Wisdom, the light of the Divine will be visible to you everywhere.

Where is God? When the students sit for their meals, before taking food, they recite a mantra. But they make no effort to understand its meaning. "Brahmarpanam Brahmahavih Brahmagnau Brahmanahutham Brahmaiva thena ganthavyam Brahma Karma Samadhina. " This prayer is chanted and the food is offered to Brahma. Where is Brahmam? The answer is given in the sloka:

"Aham Vaisawanaro Bhutva Praninam deham Asritah Pranapana Samayuktah Pachamyannam Chaturvidham." "You simpleton! I am residing within you in the form of Vaiswanara. If I am not within you as the digestive fire, you will die from indigestion. The four kinds of food you eat are being digested by Me."

Appearance is different from reality

Thus, there is no room for any doubt for man regarding Brahmam. For the

man with doubt there is none who can remove it. You can wake up a man who is asleep or who has just closed his eyes. But can anyone wake up the one who is pretending to be asleep? There is nothing like sleep for God. If God sleeps, the whole universe will go to sleep. There is also nothing like a waking state for God. There can be waking state, only if one goes to sleep. When a person is never asleep what need is there to wake him up? Waking and sleeping are confined to man. These states are related to day and night. In reality, there is neither day nor night. Day and night are based on the motions of the earth around the sun and the daily life of man according to the region where he lives.

In the spiritual path differences cease

Likewise, on the basis of the direction in which the Sun appears to rise and seems to set, East and West are described. The scientists are aware that these descriptions of the directions have no inherent reality. But in practical life they are recognising these directions. This is because in daily life, such conventional descriptions cannot be avoided. When one takes to the spiritual path, everything is alike and differences and distinctions cease. As long as you are in the phenomenal world, you have to observe the phenomenal appearances. Differences will remain as long as you think in terms of "I," "you" and "he." These three different entities have to be eliminated. That is the state of the Atma. One has to get rid of the feelings of "mine" and "thine." This is not so easy. However, by constant effort, it can be realised. But man does not make this effort with earnestness and devotion. Evolving from the animal, man developed the mind and in due course was able to invent whatever was necessary for his comforts. He discovered many things but could not discover the cause of birth and death. What is the secret of this phenomenon? "Jatasya maranam dhruvam" (Death is certain for one who is born). But one does not know whether a dead person is born again. The ancient sages sought to unravel the mystery of birth, death and rebirth. They found that this secret is beyond the power of man. They realised that this was due to Divine Will and not the result of human effort. If one wants to live, can he live as long as he wants? A man may think: "I am healthy and strong and I can live for ten more years." But he may die the same night in a car accident.

Is health the cause of longevity? No. What, then, is the means of preventing death? Not our health. Nor our own abilities and devices. Not all our various possessions. Not at all. The root cause of death is Divine Will.

There is nothing greater than the Will of God

Innumerable things are happening in the world without any effort on man's part. Is man doing anything for the functioning of his heart? What is he doing for his continuous respiration? Is he responsible for the circulation of blood in his body? These are not dependent on human effort. They are the result of Divine Will. Consequently, the sages concluded that there was nothing greater than the Will of God. "Oh man, though human life is said to last for a hundred years, do not believe in it. Death may come in childhood, youth, middle age or old age. Death may overtake one in a village or forest or in a river. You have to realise God even while you are still alive. Do not concern yourself as to when death will happen, where and how. No one can alter what is destined by the Will of the Divine." Hence the sages advised mankind to pray to God for His grace.

What is Prana (the locus of life) in man? The Veda declared: "Neelathoyatha madhyasthah vidyullekheva bhaswarah" (He shines like a lightning in the heart of a dark blue cloud). Behind the back of a person, there is the spinal column with 33 vertebrae. Between the 9th and the 12th vertebra, there is the Sushumna nadi, which shines like a lightning. People imagine that life resides in the heart. The heart is like the main switch. But life does not reside there. What happens to life when heart surgery is performed? When the heart is transplanted, it is like changing the main switch. But it is because of the vital force in the middle of the spinal column that life exists.

People today regard the ancient sages as ignoramuses, who knew nothing about science. But they knew more than the scientists of today. One of the greatest scientists in ancient times was Hiranyakasipu. He was the master of all the five elements (ether, air, water, fire and earth) and explored the depths of the ocean, all the regions of the earth and the farthest reaches of the sky. He probed the secrets of the atom. But with all this vast knowledge,

he did not know his own reality.

Powers possessed by the ancient sages

It is meaningless to compare the knowledge of the ancient sages with that of modern scientists. How many sages performed arduous penances to acquire divine potencies. Today's doctors perform surgical operations. They acquire this skill after long training here and abroad and after many successes and failures. They use sophisticated instruments. But in ancient times, there was a highly skilled master of medicine and surgery, the sage Bharadwaja. He taught surgery to the world. He was the author of the science of Ayurveda - the Science of Life. People consider that Ayurvedic medicines do not yield quick results. People today have a craze for quick results. Quickness may operate both ways. Today antibiotics are used. A few drops of the medicine brings down the fever. But later fever goes up. There are also adverse reactions. In the treatment employed by the ancient sages as a result of their penances, there were no such reactions. Because of their penance, their vision transcended the barriers of distance. They could directly converse with the powers of Nature. Today crores are spent on telecommunications, radio and television. In those days there was no expense at all of this kind. When the mind was purified and divinised, they could acquire super-human powers.

Determined efforts always ensures success

Students! You have to enquire into how man through various stages developed his potentialities to higher levels. No one is a scholar or a man of knowledge at birth. It is only gradually that he acquires knowledge and skills. For getting degrees like B.A. or M.B.A., you go into so much trouble. What effort are you making to realise the Divine? Nothing at all. You must make this effort. There is nothing that cannot be achieved by determined efforts. You should not give up the effort out of a feeling of incapacity. The ancient sages persevered ceaselessly in their quest. They succeeded in their efforts after going through every kind of ordeal, braving heat and cold, gain and loss, joy and sorrow. Today whatever endeavour people undertake, they want to have all comforts and conveniences. They do not relish any impediments.

There is, however, no easy way to any worthwhile accomplishment. No one who wishes to accomplish something should seek the path of pleasure. You must be prepared for any sacrifice, offering everything to God. Only then you can acquire extraordinary powers. Whatever studies they pursued, whatever great knowledge they acquired, the ancient sages were never filled with conceit. Most scientists today get puffed up with pride after making some small discovery. A true man of knowledge should be free from pride. Students should give no room for conceit.

Divine grace is vital for any achievement

Humility is the hallmark of knowledge. People boast about the achievements of science. But there is still a long way to go. For instance, out of the energy coming from the Sun we have been able to use only 2 out of 3000 parts. We are yet to make use of the rest of the vast solar energy. If by harnessing a minute fraction of solar energy, mankind can accomplish so much at present, how much more can we achieve for humanity if the entire energy can be utilised for the benefit of man?

This means that if a single ray of God's grace is got, a great deal can be achieved. The ancient sages prayed to God to shower the rays of His grace on mankind. Even if a fragment of God's grace is secured, a great deal can be accomplished. But without Divine grace, nothing can be achieved.

Human effort is also essential. If it does not want to fly, even an eagle will not get off the ground. But an ant that wants to move along can cover miles in due course. Efforts are in human hands; success or defeat rests with the Divine. So, when you rely on the Divine, success will be yours.

The quest for God

Dear students! The Vice-Chancellor today posed a big question. He wanted to know how God is to be realised, what is the sadhana to be pursued and so on. These are apparently big questions, but the answer can be given in a trice. There is no need for any sadhana. Gajendra (the Lord of the elephants)

carried on his fight with the crocodile (which held him by the leg) for many years, relying on his own physical prowess. When it proved unavailing, he surrendered to God and cried out to the Lord as his only saviour. Only then God came to his rescue. Arjuna also on the battlefield came ultimately to realise that he had to take sole refuge in Krishna. He told the Lord: "Karishye vachanam thava" (I shall do your bidding). The Lord then assumed full responsibility for the outcome of the great war. It is only when everything is dedicated to God that our actions can be carried out smoothly and successfully. However, today's devotees and sadhakas do not resort to dedication. They tend to behave like shareholders in a company. They want to strike deals with the Lord, saying, "I shall do my work, you give me the benefits." They want to go into partnership with God. This won't work. You make your offering. God will see to the rest. The students have related their experiences at Kodaikanal when they were with Bhagavan. They said that when they were in the company of Bhagavan, enjoyed His love, listened to Swami's discourses and were in the sacred atmosphere of Bhagavan's divinity, they felt exhilarated, their hearts were filled with pure and sacred thoughts and were suffused with divinity. But all this changes when they are away from Swami. What is the reason? It is because they allow the external unspiritual atmosphere to influence their spiritual qualities imbibed from their stay with Bhagavan. If you are able to spiritualise the atmosphere wherever you go, your spiritual nature will remain unaffected.

Hence, you must always keep the company of the good and the godly. It is only when you remain with good people and perform good actions that your devotion will remain firm and unshaken. Verbal utterance of mantras or the ritual reciting of the Lord's name is not enough. Engage yourselves in godly activities. This was the lesson Hanuman taught to Vibhishana when he bemoaned before Hanuman that in spite of his constant chanting of Rama's name he had not been blessed with a vision of Rama. Hanuman then told Vibhishana that though he had been reciting Rama's name he had done no act of service to Rama such as comforting Sita or trying to see her during her ten months ordeal in Lanka. "Dil me Ram! Hath me Kam" (Have Rama in your heart and do your duty with your hands). The ancient sages functioned in this spirit. Their investigations were also made in this manner as an offering to the

Divine. To sanctify your precious human birth, you must fill yourselves with sacred thoughts and embark on the quest for God.

9. Three-in-one

Date: 23 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

The Lord of the Universe permeates the Cosmos like the thread running through a Necklace of gems, although He is not Visible in the universe and shines in it As the invisible Atmic Consciousness.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! "Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" (Verily, all that is, is Brahman).

This is the quintessence of the Upanishads. The truth about the vast universe of moving and motionless objects is contained in this single pronouncement. There is nothing in the Cosmos sans Brahman. Divinity is latent in everything like fire in wood and oil in sesame. Hence there is nothing in the world that is not permeated by the Divine. The processes of creation, survival and dissolution occur according to the injunctions of the Divine. Whether man believes in it or not, this wheel of creation is revolving according to the dictates of the Divine. God is the author of the Wheel of Time. Man, however, is forgetting how this Time should be employed meaningfully and purposefully.

Concept of equality in enjoyment

The sun shines and the moon sheds his cool rays on the earth. Rains come down and rivers are in spate. And crops grow. None of these happens because of the will of any single individual. Every human being in this world has an equal right to the enjoyment of the benefits flowing from these occurrences.

Man has unfortunately forgotten this basic truth. He makes no effort to enquire into the concept of samatwa yoga (equality in enjoyment). This feeling of equal enjoyment is conspicuous only among innocent children. Only in the hearts of babes can you notice the sense of enjoyment, of drinking the milk from the mother, rejoicing in the cool breeze and forgetting themselves

in the sweet music of the lullabies sung by the mother. As the child grows to manhood the ideals of "mine" and "thine" grow in the mind. Self-interest grows. The spirit of sacrifice declines. Humanness is eclipsed. What is the reason? It is the loss of Atma-visvasam (faith in the Self). One forgets the omnipresence of the Divine. The great truth that "Narayana pervades the universe by His presence in and outside of everything" is ignored.

The world is full of powerful men, men endowed with wealth, great scholars and men with good qualities, but there are few who have realised the Atma (the Omni-Self). The body is visible. The mind appears to exist. But the Atma (the Spirit) is not visible. The Atmavan (Self-realised person) is one who has recognised the visible Spirit, who is immersed in the bliss of that awareness and who is intoxicated by that Divine experience. In ancient times, many sages experienced the potency, the sweetness and the ineffable joy of this Divine bliss and gave the fruits of their experience to the world. They codified the knowledge contained in the Upanishads and offered it to the people in the world in the concept of Trikonam (Triangle). The Body is one side of the triangle. The second side is the mind. The third is the Atma.

Realise the unity of body, mind and Atma

The body is gross. The Atma is subtle. The mind coordinates the gross body and the subtle Atma and makes the individual experience Ananda (bliss). The Vedic declaration: Tath-Twam-Asi (That thou art) reflects the truth about this integrating process. Man does not understand the truth about the unity of "This" and "That." Tath means "That," referring to something remote. "This" refers to something that is near. From what is "That" far? From what is "This" near? "That" refers to what is far from our sense organs. "This" refers to what is proximate to our sense organs. The body, which is nearest to the senses, is connected by "This." "That" which is beyond the senses is the Atma. The role of the mind is to bring together the body that is close to the senses and the Atma that is far from them. Asi in Tath-Twam-Asi refers to the role of the mind in integrating the body and the Atma. Man should strive to realise the unity of the body, the mind and the Atma. "Tath- Twam-Asi" is not a recondite formula. It is an aphoristic declaration calling upon everyone to realise the

integral unity of body, mind and the Atma and thereby experience the Divine. The concept of Triangle was explored from another point of view, namely, the Jiva (the individual), God and Nature (the phenomenal universe, Prakriti). The essential nature of these three was described in the terms: Rakti, Bhukti and Mukti. Rakti represents the cosmos. Bhukti (enjoyment) represents the body (which seeks enjoyment). Mukti (liberation) represents Atma. The Upanishadic declaration points out that these three are essential for every human being. Another triad that has to be noted consists of Sthoola (gross), Sukshma (subtle) and Karana (causal) bodies. Another triple concept contained in the Upanishadic aphorism is that of Past, Present and the Future (the triple aspects of Time). In these different ways, the sages sought to popularise the idea of oneness of body, mind and Atma.

From the source, to the source

There is a cyclical process constantly going on. Rains fall. The water flows in the rivers, which rush towards the ocean. From the ocean, again, clouds are formed, which pour down rain and the rainwater forms rivulets which ultimately join the ocean. The river does not know its origin. But once it has merged in the ocean, it can be seen that the river and ocean are one: Tath-Twam-Asi (That thou art). The rivers may well declare: "We come from the ocean and we have merged in the ocean. The ocean and we are one." To take another analogy. A seed is planted in the earth. It sprouts, grows into a tree puts forth branches, leaves, flowers, buds and fruits. Wherefrom have these different manifestations come? All have come from the seed. The ancients realised from this fact that although the tree presents multifarious forms and names, the source is one only. The seed, from which the various manifestations have emerged, proudly declares: "Tath-Twam-Asi" (All of you have emanated from me). Enlarging on this concept, the sages declared: "Isavasyam idam Jagat" (The Cosmos is pervaded by the Divine). This all-pervading principle is illustrated by the example of sugar dissolved in water. After the solution, the sugar is not visible and cannot be taken out. But its presence can be experienced by tasting the syrup. The sugar thus proclaims the truth: "I am present as a pervading element even though I am invisible. The sweetness you experience comes from me and not from the water."

Unity in diversity in the universe

By these simple but telling illustrations from real life, the ancient sages sought to convey the great truth about the all-pervading nature of the Divine and the unity that underlies the apparent diversity in the universe. Only the One abides. But it assumes many forms. The Upanishads demonstrated that the essence of Bharatiya culture consists in the recognition of unity in diversity. Men waste their lives failing to recognise this unity. Take the three letters A;U;M. The unity of these three letters represents Omkara, the primordial sound called Pranava. The prapancha (world) is a manifestation of pranava. The Upanishads emphasised the integral unity of the Pranava and the Prapancha as manifestations of the Atma. It may be said that the Pranava (Om) is not apparent anywhere, nor can it be heard. But, in the process of inhaling and exhaling and in the circulation of blood in the human system, the presence of pranava can be experienced. Omkara can be heard when the wind blows. Om can be heard when one keeps the ear close to an electric pole.

Om is equated to Brahman

When we breathe in, there is the sound "So" When we exhale, there is the sound ham. (Bhagavan demonstrated how these sounds can be recognised). Together, "So" and "Ham" contain the Pranava mantra "Om." "So-Ham" ("He is I") conveys the same message as "Tath-Twam-Asi." "Om," which is derived from "SoHam," has been equated with Brahman. The inner meaning of the two sounds "So" and "Ham" should be properly understood. In the sound "So", the consonant "S" represents the experiences in the waking and dreaming states. Similarly "Ham" is related to the same states. When "S" and "Ha" are eliminated in the deep sleep state, only "O" and "M" remain. This means that as long as man is attached to the experiences of the waking and dream states, he cannot recognise the Divine symbolised by "Om." As long as man is caught up in the coils of the phenomenal world, he cannot escape from experiencing pleasure and pain. In the deep sleep state, man is oblivious to the phenomenal world and is free from experiences of pleasure and pain. It is

for this reason that the sages have compared Samadhi to the state of deep sleep. Hence, for man to realise the Divine, this is the path that has to be pursued. The Upanishads have explained in very simple terms the profoundest and most complex ideas. They have indicated to ordinary men how to experience the highest spiritual bliss by simple practices. The word Upanishad means "sitting near" (the preceptor). The spiritual aspirant is called upon to approach the wise teachers and elders in a spirit of humility and reverence.

Search for the eternal and Divine Reality

The Vedas declare: "Doorath doore anthike cha" (Farther than the farthest and very near too). This statement means that the Lord is as far from you as you consider Him to be, and as near as you feel His presence. It is your own feelings which account for the distance. The remoteness or nearness should not be attributed to the Divine, who is omnipresent. He is present in the subtlest atomic particle and in the vastest object in creation. This truth can be experienced by man if he makes the proper enquiry with diligence and devotion. But few undertake such a quest. All men's energies are devoted to the pursuit of ephemeral, transient and illusory material gains. Not even a moment is devoted to the search for the eternal and Divine reality. This is the result of man's indifference to the eternal verities. "Sraddhavan labhathe Jnanam," declares the Gita (the highest wisdom is secured only by the earnest seeker). Without earnestness, one cannot be aware of even what is nearest to him. Men suffer today from lack of peace of mind, but make no effort to find out the root cause of this malady Narada, the mind-child of Brahma, who was proficient in all the scriptures and every field of knowledge, suffering from a peaceless mind, went to the Sage Sanatkumara and asked him: "Oh Sage! Why do I have no peace of mind? Please remove this malaise and impart to me the knowledge to retain mental tranquillity" Sanatkumara asked Narada what all he had mastered and what credentials he had acquired to entitle him to seek this knowledge Narada said, he had mastered the 64 kinds of knowledge, studied the six sastras and learnt the four Vedas and their subsidiary sections.

Understand the principle of Life-force

After listening to Narada, Sanatkumara told him that all the knowledge he had acquired was only a mass of words. The sage told him that beyond all this scriptural and other knowledge was something transcendental. Narada was surprised to note how all his vast knowledge had been devalued. Sanatkumara said: "Above the power of words is Vak (the power of Speech). Above speech is the mind. Greater than the mind is the Sankalpa (Will). Higher than the Will is the Chitta (Awareness). Greater than the Chitta is Dhyana (Meditation). Greater than Dhyana is Jnana. Greater than Jnana is water. Greater than water is Thejas. Higher than this is Prana (the Life-force). It is only when you understand the principle of Prana, you will understand the truth of the aphorism Tath-Twam-Asi." Understanding the principle of the Life-force is thus crucial. For instance, when one starves for sixteen days he loses all his sixteen kalas (capacities). He regains them as he resumes taking food. What is the inner significance of this phenomenon? The body is constituted by Annamaya (food). When the body is deprived of food, the Life-force begins to decline. The body is thus subject to decay. But the Atma (Spirit) within is not perishable. The body is made up of the five elements. It is bound to perish. But the Dehi (indwelling Spirit) is immortal. It has no birth or death. That indwelling Spirit is God. Thus the imperishable Atma is always shining in this perishable body. Sanatkumara told Narada to understand this eternal Reality, which underlies the Life-principle. In the same manner Aruni told his son Swethakethu to seek to know That by knowing which all else is known, by having a vision of which everything else can be seen. Thus, there is only one thing which man has to recognise, by knowing which he can understand all other things. That one thing is the Atma- Tatwa - (Atma-Principle).

Direct all thoughts towards Atma

Today we are forgetting the truth of the Spirit. We are immersed in things unspiritual. What is the sadhana (spiritual discipline) which men have to practise? Is it dhyana, or japa, or yoga or yaga or rituals? None of these. One vital fact has to be recognised. When a person gets rid of the Anatma bhava (the identification with the body), he will experience the Sakshatkara (vision

of the Divine). There is no need to perform any spiritual exercises. These are mainly undertaken to secure some mental satisfaction. All these exercises are performed through the mind. How can such exercises control the mind? Can a thief catch himself? Likewise the mind cannot undertake to control itself. The mind has to be negated (Amanaska). Amanaska means freedom from thoughts. As thoughts are minimised, the mind loses its power. When one wants to develop faith in the Self, the potencies of the body, the mind and the Buddhi (intellect) should be diverted towards the Self. Whatever thought arises in the mind, it should be turned towards the Atma. This is real Sayujya (attaining oneness with the Divine). In this mergence, there is the realisation of unity and the feeling of diversity disappears. Take the example of the sacred rivers Krishna, Kaveri, Godavari, Ganga and Yamuna. They flow in their separate courses, have distinct names and the taste of their waters also varies. But once they join the ocean, they lose their distinct names, forms and tastes and become one with the ocean. That is the import of the Upanishadic saying: "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati" (the knower of the Brahmam becomes Brahmam Himself). When one merges in the Brahmam, the separateness ends. When all one's thoughts are merged in the Atma, one becomes integrated with the Atma.

Look at the world with Divine insight

In this world there is nothing apart from the Atma. There is nothing divorced from Divinity. Although everything is Divine, people do not look at the world with the Divine insight but with the worldly vision. As long as one sees with this corporeal vision, the spiritual Reality cannot be understood.

For example, when you see this tumbler (held before the audience by Bhagavan) and view it as a tumbler, only the form of the tumbler registers in the mind. What is the tumbler made of?. It is made out of silver. When one considers the material from which the tumbler is made, one only thinks of its silver base and not its form. Another example: When you go to a pilgrim centre and look at the form of the deity in the sanctum, you are conscious only of the form. But when you think of the material from which the idol has been made, you recognise only the stone and not the form. Today you are

looking at the world in terms of the names and forms of the objects in it. Hence you see only the hills and dales, mansions and huts, forests and rivers, and so on. But when you try to look at the basis of all of them, you realise the One that underlies all of them. All trees are essentially wood. All mountains are made up of rock. The earth is made up of mud. The body is permeated by blood vessels. All these are different manifestations of the five elements (ether, air, water, fire and earth). These five elements find their unifying factor in the Atma. Once, therefore, the Atma concept is grasped, the nature of all other objects becomes intelligible. This principle of unity was the perennial message of the ancient sages.

States of consciousness of an experienter

To take another example: In the jagrata avastha (waking state) one sees innumerable objects, goes through various experiences. But in the dream state, all the objects are creations of the mind by the dreamer. The pleasures and pains are also self-created experiences. The entire world in the dream state is a self-created mental phenomenon. But when he passes into the Sushupti state of deep sleep, all these are absent, he forgets everything and is in a state of Samadhi. The experienter in the waking state, the dream state and the Sushupti state is one and the same person. It is this basic unity of the Atma that is conveyed by the dictum: Tath-Twam-Asi. This means that in all the three states, in all the different experiences, the experienter is one and the same.

The need to develop humanness

Likewise, in the human condition, as long as it is identified with the body, the human level alone is recognized. People are conscious only of the physical human existence, but are not aware of the human qualities. The foremost thing that people today have to recognise and understand are human values. Whatever position one may achieve, whatever one's scholarship or status, the primary requisite is comprehension of what it means to be human. This humanness can be developed only through spirituality. If you take a seed and plant it in a tin, it will rot. But if the same seed is planted in the earth, it grows

into a tree. Humanness will not develop in an atmosphere of worldly concerns. It will grow only in a spiritual, ethical and righteous atmosphere.

Today students have to concentrate on the development of their human potential. Equally it is the duty of every man. It is not right to develop only physical relationships and attachments. These relationships are confined to the body. In man's life relationships like mother and wife are intermediate occurrences of a temporary nature. They come and go like passing clouds. The entire human life is like an ocean in which attachments and aversions, likes and dislikes, come and go like waves.

Spirituality and culture are inseparable

In our daily life, we are all the time involved in the pursuit of endless desires and are immersed in sorrow. It must be realised that in such a life spirituality is like a beacon that beckons man to a higher life. If spirituality goes, Bharat will cease to exist Hence it is everyone's duty to ensure the preservation of spirituality. The glory of Bharat is based on spirituality. There is a reference to "Indian Culture and Spirituality" This would suggest that culture and spirituality are distinct from each other' In my view this is not correct at all. Where there is spirituality, culture is embedded in it. Spirituality should not be divorced from culture. When spirituality prevails, every kind of Dharma (right conduct) will prevail. What kind of culture is possible without spirituality? Culture means samskruti (refinement of conduct). Samskruti refers to that which has been refined. How does refinement take place? Only through spirituality. There can be no refinement (of conduct) without spirituality. And without refinement there is no culture. Hence, the first step is refinement of conduct, which can be done only through spirituality Unfortunately, today spirituality is in eclipse. Many refer to spirituality derisively But it is only those witless persons who are lost in the trivialities of the mundane world who indulge in such derision. To the one who is conscious of the impermanence and worthlessness of the things of the world, spirituality is a shining, priceless ornament. Man should seek to wear such a jewel. Only then human life can be divinised. Dear students! The greatness of Bharatiya culture has been praised by people of all countries, creeds and castes. The Muslim ruler, Babar, held

Bharat's culture in great esteem. In a letter to his son Humayun (who succeeded to his throne), Babar wrote: "Son! You are lucky in being born as my son and I am lucky as the father of such a son. It is your supreme good fortune to become the emperor of this sacred country of Bharat, which has stood for the unity of all faiths, which has proclaimed the truth of the unity that underlies all diversity, and whose religion embodies the essence of all religions. See that you safeguard this great good fortune. Do not interfere with the cultural practices of the Bharatiyas. Their culture is a mighty force. It is sacred and its potentialities are unlimited. Do not interfere with this culture. Whatever decisions you wish to take, seek the counsel of Bharatiyas before doing so." Babar, who was the founder of the Moghul empire, had such great esteem for Bharatiya culture.

Understand the basic tenets of religion

But, alas! today the Bharatiyas themselves are undermining Bharatiya culture. This is a matter for shame. Therefore, I call upon you as children of Bharat to understand Bharatiya culture, live upto its ideals, and enjoy the bliss to be derived therefrom. I do not make any distinction between one faith and another. All faiths are great. The inner truth of all faiths is equally sublime. But no one adheres to the culture associated with his faith. This is a grievous mistake. Everyone should try to understand the basic tenets of his religion and live upto its principles. Every man is entitled to strive for attaining the goal of human existence. In this quest, no distinction can be made between one person and another. Everyone of you should strive to evolve from the human to the Divine. In no circumstance should you descend to the demonic state.

Education sans wisdom, mere wisdom bereft of discrimination, action without discretion, erudition lacking sagacity, power not justified by credentials, statements not based on Truth, music wanting in melody, adoration not sustained by devotion, a person devoid of common sense and character, a student not endowed with humility and a discourse that failed

to inspire: these serve no useful purpose. In addition to knowledge derived from the sacred texts, one should earn wisdom through experience. Knowledge without personal experience is futile.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. Enjoyment through sacrifice

Date: 24 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

The entire cosmos was created from Truth; It is sustained by Truth and merges in Truth; Know ye, that this Truth is the Immaculate Reality pervading Everything in the Universe.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love

Ekam Sath Viprah bahudha Vadanthi The Reality is one, the wise speak about It in many ways.

Although the Truth is one, the sages used to give it different names. Truth is not any one's private property. It is not related to any one nation, nor to any particular faith. Nor is it related to a specific time. Truth transcends the bounds of space, time, religion and country. In adhering to Truth, people of all countries, of all religions and of all times, have equal right. Truth does not follow anyone. Every human being has to follow Truth. The primal grandsire of humanity, Manu, expounded this Truth. Because man is a descendant of Manu he is termed Manuja (the offspring of Manu). Manu laid down the rule that man should be prepared even to sacrifice his life for the cause of Truth. But owing to the ravages of time, place and circumstances, we are witnessing the opposite of Manu's injunction. For today's man, falsehood has become sweet and pleasing. Truth has become repugnant.

All things emanate from Truth

Man today is making all efforts to understand innumerable things, but makes no attempt to know the basic Truth. All enjoyable and pleasurable things

come from Truth. In ancient times, the rulers reigned over their kingdoms on the basis of Truth. They held fast to the dictum: "Truth is character. Truth is the religion. Truth is life itself. Truth is penance. Truth is God." Man's weakness today is proclaimed by his failure to adhere to this eternal Truth and by his pursuit of ephemeral and unreal things.

Manu gave to the world yet another profound declaration: "Sathyam brooyath, Priyam brooyath. Na brooyath sathyam-apriyam" (Utter the Truth. Say what is pleasing. Never tell what is truthful but unpleasant). This means that you should not speak an untruth because it may be pleasing to one. Nor should you speak out the truth when it is likely to hurt a person's feelings. Every man should speak the truth, but it should be truth that is pleasing. In the Gita it has been stated: "Anudvegakaram vakyam Sathyam Priyahitham cha yath" (In speech, the words should not cause any excitement, they should be true, pleasing and well-meaning). When you see a blind man, you know that he is blind. This is true. But because it is true, if you hail him as: "Oh blind man!," you will be causing him pain. As soon as he hears the word "blind," he feels distressed. No doubt what was said was true, but it distressed the hearer. Likewise, on seeing a lame man, if you accost him as "Oh lame man," you will be causing him pain. In the name of truth, one should not utter words which cause pain to others. When a person's conduct is not proper, he is bound to lose his inherent nature. Hence, if one seeks to develop his essential human qualities, he must follow the path of truth and love.

Karma is the basis for Jnana

The Upanishads are like the crown for the Vedas. Among the Upanishads the Isavasyopanishad is foremost. This Upanishad is in the form of mantras in the Sukla Yajur Veda. Upto the 39th canto, the Yajur Veda is concerned with the Karma Marga (the path of rituals). From the 40th canto, the exposition of the Jnana Marga (the path of Supreme Knowledge) begins. This canto starts with the Isopanishad. Jnana presides over Karma. Karma is the basis for Jnana. The Upanishads seek to reconcile and coordinate the Karma and Jnana paths.

Man has to perform the actions ordained for him by the scriptures. Good actions have to be performed with good intentions. No room should be given for the desire that the doer alone should enjoy the fruits of his actions. Nor should he entertain the conceit that it is because of his actions that certain results have been achieved. This sort of egoism should go. Such attachments and egoistic feelings result in bondage.

How to combine bhoga and thyaga

The Isavasyopanishad declares that whatever bhoga (pleasures) one wants to enjoy, he should do so in a spirit of renunciation. In daily life, enjoyment and renunciation do not go together. The thyagi (renunciator) is not interested in enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The bhogi (the pleasureseeker) will not think of renunciation. In such a situation, how is it possible to combine enjoyment of pleasures with renunciation or sacrifice? It is in this context that the Isavasyopanishad has declared that when every action is free from the sense of Ahamkara (egoistic doership) and all enjoyment is free from attachment or desire, there will be no difference between enjoyment and renunciation. Hence any enjoyment associated with the ego and with attachment will be enjoyment without sacrifice. When ego and attachment are absent, the actions are free from self-interest and hence are tantamount to acts of sacrifice. Every man, therefore, should perform actions according to the prescribed rules and lay no claim to the fruits of those actions. This is the spiritual teaching of the Isavasyopanishad. The Upanishad also demonstrated that actions performed in this spirit transform bhoga (enjoyment) into yoga. Yoga is the divine culmination of the results of spiritual exercises and disciplines.

True meaning of Yogakshemam

In the Gita, Sri Krishna declared: "Yogakshemam Vahamyaham." In ordinary parlance yogakshemam is understood as referring to the well-being derived from the family, possessions and pleasurable objects. To apply the term yoga to such mundane benefits is totally inappropriate. Yoga is the state that is realised by one who, born as a human being, engages himself in various

spiritual exercises to experience the transcendental Divinity. Yoga thus means the attainment of that Divinity which is not easily attainable. It refers to the envisioning of that which is beyond the physical vision. Yoga means experiencing that Divine, which is not visible to the eye, or audible to the ear, is beyond the reach of the mind and the heart, by a process of spiritual discipline. It is the process of making manifest in one's experience the unmanifested divinity. Kshema means safeguarding the yogic experience which has been realised through spiritual efforts. Yogakshema, therefore, means acquiring experience of the transcendental Divine and endeavouring to preserve it. Such a transcendental experience may be described as bhoga (enjoyment) associated with thyaga (sacrifice). It is essential for man to pursue Yoga associated with Thyaga. It is only through such sacrifice that the Divine can manifest in man. Hence man should strive to realise the Divine by not ignoring the message of the Upanishads. Man is not merely a composite expression of body, mind and spirit. He has what is known as Prajna-sakti, the faculty of "Constant integrated Awareness." Everyone should take note of this Prajna-sakti. This "awareness" pervades the body, the mind and the Antahkarana (the inner instrument). What is Antahkarana ? It is the combined expression of the mind, the Buddhi (intellect), the Chitta (will) and the Ahamkara (ego). The mind is the instrument of continuous thought. "Sankalpavikalpatmah manah" (The mind is the repository of thoughts and doubts). If you take a piece of cloth, you find that it has threads in its warp and woof. The mind is like that cloth. If you remove the threads from the warp, there will be no cloth. Likewise, when thoughts are removed the mind will be functionless. This process has been described as going beyond the mind.

The different facets of the mind

Chitta is concerned with chinta (contemplation). Buddhi (intellect) is the power of discrimination. It is the Divine faculty by which one determines what is transient and what is permanent. Ahamkara is the identification of one's self with the bodily form. To regard the body as himself is Ahamkara. Hence, the mind, the intellect, the will and the ego are all different facets of the mind. The different terms relate to the different roles played by the mind.

Antahkarana does not refer to something distinct. All our sense organs are externally visible and function externally: the eyes, the ears, etc. The mind, the intellect and the will operate internally and are internal instruments. Therefore, they are called Antahkarana (internal instruments). By renouncing the responses of the internal organs, the enjoyment of objects perceived by the external senses becomes a form of sacrifice. Hence, the first task is to purify the Antahkarana. This purification process calls for appropriate action. The Chitta cannot be purified except through right action. "Chithasya suddhaye karmah," declares the Veda. Karma (the prescribed actions) have to be done for purifying the mind. This means that one's Satkarmas (good actions) should be performed without the desire for the fruits thereof. There should be no trace of self-interest. This has been described as Nishkama Karma (desireless action). This is also termed enjoyment coupled with renunciation. The Isavasyopanishad has expounded this form of action in various ways. One should not refrain from action. Man has been endowed with a body for performing actions. Right action renders Time itself holy. Time is associated with karthavyam (duties). Proper use of Time, right action and the performance of one's duties together constitute the primary goal of human life.

Use the body in the service of the Lord

As against this truth, how is man utilising his life today? Perpetually he is steeped in selfish and self-centred pursuits. How, then, can he experience the enjoyment associated with sacrifice? Such selfishness converts bhoga (enjoyment) into a roga (malady). Man should aim at becoming a yogi and not a bhogi (pleasure-seeker). What really constitutes pleasure? Is it eating, drinking and indulging in sensual enjoyment? For protecting the body, food is doubtless necessary. Raiment is needed for protection against cold. But beyond these basic needs, to pamper the body is futile as it is essentially composed of decaying elements. Instead of pampering the body, man should use it in the service of the Lord. In a sense, man is filled with diseases of every kind. Hunger is a disease for which the remedy is food. Thirst is a disease for which the cure is water. Even the desire for happiness is a disease. And the remedy for it is right action and chanting the name of the

Lord. Man should seek to overcome roga (the diseases to which he is subject) by resorting to Yoga (spiritual discipline). The sastras have declared that the man who takes only one meal a day is a yogi. The man who takes two meals a day is bhogi (pleasure-lover). But the man who eats three times a day is a rogi (a sick man). One who eats four times a day is a living corpse. People spend most of their time in actions to fill the stomach and not in efforts to lead a happy and sublime life. Students/ All things in the world are perishable including the body. But there is something which endures even after death. These are the ideals for which one has lived. You must all strive to lead ideal lives. It is these ideals which remain enshrined in the hearts of the people over generations.

Experience real joy in sacrifice

You must understand that when you limit your desires, keep the welfare of society in view, and seek to discharge your duties, you will be realizing the objective of combining enjoyment with sacrifice. In fact, the bliss that is derived when one renders service to others is beyond measure. It is by such sacrifice that real joy is experienced. When anything is done in expectation of a return, such joy cannot be got. Bear in mind two things. You must forget the good you have done to others. Remembrance of such good deeds gives rise to expectations of return or a feeling of envy. The other thing which you should forget is the harm done by others to you. Brooding over the harm done by others will only give rise to feelings of hatred and retaliation. Forgetting then and there the harm done by others will free the mind from evil thoughts. The Bharatiya tradition has been based on four basic beliefs: (1) Every action has its inescapable results. (2) Belief in the role of Avatars. (3) No one can escape from the consequences of his actions. (4) A firm belief that there is something sacred in everything in the world. Purity, patience and perseverance are the requisites for accomplishing anything. Cultivate these three qualities. Students must embark on this exercise from now on and develop the habit of combining pleasure with sacrifice.

The more you give, the more you grow

The true secret of enjoyment lies in sacrifice. Sacrifice has also been declared to be the only means of achieving immortality. Giving up what is taken in is a law of life. It applies to breathing, food and other things. Likewise, the wealth which one acquires should also be given back to society. Wealth includes not only riches, but every other form of acquisition including knowledge, scholarship, and skills of various kinds. The knowledge you have acquired through education should be imparted to others. It is by such sharing that your education gets enriched and purposeful. If you do not impart the knowledge you possess, it becomes useless. This means that the more you give, the more you grow. Students! You are mostly interested in the process of development in life But you should remember that simultaneously there is a process of decay at work. Every day that passes brings the ultimate end of life nearer. Hence everyone should seek to perform all his duties every day. Ramakrishna Paramahansa devoted his entire time from sunrise to late in the night on the contemplation of the Divine form of the Lord. Before going to bed he would look here and there and feel that yet another day had gone by without his having the vision of the Lord. Thus every moment of every day he experienced the anguish of lacking the vision of the Divine. The ancient sages experienced similar anguish in their penance for realisation of the Divine. Good actions and good thoughts are necessary to achieve realisation of the Atma. Our body is like a wall clock. It is when a large number of good acts are done by the body, represented by the movements of the second hand in the clock, that the mind, represented by the minute hand, moves once. It is when the mind engages itself in pure thoughts that the Atma (the hour hand) experiences bliss.

Seek to experience the Divine bliss

There are three basic things in the world: the earth, space, and light. These three are essential for sustaining the individual jivi. Water and air provide the food. Without these five, life will be impossible. Where there is the Atma, you will find water and air. The Atma can exist without water or air, but water and air cannot exist without the Atma (the Divine). The Atma is eternal, immaculate, effulgent and all-pervading. It is not dependent on anything. It sustains and supports everything. The five basic elements are sustained by

the Atma. They proclaim the glory of the Paramatma (Supreme). Every moment we enjoy the benefits derived from the five elements. If we have no air to breathe, we will be suffocated. Air is present all around us, but it is not visible to the eyes, nor can it be grasped by the hand. The Divine is equally all-pervading, but cannot be seen or held. It can only be experienced like sugar dissolved in water which cannot be seen or taken out, but can be tasted. When you experience the Divine by sadhana, it is equivalent to direct perception. Embarking on the process of Self-realisation, seeking to experience Divine bliss, performing the spiritual exercises prescribed for getting near to the Lord and merging in Him, when you develop selfless love, only then the Divine, who is the very embodiment of Love, will be experienced. Love will not grow in a field barren of love. Where love does not grow, the fruits of love cannot be gathered. That was why the gopis prayed to Krishna to shower the nectar of His love on their parched hearts by playing on His flute. Students! Illumine the entire world with the light of your love. Today the world is devoid of love. There is hatred between man and man. The world has to be redeemed through love.

11. The inner motivator

Date: 25 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

O foolish mind! Whither do you wander In search of the blessed Vision of Brahman.

It is within Your own self; find It there.

This is the word of Sai revealing the Truth.

Love cannot be grown on a farm as a crop; Nor will it be for sale in a shop.

Whether they be kings or commoners, They can know love only through selflessness.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Atma!

For every living being engaged in its pilgrimage in the *Karma Kshetra* (field of action), the mind, the tongue, ears, eyes, nose, hands, feet etc., are the *Karanamulu* (instruments) provided for its daily use. To achieve success in this physical world it is essential to have these three: *Karanamulu* (instruments), *Karanam* (cause or purpose) and *Kartha* (doer or agent). The one who wields the instruments is the *Kartha* or doer. The desire which propels him to act is the *Karanam* or cause. Man's primary aim should be to recognise the unity underlying these three factors.

The invisible Divine power in the body

In common parlance, we say that the eyes see, the ears hear, and the mouth speaks. But if this were to be true, why is it that after a man's death, these very instruments, though found intact, cannot discharge their functions? Obviously, there is an invisible divine power in the body which imparts life and energy to all these organs, and when that power leaves the body, they cannot function.

In ordinary terminology, this power is called *Prana* (Life-principle). But wherefrom does this Prana come, where does it go and at whose bidding? These are the questions raised by the Kenopanishad, which undertook to investigate whether this divine energy, which animates the several instruments in the body, is inherent in Prana (the Life-principle) or whether it belongs to a power superior to Prana. In this connection, let us consider an illustration. We see that the earth is illumined by moonlight. The moon itself shines because of the sun's light reflected on it. But wherefrom does the sun get its light? It is the divine power that lends its lustre to the sun. The hydrogen and helium contained in the sun have originated from that divine power which the Upanishads designate as the *Brahma-tatwa* (the principle of the Supreme Absolute Reality). The Upanishads further declare that it is due to the effulgence of Brahman that the world shines and that there is no effulgence in the universe which can illuminate Brahman. It is the light of Brahman that enables the eyes to see all things except Brahman. The mind is able to function because of the light of Brahman, but it cannot grasp or describe Brahman. This is why the Upanishads proclaimed about Brahman:

"Yatho Vacho nivarthanthe aprapya manasa saha"
"Brahman is beyond the reach of the mind and speech."

Although such a unique divine power resides in himself, man is unable to recognise it. Why? Because in his daily life man is developing only *Bahya drishti* (outward vision) and is not putting forth any effort whatsoever to cultivate and experience the *Anthar-drishti* (the Inner Vision).

How is one to experience the divine power?

It is quite possible for man to recognise this truth (of the Brahmic principle in him) if he resorts to proper enquiry and acquires the needed purity of mind and heart. It is a pity that every man considers himself a powerless weakling, despite the enormous power latent in him, waiting to be revealed and

released in all its glory. How is man to examine and experience such a divine power? The Kenopanishad deals with this question and points out that this divine power is the life of our life, the mind of our mind, the eye of our eye, the ear of our ear, the speech of our speech, because it is the motivating, coordinating and illuminating principle underlying all such organs of the human personality. We can easily grasp this truth by understanding that just as the headlights and other lights, the horn, the engine, the wheels, etc., of an automobile depend on the battery current for their respective functions like giving light, sound and propulsion, all the organs of our body are animated or motivated by the divine Atmic power inside, thereby enabling them to discharge their respective functions.

Mind is the Lord of the senses

All the flowers in a tree do not turn into fruit; likewise, all the fruits do not ripen on the tree. But all the ripe fruits cannot but fall down from the tree. This indicates the important secret underlying human life. As soon as the purpose, time and task for which a man is born are over, his body loses its power and vitality and drops down in a lifeless condition. But what is the basis for this *Jiva Tatwa* (Life Principle)? It is only the *Atma Tatwa* (Atmic Principle). However, man is prone to consider only the body and senses as all-important.

There is the mind, which is superior to the sense organs. It is this very mind that is spoken of as "Indra" by the Upanishads, because the mind is the Lord or controller of the senses. The Kenopanishad urges man to merge the senses in the mind, and the mind in the Atma, in order to experience the divine power inherent in the Atma-mind complex. But today's man, instead of merging the senses in the mind, and the mind in the Atma, is devoting his senses and mind to worldly pursuits, under the wrong notion that mind and Atma are quite separate.

There is an all-pervading power that permeates the body, senses, *Antahkarana* or the inner instruments, and the individual soul or spirit. This omnipresent power is called *Chit Sakti* (Constant Integrated Awareness or

consciousness) or *Brahma-Tatwam* (the principle of the Supreme Absolute Reality). This all-powerful Atmic principle resides in every human being in subtle form. Man is not able to recognise this divine power because he is preoccupied with utilizing his physical and mental faculties for the acquisition of wealth and worldly goods. Atma is always the 'Seer' and never the 'Seen'.

Let us now consider the *karana* (tools) and Atma from the standpoint of *drisya* (seen) and *drashta* (seer). All objects seen by the eyes are the 'seen' and the eyes are the 'seer.' When the eyes are open but do not see the objects present before them due to the mind wandering somewhere, the eyes become the 'seen' and the mind becomes the 'seer.' When the *Buddhi* (intellect) observes the wanderings of the mind, the Buddhi becomes the 'seer' and the mind, the 'seen'. In the state of *Samadhi*, Atma is the 'seer' and intellect, 'the seen.' There is nothing that can see the Atma. Hence it is always the 'Seer' and never the 'Seen.'

Thus we notice that the mind and other senses are *drisya* (the seen) and therefore are termed *karana* (tools) which are put to work by the *drashta* (the seer, viz, Atma). In the absence of the *drashta* (Atma), all the tools will be useless, however valuable they might be. For example, a machine worth crores (billions) of rupees is installed; but if there is no current which operates it, it will turn out to be a useless mass of steel. Likewise, in the absence of the Atmic power which enables all the organs or tools to function, the body becomes a worthless mass of flesh and bones. Therefore it is the foremost duty of man to realise the Atma (Self) which imparts value to the otherwise valueless body and the *karana* (tools) therein, and also to regulate the activities of all these tools in the right manner, so as to achieve the fulfilment of the purpose of human life.

Understand the Chinmaya tathwa

However, it is not that easy to change human nature. For instance, suppose you grow a crop of garlic by using the powder of Patchakarpooram (an aromatic variety of camphor) as the soil, kamma kasturi (a fragrant variety of musk) as the manure, and scented rose water for irrigation, will the produce

of garlic you get as a result of all your effort give up its natural, pungent odour? So also, despite all his *sadhana* (spiritual practices) and holy company, the worldly *Vasanas* (the impressions, tendencies or latent desires) accumulated in the course of his several past lives will not leave man so easily. Therefore it is necessary for man to understand first of all, the true nature of his own body.

What is this body? It is a repository of filth, urine, flesh, blood and such other things. However, in this very body there shines the gem of purest ray serene, namely, the Atma. Gems do not grow like fruits on trees, but are to be found in dirt. Similarly the body which is of the nature of *Mrinmaya* (full of dirt) harbours in itself the Atma which is of the nature of *Chinmaya* (full of pure consciousness). The secret of man's success lies in the thorough understanding and unravelling of this *Chinmaya tathwa* (principle of pure consciousness). The body is transient and ephemeral, but it enshrines the immortal and eternal Atma and hence the body should not be neglected but properly looked after, till we realise the Self.

Brahma's lesson for the demigods

Once upon a time in a war between the Devas (demigods) and the Asuras (demons), the former came out victorious; and puffed up with pride, they assembled together to celebrate their victory. Brahma wanted to prick the bubble of their ego and pride, and to open their eyes to the fact that their victory was due to divine grace and not to their own strength and valour. So Brahma appeared before them in the guise of a Yaksha (celestial being).

On seeing him, Agni (Fire-God) came to him. When the Yaksha asked Agni as to who he was, the latter proudly answered, "Don't you know me? I am Agni Deva (Fire-God), the great hero who can reduce to ashes the entire world in a trice."

Thereupon the Yaksha placed before him a blade of grass and said, "O Fire-God! please burn this blade of grass." Despite all his efforts, the Fire-God could not burn the blade of grass and he went back humbled.

Next came the Wind-God Vayu and bragged before the Yaksha about his unequalled might in devastating entire villages, trees, forests etc., in the form of cyclones, tornadoes and tidal waves, etc. The Yaksha smiled and asked Vayu to blow away the blade of grass. With all his might and herculean effort, the Wind-God could not even shake the blade of grass and had to beat a retreat.

On witnessing the failure, frustration and humiliation of his two mightiest lieutenants, Indra, the king of the demi-gods, himself came forward to see the Yaksha at close quarters but when he reached the spot he saw a woman standing in the place of the Yaksha. He addressed her, "O Mother! kindly tell me who you are and who is the one who has just vanished from sight."

Then she answered, "I am Uma. The one who was here earlier in the guise of a Yaksha was Brahma, who came to destroy the highly inflated ego in all of you assembled here. So long as you have the ego, you cannot have Self-realisation. That is why none of you could recognise Brahma although he appeared right in front of you. As Indra, you personify the mind which is the leader of the senses, and which is a bundle of desires. That is why I have given you a vision of myself as a woman, who is the embodiment of desires."

Demigods' prayer to Brahma

On hearing these words of Uma, the ego of every demi-god became deflated and in all humility they prayed to Brahma as follows.

"O Lord! Not even a blade of grass will move without your command, what to speak of the microcosm and the macrocosm. Without understanding this, some people like us become puffed up with pride. Bhagavan! What is the use of various kinds of possessions and powers like wealth, physical strength, intellectual acumen, etc., if one does not have the ability to know you? And none can know and experience you except through the strength of Bhakti (devotion or love)."

The lesson this episode teaches us is that we are mere tools in the hands of

the Almighty and we should not become egoistic and proud thinking that any success or achievement is due to our own innate strength. We cannot win God's grace except through *Bhakti*. And what is Bhakti? It is but loving God with a pure and selfless heart devoid of ego and pride. We should use the God-given and God-motivated tools called senses in the right manner. These tools often become affected by diseases. For instance, when the eyes are jaundiced, everything appears yellow. When one is suffering from malaria, even sweet things taste bitter to his tongue. In this manner our sense organs become the victims of *Roga* (disease) instead of helping us to attain *Yoga* (union with God). What is Yoga? According to Patanjali, it is controlling the vagaries of the mind and the tendencies of the senses. First of all, we should keep our sense organs under control.

Students!

At this youthful age of yours, it is but natural that your senses should be strong, active, impulsive, impetuous and turbulent. But you should exercise control over them, lest they drag you into wrong paths. Practise the following maxims:

See no evil, see only what is good;
Hear no evil, hear only what is good;
Think no evil, think only what is good;
Talk no evil, talk only what is good;
Do no evil, do only what is good;
This is the way to God.

The law of Karma will always follow you

Bear in mind what the Kenopanishad taught to the celestial beings, the sages and other human beings. It taught them about the inexorable, immutable and inescapable law of Karma, duly stressing the fact that the results of good or

bad actions are not like the milk that you get immediately as you draw it from the udder of a milch cow, but they are like the fruits that you get from a tree long after the seed is planted. Therefore, don't feel elated just because your bad actions have not given you the bad results immediately; you are sure to experience them in due course. You can never escape them. Therefore take to the virtuous path of life even from this young age.

You should also understand the importance of the faculty of speech and the great role of the tongue. Addressing the tongue, saint Jayadeva praised its immense power and called upon it to chant the name of the Lord and not indulge in unholy talk. The tongue displays a sense of discrimination in the choice of food. It has also a remarkable ability to observe restraint by not getting bitten by the teeth. It never goes beyond its bounds. Such a highly valuable organ should be used for the sacred purposes for which it is intended. This is the exhortation of the Upanishads to all mankind.

Do not ignore the Upanishadic teachings

In sweet and simple words, the Upanishads, which constitute the quintessence of all Vedas, proclaim profound truths which will dispel man's ignorance and fill him with the *Prajnana Jyothi* (the divine light of constant integrated awareness). Unfortunately such a priceless treasure is being ignored at present. It is up to you, students, to retrieve the situation by moulding your lives even from now on in the light of the Upanishadic teachings.

Acquire humility along with your education. Respect your parents, teachers and elders. Love those who are younger than you. Students today are given to excessive talking, bragging and ostentation. You should not give room for such shortcomings.

The world outside is filled with strife and fear. The students should go to the rescue of those who are the victims of fear, and serve them with love and devotion. This is the spirit behind the well-known Upanishadic verse which is a peace invocation:

OM!

Sahana vavathu, Saha nau bhunaktu,

Saha veeryam karavavahai.

Tejasvinavadheetamastu.

Ma vidvishavahai.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih!

Om! May God protect us both (students and teachers)!

May He nourish us both!

May we both acquire energy (as a result of this study)!

May we both become illumined (by this study)!

May we not hate each other!

OM, Peace! Peace! Peace!

You should appreciate the fact that the Upanishadic Rishis (sages) undertook more intelligent, more intensive, and selfless research into life's most fundamental problems, in shining contrast to the researches of the scientists of to-day. Do not underrate these ancient Rishis whose invaluable findings have been enshrined in the Upanishads which serve as guideposts that lead mankind to the fulfilment of the purpose of human life. Imbibe and follow in your day-to-day life the simple yet profound teachings of the Upanishads and make your lives blessed.

12. The Divine and the Cosmos

Date: 26 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

The trees yield fruits for the benefit of others;
The rivers carry water for helping others;
Cows give milk to benefit others;
The body is given to man to help others.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Atma!

Trees produce fruits for the enjoyment of others. They have such sacred feelings. Rivers carry water to meet the needs of others. They don't consume the water they carry. All their water is offered for the benefit of the world. In a spirit of helpfulness, cows offer their milk to the people. They do not consume their milk. However, man, forgetting that he has been endowed with a body for rendering help to others is immersed in selfish concerns and pursues narrow ends. Man today does not exhibit even a thousandth part of the spirit of selfless help to others shown by trees, rivers or cows. From sunrise to sunset, man today is steeped in selfish pursuits. All the ills afflicting people today stem from this selfishness. To be concerned about one's self-interest is understandable. But, as the saying goes, nothing great can be achieved without observing appropriate restraints and limits. There must be a clear limit to selfishness. In the absence of such limits, divinity eludes man.

Universe is not different from God

Man does not try even to be human in his way of living. When man becomes truly human, he can experience the Divine.

What you think exists, is not real. What you think does not exist, is the Reality. God is the only Reality And there is nothing in the world Which is not

pervaded by God. God is immanent in the entire cosmos. The Universe does not exist apart from God.

"Viswam Vishnumayam Jagath" (The Universe is permeated by the Lord).

"Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" (Verily, all this is Brahman).

"Isavasyam idam sarvam" (All this is pervaded by the Lord).

The universe is not different from God. The Prasnopanishad expatiates on this cosmic unity. In every *padartham* (object) there is a *parartham* (Divine element). Without this Divine basis, no object will be cognisable. A being without life is as good as non-existent. Likewise, any object which lacks a divine base is worthless. The divine element is the basis. The material form is gross. The divine is the basis of the physical substance. Viewed from the physical point of view, these two appear to be contradictory. But viewed from the spiritual point of view, it will be apparent that there is no material object without a divine basis, no living being without the vital force and no inert substance without consciousness.

Cosmos is the synthesis of spirit and matter

A living creature proclaims its existence by the Life-principle in it. There is life in matter and matter in life. This truth has been recognised by the Vedic sages and modern scientists in the concept of the convertibility of matter and energy. The Prasnopanishad has pointed out how the essential one-ness of Siva-Sakti represents the unity of the Divine. Hence, there is no basic difference between the revelation of the scriptures and the discoveries of science. Generally it is considered that the natural sciences are concerned only with matter. Metaphysics is regarded as being concerned with things spiritual. But the physical and the metaphysical are inextricably-related to each other. The unique greatness of the Upanishads consists in proclaiming this basic unity.

It is unfortunate that in these days the Upanishads are regarded as spiritual texts which are not concerned with physical phenomena. Many consider that spirituality has no concern with mundane affairs. Equally, they consider that there is no connection between the physical world and the realm of the Spirit.

This is a grievous mistake. One is the base and the other is sustained by it. One is *prana* (life) and the other is the *prani* (living being). The cosmos is the synthesis in consciousness of these two (Spirit and matter).

God and the Universe are inter-related

To ignore this universe and to concern yourself with only the Spirit is a form of narrowmindedness. You have to develop the conviction that the Divine and the Universe are intimately interrelated. If the phenomenal world did not exist, one cannot understand anything. Nor can one recognise any truth. The universe is the basic cause of ideas relating to what is Real and what is unreal. It is impossible to accomplish anything if the world is discarded. Basing yourself on the physical world, you have to aspire for realising the Divine. If you want to realise the Divinity in man, you have to understand the nature of the human estate.

Once upon a time, six young students, who were keen to learn about the mystery of existence and the true purpose of human birth and to investigate the goals of life, came to the sage Pippalada. Prostrating before the sage in all humility, they asked the sage: "Oh Maharishi! What is the cause of creation and of the Cosmos? What is the primary purpose of human life?" They appealed to the sage to clear their doubts and teach them the truth.

Pippalada said: "It is your good fortune that you have developed this desire for the highest wisdom. But, for undertaking any task, one has to have the minimum competence. Without that competence, even the answers I give will be beyond your comprehension. Even for doing the smallest task, one has to acquire the requisite fitness. If one wants to prescribe a medicine for a patient, he has to be a qualified doctor. If one wants to build a bridge, he

must be a qualified engineer. This applies equally to every undertaking in the world. Therefore, while your desire is commendable, you have to prepare yourselves at the outset by preliminary studies relating to the processes of investigating the truth about the real and the unreal. Don't be in a hurry, because haste is inimical to the discovery of truth and results in waste of time and energy. The purpose of life is implicit in the fact of human birth. You must cultivate patience to discover the purpose of life. Therefore, stay in the ashram for some time, observing its disciplines."

After the lapse of a year, Kabandhi, the son of Katya Maharishi, approached sage Pippalada and said: "Sire, I have stayed here for quite some time. My doubts have grown. I appeal to you to clear the doubts and confer peace of mind on me." He asked the sage: "Who is the primal author of this creation? Who is the creator of these innumerable living beings?"

The creative process

Pippalada smiled at the youth and replied: "Dear son! These are the progeny of Prajapathi." Kabandhi felt disappointed with the answer. He said: "Swami! You state that Prajapathi is the creator of living creatures. Who is this Prajapathi?"

Pippalada replied: "Food is Prajapathi. It is through food that human birth takes place." "What is the root cause of food?" "Varuna," replied the sage. "It is because of Varuna, crops grow and food becomes available."

The sage told him: "Your conduct is of primary importance. The results are based on the nature of your actions like smoke from fire, rain from the clouds and the harvest from the rain. The nature of the human being depends on the nature of the food he consumes."

When the sage was asked what was behind this process, he explained: "The Sun represents Prana (life). The moon represents inert matter. The combination of life and matter is the cause of creation." In the universe, both matter and *chaitanya* (consciousness) are self-existing. Likewise, life and the

living being exist naturally The unity of these two accounts for the creative process.

The Sun is the primary cause of creation

The sun is ever shining effulgently. The sun's rays enter the digestive process (represented by the *Jataragni* - the digestive fire). For every object in the world, whether it is a tree or a mountain or a living creature, the sun's rays are essential for its existence. These rays contain the Life-Force. It is through this Life-Force that creation goes on. It is this Life-Force that sustains the cosmos. Sage Pippalada declared that the Sun is the primary cause of creation, growth and dissolution. The sage observed that very few students were interested in making the enquiry about the fundamental goal of human life. Most men were content to regard eating, sleeping, etc. as the be-all and end-all of life. This is wrong. The true goal of human life is to discover what is right and what is wrong, to lead a life of righteousness and to share the fruits of such a life with others. An ideal student should follow the example of the fish, which removes the dirt in the water and purifies it. He should plunge into society, remove the evils afflicting it and stand out as an ideal example to others.

Courage is the key to success

Students should also realise that they have to face the difficulties and challenges of life. Nothing worthwhile can be achieved without strenuous and difficult efforts. There was a gardener who felt depressed over the drudgery of his life after a trivial domestic quarrel. The mud pot, which he used for carrying water on his head to water the plants in the garden, hearing his lament told him that without going through severe ordeals nothing great can be achieved. It pointed out the lesson to be drawn from its own career from a despised lump of clay to a pot carried on the head of man. This was possible because it was pressed and moulded into a pot and burnt in a kiln before it emerged as a pot. The body has been given to man to face all difficulties. There is no need for man to bemoan his weakness. He is indeed endowed with the capacity to overcome the difficulties he encounters in life. Only

because he is unaware of his strength, he feels overwhelmed by difficulties. Students must be ever prepared to face with courage every challenge in life. Courage is the key to success. Life is bound to offer all kinds of difficulties. You should not quail before them. Face every ordeal with fortitude. It was this kind of courage that sage Pippalada taught to his disciples.

Students nowadays get easily depressed and confused when they encounter difficulties. Depression leads to frustration. This is not the way to face the challenges of life. They should develop the courage to go through the adventure of life. Adhering to truth, cherishing love in their hearts, cultivating fortitude, students should develop firm determination and a steady vision. Such a life will result in fulfilment. The rewards of life can be got only through strenuous effort, just as sugar can be got from sugarcane only after crushing it and processing the juice. The body is like the sugarcane. The difficulties to be overcome by the body are like the crushing, etc, which the cane undergoes before sugar is produced. It is through the difficulties one experiences that the sweet juice of divinity manifests in man. This sweetness is all.

The three stages of enquiry

In the world men drift along without making proper enquiry about the meaning and purpose of life. That is why the Gita indicated how man should undertake this enquiry. It pointed out three stages: "Jnathum, Drashtum and Praveshtum." *Jnathum* refers to the first stage of ascertaining the objective. Without this knowledge, there is no meaning in undertaking anything. One has to find out what is to be sought, from where and from whom and how it is to be got. Even when a person wants to enjoy a mango, all these enquiries have to be made before the mango can be got and eaten. After getting the knowledge of where mangoes are available - which is the stage of Jnathum - one sees the fruit in the market. This is *Drashtum* (seeing). After buying the fruit, you start eating it - this is the stage of *Praveshtum*. It is only when all the three stages are gone through that one realises one's objective and achieves fulfilment.

Students should realise that whatever is their objective, they should approach knowledgeable persons and seek to know from them all about their objective. You should not arrogate to yourself that you are all-knowing. In fact, in the world today even what the greatest scientist knows is only a miniscule part of the totality of knowledge.

Students should recognise the unique importance of the Prasnopanishad. All the doubts felt today are answered in this Upanishad. The students of the old days were highly dedicated and disciplined young men, who controlled their senses and led a life of renunciation in the quest for understanding the highest truth. Today the students' minds are running in all directions. Their aspirations vary from hour to hour. One's true goal should not change with time. One should pursue the goal with firm resolve. This calls for control over the senses. Students should strive to become masters of their senses.

Never dissipate your energies

The disciples of the sages in the old days had the devotion, discrimination and determination, which enabled them to realise the divinity. True devotion calls for readiness to sacrifice one's all for what he values. You have to develop total commitment to whatever task you take up. When work is done in this spirit, it becomes worship. You have to use your discrimination properly to determine what is right and act accordingly, uninfluenced by considerations of expediency or self-interest. In exercising your freedom of action, you have to show due regard for the equal right to freedom of others. Never dissipate your energies. They must be used for the sacred purposes for which they have been given to you. Bear in mind that you will be the future rulers of this country. How much knowledge and ability are required to govern a country like ours! You have to acquire all the qualifications for such tasks. Instead of acquiring the requisite skills, students fight for "rights." How can "rights" be divorced from responsibilities? Rights flow from the due discharge of responsibilities. As students, you have to keep in mind your duties to your parents, to society, to the nation and to life itself. When you discharge these duties, your rights will be automatically ensured.

Develop inner vision to achieve equanimity

In his answers to the questions put by the six students who approached him, the sage Pippalada revealed to them what were the primary goals of life and how they should conduct themselves. In this Kali age, owing to the perversions of time, place and circumstances, students are prone to ignore the promptings of their inner conscience and act in response to external impressions. They must develop the inner vision to achieve a balanced attitude. The world needs today the services of students dedicated to ideals. The external environment is highly polluted. But if you keep your hearts pure, you can cleanse these impurities and transform the environment. Develop Self-confidence for this purpose. The rest will follow - Self-satisfaction, Self-sacrifice and Self-realisation. At the basis of all these is the awareness of the Self, the Atma-principle. Pippalada taught the students that this awareness should be their primary objective. In that awareness, the identification with the body consciousness goes and the oneness of the Atma in all is realised. This is the message of the Prasnopanishad.

People aspire only for the fruits of authority; they shirk the responsibility that authority involves. Do not think that this is so only in India, it is the attitude of aspirants all over the World today. Power is sought but the burden that comes with power is not welcomed. The chaos and misery of the World today are the creation of persons who have climbed to positions of authority but do not discharge the responsibilities of those positions. No one is entitled to such position who is unable or unwilling to shoulder the responsibility inherent in it and who does not discharge it sincerely. Whatever their status, however deep their scholarship, however rich they may be, they do not deserve the position they crave for or hold.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

13. Birth: Rebirth: Freedom

Date: 27 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

Like the reflection that does not adhere to the mirror, Like the water on the lotus leaf that is unattached to it, Sins do not adhere to the man of devotion. Birth and death revolve together Like the two wheels of a cart; If one goes, Creation itself will come to a stop; This is the secret of Creation on earth. STUDENTS! Embodiments of Divine Love! "Ekoham Bahusyam" (I am One; let me become manifold). By the divine will of Prajapathi, two pairs were created; the subtle and the gross, the inert and consciousness. By the union of the two, the entire cosmos, consisting of animate and inanimate objects, was created. After Kabandhi had heard from the sage Pippalada the secret about the origin of creation, he felt extremely happy and satisfied. Then, Bhargava from Vidarbha approached the sage and asked him reverentially: "The cycle of birth and death seems to go on endlessly All the sastras declare that death is inevitable for everyone who is born, and birth is inevitable for everyone who dies If life is bound up with the round of birth and death, when will this process end? What is the basis for it?" Pippalada replied: "Son! God is without a beginning or an end. The entire cosmos consisting of moving and unmoving objects is mithya (illusory). Although there is the Real in the illusory universe, all that is perceived in the phenomenal world is liable to pass away.

No rebirth after reaching solar region

"The sun is responsible for the phenomena of night and day, of days, months and years. These are fragments of Time. All phenomena relating to Time are associated with Prajapathi-(the cosmic progenitor). Time is a manifestation of Prajapathi. Time moves in two directions - Uttarayana and Dakshinayana. 'Ayana' means journeying. When the apparent movement of the Sun is northwards, the period is termed Uttarayana. When the apparent movement is southward, it is called Dakshinayana. The period of Uttarayana is marked by brightness, peace, rejoicing, fearlessness, and purity. Dakshinayana is characterised by darkness, peacelessness, fear and disasters. Spiritual aspirants who perform yagas and yajnas during Dakshinayana reach the

moon. The moon is inert and those who go to the moon realise only physical pleasures and material possessions. They cannot realise God. They stay on the moon according to the merit earned by them and when it is exhausted, they return to the earth, as declared in the Gita. "Ksheene punye marthyalokam visanthi" (When their merit is exhausted, they enter the land of mortals). This may be likened to the exit of an elected legislator from the legislature at the end of his five-year term. The man who has performed meritorious deeds spends the allotted time in the Land of the Moon and then is reborn on earth. The one who performs spiritual actions during Uttarayana, with concentration on the Brahman and devotion to the Absolute, goes to the land of the Sun (after death). The Land of the Sun is Prana (the Life-Principle). After reaching the Solar region, the person has no rebirth. "Punarjanma na vidyathe" (He does not return to the earth again). Pippalada told Bhargava: "Life redeems itself only when it merges in Prana. As long as one's life is immersed in delusion, life itself remains a delusion. As long as delusion remains, the Absolute cannot be realised. The Absolute is realised by absorption in the Brahman and then there is no rebirth".

The creative power of Prajapathi

The five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) are like five feet for the Sun. The twelve months correspond to twelve seasons for the Sun. The passage through the twelve "houses" endows the Sun with seven colours. Every month has two halves - the Sukla Paksha (Bright fortnight) and the Krishna Paksha (dark fortnight). During the bright fortnight, the moon shines effulgently because of the direct illumination received from the Sun. On Full-moon night, it shines with all its sixteen Kalas (aspects) illumined. On Amavasya (New Moon) night, the moon receives no light from the Sun and hence it is totally dark. The fortnight after the full moon, when the moon starts waning, is called Krishna paksha, the dark fortnight. The fortnight after Amavasya (New Moon) when the moon goes on waxing is called Sukla paksha, the bright fortnight. Sukla paksha is Prana (Life) and Krishna paksha is Prani (the living being). The entire cosmos is made up of the combination of Prana (the Life-breath) and Prani (the container of the Life-breath). All these are manifestations of the creative power of Prajapathi. "The One willed to

become the many." This process can be recognised in the manner in which a seed planted in the earth grows into a huge tree which yields fruits in which there are thousands of seeds from which many more trees come into existence. The same process can be seen in the proliferation of living creatures.

Creation is an eternal process

Creation has, therefore, no predetermined limits. It is an eternal process whose beginning or end cannot be known. In the process of birth, growth and dissolution, besides the will of the Lord, the role of human effort can also be recognised to a certain extent. Man's destiny is determined by the nature of his actions, thoughts and desires. In this process, man forgets the Divine source from which he has come. Developing demonic tendencies and behaving like an animal, man wastes his human existence.

Pippalada told Bhargava: "Dear Son! Death exists as well as birth. But man has the capacity to free himself from rebirth. He is the architect of his ultimate goal. Take, for instance, the example of a green-gram seed. When it is sown, it sprouts into a plant and produces numerous pods with green-grams peas. It does not know the origin of its existence as a green-gram seed or the history of its ancestors. But when you put a seed in your mouth and munch it, its life comes to an end. Likewise, we do not know our origin, but we can determine our future. No one can tell how man came into existence and the circumstances of his origin. But his future is dependent on the sadhanas performed by him.

How to attain freedom from rebirth

When life is given up during the Northward journey of the Sun, with your thoughts centred on Brahman, with love of Brahman in your heart, and with an awareness of the Brahman, you can become one with the Divine. Freedom from rebirth follows the complete shedding of all desires. It is like removing the husk from a paddy grain. Without the husk, the rice grain will not grow. But as long as the husk is there in the paddy seed, it can become a

plant and continue the process of reproducing itself.

Man without desires has no rebirth - "Punarjanma na vidyathe. " As long as the mind is filled with desires, there can be no escape from the chain of birth and death. When the desires are replaced by the Brahmic consciousness and the mind is emptied of all other thoughts, there will be no rebirth. "Oh Bhargava! You think that rebirth and death are beginningless and endless. This is not so. There is a way out of this recurring chain", declared Pippalada. Then, a third disciple, Asvalayana, approached the sage reverentially and asked: "Swami! What kind of vital elements sustain, nourish and support living beings from inside? Who is the foremost among these living beings? Each living being has various limbs. There appears to be a coordinating power which integrates the different functions of these limbs. What is this power?"

The power that coordinates various limbs

Pippalada replied: "Son! From Akasa (the ether), Vayu (air), Tejas (effulgence or fire), water and earth emerged in succession. The faculties corresponding to these elements are speech, sight, hearing and thought (or mind). Controlling all of them is Prana (the Life-Force). The abode of this Life-Force is the body. The Life-Force operates using the body as its sanctum. It is timeless in its origin, but seeks an abode in a new body. In this body, the Sahasrara Nadis (nerves) enter all subsidiary organs and function throughout the body. In fact, there are 72 crores (720 millions) of nerves in this body. Everyone of these nerves is filled with the vital air called Vyana. Without it, the nerves will not function at all. The vital air called Udana is present in the upper vision. It keeps constant vigil over the good and bad actions of the individual and takes him to the appropriate places (in life). Hence, one's status or condition in life is based upon one's actions. The scriptures, therefore, teach man not to succumb to difficulties or gloat over success but maintain equanimity in all situations. Neither difficulties nor successes are caused by others. Each one is responsible for his joy and sorrow. Out of mental weakness others may be blamed for one's condition, but in fact he alone is responsible for what he suffers or enjoys. One's own thoughts and actions are responsible for one's successes or failures, honour or ignominy, pleasure or pain. Whether one

goes to heaven or hell or any other place, it is his own actions that are responsible. This is the function of the Udana, vital air.

The secret of creation cannot be explained

There are five kinds of vital airs or Pranas (life-breaths): Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana. These five life-breaths are not only present in the body, but are cognisable in all the Panchabhuthas (five basic elements). The Prana is in the Sun. Apana issues from the earth. Samana emanates from Akasa (ether). Udana issues from Vayu (Air). Vyana arises from Agni (Fire). In these five elements, the five life-breaths are immanent. Close to each one of these life-breaths, the reflections of man's actions are present. No one can easily explain the secret of creation. There is a shadow which closely follows every object. Likewise the reactions of each action of man closely follow the Prana. When the Prana (life-breath) leaves one body and enters another, the results of one's actions follow the Prana to the other body. The Prana enters another appropriate body in accordance with the results of the actions in the previous body. Hence, one can reach a worthy state in life by doing good deeds and cherishing good feelings. " As you sow, so will you reap." You cannot get a mango fruit by planting a lemon seed.

Man may fancy that he is capable of achieving anything. But his achievements are solely related to the nature of his actions. The Creator sends each one at birth with a garland made of the results of his good and bad deeds in his previous birth. The scriptures exhort men to adhere to good thoughts and good deeds as the only way of realising a good life. The fruits of your actions will be reaped only by you and none else. You alone are responsible for your joys and sorrows. God is in no way responsible. He is only a witness. But if you pray to Him with all your heart and soul, the effects of all karmas will disappear like mist. Devotion will free man from the consequences of his deeds. If man devotes a small fraction of the enormous time he devotes to his wealth, family and position, to thoughts of God, he need have no fear about the Lord of Death. If one does not think of God even for a moment, how can he hope for peace of mind?

Dedication transforms work into worship

Pippalada told the disciple: "The Prana (Life-Principle) is the most important factor. You have to merge yourselves in the mind. Merge the mind in the Atma. Whatever. you do, do it in a spirit of dedication to the Atma (the Divine). You can carry on your respective avocations. When you practise it in a spirit of dedication, work will be transformed into worship. When life is led in such manner, there is no rebirth." The dedication to the Lord should not be merely verbal, but must emanate from the heart. When an offering is made in words, the response is also in words. When somebody tells me: "Swami! Why don't you come to our house?" I tell him: "Yes, I shall come to your house." For the invitation in mere words, the response also is in words only. When the invitation is whole-hearted, I come with all my heart. "Yadbhavam tadbhavati." (As is the thought, so is the result). Your thoughts are in tune with your desires. According to your thoughts, the results follow. Therefore, whatever you do, do it with all your heart. All the myriad nerves in man pervade the heart and the entire body. Hence, when the heart is filled with good thoughts, the entire body is filled with them. Everything stems from the heart. It is not the physical heart that is meant here. It is the spiritual heart. When your heart is filled with loving thoughts, you will realise freedom from rebirth.

Thoughts determine the vision of the world

All the conceivable doubts that could arise in any person were placed before sage Pippalada by the six young disciples and they got from him the right answers. Kabandhi asked the sage: "What is the cause of dreams?" Some of the familiar answers to this question are that indigestion causes dreams, or that dreams are related to one's thoughts, or that they are based on physical ailments. But these are not the right answers. Pippalada said : "Sleep is the cause of dreams." Dreams appear only during sleep. For the man who is not asleep, there are no dreams.

Pippalada asked the disciples to control their thoughts as their thoughts determine their vision of the world.

14. The Indweller in the heart

Date: 28 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

When you eliminate all the impurities in the mind, Fill it with supremely pure thoughts, And acquire the effulgent Vision of Wisdom, You will find the entire Cosmos illumined by the Divine. What need is there for penance for those who know the Truth ? To the votary of Truth, what is the need for Sadhana? To the one free from falsehood and deceit, Where is the need for rituals? This is the path of Truth declared by Sai. STUDENTS! Embodiments of Divine Love! Birth and death are incidental to life. Bhargava, who had sought to understand the mystery relating to birth and death and the truth about the Uttarayana and Dakshinayana (Northward and Southward journeys of the Sun) and the nature of the Sukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha (bright and dark fortnights in a month), satisfied with the knowledge he had acquired from the sage Pippalada, respectfully bowed to him, expressed his gratitude and stood blissfully before the sage.

What happens when one is asleep?

Then the fourth disciple Saurayani, of Gargi lineage, approached the sage and asked: "Swami! When living beings are asleep, who is it that sleeps? Who is it that is awake in that state? Who is it that is oblivious to the mind, that is immersed in bliss, forgetting life itself, and is one with that Entity? Please reveal the mystery about these and confer peace of mind on me. When a living being is asleep, what happens to all the qualities of Prana (the Life-Force)?" Pippalada replied: "Just as when the sun sets, the sun's rays are withdrawn into his Tejas and are effulgent again the next morning, when a man is asleep, all the activities of the sense organs are merged in the mind. Because of this, man is unable to see the external world, is not able to speak or hear, or think. The reason is all the operations of the senses are merged in the mind. However, in this sleeping state, the Pancha Pranas (Prana, Apana, Samana, Vyana and Udana - the five vital breaths) are active in the form of Panchagnis (five internal fire-principles). In that state, the processes of inhaling and exhaling go on, with the help of the Prana (breath) and the

Samana (vital air). Hence, what are awake in the sleeping state are the "five fires" corresponding to the Pancha Pranas (five vital airs). In the sleeping state it is the Jiva (the individual spirit) that enjoys the rest and the bliss of that state. The occurrences in the past and the present, the things seen in the past and now, past and present experiences, all these are experienced by man in the form of dreams. Moreover, the consequences of activities in previous lives, which have become part of his spirit but are not known to him, are also experienced in dreams.

Hence, in the sleeping state, what is experienced relates to the panchabhutas (the five physical elements). It is the Jiva who experiences the calmness and happiness of the sleeping state. In the dream state, he creates all that he experiences, including himself, and enjoys self-created experiences. For all these, the mind is the root cause. The mind is responsible for the experiences in the waking state and in dreams."

Significance of Pranava

While Pippalada was giving this explanation to Saurayani, the sixth disciple, Sibi, approached the sage and asked him: "Swami! The scriptures declare that the one who utters the pranava (Om) at the time of death, attains the Akshara state (immortality). Is this possible?" Sage Pippalada replied: "Dear Sibi! The entire cosmos is filled with Pranava. Pranava is a manifestation of the Paramatma (Supreme Spirit). The Pranava - constituted by the three sounds A+U+M pervades the three worlds represented by the terms: Bhu, Bhuvah (which is above the Bhu-loka) and Suvah (the top-most of the three worlds). The three Vedas Rig, Yajur and Sama - have emanated from the Pranava. The three Vedas in their hymns glorify the Pranava. Thus, the Pranava is the all-pervading primordial sound. The Pranava is also described as the embodiment of the eight forms of Aiswarya (divine wealth): Sabdabrahmamayee, Characharamayee, Jyothirmayee, Vangmayee, Nithyanandamayee, Paratparamayee, Mayamayee and Srimayee. This means that all the sounds in the world are echoes of the primordial Om.

The emergence of Sun and Moon

Those who chant the Pranava (Om) as a physical sound will get only physical benefits. The scriptures declare that those who recite the Om with concentrated mind, reach the Chandra-loka (the region presided over by the Moon-god), The Chandra-loka does not mean the planet moon as conceived by the Americans and the Russians. Students should not make this mistake. The Vedas declare that the Moon emerged from the 'mind' of the Virat-purusha (Cosmic Person) and the Sun from the 'eye' of the Cosmic Person - "Chandrama manaso-jathah. Suryo chakshorajayatha." The Moon in the Vedic sense represents the mind-principle. Likewise, the Sun represents the illumination in the eye. When the vision encompasses the creation, the eye becomes a sacred instrument (for the understanding of spiritual truths). The scriptures are not some isolated writings. Whatever the eye perceives carries an authenticity of its own. This is called Pratyaksha Pramanam (proof by direct perception). The Sun is the basis for this type of proof. For Anumana Pramanam (proof by inference), the mind is the authority For Sabda (proof on the basis of the spoken word), the authority is Vak (the deity presiding over speech). When man acts on the authority of these three kinds of proof, he can realise the Divine.

Hiranyagarbha - the mind-principle

For the world of external phenomena, the presiding deity is called, Viswa (Viswudu in Telugu). The deity presiding over the internal organs is known as Hiranyagarbha. What is the reason for the difference between the external and the internal? It has to be recognised that the mind represents a highly sacred principle. When the mind, filled with agitations, contemplates on God, it achieves inner peace Hence, the seers have declared that man proceeds from peacelessness to peace, from peace to illumination, from illumination to recognition of the Supreme Effulgence, which is the Brahman (Absolute). The Mind-principle has been described as Hiranyagarbha. (At this stage, Bhagavan materialized a golden egg-shaped Linga, which He showed to the gathering). Hiranyagarbha is located in the heart of every person. You can see from where you are that the whole world is contained within this Linga. All the countries, India, Germany, etc. can be seen on it. "Hiranyagarbhaya Namah"

(Salutations to Hiranyagarbha) is one of the forms of prayer. Hiranyagarbha means One who is pregnant with gold. A characteristic of gold is that it remains unchanged. Gold remaining buried in the bowels of the earth for millennia remains unchanged and undergoes no decay. Likewise, however long it may remain on earth, the Hridaya (heart) is not subject to change. This is not a reference to the physical heart, but to the spiritual heart. It has infinite potentialities. The divinity in man is beyond words. The Hiranmaya principle resides in the heart in twelve forms. These forms are also called Aditya Brahmas. The twelve Aditya Brahmas preside over the twelve months of the year. The Sun in his golden form, rises and sets every day. From the scientific point of view, there is no sun-rise or sun-set. It is a process without a beginning or end. The phenomena of night and day are not caused by two suns.

Bhava and Sadhana are the paths to be pursued

Pippalada taught these truths to Sibi. The sage went on to explain that there are two different paths which may be pursued by the earnest aspirant. One is Bhava and the other is Sadhana. One who meditates on the pranava with Bhava (intense feeling) may not be able to realise his divinity. Even if he has some glimpses of the Divine, they do not last long. The one who pursues the path of Sadhana, reaches the Surya-mandala (realm of the Sun) and proceeds from there to the region of Brahman. By the term Brahma, you may consider him as a four-faced deity or in some other form. But Brahman essentially means that which is allpervading. To acquire Brahma bhava (the awareness of Brahman) means being aware of this infinite vastness. Today's science is engaged in trying to explore the infinitesimally minutest particle in matter. But spirituality pursues a different goal. It is concerned with exploring the Infinite - Mahatho Maheeyan - what is vaster than the vastest. It is concerned with "expanding" the consciousness. Brahman means the Infinite. Chandra refers to the mind. Surya refers to the eye- -the faculty of vision. Only the person who is able to understand the Vedantic meanings of these terms can comprehend the nature of spirituality.

The entire universe is within us

Here is this Lingam. Is it to be found within the physical body? In Vedanta, it is described as Angustamatham (the size of the thumb). The reference to the Hiranyagarbha in the Hridaya is considered as a reference to the physical heart. Not at all. In the spiritual sense, the Linga is one that is golden-hued, absolutely immaculate (untainted by any pollution), gloriously resplendent, containing within it the entire cosmos. There is an illustration for this. You might have been to Badrinath, Kedarnath or other places. Where are these places which you have seen? The moment you recall the visits, all the places are in your mind. If you close your eyes and think of your visit to Badrinath, the entire scene - the temple, the Himalayas, the Alakananda river and everything else - appears before your mind's eye. All that you have seen and experienced in life will appear before you in your mind, the moment you try to recall them. This means that the entire universe is within you. All that you see is "a reflection of the inner being." All that you speak is a reflection of inner thoughts. All that you do is a reflection of inner action. Hence, to act according to your inner impulse is Dharma. To speak what you feel inside is Sathya (Truth). To contemplate on what you experience in your heart is Santhi (Peace). To understand properly the promptings of the heart is Ahimsa (Nonviolence). Consideration for all emanating from the heart is Prema (Love). Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are reflections of feelings emanating from the heart. Manavathva (humanness) means the complete harmony of thought, word and deed. If there is divergence between thought, word and deed, what is the outcome? Fruitless action.

Direct your vision towards the Divine

What, then, is the meaning of Dharma? It is to express in words what you think, and to act according to your words. This unity of thought, word and deed is Dharma. Today there is no such unity in the conduct of people. The result is that the heart becomes a lump of clay. Why should the heart that is Chinmaya (enveloped in Consciousness) become a lump of clay? It is the selfishness and self-centredness in man that is the cause. This self-interest should be turned towards the unsullied, the effulgent, the blissful and eternal Divine by worshipping Hiranyagarbha (the Lord seated in the heart) with the

prayer: "Hiranyagarbhaya Namah." This means that your vision should be turned towards that which is unchanging. All the things of the world are transient and perishable. That is why, Krishna declared in the Gita: "Having taken birth in this impermanent and sorrow-ridden world, worship Me!" The entire universe is subject to change sometime or other. It is not permanent. Only the consciousness in the heart is permanent and real. What is done wholeheartedly by that consciousness leads to immortality. The achievement of oneness with the Hiranyagarbha is like the shedding of its slough by a snake. All that is mundane drops off and only the consciousness remains. The body is impermanent. The Hiranmaya- principle is the Reality This reality is covered by Maya (delusion) like the slough which encases the snake. This delusion is not something distinct. It is created by the individual. It arises out of ignorance. You mistake a rope for a serpent in twilight. The mistake is due to the absence of light. When you see it with a torch, you realise that it is not a snake but a rope. The rope was there before you turned the torch on it and what you saw was the rope in the light of the torch. There was no snake there earlier or later. The appearance and disappearance of the snake were caused by delusion. The one unchanging reality was the rope.

The Divine effulgence is present in all

The wise have declared: "There is only the One it is called by different names." It is changeless. Hence, the Vedas have declared: "There is an effulgent, golden-hued Divine substance that is shining in the heart of everyone." It is because of this Divine effulgence that the eyes are able to see, the ears are able to hear, and the mouth is able to speak. If that effulgence is absent, the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear and the mouth cannot speak. The physical scientists have no faith in these truths because they have made no effort to enquire into them. They are concentrating all their attention on the physical and the phenomenal world. The researches of yesterday have become obsolete today. Science is caught up in this constant process of rejecting the old and discovering the new. But in the realm of spirituality, there is nothing like old or new. It is everfull, ever-whole.

The contrasts between science and spirituality

All scientific investigations are based upon the intellect. All spiritual explorations are based on the heart (or the consciousness). In the spiritual field, man alone is supremely important, not the machines. Scientists put their faith in machines. The spiritual seekers place their faith in Mantras. One is a scientist, the other is a saint. The saint believes in purnatva (fullness). The scientist is content with half the circle. Spirituality represents the full circle. The beginning and the end meet in the full circle. When this circle is divided by half, you have a half-circle resembling the letter C. The 'C' is science. It starts at one point and ends at another. Between the points there are endless doubts. Hence, there is no absolute certainty regarding scientific findings. What is considered true today may turn out to be incorrect tomorrow. But spirituality stands for what was true yesterday, what is true today and what will be true for all time to come. The spiritual truths are inherent in man. But he is forgetting them and is gloating over the achievements of technology and the machines created by it. This is totally wrong. Men are more important than all the wealth in the world. There is a big computer, for instance. A man puts the question to the computer: "It is about to rain. When shall I reach home?" The computer answers: "Take an umbrella before going out." Now, was this reply given by the computer as its own answer or was the reply built into the computer programme? The touching faith in computers is misplaced. Crores of rupees are being wasted on computers.

Put your faith in the natural brain. Even the computer is operated by the human brain. Instead of putting our faith in the brain that produced the computer, faith is being placed in the computer. What is it that the computer does? If you place wheat in a flour mill, you will get wheat flour at the bottom. If you place rice in the grinder, you will get rice flour. This is also how the computer behaves. You get from it what has already been put into it. If it can answer a question by itself, ask the question: "When will I die?" Will it be able to answer that query? No. It cannot give the answer, because even the maker of the computer does not know the answer. The scientist puts into the computer what he knows. The scientist is the subject and the computer is his

image. Man lacks faith in himself, but relies on the image emanating from him.

Confidence in the self is highly essential

Dear students! Self-confidence is highly essential. Develop confidence in the Atma (Self). There is nothing greater than the Atma. The Atma is the combined expression of Vak (speech), Manas (mind) and Prana (the life-force). Of these three, Prana is most important. There is no end to Prana, though there is an end to the body in which Prana remains. It is this Prana that is reflected in all beings as the image in a mirror. But Prana alone is not enough. All the three are necessary. It is from these three - Vak, Manas and Prana - that the Atma arises. Many of you know that in a chemical laboratory when three chemicals are brought together, an altogether new product emerges. In everyday life, you know that the combination of the brown betel nut, the green betel leaf and the white chunam produce a reddish compound. In the same way when man's mind, speech and vital breath come together, the Atma emerges. This is the true sign of mankind. Our lives have to be made meaningful by the unity of these three.

Hiranyagarbha resides in the heart

Everything exists in the human heart (mind) and not in the external world. Based on this, the one that is in the Sushumna state is hailed as Hiranyagarbha ("Hiranyagarbhaya Namah"). In that state lies unbounded bliss. Take a simple example. We don't derive much joy from finding a piece of copper, iron or silver. But we are extremely happy if we find a piece of gold. Gold thus has the capacity to give some kind of joy to the heart. What is this gold? It is also a piece of earth. But as earth is available freely everywhere, it is treated as of no value. But as gold is found somewhere within the bowels of the earth, it is accorded special value. If gold is available everywhere, it will have no value. In the human body, there are flesh, bones, blood, etc. which are found in everyone and hence no value is attached to them. But the heart is regarded as precious as gold. Hence, when we refer to Hiranyagarbha, we refer to the one who confers value on the human

condition, who endows it with brilliance, who inspires man with idealism and ensures the humanness of the human being. He resides in the heart and is equated with the heart. Dear students! The exposition of the Prasno-panishad must have proved quite taxing for you. From tomorrow I shall deal with matters relating to duties in daily life. The Upanishads are beyond the comprehension of even great scholars. It is not therefore easy for students with a smattering of English to understand them. Today people seem to value Anglabhasha (the English language) more than Atma-bhasha (the language of the Spirit). It is natural for you to have difficulty in understanding the teachings of the Upanishads. You can understand only that which is appropriate to your intellectual level. Hence from tomorrow onwards the discourses will be concerned with the role of science, the duties of the individual, the path of action, the obligations of the individual and his moral responsibilities. With the growth of science, morality is declining. Of what use is science in such a context? People talk about progress of education in the country, but what we are witnessing is only a general decline in morals and the growth of ingratitude, irreverence and selfishness. Education must bring about improvement in general conduct including qualities like gratitude and respect for parents.

15. The sixteen potencies

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Peace has vanished; Truth has become scarce; The arms race has become a dreadful threat; Selfishness is the cause of these evils This is the pronouncement of the Truth. EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! Sathyam (Truth), Jnanam (Knowledge of the Absolute), Anantham (the Infinite), Aksharam (the Imperishable), Paramatma (the Omni-Self), Paratatwam (the Supreme Truth), Brahma (the Absolute), Kshetrajna (the Knower of the Field) - all these terms are synonyms for Atma (the Spirit). These terms came into vogue depending on the time, the place and the circumstances. In the world, every living being aspires for happiness and seeks to banish grief. Although man hankers after pleasure, peace and bliss, what is the inner meaning of the fact that he is haunted by worry and sorrow? Sorrow, peacelessness and fear are the reflected images of happiness, peace and security. If there is no grief, there is no value for happiness. If peace is not absent, no one will seek peace. Therefore, these opposites are associated with each other and constantly follow each other.

Yesterday, I explained that Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka and Swargaloka are expressions of the three sounds A, U, M in the Pranava mantra, Om. The three Vedas Rig, Yajur and Sama Veda - in their different rhymes pay homage to the three letters of the Pranava. To experience the truth underlying the Pranava, whose triune aspects are manifested in the three Vedas and other triple entities, there are three paths. The first is Nama-chintana (meditation on the Divine Name). The second is Bhava (inner ecstasy). The third is Sadhana (spiritual discipline).

How man reaches lunar and solar regions

By meditating on the Name of the Lord, worldly pleasures can be enjoyed. These are transient, unreal and momentary. Such ephemeral pleasures are got in the mundane world by reciting the name of the Lord.

Bhavam relates to the consciousness arising from a realisation that there is supreme power that governs the whole of creation - the moving and unmoving objects in the cosmos. When that consciousness is made the basis of one's entire life, by dwelling in that consciousness, a man reaches the Chandra-loka (the region of the Moon-god). To realise that at the base of the gross phenomenal world, there is a subtle power is itself a great progress in Bhavam (consciousness). Achieving this consciousness, man enjoys the sovereignty of the mind in Chandra-loka. By chanting the name of the Lord, worldly pleasures are enjoyed on the earth and by the Bhava Consciousness, man enjoys the bliss of reigning over the empire of the Mind. From these experiences, man progresses, through Sadhana (spiritual exercises), and reaches Suvarloka (the region of the Sun). The Solar region, made up of Vijnana and Prajnana (physical and spiritual knowledge) is Cosmic Consciousness itself. It is the realm of Divya-drishti (Divine Vision). The man who attains this region enjoys supreme peace from the unified cosmic consciousness.

The status of the three Lokas

The Bhuloka (the physical world) and Bhuvarloka (the Lunar region) are said to be Aparabrahma (regions not related to the Supreme Self - Parabrahma). Suvarloka relates to the Parabrahma (the Supreme Self). Hence, the Bhuloka and Bhuvarloka are related only to the impermanent and unreal phenomenal world.

Bhuloka is sthoola (gross), Bhuvarloka is sukshma (subtle). The body is gross. The mind is subtle. The Bhuloka and Bhuvarloka are related to the body and the mind. The Suvarloka, however, is related to the Atmic state. Through Nama chintana, Bhavam and Sadhana, man can attain the three worlds. When man combines all three practices, he can achieve in addition Paramasanthi (Supreme Peace). Man's primary goal should be to realise such a state of peace and bliss.

When Pippalada was explaining all this to Sibi, Sathyakama got up and asked the sage: "Swami! All the scriptures have declared that there is a

Purushothama (the Highest of all beings) who possesses all the sixteen kalas (potencies). Who is this Purushothama? What are these sixteen kalas? Where are they present? Please confer peace on us by your answers to these queries."

The sixteen potencies exist in human beings

Pippalada smilingly replied: "Dear Sathyakama! This Purushothama embodying the sixteen potencies does not dwell in any particular spot. In every human being, He is experiencing bliss in the form of consciousness. He is Sat (Being) Chit (Awareness) and Ananda (Bliss). Sat means that He remains as an unchanging entity. Chit refers to the one who indicates Paripurnatvam (total Awareness). The one who experiences these two states is the Blissful one. The unity of Sat and Chit is Ananda. Though Sat and Chit have different appellations, their outlook is one and the same. The two are like the right and left eye in a being. They are apparently separate and apart from each other. But the two eyes have no double vision. They see only one object. Sat, Chit and Ananda are present in every human being." As regards the sixteen kalas, the sastras, puranas and epics have caused confusion in men's minds by varying and misleading interpretations. These sixteen kalas do not exist in a separate place wherefrom they can be obtained. There is Akasa (space or ether). From the sabda (vibrations) in space, Vayu (air) is produced. From air, Tejas (fire) emerges. From Tejas water is produced. The solidified form of water is the Prithvi (earth). These are the Panchabhutas (five basic elements). There are the Panchapranas (five vital breaths): Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana. The five elements and the five vital breaths together make ten. The five Jnanendriyas (organs of perception) are the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth and the skin (seeing, hearing, smelling, speaking and touching are the faculties of these organs). With these five, the total goes upto fifteen. There is the mind. With it, we have the sixteen kalas. These sixteen kalas are present in every human being, performing their respective functions ecstatically.

Who is a Purusha and a Purushothama?

Only those who enjoy these kalas in all their fullness and purity, make use of them properly and experience the bliss of that fullness, have been described as Purusha or Purushothama. Who is a Purusha? Not the one donning a bush-coat and trousers. The body is called Pura (a city). The divine consciousness which pervades the entire body from head to foot is called Purusha. The individual who experiences this consciousness and manifests his individuality is also called Purusha. The divine power which pervades the entire cosmos equally, shines equally in everything and proclaims His omnipresence is called Purushothama. Thus, in the individual this power is known as Purusha and in the cosmic manifestation, it is described as Purushothama.

What are the duties this Purusha should perform to sanctify his life? Men should develop the awareness that the five elements - Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth - are divine entities and should be utilised appropriately in that spirit. The divine has equipped man with five Jnanendriyas (organs of perception) to make use of these elements.

Making proper use of sense organs

"Seeing" (the power of sight) is based on Tejas. Hence, the power of Tejas should be put to proper use. It should never be misused. See what is good. Only then, Tejas is utilised as a divine potency.

Next comes Sabda (hearing). The ears have to be used only for listening to sacred words and thereby seek the Divine. The faculty of hearing should not be used for unworthy purposes. Next, there is the faculty of smell. When fragrant smells are taken in, not only does the health improve, but one derives pleasure. Foul smells cause illness and distemper. Fragrance in the air is a Divine manifestation.

Then, there is the skin. Care of the skin means that contact with all and sundry should be avoided. The faculty of Sparsa (touch) is sacred power. To avoid contamination by contact with impure persons, the sages' and sadhakas in ancient times left villages and towns and dwelt in remote forests in solitude.

There is a divine power in the human body called Chit-sakti (the energy consciousness). It is like an electric current. When one body touches another, there is an exchange of energy. In this process, there is a likelihood of one's good qualities going out and an inflow of bad qualities from another. The practice of touching the sacred feet of pious and good men was commended to enable people to get rid of their bad qualities and acquire virtues. While sitting in meditation, there should be no physical contact between devotees. Each one should sit apart and try to experience the presence of the Indwelling Spirit. The consciousness of one's divine nature gets weakened as a result of polluting contacts with all kinds of undesirable persons. The sages of yore could rise to divine heights by making use of their sense organs for sacred purposes.

The five vital life-breaths

Coming to the Pancha Pranas (five life-breaths), there are 12 crores of nerves in the human body (as stated in an earlier discourse). The life-breath Vyana pervades the entire nervous system. It is because of the pervading presence of this divine vital air in all the nerves that the health of the body is maintained. It also contributes to the experience of happiness. The presence of the vital air Vyana in the Sahasrara (the thousand-petalled Head of the Kundalini seated in the brain) accounts for the intelligence in man. When the Kundalini-sakthi rises from the Mooladhara (at the bottom of the spinal column) to the Sahasrara (at the top of the brain), there is a blossoming of the powers in man. The Kundalini-sakthi shines effulgently. Because man has lost this power (of the Kundalini), he is subject to numerous troubles. The ancient sages were able to harness the power of the Kundalini for great purposes. Hence, it is essential to make proper use of the Pancha pranas (five vital airs) also. Only then, man will become a Purusha. Although man has all the sixteen potencies, he is failing to make proper use of them. He is unable to comprehend their divine power. Failing to make use of this divine potential, man behaves like a person who does not know he has the Kamadhenu (wish-fulfilling cow) in his house, and wants to buy an ordinary cow. By his failure to recognise the vast divine potentialities in him, man has become a prey to sorrow and worry. Instead of rising to the level of the Divine, man is going to

the level of the demon and the animal. Even if men are not able to live upto the injunctions of the scriptures, there is no reason why men should not observe morality and integrity in daily life. Everyone knows that he should speak the truth, avoid harshness in speech, should not hurt anyone by his words, should speak softly and pleasantly, but he does not behave in this manner. What is the reason? Selfishness and selfishness alone. Despite his knowledge of what is right, man misuses his sixteen potencies for achieving his selfish ends. Man is indeed endowed with the sixteen potencies. The one who sanctifies these potencies by proper use becomes Purushothama (the Supreme Person). The one who taints them by his misdeeds is damned.

All Avatars are Purushothamas

The answer to Sathyakama's question regarding Purushothama is that there is no separate dwelling place for the Supreme. God resides in every being. Sin is not something foreign. It adheres to the evil deeds one does. It is through one's actions that one becomes a Purusha or a Purushadhama - a Divine or a despised being. It is one's actions which carry a man to great heights or hurl him down to the depths. The scriptures have declared that the one who possesses in full all the sixteen potencies is Purushothama (the Supreme Person). The term is applied to the Avatars (Divine incarnations) who utilise the sixteen potencies for the benefit of others. Whatever they say or do is totally free from the taint of self-interest. No Avatar, whether in Bharat or elsewhere, has ever used the five elements, the five senses, the five vital airs or the mind for any selfish purpose. Even when they go about in daily life like other ordinary beings, in every one of their actions they demonstrate its purity and unchanging truth. The common people do not recognise this truth. Hence, they fail to understand the true nature of humanness.

Recognise the unity of Kshara and Akshara

After this explanation, Pippalada went on to point out to Sathyakama the basic oneness of the Eternal and the impermanent. He said that the gross substance is Kshara (perishable or destructible). Akshara (the Imperishable) is subtle and Kshara is physical. Akshara is related to the Atma (Spirit). That

which is related to life is Kshara. Akshara is related to God. Pippalada asked Sathyakama to recognise the unity of these - Kshara and Akshara. "It is only when you recognise their unity will you be able to make proper use of the sixteen kalas," he said. The entire cosmos, consisting of moving and unmoving objects, emanated from Akshara (the Imperishable Supreme). All that has come from Akshara has the attributes of Akshara. Issuing from Akshara and sustained by Akshara, ultimately everything merges in Akshara. Akshara is the unified expression of the Cosmos. It is the unity of the Everlasting and the ephemeral. If you wish to make sacred use of the sixteen potencies, direct your vision towards the Atma, not relying on the eyes. Have the conviction that it is because of the Spirit within, that you are able to see with your eyes and hear with your ears. Your organs of perception are able to function because of the existence of Prajna (Inner Consciousness). All that is perceived in the external world is the cosmic manifestation called Viswam. All that is experienced within the dream state and in sleep is due to Prajna (Divine Consciousness). You have to divinise everything that you see or do by spirituality. Then everything acquires a wholeness and unity. For instance, there are many rivers with different names and forms. But when they merge in the ocean, their names and forms disappear. They become one with the ocean. Likewise, the five vital airs and the five organs of perception are all different streams. The mind is a mighty river. When the waters flowing in all these sixteen merge in the Atma, they lose their separate names and forms and achieve the prajna-principle of the Atma. Thereby, they become pure, unsullied, unchanging and eternal. Man becomes Purusha and Purushothama when he sanctifies the sixteen potencies in him by engaging himself in good deeds and good thoughts.

Brahma Vidya is a spiritual knowledge

"What is it by knowing which all else can be known?" This was the question which Saunaka put to the Sage Angirasa. He asked the sage: "What is it by seeing which all else can be seen? What is it by experiencing which everything else can be experienced? Please reveal to me the nature of this Divine eternal principle." Angirasa replied: "Only through Brahmavidya (Knowledge of the Supreme) can this be obtained." All knowledge today is

associated with the mundane whether it relates to the arts like music and painting or the sciences like botany, physics and chemistry. In essence all this knowledge is concerned with earning a livelihood. That true education is for the purpose of acquiring supreme wisdom should be recognised. That is the means to acquire Brahma vidya (Knowledge of the Divine). Brahma vidya must be distinguished from worldly knowledge. The latter is concerned with knowledge of what is observed externally. Brahma vidya is beyond the power of the eyes, the ears and the mind. It is concerned with revealing the Spirit. You must seek this spiritual knowledge. You will obtain it when you reach the stage of utilising fully your sixteen potencies.

The inner meaning of "Angirasa"

God is described as Sathyam (Truth), Jnanam (Wisdom), Anantham (Infinite), Brahma (the Absolute). Sathyam means that which is unchanging, unaffected by the variations in time. Jnanam means perceiving the One without a second - "Advaita darsanam jnanam." Anantham means Infinite, omnipresent, pervading the entire cosmos. Brahma means that which permeates everything.

This was what Angirasa taught to the sage Saunaka. This episode should not be regarded as an Upanishadic story. The inner meaning of the name Angirasa is he is the one who represents the sixteen potencies flowing as a sweet liquid in every limb of the human body and sustaining it. The Prajnana-principle in every person is the form of Angirasa. This Prajnana pervades the mind, the intellect, the will, the Antahkarana and every part of the body. Hence, it has been declared: "Prajnanam is Brahma." All the essential truths man seeks to learn are found within himself. He has no need to go to the scriptures or any external authorities for this purpose. Forgetting the source within himself of what he is seeking, man pursues external objects and experiences frustration. Searching within himself man will find the prajna (the wisdom) that he seeks.

The Divine and Cosmos are inseparable

The terms Akshara encompasses everything. Akshara contains two terms: A + Kshara. "A" stands for that which is Anantha (Infinite), and Aprameya (Immeasurable), Anandamaya (filled with bliss). That is the Atma, the Eternal Self. Kshara represents that which is impermanent, illusory, and perishable. Akshara is the combination of the eternal and the evanescent, the imperishable and the perishable. Akshara has a twofold meaning. It indicates the presence of the impermanent cosmos within the eternal Omni-Self. The cosmos cannot exist apart from the Divine. The Divine cannot divorce the cosmos. The devotee creates (his own image of) God. God creates the devotees. The common belief is that all beings including devotees are created by God. But this is not the whole truth. The devotee also by his spiritual sadhana creates God. That is the meaning of the term Sakshatkara (Directexperience of the Divine form).

Wherefrom does this Divine form come? It comes from the devotee's intense feeling for a direct vision of God. It is folly for anyone to go in search of God. When God is omnipresent, what is the need for a search? It is a delusion to imagine that man is in quest of God. It is God who is searching for a true devotee.

Man must recognise that God is one, though He may be worshipped with many names. There is a practical illustration for this. A devotee keeps the idol of Krishna before him and performs Sahasranama Archana, reciting the thousand names of the Lord. The names are many but the God that is worshipped is one.

Triune knowledge of this world

Sathyakama approached Pippalada again and asked the sage: "Swami! There are three kinds of knowledge in this world. One is the ordinary kind. The second is called Sujnana (right knowledge). The third is called Vijnana (higher knowledge). What is the difference among these three?" Pippalada: "There is considerable difference between Jnana (ordinary knowledge) and Su jnana and Vijnana. Jnana is knowledge got through the body. Su jnana is what is got through the mind. Vijnana is the knowledge got from the heart. You see

various objects like a table, a tumbler, etc. The knowledge got by perceiving objects is ordinary knowledge. It relates to the physical and is useful in daily life. Su jnana relates to the mind. In doing any action, when one considers whether what he is doing is helpful to others, the knowledge on which such action is based is Su jnana.

Based on both these types of knowledge, actions which are in accord with the dictates of one's conscience and which are performed to propitiate God constitute actions based on Vijnana (the highest knowledge). If God is pleased with one's actions, the whole world will be pleased. No effort is needed to please others separately.

Divine Grace earns the goodwill of the world

The one who has earned the grace of the Divine will be able to gain the goodwill of the world. But one who has forfeited the grace of God will be unworthy of the goodwill of others. Once one comprehends God, everything in the universe can be comprehended. Unfortunately men's vision today is turned only towards the Prakriti (phenomenal world), ignoring the divine. It is only when they understand and experience the Divine, will they be able to comprehend fully everything.

The mysterious ways of the Divine cannot be grasped easily. Wrong impressions are formed out of what is stated in the books about Krishna or Rama. People must try to get at the inner truths about their actions.

Men have to aspire for peace - peace of the body, the mind and the heart. To achieve peace of the body, it is essential to chant the name of the Lord. For achieving peace of the mind you have to cultivate the Brahma-Bhava (the meditation on the Supreme). Peace in the heart calls for sadhana (spiritual discipline). You have to progress from the body to the mind and from the mind to the Atma.

16. The human predicament and the Divine

Date: 30 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

Social norms have vanished; Contentment among men has disappeared; Character and moral values have been shattered; Humanness has been degraded in mankind. DEAR Students! Food is essential for everyone in the world. Among the necessities of life food comes first. But man cannot be satisfied with food alone. A full stomach does not fully satisfy the mind. He cannot merely rest on a satisfied appetite. He has to move about and engage himself in work. While doing work, one has to ask himself: "What am I doing? Why am I doing and how am I doing? When he enquires into these questions, he can derive meaning and joy from his work. In this way, he recognises the purpose and value of what he is doing. Realising what is good in his actions, he makes it a part of his life. He experiences the joy derived from his actions and shares that joy with others.

Power of mantra in Taithiriya Upanishad

This is the primary message of the Taithiriya Upanishad. Starting with food, attaining bliss is the final goal of life. The Taithiriya Upanishad is a section of the Krishna Yajur Veda. This is an ancient Upanishad. Everything in it is in the form of a mantra (a sacred statement). Mantra does not merely mean pronouncements like "Om Namassivaya" or "Om Namo Narayanaya." "Manana thrana samhitham iti mantrah" (Mantra is that which redeems by contemplation). Mantra is that which gets established in the mind by the process of contemplation on it. In this Upanishad, every utterance has the import of mantra. Every word in it is filled with the power of mantra.

"Sathyam vada. Dharmam chara" (Speak the truth; practise righteousness). "Om iti Brahma" (Om is Brahmam). "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham Brahma" (Truth, knowledge, all are Brahamam). "Ekam Sath; Viprah bahudha vadanthi" (The Real is One; the wise call it by many names). "Ekoham bahusyam" (I am One; let me become many). "Eko vasi sarvabhutha antharatma" (The One is the Indweller in all beings) these aphoristic pronouncements acquired the

form and power of mantras spread throughout the world and generated bliss among men by raising their consciousness.

There is another remarkable feature of this Upanishad. The other Upanishads are relevant to specific categories of people. But the Taithiriyā Upanishad is valid for celibates, householders, renunciants and ascetics equally in its message and its practical application. It has thus an appeal and relevance for every human being. Its teachings are essential for persons in the four āsramas (stages in life).

The five kinds of Fire-principle

There is another important section in it dealing with the Panchagnis (the Five Fires). There are five kinds of Fire-principle: Udara-Agni, Manda-Agni, Kama-Agni, Soka-Agni and Badava-Agni. Udara-Agni refers to the burning sensation caused by hunger (Fire in the stomach). Manda-Agni refers to the burning feeling caused by excessive eating resulting in indigestion. Kama-Agni is the burning agony in the mind caused by numerous desires and passions. Soka-Agni does not refer only to consuming grief caused by worldly disappointments and losses. It pertains also to the burning sorrow felt by one who is yearning for God thirsting for experiencing oneness with the Divine.

The Bhagavad Gita is a scriptural text acceptable to people of all faiths. The very first canto in it is titled Vishada-Yoga (the Yoga of Despondency). What is this Vishada? Does it relate to any worldly concerns? Is it despondency about the fate of kinsmen and friends? Can such a grief be described as a form of yoga? Clearly this grief is not associated with worldly desires or human relationships? Arjuna's grief arose from out of a concern for Dharma (Duty) and for God. He realised that in the war (that was about to be waged) many would die. As a consequence of their death, Dharma (righteousness) will suffer a mortal blow. There will be confusion of castes. It was because of his concern for Dharma and his faith in God that Arjuna was grief stricken, his grief turned into a form of yoga (quest for communion with the Divine). Likewise, this Soka-Agni is not consuming sorrow over the lack of worldly possessions. It is a grief felt for the sake of Dharma and God.

Badava-Agni is the burning feeling caused in a person by dire diseases and death. All these five types of "fire" are related to physical conditions. They have no relation to the Atma (Spirit) which is different from the body. The Spirit is a witness to all the experiences resulting from these five forms of fires. Utilising these five fires as experiences witnessed by the Spirit, the Upanishad revealed the truth underlying physical phenomena.

Four types of human beings

There is another inner secret that has to be recognised in this context. Human beings are classified under four categories: Daiva (Divine), Manava (Human), Danava (Demonic) and Pasutva (Animal). Of these four categories, the first is Manava-Daivamu (the divinely human). "Daivam manusha roopena" the Divine in human form. This means that the Supreme is present as Vishnu in the heart of the human being. The "Divinely human" being is one who is conscious of the Divinity residing within him, who dedicates all his actions to the Divine, who recognises the Divinity present equally in all beings and has love and compassion for all living beings and devotes his life to the service of God. Manava-manavatwa (Human-humanness) calls for a life dedicated to Sathya and Dharma. "Sathya Dharma Bhavo marthyaha" (He is a man who is devoted to Truth and Righteousness). In this world of delusion, the one who has his sights on Truth and Righteousness, preaches and practises the two virtues and shows love and compassion to his fellow-beings in the conviction that to be truly human is the mark of a human being, is a humane-human being. Such a man practises Dharma, engages himself in charitable activities, harmonizes his thoughts, words and deeds and leads a godly life even though living as a grihasta (householder). Performing his duties, he stands out as an example to his fellow-men.

Characteristics of a demonic person

Next comes Manava-Danavatva - the demonic human being. Surapanodanavah (The demonic being is addicted to intoxicating drinks). The demonic man is one who is addicted to drink, who harasses people, inflicts pain on others for selfish reasons, who is without love or compassion, and

who is totally immersed in selfish concerns. This is how the Upanishads characterise the demonic human being. The fourth category is the Manava-pasutvam (bestial-human being) "Jnanena sunyah pasubhisamanah" (The man without wisdom is equal to an animal). What is the animal nature? Governed wholly by the senses, considering sensual enjoyment as the sole purpose of his life, leading a sensuous life from birth to death, spending his time in eating and sleeping and forgetting his basic human nature in such a life such a person has been described as an animal in human form. The chief quality that distinguishes a man from an animal is wisdom the power of discrimination as to what is permanent and what is transient. A man who lacks this capacity is no better than an animal. When does a man lose this capacity? When he is self-centred.

God-realisation should be the goal for man

The right cause for man is to pursue the path of God-realisation, If he is unable to do this, he should strive at least to behave as a human being. For man to behave like a demon or an animal is totally opposed to his basic nature. It is because these degrading tendencies have become rampant in the world today that true humanness has declined. It is because demonic and animal tendencies have grown in the world today that genuine human traits have declined. Morality and integrity have reached their nadir. Social obligations have lost their hold. Men are wasting their lives without any awareness of what is society. Society is regarded as an assemblage of heads. This is not so. Society means the unified expression of the collective group. It implies recognition of the duty by everyone in the community to live in harmony with others. It must be realised that individual happiness is dependent on society. The Taithiriya Upanishad contains significant message given to the disciples by the preceptor at the end of their education in the preceptor's hermitage. In this message, two paths are indicated: the Preyo-marga and the Sreyo-marga. The Preyo-marga relates to practices which will give pleasure to the senses from time to time. These are momentary, impermanent and unreal. Most people prefer this path of Preyas. Very few seek to follow the Sreyo-marga (the sublime path), which confers permanent and unchanging good. The reason is it takes time to yield the benefits. Man is

eager to get quick results and does not want to wait. He is in a hurry all the time. Even his desires are confined to immediate results. He desires a good name, a good environment and an enjoyable life. He does not seek good knowledge, good conduct or good sense, which are the requisites for following the Sreyo-marga. The path of Preyas (the mundane path) is concerned with achieving temporary name, power and position.

Do not give up Truth in any circumstance

Summoning all the pupils, the preceptor would address them thus: "Dear students! What is the primary aim of education? It is the cultivation of humility. Character is the life-breath of education." The Sikshavalli chapter of the Upanishad contains all the lessons which the preceptor wanted the students to bear in mind when they went out into the world. Among them were injunctions such as "Matru devo bhava! Pitru devo bhava" (Worship the mother as God. Worship the father as God). Reverence for the parents comes first. They were enjoined not to give up truth in any circumstance and not to forsake righteousness at any time. Through these teachings, the students of those days were filled with high ideals and were inspired to lead exemplary Godly lives. Unfortunately education today tends to dehumanise the students. While developing their intellectual abilities, nothing is done to develop good qualities in them.

All that our much-vaunted "progress" in education has achieved are a decline in morality and a contempt for teachers.

Cultivate love for your fellow-beings

Students have to outgrow their narrow egoistic ideas and develop a universal outlook. They should strive to enlarge the individual consciousness to comprehend the Universal by recognising that the Spirit that dwells in all beings is one and the same Cosmic Spirit - "Ekatma Sarvabhuta antaratma." When this consciousness of oneness is realised by all, the world will experience peace and prosperity. To start with, cultivate love for your fellow-beings. If a man cannot love his father, wife or children or his fellowmen, how

is he going to love God? Love is not something that waxes and wanes. It is unchanging. It must spread wider and wider till it becomes all-embracing. Such love is Divine. Love is God. Live in love.

17. Experiencing the Bliss Divine

Date: 31 May 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

STUDENTS! Embodiments of Divine Love! It is only when the process of creation is understood in terms of the close relationship between the Brahman (Omni-Self) and man can Brahma-Vidya (the Divine knowledge of the Supreme) be attained. Brahman represents the Infinite. From this Infinite, Akasa (ether or sound) emerged. From Akasa came Vayu (air), from Air, Tejas (Fire), from Tejas, water and from water, the earth. From the earth came the Oshadhayah (herbal plants), from the plants, food, from food, Purusha (man). When the advent of man through this process is understood, it will be clear that man came from the Infinite.

The term Brahmananda is a compound word composed of Brahma and Ananda. When this compound word is examined in its two parts, it will be 'seen that Brahma is different from Ananda. When this Ananda (bliss) is united with Brahman, it becomes Brahmananda. Hence, it is evident that there is an inextricable association between man and Brahman (the Omni-Self).

Steps to be taken to experience Brahmananda.

Brahma-Vidya (the knowledge of the Absolute) can be got only through Brahman. But, man because he is bound to worldly attachments, forgets the truth about the Absolute and is lost in mundane concerns. The common man, who is a prey to desire, fear and hatred, is far from experiencing Brahmananda (the Supreme Bliss). If desire, fear and hatred are given up, men will be able to understand to some extent the nature of this Supreme Bliss. But renunciation of these three alone is not enough. Love of the Lord should be fostered. Even that is not enough. You have to qualify yourself to be proximate to God's love. But even nearness is not enough. You must rely entirely on the paratattva (the Supreme truth). Only then the human can become the divine.

The Sikshavalli section of the Taithiriya Upanishad sought to teach the disciples how to realise this Brahmananda. Brahma-Vidya is not something beyond human attainment. It relates to spiritual practices concerning daily life, These practices have to be observed regularly every day. The Upanishad has revealed three forms in which the transcendental Brahma-tatwa manifests Itself The three forms are: Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Avyakrita. These three forms are related to the gross, the subtle and the causal (forms of the human body). They are related to the three states of consciousness: Waking, dream and deep sleep.

Three Different forms of the Virat-swaroopa

The Virat form is the gross physical form assumed by the Atma in the waking state for leading a long life in the world. He manifests himself in many forms under many names. The entire cosmos, consisting of animate and inanimate objects, is the form of Virat, permeating the five basic elements. The Virat Purusha (the Cosmic Person) is manifest in every creature from an ant to the Absolute, demonstrating thereby that the cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine. He is called "Virat" because of his cosmic manifestation and His immanence in everything in creation that is perceivable.

Thus everything that is seen is a manifestation of Virat. The Virat Swaroopa (the Cosmic Form) is related to the external physical universe. Assuming the gross physical form, the Virat (Cosmic Person) stands forth as an ideal. He has no other names. One is Vaiswanara. This is the Divine in every being, who identifies himself as "I." From a king to a peasant, from a millionaire to a pauper, from a child to an old man, a woman or a man, every person identifies himself or herself by using the term "I" ("I am so and so"). The concept of "I" is thus present in every being. Vaiswanara is the entity that makes every being use the term "I" to distinguish oneself.

The other name is Vairajasutha. It means one who has assumed a mysterious form. While being present in every being, he appears to be absent; while carrying on all activities, he appears to be inactive; while experiencing everything, he appears to be not the experiencer. It is for these reasons he is

called Vairaja-sutha. This is the inner meaning of these three different forms of the Virat Swaroop (Cosmic Person).

Hiranyagarbha is the source of all beings

The second name is Hiranyagarbha. He is the source of all kinds of knowledge - ethical, spiritual, physical, scientific and social. He may be described as Jnana bhaskara (The Sun of Knowledge). When the Sun rises, he assumes a golden hue. By his golden rays, he turns the whole of nature golden. The entire creation emerged from Hiranyagarbha at the beginning. Hiranyagarbha is in the form of an oval-shaped golden egg. From Hiranyagarbha, the first to emerge was the mouth. Sound started from the mouth. Then came the nose, from which arose air. Then came the eyes, from which emanated fire. The ears came thereafter. The directions arose from the ears.

Hiranyagarbha is the primary source of the origin of man. Hiranyagarbha is the prime source of all living beings. It is Hiranyagarbha who endowed all these beings with the power of discriminating between the eternal and the ephemeral between what should be sought and what should be renounced, between what ought to be and what ought not to be done. What is the Supreme Knowledge that man needs to make his life sacred and meaningful and what is the path he should pursue to lead a purposeful life? Hiranyagarbha offered to man the knowledge he needed for this purpose. This is the primary activity of Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagarbha has two other names: Suthratmaka is one. It means the one who functions like a string through all Atmas, even as a string runs through a necklace of gems. This means that he is present in all beings like the string that keeps together the gems in a necklace. This string is called Brahma-Sutra (the string of Brahman). The principle of Hiranyagarbha indicates how the Divine unites all human beings equally like the string of a necklace. Hiranyagarbha thus demonstrates a divisionless universe.

Hiranyagarbha creates the figures in dreams

The other name for Hiranyagarbha is Prana. Hiranyagarbha assumes a subtle

form in the dream state of a human being. He is the entity who is awake in the dream and sleeping states. In the waking state, the Virataswaroopa creates the visible cosmos. In the dream state, Hiranyagarbha creates the figures in the dreams. All objects in this state have no physical basis. All that perceived in dreams are the creations of Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagarbha in his subtle form creates everything in the dream state. The third one is Avyakrita. He is one who has no form of any kind. He is present in the Karana Sarira (causal body), without any form, and enjoys the Sushupti state of man (the deep sleep state). Though he has no form, he has control over everything. Without limbs or organs, he performs all actions. He travels long distances. Without eyes, he sees everything. Without ears, he hears everything. He is thus engaged in all activities relating to creation, but has no form. This Avyakrita has two other names: Antaratma and Iswaratwam. Thus, Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Avyakrita have three names each. What is the inner meaning of these names?

Antaratma means one who impels from within all activities (Antaravani or inner voice). Every impulse arises from Antaratma. All the sounds uttered by man come from the Antaratma. The Antaratma is the basic source of all sounds. Iswara is the third name for Avyakrita; though he is the possessor of all forms of wealth, he is the entity who judges good and bad actions and metes out punishment or reward according to deserts. In common parlance, he is called "Layakara." He presides over actions. Hence, he decides on good and bad actions and metes out justice. He is known as the giver of Aiswarya (wealth). But good and bad deeds are comprised in Aiswarya. As Iswara is the Lord of all wealth, he gives to each man what he deserves according to his good and bad actions.

Upanishads have relevance to all human beings

The Upanishads should not be regarded as of no relevance to ordinary human beings and as valid only for sages and ascetics. Why are students today ignoring these sacred Upanishads? It is because there is no expositors of the Upanishads who will teach the students the relevance of their teachings for daily life. The notable advances in science and technology we witness today

represent the essence of the Upanishads. The Upanishads are the final phase of the Vedas. Hence they are known as Vedanta.

The Upanishads are the quintessence of knowledge. They are the very embodiment of the highest knowledge. They are illuminating. Man should acquire this knowledge. Physical and mundane knowledge is concerned with the world. But to achieve peace of mind and joy of the Spirit, knowledge of the Upanishads is vital. Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Avyakrita are not entities existing in some separate place. When you examine carefully, you will find that every human being is an incarnation of Virat, of Hiranyagarbha and Avyakrita. This profound truth is not realised by men because of their narrow outlook. The Virat-form (Cosmic Person) is the human body multiplied by infinity. $\text{Mind} \times \text{Infinity} = \text{Hiranyagarbha}$. $\text{Life} \times \text{Infinity} = \text{Avyakrita}$. These three forms are related to the gross, the subtle and the causal bodies of man. All the three bodies are in the human being. Hiranyagarbha is not in some distant place. He is installed in the mind. The Virat-purusha is in the human form. The five basic elements (representing the faculties of sound, sight, smell, taste and touch) are in the human body, as well as in the cosmos.

All powers are present in man

The body is Prakriti (matter or earth). The inhaling and exhaling process is based on air. When man is engaged in motion and action, heat is generated. This is the fire element in man. When one performs an exercise or rubs his palms, heat is generated. That heat is in man. The entire body is composed of water (the fourth basic element). In this manner, all the five elements are within the human body and hence is regarded as a manifestation of the Virat-Swaroopa (the Cosmic Person).

All powers are found in man. The powers not found in man cannot be found elsewhere in the universe. Because of his external vision man is unable to recognise that all that he sees externally is within himself.

Difference between waking and dream states

On account of attachment, fear and hatred, man forgets his true nature. This fact can be witnessed in the dream state. You have a dream in which you are travelling by a train. You pass a number of stations in the dream. You see many passengers and you spend your time in talking and joking. Wherefrom did the train come in the dream state? It is a creation of your mind. Likewise the stations you passed by and the passengers you moved with are all creations of the mind. All that was experienced in the dream are products of the mind. Nor is that all. You created even yourself in the dream. This is the activity of Hiranyagarbha. In the waking state, one perceives everything outside him. His perceptions are governed by the conditions of time, place and circumstance. But in the dream state, these triple conditions are totally absent. You may enquire into the difference between the waking and dream states. For instance, you learn that there will be a meeting at 4 p.m. here. You start from the city at 3.30 p.m. by car. You arrive here at 4 p.m. You came to attend the meeting and listen to Swami's discourse. The time 3.30 p.m., the action leaving by car, the consummation reaching here at 4 p.m. In this sequence, you will notice that time, aim, action and achievement are all present in the waking state. In a dream, you have travelled to Delhi. When did you start on the journey? The time is not present in the dream. By what conveyance did you go? There is nothing in the dream about it. For what purpose you went to Delhi is not evident in the dream. The absence of time, purpose and circumstance is characteristic of the dream experience. The waking state testifies to the presence of these three elements. The Virat-Swaroopa is related to time, purpose and action. The absence of these three factors indicates the nature of Hiranyagarbha (the dream state). Men experience both these states (the waking and the dream states).

The experiencer is same in all three states

Who is the experiencer? It is not someone in the waking state, a different one in the dream state and a third one in the Sushupti state (of deep sleep). The states of consciousness vary, but the experiencer is one and the same in all the three states. Because of the differences in the states, the experiencers appear to be different. All the variations in experience are related to differences in time, place and circumstance. The body is made up of time,

actions and obligations. Therefore, if the body is to be sanctified, time has to be utilised in performing right actions. "Karmanubandheeni manushaya loka" (The human world is bound by actions). No one can be free from action even for a moment. Everything a man does, whether voluntarily or otherwise, constitutes Karma. For instance, a question is asked about someone: "What is he doing?" "Nothing," comes the reply. "If he is doing nothing, what is he doing?" is the next question. The answer comes: "He is sleeping." "Sleeping" is also an action.

Likewise, "sitting" is also an action. Respiration is also an action. All that happens within our body, like the circulation of blood or the beats of the heart, is also an action. Actions may be performed voluntarily or involuntarily. The breathing process goes on irrespective of what you do or feel, without any deliberate effort on one's part. This goes on in different states of consciousness. Such an automatic action is called Adhi bhautikam. It relates to actions of the body. Adhi atmakam relates to actions of the mind. Adhi daivikam relates to actions prompted by the Divine. These three categories of actions are governed by Virat-Swaroopa, Hiranyagarbha and Avyakrita respectively, in the different states of consciousness.

The awareness of the ancient sages

As the ancient sages knew the inner secret of these three divine manifestations which governed the three states of consciousness, they renounced all the worldly attachments and strove for realising permanent Ananda (spiritual bliss). People today, being ignorant of these truths, are treating this knowledge with derision. For instance, in one Veda it is declared: "Chandrama manaso jatah. Suryo chakshorajayata" (The moon emerged from the mind of the Cosmic Being; the sun came from his eyes). The moon referred to in this mantra is not the planet moon, a fragment of the earth, on which man had landed, as considered by scientists. They jestingly comment that no God was found on the moon by the cosmonauts. The Vedic reference to Chandra is not the planet moon visible from the earth. It refers to the mind-principle acting in every human heart. The significance of the Vedic reference to the Sun and the Cosmic Purusha's eye is that the human eye has the

effulgence of the sun, on account of which it is able to see the Divine in everything.

Relationship between the sun and the eye

No one can determine the power of the eye. The eye which is barely half an inch in size is able to see stars that are billions of miles away. Wherefrom did the eye get this power? What is the relationship between the sun and the eye? It is like the coming together of the negative and the positive, which enables the eye to see this phenomenal universe. If the one is present and the other absent, nothing can be seen. For instance, if you go into a dark room, your eyes cannot see anything because there is no light. But when there is light, if you close your eyes you cannot see anything. There has to be a coming together of light and eye-sight. Only then you can see the forms of objects.

The effulgence of the sun and the power of eyesight together make the world perceivable. Thus the entire srishti (creation) is perceived through drishti (sight). Without perception there is no creation. Perception is thus fundamental. There is no blemish in creation. The fault lies with the drishti (sight). Hence, one's vision should be totally pure. This is the lesson of the Upanishads. Your eyes are your sastras (scriptures). Therefore, develop the proper relationship between creation and perception. Thus, there are many things, which cannot be learnt through the physical sciences, which can be understood from the Upanishads. What science has discovered so far is very little. Scientists feel proud about their miniscule knowledge. Spirituality affirms that even in the microcosm there is the macrocosm. "Anoraneeyan mahathomaheeyan," proclaims the Veda (The Divine is minuter than the atom and vaster than the vast cosmos). A small seed planted in the ground grows into a vast banyan tree. The power of growing into a huge tree, with branches, leaves, flowers and fruit is immanent in the small seed. How does this growth take place? It takes place when the seed has sacrificed its original form. After it is planted in the ground it renounces its individuality as a seed (Ahamkar). When it sacrifices its original form, it acquires a new form. As long as it retains its original form, it will not be able to manifest its potentialities.

Moreover, in the vast banyan tree, there are innumerable small seeds.

Minutest atom and Infinite Cosmos are one

From the microcosm the macrocosm emerges. In the macrocosm the microcosm exists. When this process is investigated, it will be seen that the minutest atom and the infinite Cosmos are basically one. Only the forms differ, but the substance is one. This is one of the profound mysteries revealed by the Upanishads. Each Upanishad has sought to disclose the secret of creation. In attempting to understand the Upanishads, different persons, according to their intellectual abilities, interpreted them variously. These differences are related to their different natures. For instance: A hunter looking at a bird on a tree fancies what a fine meal the bird will furnish for his family. He is thinking only of the meat in the bird's body. But when a poet looks at the bird, he is in rapture over the colours of its plumage and the softness of its feathers. Although the object is one, it appears differently to different persons according to their outlook. How do these differences in perception arise? They arise from the worldly habits of the people concerned. Hence, good habits are essential to develop right attitudes. Nothing can be learnt well except by Constant practice. This applies equally to the Upanishadic teachings.

Brahma-Ananda is Self-realisation

Brahma-ananda is not a commodity obtained from somewhere. It is Self-realisation, which confers supreme bliss. Man imagines that there is something uniquely precious by securing which he can experience bliss. This delusion is the cause of attachment, which arouses fear as to whether he would be able to get what he seeks and whether he would be able to retain it. Out of this fear is generated hatred. If there is no attachment, there will be no fear or hatred. The first requisite is for men to realise their humanness and have respect for human values. All the violence and discord in the world today are due to the eclipse of human values. In the pursuit of desire, all values are sacrificed. Of what use are acquisitions if humanness is absent? Students! Lead ideal lives. Ideals alone survive long after men are dead. Earn

a good name by your exemplary conduct. Make your conscience your mentor. Control your senses and make the mind the master of the senses. This is the supreme message of the Upanishads. The term Upanishad means "Sitting near." (It signifies the proximity of the disciple to the preceptor). Nearness to God enables you to get rid of your bad qualities and to acquire good qualities.

Study the sacred scriptures of all faiths

The Upanishads lead you near to God. Instead of wasting your time on trashy novels, devote as much time as possible to the study of the sacred Upanishads, which will make your lives sublime. Study as well the sacred scriptures of other faiths. All of them contain sacred idea. It is highly important for women to study sacred books and avoid seeing sensuous films and TV shows, especially during pregnancy. The child in the womb is likely to be influenced, by the mind of things they read or see. (Swami gave the examples of Subhadra and Lilavati to point out how Abhimanyu learnt about Padmavyuham in embryo, while Prahlada learnt the Narayana mantra from Narada from the womb of his mother). Mothers should be filled with pure thoughts and maintain a pure environment. Mothers should see that their children grow up as ideal persons in society. For this purpose, they should acquaint themselves with the cultural heritage of the country as enshrined in our Upanishads, puranas and epics.

18. Face the challenges of life

Date: 01 June 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

MAN undertakes numerous good acts and devotes his thought, word and deed to various forms of discipline to realise God. But all these efforts are not bearing the desired fruit, because man has not understood what is true spiritual sadhana (discipline). Those who try to follow the nine forms of worship (Sravanam, Kirthanam, etc.) are also failing to attain their objective because they have not grasped the inner meaning of these forms of worship. What is meant by sadhana? Can japa, dhyana, bhajans and pious actions be called sadhana (spiritual effort)? Real sadhana consists in transforming bad into good, converting sorrow into joy. There can be no happiness without sorrow, no good without the bad. There is a continuous conflict between good and evil, between happiness and sorrow. Happiness and misery are inseparable twins which are inextricably linked to each other. One is the beginning and the other is the culmination. Beginning and end go together. Only the Divine is free from a beginning, a middle or an end, but in worldly affairs, everything that has a beginning, has an end. Grief is not something which someone thrusts on you from outside. Troubles and difficulties are not imposed on you from outside. Grief and trouble arise in the natural course of things.

Sadhana elevates one's life to the sublime

The refinement of life calls for continual sadhana (spiritual practice). Without such practice, life gets degraded. For instance, a diamond gets enhanced in value when it goes through the process of cutting and faceting. Likewise, gold, taken out as ore from the earth, becomes pure and valuable after refinement. In the same manner, sadhana is necessary to elevate life from the trivial to the sublime. No one is a scholar or a man of virtue at the moment of birth. It is only through various endeavours that he becomes a scholar and a righteous person. In creation there are many things which are naturally bad. Out of these bad things, good emerges. When one desires something, the desire is associated with aversion to something else. Man's

life is bound up with likes and dislikes, with good and bad thoughts, with union and separation. Hence samsara (worldly life) has been compared to a vast ocean on which the waves are constantly bringing about union and separation. The same ocean contains pearls and gems. Therefore, we have to face and overcome the trials and tribulations of life. If we fail in this, our life becomes a waste. Life is full of trials. If these difficulties are not there, life will have little value.

Powers of the mind are indescribable

There is a saying: "Anything can be achieved by Sadhana." Sadhana means converting bad into good, transforming evil into virtue. This calls for the right use of the mind. Man is not aware of the potentialities of the mind. The mind is the cause of all our sorrows and joys. The powers of the mind are indescribable. In one moment it can encompass the universe. In another moment it can be a total blank. It can blossom in a moment and wither in a moment. The mind is the cause of both good and bad.

When we take food, we think that this food is digested by us and that the food sustains the body. But it is not food that gives us strength and energy. It is the mind that is responsible. When food is consumed, if the mind is not calm and happy, the food may get toxic. It is the mind that raises man from the human to the Divine. Hence, it is essential to ensure purity in thoughts, words and deeds.

Man can achieve nothing without the motive power of the mind. Man gets puffed up with pride on the basis of his wealth, physical strength, scholarship and position. But very few realise whither Ahamkara (egoism) which kindles this pride, will lead man? Men often receive the benediction from elders that they may be blessed with a hundred years of life. But actual experience shows that many die in the middle age or earlier. No one knows the truth about the length of one's life. The promise of a hundred years of life should not be taken on trust. Life may come to an end at any time, in boyhood, manhood or old age, and anywhere, in water, on the ground or in the sky, in a forest or in a city (Swami recited a poem in this context). No one is competent

to determine the length of anyone's life. Why, then, is there mention of a hundred-year span for man in the scriptures? This is not a mere fancy of the authors of the scriptures. It is the truth. Every man should live for a hundred years. What is the reason for premature death? The wicked tendencies in man, such as arrogance, envy, bad thoughts and misdeeds, go on shearing the life of man into pieces. His bad qualities shorten the life of man. When a man's life is filled with good thoughts and good actions, he can live for a hundred years. The secret of the longevity enjoyed by the ancient sages is precisely this. Man today wastes his life in bad thoughts and bad actions and ends his life in a bad way.

Egoism dims a man's vision

Students! Foster good thoughts and good actions with zeal. Develop devotion to God. Today faith in God has declined and respect for righteousness has diminished. Devotion is at a discount. In such a situation how can the promise of a life of hundred years be fulfilled? People must develop faith in the Self. Without faith in himself, how can a man inspire confidence in others? He must realise his Divinity. A blind man cannot see the sun. A man filled with ego cannot know his Atma. Egoism dims a man's vision like a film. Get rid of egoism. All wealth, position and power are transient like passing clouds. Does a man, who devotes half his time to earning money, spend even a fraction of it on thoughts of God or on activities dedicated to helping others? His entire life is devoted to selfish pursuits. His attachment to every object is rooted in selfishness. His love for others is also based on self-interest. The slightest enquiry will reveal how deep-rooted is this selfishness. In a totally meaningless preoccupation with selfish concerns, man is sacrificing the enduring and the eternal Spirit. It is only when man sheds his selfishness that he would be able to turn away from bad deeds. The fear of sin has gone. In fact, what are essential for man are fear of sin, love of God and morality in society. When there is no fear of sin, men will have no scruples about doing anything. When fear of sin and love of God are absent, there can be no peace in the world. Students! You are the prospective redeemers of the nation. You will determine the future of this country. Hence, purify your hearts, fill your minds with sacred thoughts and consider that your bodies have been given

for service to the nation. I want you to dedicate yourselves to the service of your fellowmen, with faith in the saying: "Lokas-samasthas-sukhino bhavanthu!" (Let all the worlds be happy).

Self-interest is the reason for all problems

Students! Human life today is riddled with many problems. People are confused as to what they should believe and what they should reject, what they should do and what they should eschew. Man has lost the capacity to discriminate between the enduring and the ephemeral. He believes in the unreal and has no belief in that which should be believed. The reason for this is selfinterest. It is only when human behaviour is reformed that the world will get transformed. The process of change has to begin in men's minds. The mind is a bundle of thoughts. Thoughts lead to action. And actions account for the state of the world. When the thoughts go astray, the actions also are improper. The state of the world, good or ill, depends on the behaviour of individuals. There is nothing wrong with the world in itself. It is man's wrong desires which are the cause of his misery Hence, keep your minds ever pure and unsullied. Keep out rigorously all bad thoughts by reciting the name of the Lord.

Develop the capacity for adjustment

Man is beset with joys and sorrows and has to bear with them as with heat and cold. To live in the world completely free from troubles is not possible. Recognising the difference between good and bad, you have to lead a balanced life. Students sorely need such understanding and capacity for adjustment. Once they develop right understanding, adjustment will be easy to accomplish.

Whenever you enquire, whether it is a millionaire or a beggar, a child or a man, or a woman, every person announces himself as "I am so-and-so." This "I" that is common to everyone is the Atma-principle. It is common to all irrespective of moods and conditions. The Vedantic method of arriving at Oneness by the process of Neti ("not this, not this") also leads to the same

Atmic truth. The "I" exists in everyone. Once you have cultivated this "Ekatma bhava" - the spiritual oneness of all there will be no room for differences and discord. You will then feel that when you hurt or blame others, you are hurting or blaming yourself.

Siva teaches a lesson to Sankaracharya

Here is an illustration from the life of Adi Sankaracharya. When Sankaracharya was in Kasi (Varanasi), at the approach of an untouchable, he said: "You fellow! keep away, keep away!" The other man asked: "Whom do you want to keep away from you? Is it the body? The body is inert. What right has your inert body to ask my inert body to keep away from it? Both are inert. How can one inert object talk to another? Or, is it the case that you want the Atma in me to keep away from you? The Atma in me is the same as the Atma in you. What is it that you want to go away from you?" There was an argument between the two over the body and the Atma at the end of which Sankaracharya realised that the person who had recognised the Atma-principle could be none other than the Lord Himself and prostrated before the man in front of him. At that moment Siva revealed Himself and told Sankaracharya-"It is to remove from your mind your mistaken notions that I had assumed the form of the untouchable." Hence, you should realise that it is not possible for anyone to know in what form, in what situation, at what time and in what circumstances the Lord appears to man to teach him how to get rid of his bad thoughts, bad qualities and bad actions. Therefore, you must make every effort to keep out bad thoughts and bad qualities and try to sanctify your life by good thoughts and good actions. This is true sadhana (spiritual discipline). Sitting in so-called meditation without getting rid of your bad qualities is utterly valueless. It is an "artificial" exercise. What you should do must come from the heart. A great deal of what passes for japa, dhyana, yajna and yaga is artificial and has nothing to do with the heart. The result is that the fruits of such exercises are also artificial. These are not fruits coming from God. They are the products of one's own actions. Hence, do not blame God for anything. For all your difficulties and joys, your actions alone are responsible. Keeping this truth in mind, you have to follow the path of righteousness.

What is the day that is really sacred?

Students! During the past twelve days, you have enjoyed discourses on various matters relating to the Spirit, the bliss divine, worldly problems and have tried to understand the underlying truth. Days spent in this way are the greatest moments in life. Hence I have often reminded you 'The day when good devotees gather together and pray: "Oh Lord!" in sweet tones;

The day when you mix with the poor like brothers in fraternal union;

The day when you offer to the devotees of God delicious food; The day when a high-souled devotee comes to you and relates stories of the Divine;

Only that day is a really sacred day. All others are days of mourning for the dead. This means that only that day is a real day (in your life) when you help people in need and make them happy. I cannot say that the penance on which we embarked in this Summer Course will now come to an end. There is nothing like a completion for this exercise. It is an endless spiritual undertaking.

Consider what constitutes tapas (penance). It is the performance of duties assigned to you. Today, because people have forgotten their duties and responsibilities, what should be Tapas has turned into Tamas (the darkness of ignorance). Hence, you have to carry out all through this tapas relating to your duties. Discharge of your duty is the daily yajna (spiritual offering) you have to perform. That is the primary spiritual exercise. That is the penance you have to do and that is the goal you have to keep in mind. I desire that our students should dedicate their entire lives to the service of others, harmonising their personal interests with their concern for others, and lead exemplary lives.

One should have a mind filled with Samarasa, a vision of equality, the

conviction that fundamentally all are same. The spiritual life is not a matter of meaningless talk; it is really life lived in the Atman; it is the experience of Pure Ananda; it is just another name for the Full Life.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. Vijnana and Dharma

Date: 02 June 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1991

VERY country develops its own system of Vijnana (knowledge). But in all systems there are certain good traits that are common like morality, character, truth, sacrifice and forbearance. The Bharatiya system of education contained five elements' conduct, tradition, religion, art and study. This comprehensive scheme of acquiring knowledge is not kept in mind by educationists today. The value of this system of knowledge is measured by the degree of righteousness which is promoted. The progress of knowledge in the world is determined by the progress of righteousness. The well-being and advancement of a country depend on the combined progress of Dharma and Vijnana.

Vyasa and Valmiki are great sages. Through their poetical works they propagated among the people righteousness and the highest knowledge, which would make them adore the Supreme Lord, the giver of all gifts. Their works are ancient and have been described as puranas because of their antiquity.

Unifying mantra of Bharatiya culture

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana teach the laws of righteousness not only to Bharat but for the whole world. From the most ancient times, Bharatiya culture has been promoting security and prosperity in all countries. Transcending all differences of nationality or religion, Bharatiya culture taught to the world the unifying mantra: "Lokas samasthas sukhino bhavanthu" (Let all the worlds be happy). This message transcends the barriers of time, space and circumstances and preaches the doctrine of oneness. Bharat alone has held forth the broad-minded principle of the happiness of all people everywhere, eschewing the idea of 'I' and "my people." What is the inner significance of the fact that the sage Vyasa, without any regard for the wealth, power, physical prowess and abilities of Duryodhana, Dussasana and others, esteemed only Dharmaja, (the eldest of the Pandavas)? The great

men of those days had the highest respect for Dharma (Righteousness), regarded Dharma as the sole sustaining power in the world, and considered that all institutions in Bharat should be based on Dharma. It was out of his supreme regard for Dharma that Vyasa esteemed Dharmaja highly. The Ramayana, which taught to the entire world the greatness of morality and integrity, should be the life-breath of every family. How should the brothers in a family conduct themselves, how should a son carry out the injunction of the father, how should husband and wife live in harmony - all these aspects of family life are excellently expounded in the Ramayana. Ramayana taught how the unity among the elder and younger brothers should be fostered, how affection should prevail among kinsfolk, and how the reputation of the family should be safeguarded. The author of the great Ramayana is Valmiki.

Rama is the very image of Dharma

Ravana was one who was endowed with all wealth and prosperity. He lacked nothing in terms of comforts and luxuries. He had mastered the 64 categories of knowledge. His capital, Lanka, rivalled Swarga (heaven) itself in its grandeur. Instead of showing regard for Ravana, Valmiki extolled Rama, who gave up the kingdom, donned the robes of an ascetic and lived a simple life in the forest. What is the reason? It was because Rama was the very embodiment of Dharma. Everyone of his actions stemmed from Dharma. Every word he spoke was truth. Every step he trod was based on Dharma. Hence, Rama has been described as the very image of Dharma (Ramo Vighrahan Dharma). What is the inner meaning of the fact that the great sages attached no value to wealth or possessions or intellectual abilities, but esteemed only righteousness as of supreme value? It shows their concern to demonstrate to the world the truth that the world is based on Dharma and that Dharma is vital for the life of man. In the Bharatiya concept of Purusharthas, the four goals of human life - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha - Dharma (righteousness) comes first. It is only when the pursuit of Artha (material prosperity) and Kama (desires) is based on Dharma that man will have genuine happiness. If he pursues Artha and Kama without regard to Dharma, he will be plunged in misery. Hence, the acquisition of wealth should be based on Dharma. Equally, Kama should be infused with Dharma. Only

then, the desires will lead to Moksha (liberation). This is the real lesson taught by the Purusharthas.

Unfortunately, today, the people have cut off the foot (Dharma) and the head (Moksha) of the Purusharthas and are leading lives based solely on Artha (wealth) and Kama. This is the reason why the country is a prey to every conceivable trouble. Because the people have forgotten Dharma the entire land wears the mantle of unrighteousness. In such a situation, the students should take a pledge to acquire knowledge based on Dharma and to use that knowledge for promoting the progress of the nation and raise it to glorious heights.

Understand the real message of the Gita

The message of the Bhagavad Gita has been interpreted by scholars in many different ways. They have argued that it prescribes the Karma Marga, the Jnana Marga or the Bhakti Marga as the primary path. But the real message of the Gita is to be got from the first word of the first sloka (Dharma) and the last word of the last sloka "Mama." "Mama Dharma" each individual has to act up to his duty - -that is the lesson of the Gita. Householders should follow the Grihastha Dharma (the duties of householders), old people should follow the Vanaprastha Dharma (the duties of those who have withdrawn from family duties). There are Sanyasa Dharma (the duties of a renunciant) and Brahmachari Dharma (the duties of a celibate during the years before marriage). These duties are prescribed for each in his particular stage in life and they should not be mixed up. The Gita taught these duties for people in different asramas (stages). The basis for all the dharmas is the Manu Dharma Sastra (Code of Manu). There is no Code of conduct equal to the one laid down by Manu anywhere in the world.

The greatness of "Manu Dharma Sastra"

Once upon a time, a German philosopher called Nietzsche wrote a book called "The will to power." While engaged in writing his book, he happened to see a copy of "Manu Dharma Sastra." On reading the book he experienced

inexpressible joy. He laid aside his own writing. He observed that "When in the firmament the Code of Manu is shining effulgently like the sun, the book I am writing is like a candle. You cannot come across in the whole world a treatise like this." In spite of the fact that such great and sacred books and moral treatises are available within Bharat itself, why are Bharatiyas going after exotic ideas and practices disregarding their own dharma ? In this there is a sort of false fascination. Though one possesses invaluable gems and precious truths, if he is attracted by the doctrines of others, he becomes a prey to such maladies. There is a Telugu adage which says that a man prefers the neighbour's stale food to the delicacies in his own house. Can there be greater folly than ignoring the matchless treasures of one's own cultural heritage and going after the tinsel from other countries?

Knowledge must promote human personality

Students! The knowledge developed by each country is essential for it. This should not be underrated. According to its historical circumstances and the requirements of the place and the time, each country develops its own store of Vijnana (knowledge). No one has the right to criticise it. Each country evolves its own code of righteousness and its corpus of knowledge and culture based on its conditions and needs and this is the proof of its validity. Each system of knowledge, however, is designed to promote the human personality. The Indian system is intended to foster what is sublime and exemplary in human nature. Without considering this aspect of promoting human excellence and helping people to lead ideal lives, mere study of ancient texts is of no use. What is learnt from books should be put into practice. Only then there is the real bliss of knowledge. If a myriad books are studied, but good qualities are not cultivated, of what avail is that study? Qualities are most important. From earliest times our ancients laid stress on good qualities.

No scientist has the competence to criticise the Indian texts dealing with philosophy and metaphysics. Science today claims to discover some truth, which on later investigation is found to be untenable. A science which is constantly revising its theories, cannot sit in judgment on the eternal verities

presented by the Indian sages in Vedanta. If you examine the speculations of European philosophers from Kant to Spencer, you will find that compared to the downpour of philosophic thought presented by the three schools of Vedanta Dvaita (Dualism), Advaita (Nondualism) and Visishtadvaita (Qualified Non-dualism) - the speculations of these philosophers are a mere trickle.

All the explorations of modern science are not greater than what Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha carried out aeons ago. Hiranyakasipu explored the earth, the sky and the five elements and was so proud of his mastery over all the elements that he persecuted his own son (for not recognising his powers). What is it that happens when one acquires mastery over the physical elements? He develops his ego and forgets his true nature. The son Prahlada is a worshipper of Hari. The father, Hiranyakasipu, is a hater of Hari. There can be no common ground between the two. Likewise there is no common ground between philosophy and the physical sciences today.

Lesson to be learnt from Narasimha Avatar

"Where is your God?" asked Hiranyakasipu, Prahlada replied: "Do not have any doubts that he is here and not there." "Is he in this pillar?" "Yes," replied Prahlada. When Hiranyakasipu struck the pillar with his mace, a divine power emerged from it. The lesson of this episode is that until man shatters the pillars of his ego, he will not be able to discover the Divine within him. As long as man is filled with body-consciousness, he cannot experience the divine. Only when he gets rid of the body-consciousness he be able to understand the Divine within him. No doubt it is necessary to pursue the study of physical sciences. But one should not get puffed up by one's scientific knowledge. Realising that there are innumerable other things which are yet to be learnt, the scientist should cultivate humility and modesty. Students! You are the future leaders of the nation. The nation's weal or woe depends on how you conduct yourselves. If you are good, the nation will be good. If you behave badly, the nation will go down. You have to understand the true role of science. A student today after acquiring a mustard seed quantum of knowledge develops a swelled head as big as a pumpkin. This is totally wrong. Rather than preach a ton of precepts to others, you would do well to

practise an ounce of them yourself. Practice should precede precept. In this way, Bharatiya Vijnana, (science) containing the essence of all Sastras (scriptures), laid down the goal of all human endeavour in the form of a divine sutra (maxim).

The close link between Vak and Divinity

This entire cosmos is made up of two components: One is the name and the other is the form. There is nothing that can be perceived without name or form. Name implies sound. Sound permeates the universe. The sound is called Vak (word or speech). For speech the prana (life) is bhava (feeling). For feeling, the life is desire. For desire, the life is Ajnana (ignorance). For ignorance, Divinity is the life-source. You have to recognise the close link between Vak and Divinity.

Without words you cannot identify anything. Every object has a sound (or name) attached to it. All things have originated from sound. We have not created sound. Hence, from ancient times every sabda (sound) had a specific meaning. These meanings are not the creation of any scientist. For instance, here is a plate. Who made this plate? A goldsmith might have made the plate, but who gave it its name? It may be said that the name has come down from the past. Here is a tumbler. It is called a tumbler because of its form. Thus it is evident that the name is associated with the form of an object. For the form the proof is the name. The two are interdependent and inseparable. You must recognise this truth. For every word in the world there is a form. What, then, is the form of the word Duhkham (grief)? The troubles you experience are its form. For Ananda (bliss), the joy you experience is the form. This is a 'hall.' The form gives it the name. For every word there is a form.

God should be realised by His name

Scientists do not recognise the logic implicit in this truth. For instance, you have a dictionary. It contains numerous words and gives their meanings. Does not the user accept the meanings given in it? The dictionary contains the word "God." This word must have a form. If it had no form, how could the

word have come into existence? Why is this fact not recognised? This is due to individual prejudices and is not true of the generality of the people. Basing on one's personal preferences and narrow attitudes, a certain opinion (about God) may be held. There are only two things in the world: name and form. Hence, Vedanta prescribed that God should be realised by His name. It is difficult to realise the form from the description of the form. For instance, if a person is described as wearing a shirt and tie and of a certain height, you cannot make someone answer to that description in a crowd. But the moment the name is mentioned and the identification marks are given, the person can be picked up from a crowd of a hundred thousand. Through the name, the form can be easily envisaged. Hence, the Sruti declared: "Smarane Taranopayah" (The remembrance of the name is the means of redemption). Students! Bharatiya Vijnana (supreme knowledge) encompasses all potencies. No other system of knowledge contains what is in Bharatiya Vijnana. You have not got this knowledge. You have not tried to make practical use of it. Consequently you have no conception of its prodigious value. Seek to know it and put it to proper use. Thereby you will experience bliss.

Dharma is the primary maxim of life

Bharatiya Vijnana is suffused with Dharma (Righteousness). Dharma is the primary maxim of life. It is life itself. What is Dharma? It is said: "Dharayati iti Dharmah" (Dharma is that which bears or supports everything). This derivation is not adequate. In every object, there is a vital principle running like a thread. Here is 'fire'. What is it that 'fire' bears within it? Heat and light. Only when heat and light are present, can you regard it as Agni (fire). If heat and light are not present, it will be a piece of charcoal and not fire. What, then, is the Dharma (the vital principle) of 'fire'? To manifest heat and light.

Here is a lump of ice. What is its form? It is white. It is cold. If it is not cold, it will cease to be ice. Likewise, the vital principle of sugar is sweetness. If it has no sweetness, it will turn into salt or mud.

Dharma of man is a life of sacrifice

What is the Dharma of man? A life of sacrifice on the basis of morality and integrity is the Dharma of man. How should the Dharma be practised? With Trikarana Suddhi (purity in thought, word and deed). True humanness consists in the harmony of thought, word and deed. Today it is because there is no unity of thought, word and deed among men, Dharma has declined. As a result Vijnana (science) has lost its true form. The nation's prosperity and wellbeing have been destroyed. Security has become scarce. Morality and integrity have disappeared. Mammon-worship reigns supreme. In the insane pursuit of wealth, men are losing their morality and integrity.

Money earned by unworthy means is nothing but dust. That wealth will not be of use to you. Hoarding wealth is of no avail. Ill-gotten wealth is not truly yours. There are four covetous elements waiting to get at it. The first entity is the Government. In the name of some tax or law, the Government will make a raid on the hoarded wealth. The second entity is fire, somehow or other fire reaches the ill-gotten wealth and destroys it. The third entity is a thief. The thief is after secreted wealth. Somehow he tries to steal it. The fourth entity is disease. To deprive a person of his ill-gotten wealth, disease seizes hold of him and makes him spend money on treatment. Misers, who will not part with a paisa to a beggar, will spend any amount on doctors and medicines. These are the ways in which money earned by dishonest means is taken away. Therefore, you students, who are the nation's hope for the future, should rigorously eschew unfair means to earn money, adhere to morality and integrity in your professional life and uphold Dharma through love and truth and serve the nation. Only then will the nation recover its ancient greatness and glory. It is impossible for anyone to eradicate the basic truths embedded in Bharatiya culture and tradition.

Engage in prayer for the welfare of the world

For everything, the foundation is devotion to the Lord. Without devotions, nothing can be accomplished. Only the power of the Divine can save the world and not any tank or bomb or Government. Therefore engage yourselves in prayer to God for the welfare of the world. Always chant, the name of the Lord. Don't waste time because Time is the embodiment of God. Try to be

helpful to others in all your activities. There is no greater sadhana or puja than this. There is no need to install a picture of the Lord in your small shrine to worship Him.. Install Him in your heart and adore Him.

Worship of the Lord externally has its hazards. Mira was a great devotee. Apart from Krishna she saw nothing else in the world. But she had a desire based on the external. She wanted to install an idol of Krishna in a temple and please Him with her songs all day long. How could she build a temple? It was beyond her means. She wondered whether this would be possible at all in her life-time. She was filled with these doubts. One day, the Maharana (of Udaipur) saw her and wished to marry her. Mira had no desire for marriage as her main aim in life was different. She saw that the Maharana was a powerful and fabulously rich person. She felt that if she married him her innermost desire might be realised. By marrying the Maharana, she could get a temple erected in marble and install a marble idol of Krishna in it and devote her entire time to worshipping Krishna and sanctifying her life. Because she was deluded by this desire, she courted disappointment.

After the marriage, the Maharana was displeased with her way of life and asked her to leave the mandir. This was a great shock to Mira. She was in deep agony. At the same time, it was a great moment of truth for her. She realised that the mandir was built by the Maharana and was liable to decay some time or other. "But the temple of my heart has been erected by the Lord. God is installed in it." Mira recalled Krishna's assurance to Narada: "Wherever my praise is sung, I am there." She addressed her mind thus: "Oh mind, go to the junction of the Ganga and the Yamuna." Where is this junction of the two rivers? It is in the middle of the two brows (Swami sang Mira's song).

Students should redeem the Nation

Today only the grace of the Divine can save the country from the chaos and disorder in which it is plunged. Peace and progress in the future are dependent on the abilities and endeavours of the students. When a country, known for its spiritual greatness for millennia is overwhelmed by corruption,

violence and injustice, it is the privilege of students to redeem the nation by the practice of truth, righteousness, love and forbearance and ensure peace and security in the country. Such students are needed by the thousands today. A lone Prahlada could attempt to transform only his father. All of you should attempt to transform your parents by your own exemplary life and make them lead noble lives. All of you should exemplify the life of Prahlada. He was a lad of about your own age. He was a student like you. Even the teachers were good men. But owing to the perverse nature of the father and his threats, they tried to teach wrong things to Prahlada. But Prahlada ventured even to teach to the preceptors. They were so much influenced by Prahlada's teachings that they came to Hiranyakasipu and said: "Oh Lord of the Rakshasas! Your son is not an ordinary boy. He is endowed with great qualities. It is not right for you to punish such a child." When the minions of the king hurled their javelins at him, Prahlada would not wince or utter a cry, but only prayed to Vishnu calling Him, "Oh Pannagasayi!" (Oh Lord, resting on the serpent couch!). (Poem). He was ever smiling. When he was thrust into a blazing fire, he was calmly glowing in the name of Narayana. When he was pushed into the sea, he continued to chant the name of Narayana. He was unconcerned about the deha (body). He was contemplating only the Dehi (Indwelling Spirit). One such child is enough.

Wisdom should shine forth from education

Hence, in this world, which is making such advances in science and technology, students should lead a life dedicated to truth. Anil Kumar (in his speech earlier) had observed that education does not mean mere study of books. Like the lightning that flashes from clouds, wisdom should shine forth from your education. Deem your heart as the sky. In that sky, your thoughts are the clouds. The mind is the moon, your intellect is the sun. At this young age of yours, dark clouds are likely to gather in your hearts. At that moment, the sun and the moon will not be visible. But for how long? Only for a brief period. The clouds are passing clouds, not permanent. If you have forbearance, the clouds will pass and then you will be able to see your true Self. Then your mind and intellect will shine brightly. Therefore, cultivate patience and forbearance to experience peace.

Students nowadays are prone to get easily excited. Don't allow yourselves to be provoked. Today the student world is filled with agitations. It may seem incidental to the period of adolescence. But you should not regard it in that light. It is from the years of adolescence that you should develop all your faculties and talents. You must practise sense-control from now itself. What kind of discipline is possible in old age?

Do not postpone spirituality for old age

There are some persons who ask "What is the need for thinking about God at this age? Is it not enough if we start thinking of God after taking up a job, earning wealth and retiring from work?" There are some who declare that they will take to spiritual activities after retirement. But in fact they seek other jobs after retirement and continue to be in harness right upto the end of their lives. They do not give up the desire for money. When will they ever embark on the spiritual path? "Is it possible to think of Hari when the messengers of the Lord of Death have caught the man's life in their noose, when the relations are in a hurry to get the dead body out of the house, and when wife and children are wailing around the body?" (Poem). It is impossible to think of the Lord at that moment. Therefore, you have to start adoring the Lord from this age itself. Hence from this age itself, you must fill your heart with love of the Divine. You can make use of your devotion in your old age. This is the task before you.

Combine spirituality with academics

Regardless of what anyone may say, combine spiritual pursuits with your academic studies. You cannot run the cart of life on a single wheel. It is too hazardous. No bird can fly with a single wing. It can fly freely when it can use both the wings. Likewise man needs mundane knowledge for carrying on worldly affairs and Brahma- Vidya (Spiritual knowledge) for his spiritual welfare. Acquire knowledge of the physical sciences; that is necessary. At the same time seek spiritual wisdom also. You have to conduct your life based on both these kinds of knowledge. Students! Do not spend your entire time solely on worldly concerns. Devote some time to what is essential for realising

the highest goal of life. It is only when the country is filled with such students that it will be prosperous and happy and regain its ancient glory. Only the power of the Divine can protect any individual, society or nation. Seek to realise that divine power. It is not to be got from outside. It is inherent in you. That is why the Vedantic texts declared: "The One Lord dwells in all beings."

20. Develop social consciousness

Date: 22 July 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

TODAY, in the name of promoting education, all kinds of bizarre developments devoid of morality are taking place in the country. There is no trace of humility and discipline which are the hallmarks of true education. In the place of character and good conduct, which should be prevalent among students, we notice today the spread of materialism, ostentation and arrogance amongst them.

With the rapid advance of science and technology in the world, there is a corresponding decline in peace and security. Developing insatiable desires, the modern student is vitiating his mind. He lacks the capacity for introspection. But his external vision is turned in all directions. The primary thing students should seek to know is: Who is a man and what are the qualities that distinguish a good human being? "Man" means an individual with faith. One's faith gets developed when one lives upto one's beliefs. The sacredness of the human being should be recognised.

There is no use in attempting to establish a new system of education or a new social system. By these means the current problems cannot be solved. We have to bring up a generation of purehearted boys and girls. To rear such a generation, there should be a climate of purity and sincerity. This calls for the development of morality and devotion to truth. Character and truth lead to the emergence of spirituality in the divine human personality. Hence, spirituality is the basic foundation for producing a generation of pure-hearted boys and girls. Only when we have such pure young persons, will the nation experience peace and prosperity. To lead a good life students will have to give up their selfishness. Unfortunately, the spirit of sacrifice is not to be seen among students today.

Wealth of spirit is greater than worldly wealth

Students suffer today from some mental weaknesses. One of them is the

feeling that wealth and position are essential for personal happiness and these alone should be sought after. This is wholly wrong. What is the inner significance of the fact that in the past great rulers like Janaka and Shivaji submitted themselves to sages like Yajnavalkya and saints like Samartha Ramadas? They lacked nothing in terms of wealth and power. But they esteemed the wealth of spirit as greater than all worldly wealth and power. Men like the Kauravas, who attached greater value to power and position, than to faith in the divine, came to a miserable end. It is true that you need material wealth for a living. But wealth should not become the 'be-all and end-all' of life. Human life has come from the divine. When you dedicate your life to God and adhere to the path of righteousness you can sanctify life and achieve peace, happiness and prosperity

Self-management is the first requisite

In the MBA course of studies, different areas of management - finance, marketing, etc., are taught. But more than all these, the most important area of study is 'self-management' or manmanagement. The individual who cannot manage himself, how is he going to manage anything else?

The first requisite, therefore, is 'self-management.' In this, there is no room for self-interest. No one can be an island unto himself. If a man is asked, for whose sake he is living, he may answer that he is living for himself. When further questioned about his job, he will say he is working for the sake of his wife and children. When he is plied with further questions he will admit his dependence on society for meeting various needs of himself and his family. No individual or family can exist without depending on society. Today, there are lakhs of people in authority or engaged in politics, business or other walks of life. Almost all of them are concerned only about themselves and their families and few are imbued with a social consciousness. What is the cause of all the evils plaguing society? It is the lack of sense of social responsibility. Every individual has to recognise his duty to society and understand that without society he cannot lead a family life. Students, therefore, should develop a social consciousness. They should ask themselves how by each of their actions they can promote the welfare of society rather than the interest

of themselves and their families. Everyone should feel: "I am a part of the society. My well-being is bound up with the well-being of others." It is the decline of spirituality that has led to all the disorders and maladies in the country. In the world today, beginning with the human mind, everything, the air, water, etc., is polluted. All the five elements are contaminated. Man's life is based on these five elements. Hence, he is the embodiment of pollution in these elements. The sacredness of human life has been desecrated. Moral values are going down the slope everyday. The animal instincts in man are rampant. Only by fostering the divine nature in man, can this animality be destroyed and the human can rise to the level of the divine. For this, men must get rid of their selfishness.

Inverse relation between salaries and morals

Education is essential as a preparation for serving society. For instance, the MBA students are hoping, after getting their degrees, to become managers of big companies and lead a comfortable life. Managerial jobs carry high salaries. The reason for the high income is inflation in prices caused by the failure of production to keep pace with the demand. Rise in income has been followed by a decline in morality. With the collapse of morals, the nation has become a prey to violence and disorder. Those receiving large incomes should ask themselves whether the work they do is commensurate with the salaries they get. In many enterprises, the expenses exceed the receipts. The absence of work ethic - the spirit of work - is responsible for this situation. The position in India is worse than in some other countries. Laziness is on the increase. Let the students compare the situation in Japan and Bharat. The Japanese have the 'spirit of work', they work hard. Hence, their productivity is high and they are able to keep the prices low. They do not abstain from work even during 'strikes'. In India, there is a clamour for high wages but there is no willingness to work harder. It is because of this attitude that the Indian economy is in a deplorable state.

"Work, work, work!" should be the motto

Students are not ready to take up any kind of work. "Work, Work, Work" -

-that should be their motto. With no prospect of getting jobs, educated young men are getting frustrated and mentally upset and are turning into naxalites or terrorists. But students should not develop such perverted tendencies. They must think only of their duties. They should not wait for specific jobs of their choice.

On January 28, 1973, a plastics factory was started in a village called Balliapara near Calcutta. A chemical fluid was being discharged from the factory as an effluent. An oil-monger noticed the flow of this oily substance. He collected this effluent and mixed it with the edible oil he was selling to customers. When an epidemic of paralysis broke out in that village, striking down all men, women and children, an official enquiry revealed that the outbreak of paralysis was sequel to the consumption of the adulterated oil sold by the merchant. In their greed for filthy lucre, some businessmen are endangering sacred and precious human lives. A great deal of business today is of this nature. We cannot get pure milk, pure water or pure air. Every commodity is adulterated. Even a new car develops trouble the very next day. In this manner, all the necessaries of life are contaminated. Selfishness is at the bottom of this evil. It is growing on account of disregard for moral values. Morality means good conduct. Good conduct is based on recognition of right and wrong.

Develop the spirit of sacrifice

Students should develop a spirit of sacrifice so that they are prepared to dedicate all their energies and talents to the service of others. For this purpose, they must cherish those moral values which will enable them to lead ideal lives. Wherever you may work and whomsoever you may meet, you should earn a good name. You should not behave in a conceited manner because of your high MBA degrees.

You must also remember what Prahlada revealed as the essence of all education - the contemplation of God. Once you have filled your heart with thoughts of the Divine, ideas of fraud and chicanery will not enter your minds. Only then will you be able to make the right use of all the varied knowledge

you have acquired in your management studies. The students of our Institute are good boys. They are pure by nature, but are likely to be affected by the environment outside when they go out into the world. To keep your minds pure in such environment, fill your hearts with love and keep your daily actions pure and unsullied. Students should also learn to avoid wasting of food, time, money and energy. When you move in the outside world, your life should be exemplary. Look upon God as your only true friend. Follow the dictates of your conscience. You should develop into ideal managers. When you bring credit to this Institute by your behaviour, that will be the best way of showing your gratitude to your Alma Mater. We seek nothing else from you. Earn for yourself a good name. Lead an ideal life. Thereby you will be pleasing your parents and the Institute where you have studied.

of Higher Learning, while inaugurating a four-day Management Development Programme. Prema is the weapon; Vichara is the wheel which must be revolved perpetually to get the light of Prema. Until Prema emerges, you have to be in the darkness of hatred, where even the slightest movement creates fear and suspicion.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

21. Discover the God within you

Date: 26 July 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! What appears to the eyes, whatever reaches the ears, whatever occurs in the mind, whatever moves the heart - all these are capable of deluding the person. The whole cosmos is an expression of the combination of Drisya (the seen) and Drashta (the seer). Brahman (the Absolute) is the Seer. Creation is a manifestation of the union of the Seer and the Seen.

In this land of Bharat

The ancient sacred relationship between Preceptor and pupil has vanished. The treasure of Truth and Self-discipline has been lost. Faith in God and devotion have declined. Assertion of freedom without responsibility has grown beyond bounds.

Wealth has become the sole aim, And righteousness has receded to the background. What else can I convey to you, Oh good and noble people assembled here? In this vast universe, wherein there are innumerable things which have to be learnt, what is the inner reason for the emphasis placed by Vedanta on the search for the meaning of the word 'I' used by everyone in common parlance? In fact, if man is able to grasp the meaning of the infinite Atma, he will be able to comprehend everything else in the world. "Yad vijananena sarvam vijnatham bhavathi" (Knowing That by which all else becomes known) is the declaration of the Sruti, the Veda. When man is able to understand the meaning of "I," he will be in a position to understand everything.

Enquiry into the Self leads to Liberation

"Janma karmacha mey divyam" (Birth and action are My Divine aspects). This is stated in the Gita. "Mamaiveshyati Arjuna" (You will attain Me, oh Arjuna!). "Aham thva sarvapapebhyo mokshayishyami ma suchaha!" (I will liberate you

from all sins, do not grieve!). In the Gita in a number of places you have references to "I" and "me." In the great scriptures and epics, you find the statement: "Swavimarso mokshah" (The enquiry into the Self leads to Liberation). All scriptures enjoin: "Know thyself." In the world, when anyone introduces himself, he declares: "I am Ranga", "I am Linga", "I am Rama", and so on. Even animals and birds use the term "I" in their own respective language to indicate what they are - whether a fox or a dog, a leopard or a tiger, an eagle or a parrot. "I" runs like a continuous thread in a garland in all beings, whatever their name or form. Hence, every man has to recognise the significance of this ubiquitous term "I". Unfortunately, man is becoming a prey to innumerable difficulties by identifying this "I" with body.

"I am not this" - as declared by Sruti

The Sruti (Veda) declares: "Aham ethath na" (I am not this). The Sruti teaches in this statement that the "I" is different from the form. The Sruti also teaches the profound truth about Sat-Chit- Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). In the statement, "I am not this," there are three distinct terms: "I," "am not," and "this." What is the "I"? On the authority of the Vedas, the "I" has been described under various names as Atma, Brahmam, Paramatma, Pratyagatma, and the like. It must be noted that this "I" is present in every man as Vaiswanara. In the form of Vaiswanara, the "I" principle digests the food taken by a person and, converting into blood, circulates it to every part of the body. Thus, in the Gita, Krishna declared: "Aham Vaiswanaro Bhutva praninam dehamasritah : Pranapana Samayuktah Pachamyannam chaturvidham" (Assuming the form of Vaiswanara, I enter the bodies of all living beings and through the life-breaths of Prana and Apana consume the four kinds of food). "I am present as Vaiswanara in every human being," declares the Lord. The significance of the term Paramatma is that He is the one who transcends the senses of action and perception, the mind, intellect, will and Ahamkara (the ego). The Paramatma Principle is envisaged as Brahmam (the Supreme Absolute). Brahmam is characterised by all-pervasiveness. The "I" principle is present in every human being. This omnipresent "I" is Brahmam. "I" is, therefore, a manifestation of Brahmam.

The 'seer' and the 'seen' are different

Then, there is the term "This." "This" implies and indicates every object in the phenomenal universe. "This is a mike," "This is a vessel," "This is a cloth," "This is a fan". "This" is used when referring to the sun, the moon, hill or dale. The inner meaning of the use of the term "This" is that it refers to everything that can be perceived. If a pointed reference is not made by the use of "This", the question will be asked to what one is referring when using a word like "cloth." By stating that "This is cloth," the precise object is indicated. Thus, in all objects, "This" is present as an all-pervading quality. "This" is Drisya (the Seen). "I" is Drashta (the Seer). It follows that the 'seer' is not the 'seen'. "I am not the body; that is my vesture. Even as I see other things, I am also seeing my body." This is how one should recognise the distinction between the seer and the seen. If this logic is understood, is it not a sign of ignorance to identify the body with the "I"? The body is like other perceived objects. Hence, to identify the body with one's Self is preposterous.

In the states of dream, deep sleep and Samadhi, one is not aware of the body. Hence, you are not the body. You are the drashta (the seer). In this vast creation, with its myriad forms and names, there is one basic principle sustaining all of them. It is from this basic principle, everything else has emerged. Nothing can be installed without a base. A variety of ornaments are made from gold. The ornaments may vary in form and name, but their basic substance is the same - gold. The gold remains even when the jewels are melted. The yellow metal itself remains unchanged. Likewise, for the world of perception (with its myriad names and forms), drisya (the seen) and drashta (the seer - the "I" principle) is the adhishtanam (basis). Hence, the commonly used term "I" (nenu, in Telugu) should not be interpreted in a superficial sense. "I am the Atma." It is only when man recognises this basic truth can he overcome the troubles he encounters in the phenomenal world, and experience real Ananda (bliss). All the myriad forms cannot be perceived without a perceiver. Therefore, the basic truth underlying all the forms is the existence of the perceiver (the "I"). The first sound that emanates from every man and from all beings is "I". "I" is anterior to Pranava (Om). But just because the "I" is in common use and is part of the daily experiences of

everyone, it tends to be treated as a cheap cliché. Because of this tendency, man becomes a prey to innumerable troubles and difficulties.

The actor and his role played on the stage

You must remember that the divinity in man is not divisible or separable. For instance, take the case of an actor called Rama who was appearing in the role of Hiranyakasipu. When he appeared on the stage, the stage director asked him: "Who are you?" In his garb as Hiranyakasipu, he was oblivious to his original name Rama. In stentorian language he answered: "Don't you know that I am the all-powerful, universally dreaded monarch of the world, Hiranyakasipu? Don't you know that I have mastered my senses and control everything in the world?" He answered boastfully in this manner.

The actor was Rama. The role he was playing was that of Hiranyakasipu. It was one and the same person who was playing two roles as Rama and as Hiranyakasipu. The jiva (individual) is in the body, the Divine is in the hridaya (heart). Both sport together and part from each other. There is a supreme puppeteer Who runs the puppet show Using the individuals as dolls.

All-pervading Divine is present in every man

The actor Rama in the role of Hiranyakasipu on the stage is recognised only as Hiranyakasipu by the audience. Similarly all human beings with their different names and forms are playing different roles on the stage of life. But the one indwelling principle in all of them is the Atma. Forgetting this basic truth about the inherent divinity of man, believing in the manifold forms and vestures worn by human beings, men are involving themselves in numerous difficulties. When you find out who is the person who has put on the garb for a certain role, you will discover the transient nature of the role. In every man, the all-pervading Divine is present. When one becomes aware of the Divine in him, he becomes the Divine itself "Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavathi." "Brahmavidyath apnothi Param" (Through the knowledge of the Brahman, one attains the Supreme). "Tharathi Atmavith sokam" (The knower of the Atma overcomes sorrow). "Neha nanasthi kinchit" (There is no multiplicity

here). Only the One abides. "Ekameva Adviteeyam" (There is only One and no second). These are the truths declared by the Vedas. Because man has ignored these Vedic truths, he is forgetting his true divine nature. Man should endeavour to know that by knowing which everything else is known. For instance, if the nature of clay is known, all about objects made from clay can be known. Clay is in a mudpot, but mud-pot is not in the clay. The pot is an artificial product. Likewise, what is drisya (perceived) is in the drashta (perceiver), but the perceiver is not in what is perceived.

Different names for "I" in different states

Recognise the fact you are the seer. This drashta (seer) is known by many names. In the waking state, he is the cogniser in all beings, and hence is called Virata Swaropa (The Cosmic Person). As he is engaged in a variety of activities, he is also termed Vyavaharika. On account of the attachment to every object in the world, he is also called Viswam. In the dream state also, the "I" is known by different names. He is known as the creator of dreams. As the mind alone functions in this state, he is known as Pratyagatma. Moreover, as he is seeking to attain a higher state by a process of enquiry and questioning, he is also known as Chitta-ekagratah (the one-pointed enquirer). In the deep sleep state, because of the potency of the Antahkarana (the Inner Motivator) the "I" is liable to comprehend everything and therefore is called Taijasa or Prajna. Although the universe is filled with innumerable objects, with different forms and names, the one thing that is present in all of them is the "I." The "I" principle is omnipresent.

Understand the inner significance of "I"

Aham is the primary sound that emanates from one and all equally. When you call anyone by his name - Rama, Krishna or Vijay - the response is: "I." This common expression emanating from everyone equally is the Atma. You cannot find any human being or animal without the "I"- consciousness. The expression "I" is used by a yogi or a bhogi (pleasure-lover), by a mendicant or a millionaire.

Every man has to understand the inner significance of the "I." He uses the expressions: "This is my body; this is my house," and so on. But who are you? Without knowing who you are, how have these relationships arisen? When you say, "My body," the body must be different from you. It follows that you are not the body. The body is drisya (an object of perception). The senses, the mind, the chitta and the Antahkarana are all the drisya (the seen). The "I" is the seer. This is the truth proclaimed by Vedanta.

What is Vedanta? It is not mouthing some abracadabra, using abstruse words without knowing their meaning. Awareness consists in recognising one's true self. Failure to recognise one's self is ignorance. Awareness is Brahman. Viewing the world as apart from Brahman is ignorance. To be awake in all the states of consciousness is "Awareness." This is the true meaning of Awareness. Vedanta has declared that constant integrated Awareness in all the states is realisation of the Self. The wisdom that "I am the Atma" should blossom in every human being. It is only when this wisdom dawns that man can have direct experience of the Divine. Therefore, everyone should try to manifest the divinity within him.

Desires have to be kept under control

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna called upon Arjuna to renounce all Dharmas and seek refuge in Him alone - "Sarvadharmam parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja." What is meant by Dharma? In the present context, Dharma refers to the specific quality of each object. Heat, for instance, is the Dharma of fire in a burning charcoal. Without heat, it is mere charcoal. Sweetness is the Dharma (natural quality) of sugar. Without sweetness, it ceases to be sugar. It becomes sand. Likewise, there is a Dharma (natural tendency) for man. What is it? Desire for things. It is natural for man to multiply his desires. "Sarvadharmam parityajya" means giving up all desires. This is also called Vairagya (detachment). Today man has lost his mental bearings because of the limitless growth of desires. As a result man behaves like an intoxicated person. Desires have to be kept under control. Animals are content to satisfy their hunger. But man's appetite for eating and enjoying is insatiable. Animals and birds do not indulge in exploitation or hoarding, while man revels in

them, forgetting his true human nature.

With regard to desires, it should be noted that besides excessive desires, man is prone to cherish wrong desires. Men today tend to forget their own parents to whom they owe everything in life. The man who forgets his obligations to his parents is a Kaliyuga rakshasa (a veritable demon). Persons who do not have this elementary human quality of gratitude to parents, how are they to remember God? This is the mark of the Kali Age. In the waking state, the "I"-consciousness is present in its fullness. In the dream state, it is present only to the extent of fifty percent. In the Sushupti state (of deep sleep) it is present in its complete subtle form. Men should not allow themselves to be carried away by the temporary roles they play in life like the actor in the role of Hiranyakasipu on the stage. They must realise their true human self. Egoism, pride, ignorance, slander and other bad qualities are the cause of misery for man.

Give up selfishness and self-centredness

Embodiments of the Divine Atma/ Recognise this essential truth: Give up your selfishness and self-centredness. How long can you be immersed in selfish concerns, forgetting other essential things? All things have to be given up sooner or later, including the jagat (world). The word "Jagat" itself means that which comes and goes. To regard these ephemeral things as permanent is a mark of ignorance.

You are the truth. The role assumed by you is not true. All the acting you do and all your experiences are not true. They are illusory. It is only when one can get rid of the delusion to regard the temporary as the permanent can one experience the Brahman. Embodiments of Divine Love/Today is Gurupurnima day. What is its inner significance? There is no guru other than the One Divine. As long as you consider yourself a mere human being, you may regard yourself as a disciple. But when you realise that you are the embodiment of the Atma you become your own Guru. In going after gurus and teachers, men are deluding themselves and forgetting Brahman. Seek refuge in yourself. Recognise your Reality. That is the right path. And that is the way to rever

the Guru.

Prahlada expostulated with his father, Hiranyakasipu: "You claim to have conquered all the three worlds and acquired mastery over the elements. But what is all your power worth when you have not mastered your senses?" This applies equally to the scientists and scholars of today. They have mastered many subjects, but have not learnt the real science of living. They are caught up in the pursuit of mundane objects. The truly great man is the one who has mastery over his senses and mind. A man with a good heart is more likely to be helpful to mankind than a hundred intelligent scholars. A scholar with no compassionate heart is a pitiable person.

Craze for foreign studies

Many of our young people are going abroad. What for? To beg (for jobs). Why not do the begging here itself? Can this be called higher education? What do they learn by going abroad? They return filled with bad qualities, bad thoughts and bad habits. Should thousands of rupees be spent for this purpose? It is better to live here as a man of character than go abroad to acquire undesirable qualities. Why make your parents spend tons of money only to foul your brain? Such persons, who bring a bad name to their parents, are better dead than alive. Such conduct is totally unworthy of those who call themselves Bharatiyas. If you describe yourself as Bharatiya, you must acquire Bhagya (all that is good) for the country. You must acquire the wealth of wisdom. All that you want to learn can be got in Bharat itself. There is nothing that cannot be had in Bharat. Bharat has been the provider for the rest of the world. What is bought from India at a low price is sent back in attractive package at a very high price. We are falling a prey to meretricious attractions.

Be proud of Bharat, the land of Avatars

Realise the greatness of Bharat. Remember that all avatars have incarnated in this sacred land. We are unable to appreciate the greatness of our country. We ought to be proud of our sacred motherland and lead a life in tune with its

greatness. Alas, it is not so. Indeed, foreigners are coming to Bharat to gather all that is glorious in our land while we are going after the soiled garments of the foreigners. How unbecoming is this of those who call themselves Bharatiyas! Every Bharatiya should regard himself as the embodiment of the Atma (the Spirit). Doubtless, people in all lands are equally embodiments of the Atma. But most of them are not able to realise this truth. Bharatiyas are able to recognise this truth because of the heritage of their great scriptures.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Strive to recognize the Truth. Enquire into the Vedic declarations: "You are the Atma," Embark on this self-enquiry. Put into practice what you have learnt. Only then you will understand your true nature. The term "Nenu" ("I" in Telugu) is not just a simple two-letter word. It has countless meanings. It does not refer to the transient body. The "I" is the Eternal Witness present in all beings. All worldly knowledge relates to the senses, which are transient. Hence such knowledge has no permanent value. The real Truth emanates from the heart. What is received from the external returns to the external. Man is not a product of the external world. He has come from the Divine. "You are Divine." Develop this conviction. Man means one who has faith. When you live upto your faith, it gets confirmed. It is because men do not act upto their beliefs that their faith is on the decline.

The goal of man is to merge in the Divine

Man is derived from the Divine, is sustained by the Divine and has to merge in the Divine. That is the goal of man. Man is not a petty being, nor is he a weakling or a destitute. He is the most powerful being on earth. You have to take up sadhana on the strength of this belief. (Swami sang a song of Purandaradasa in which he says: "How can I consider myself poor when the Lord Sri Hari, is within me? You are my all. I am in you and you are in me"). Bharat has had innumerable such great saints who had firm faith in God. They are not remembered today. At least from now on, develop sacred thoughts and lead noble lives. Esteem yourselves as the children of immortality. Divinise your thoughts, words and deeds. (Bhagavan sang a ballad in which He urged devotees to learn the truth about their Divine essence after coming to Sai). Treat the body as an instrument for realising the Divine, by engaging

yourself in all sacred actions. Contemplation on the Divine is the only way to achieve this. Continuous contemplation leads to God-realisation.

God and man can be reconciled and affiliated only on the basis of the sutra or principle of Karma. When man realises that God has no share in causing his suffering and that he is himself the sole cause, that no blame attaches to any other person, that he is the initiator as well as the beneficiary - the cause and the effect - of his acts, that he is free to shape his future, then he approaches God with a firmer step and a clearer mind.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22. Honour the plighted word

Date: 24 August 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! In the world today, the number of intellectuals who are engaged in breaking up the One into the many and fostering divisive forces is on the increase. On the other hand, the number of those who recognise unity in diversity is on the decline. In a world bristling with disunity, disorder and chaos, it is only the sense of unity underlying the multiplicity that can bring about peace. The world sorely needs today people imbued with this feeling.

The unity that subsumes the multiplicity will become apparent if an objective, pure and selfless enquiry is made. Historically, socially, biologically and scientifically it is evident that food and drink are common to all human beings. "Food may vary but hunger is the same for all" is a Telugu adage. A rich man may appease his hunger by a wide range of delicious dishes. A beggar satisfies his hunger by whatever he can get. Hunger, however, is common to a millionaire and a pauper.

Equally common are sleep and fear, for all human beings. A rich man may sleep in comfort on a luxurious couch. A beggar may sleep soundly on hard ground. The place of sleep may vary, but sleep itself is common to both. More than all these, the most important experiences that are common to all equally are birth and death. This is an index of the unifying principle for humanity. The millionaire does not descend from the sky. The pauper does not emerge from the bowels of the earth. Both are born from their mother's wombs. This process of birth is common to all human beings. Likewise, death comes to everyone, whether in a forest or a town, whether one is on the top of a mountain or the bottom of a valley, wherever one may be. Birth and death thus point to what is common in what is diverse.

Human existence is a journey

This principle of unity in diversity is clearly expounded in the Kathopanishad.

This Upanishad has compared the human body to a chariot and the Atma (Indwelling Spirit) to the charioteer and pointed out that human existence is a journey in this chariot. The body and the Spirit are integrally related to each other. But man in his ignorance has separated the one from the other and developed divisive tendencies. For all man's joys and sorrows, difficulties and enjoyments, his own thoughts are responsible. His happiness and distress are related to his actions. As he thinks, so he becomes. When the thoughts are misconceived, the results also go astray. Hence, the primary goal of man should be to develop right thinking.

Two forces are operating within man One is the demonic impulse. The other is the Divine impulse. Man, by misusing his God-given capacities (mind, status, wealth and position) and falling a prey to evil tendencies like desire, hatred, greed, etc., reduces himself to the level of the animal. The one who strives to make the right use of his endowments manifests his Divine nature.

The secret of real happiness

Unfortunately men today misuse the God-given gifts and thereby ruin themselves and cause harm to the world. The reason for this is the encouragement of divisive forces in the place of unity, and the growth of the acquisitive tendency. "Mamethi paramam dukham; na mamethi paramam sukham" (The feeling of 'mine' is the cause of great sorrow; absence of possessiveness is the cause of supreme happiness). Real happiness lies in giving up acquisitiveness, surrendering to God and experiencing Atma-ananda. (the bliss of the Spirit). Men should strive to achieve this kind of happiness by shedding narrow ideas, developing a broad outlook and realising the Divinity that sustains everything. Contemplation on the Divine is the key to all happiness and prosperity. Man should dedicate all thoughts and actions to God at all times and in all situations. "Whether one is immersed in yoga or physical enjoyment, in society or in solitude, if he devotes his mind to the Supreme, he experiences ecstasy alone" (Swami recited a stanza from Adi Sankara's "Bhaja Govindam") When one enquires into the Reality earnestly and objectively, he will realise that Divinity pervades everything. God is eternal and bliss incarnate. Among the myriad names of the Lord, the most

significant is Sat-Chit-Ananda. This means that the cosmos is the embodiment of Sat- Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss) and vice versa. They are inextricably united.

Divine is unified form of Sat-Chit-Ananda

Everything in the universe, from an ant to the Absolute, is a manifestation of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Sat is that which transcends the three categories of Time Past, Present, and Future. Chit refers to Paripurna-jnana (total awareness). Where these two are shining in unison, there is the Bliss Divine. Hence, Ananda (Bliss) is not something separate from the other two. They cannot be trisected. The One is radiant in the three as an integral expression. For instance, fire has three qualities: heat, light and redness. These are not separate from each other. Likewise, the Divine is the unified form of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Today men, who have read the scriptures or listened to the discourses of scholars, imagine that Sat-Chit-Ananda abides in some special place. This is the root cause of their ignorance of the Real. You are the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Everything around you is a manifestation of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Forgetting his own true nature and separating himself from the Divine, man becomes a prey to numerous troubles. A blind man knows that the world exists, but is unable to see it. Likewise, people believe from the teachings of the scriptures and of the learned ones that Sat-Chit-Ananda exists, but very few have direct experience of the Divine. They must strive for such direct experience. This is the primary goal of man. The Upanishads have declared that what does not exist cannot be made to exist. What exists cannot be wished away. Hence, man has to accept what exists and base his life on it. Sat-Chit-Ananda is the essential nature of everyone. Realisation of this calls for spiritual endeavour.

True devotion is recognition of God within

Most people today have no real idea of what is devotion and what is spiritual discipline. Different forms of worship, pilgrimages, meditation and the like are equated with devotion. These are not the indices of Bhakti (devotion). They are all actions which can confer some mental satisfaction. To realise your

inner nature, your efforts must be directed internally. As long as you think God is somewhere outside you, you cannot qualify for Divine Grace. The true mark of devotion is to recognise that God is within you and around you, everywhere. You must develop the faith that you are a manifestation of God. The scriptures call upon everyone to find out, "Who are you?" There is no other path than the path of dedication to God and complete surrender to the Will of the Divine. The emperor Bali was an exemplar of this doctrine of Saranagathi (complete surrender) to God. Despite the protestations of his preceptor Sukracharya, Bali felt that it was his duty to offer everything to the Lord and, acting against the advice of his guru, he made a gift of all he had to the Lord who had come in the form of Vamana (the young celibate). In making an offering to God there is no need to abide by the instructions of the preceptor. The Lord is the supreme preceptor manifest in every Divine form. Emperor Bali adhered to two resolutions. First: to give to anyone whatever he sought. Second: never to go back on the plighted word. Bali held that there was no greater sin than going back on one's word. He firmly declared that whatever might happen to him, even if it cost him his life, he would not go back on his promise. Thereby, Bali became a glorious upholder of truth. Who is a real emperor? Not the one who has conquered many countries and ruled over a vast empire. Once, Adi Sankara summoned his disciples and put them the question: "Who is a real conqueror?" The disciples gave various answers. Sankara told them that the real conqueror is the one who has subdued his mind. Of what use is it to accomplish many things without mastering the mind? This was precisely the question which Prahlada put to his father, Hiranyakasipu, who had acquired control over even the elements but had not acquired mastery over his senses.

Truth is the life-breath of the spoken word

Men should learn to honour their promises. They should never go back on their word. Truth is the lifebreath of the spoken word. Many ancient rulers were prepared even to give up their lives for honouring their plighted word. Emperor Bali was Truth incarnate. Always devoted to the well-being of his subjects, he constantly strove to lead them in the path of truth and to ensure prosperity in his realm. Bali's grandfather, Prahlada, had the same noble

qualities. Once there was an argument between Prahlada's son Virochana and the son of the sage Angirasa. Angirasa's son said that the debate should be conducted before a judge who should decide who was the winner in the argument. He said Virochana's father, Prahlada, should be the judge. Both went to Prahlada. They agreed that whoever lost in the debate should forfeit his life to the winner. Prahlada listened to the arguments impartially and declared that Virochana, his son, has lost and that Angirasa's son has won. Recognising Prahlada's total commitment to justice, without any concern for his relationship with his son, and admiring his sense of justice, Angirasa's son told Prahlada that he was giving back Virochana's life that had been forfeited to him.

This is an illustration of the supreme value attached to truth in ancient times. Truth was esteemed as the very form of God. It is the foremost duty of man to uphold truth, lead the good life and share his joys with others.

Bali's reaction to his preceptor's warning

Embodiments of Divine Love! Uphold truth even at the cost of your lives. That was what Emperor Bali did when he had to honour the word he had given to Vamana. His preceptor Sukracharya warned Bali that the dwarfish Brahman lad was none other than the Lord Vishnu Himself, and that it would be disastrous for Bali to make the girl; sought from him by Vamana. You must note how Bali reacted to the preceptor's warning. He declared that when the Lord of the universe had Himself come to him with an outstretched hand, seeking a gift, what greater good fortune could befall him (Bali) than to make the gift? "The palm that showers its grace on the whole world, the palm which can rid men of all their griefs and pains, which holds within it the entire process of creation and dissolution, the palm that holds out freedom from fear to every devotee, is now held out before me seeking a gift. My hand has been giving generously to all. How fortunate am I that it is now held over the palm of the Lord! The coming together of the two hands signifies the union of the individual soul with the Omni-Self. Guruji, this is a supremely auspicious occasion. Hence, I will not go back on my word, despite anyone's opposition." Emperor Bali was the embodiment of sacrifice. He was the repository of all

good and noble qualities. He explained the significance of the advent of the Avatar on earth "Out of love for the people, God descends to their level on earth. Together with his Divine Consciousness, He maintains His human consciousness." Bali declared that he had discovered that day this sacred truth.

Bali was supremely happy when the Lord sought a gift from him. Today people would turn the other way if the Divine sought anything from them. God needs nothing from this world. Krishna declared in the Gita: "There is nothing that I need from the three worlds. Nevertheless, I do my duty."

Avatars duty is to promote devotees' welfare

Why am I engaged in various activities? Why am I concerned so much about the devotees? Why have I established so many institutions? This is my duty (as Krishna declared to Arjuna). To promote the welfare of devotees is the duty the Lord has taken upon Himself. I am undertaking so many activities for their sake. But people do not recognise this fact. And owing to this failure, they are missing their good fortune. The reason is their selfishness. At least in the days ahead, they should try to experience happiness and prosperity by leading meaningful lives. They should sanctify their thoughts, because "as they think so they become." Bali's daughter Ratnavali developed a maternal feeling towards Vamana on seeing his beauteous form as a boy. Later when she recovered from a trance and found the foot of the Lord - -as Trivikrama - on Bali's head, she was seized with rage and rushed to kill Him. Bali warded her off. Ratnavali was reborn as Puthana, the ogress, during the Krishna avatar, when she first fondled Krishna and then sought to kill him. The moral from this episode is that one's thoughts have their consequences sooner or later.

Hence, it is essential to have good thoughts and do good deeds to escape from the cycle of birth and death. This was what Emperor Bali sought from the Lord.

Insane violence is prevalent at present

Everyone should be prepared to offer all his actions to God. The cosmos should be regarded as the all-pervading form of God. Only by realising the feeling of unity in diversity can the individual and the nation be redeemed. Today divisive tendencies are rampant. There is discord between man and man. The world is turning into a kind of mad-house. All nations seem to be afflicted with some kind of lunacy. To kill one man they are prepared to sacrifice a hundred lives. They have no regard for life. Men desire the fruits of good deeds, but do not perform good deeds. Men want to avoid the consequences of sinful actions, but are engaged in sinful deeds. How is this possible? It is not easy to escape from the consequences of one's actions. But there is no need for despair. If one earns even a grain of grace from the Divine, a mountain of sins can be reduced to ashes. If one feels genuinely penitent, seeks God's forgiveness and takes refuge in God, all one's actions will get transformed. But without heart-felt penitence, this will not happen.

Follow Emperor Bali's example

The glorious qualities of Emperor Bali are rightly praised. But how many are cultivating even a few of these qualities? Bali promised to his subjects that once a year he would appear before them. The Onam celebration is intended to rejoice in the appearance of Bali in their midst by observing this day as a festive occasion. Sweet dishes are prepared on this day. But it is not Bali who consumes them. What should be offered to him is the sweet feelings in your heart. That is the right way to celebrate Onam. You have to manifest your genuine love for Bali. You must practise the ideals for which he stood. Look at the many ways in which he served the Lord. He was utterly dedicated to the well-being of his people. Develop the quality of love. Eschew differences of caste, creed and nationality. Promote unity among all people. Regard all as the children of one God.

Having been born in the sacred land of Bharat, if you do not practise at least some of Bharat's ideals, you have no right to call yourselves as Bharatiyas. The greatest need today is for all people to cultivate unity. Only then will the nation be rid of its troubles and experience prosperity.

The people of Kerala are extremely fortunate in many respects. Despite various political changes, the Keralites have adhered to their cultural heritage and observed festivals like Onam with scrupulous regard for tradition. Devotion to God is deeply entrenched in their hearts. Even if some of them do not exhibit their devotion openly, for various reasons, it is imprinted in their hearts. It is because of this, they observe the sacred festival of Onam with enthusiasm and joy year after year. You can realise the depth of their devotion from this single fact. Among the score of States in India, the people of Kerala are the only people who celebrate their unique festival in Prashanthi Nilayam with boundless fervour and devotion. People from none of the other States have held any such celebration in Puttaparthi. The manner in which Keralites, with all their women and children, celebrate the festival here testifies to their devotion to Swami which transcends regional attachments. "Swami" is everything for them. The devotion to the Lord is expressed in Kerala today in many forms. Their enthusiasm and devotion are highly commendable. The Chief Justice of Kerala, Sri Jagannadha Rao, and the Transport Minister of Kerala have expressed the desire on behalf of the people of Kerala that Swami should visit their State and bless the people.

To confer joy on all of you on this sacred Onam day, I am giving this assurance that I shall be visiting Kerala very soon. I give you My promise that I shall share My joy with you and enjoy the bliss you feel in My company and shower My blessings to all the people of Kerala!

23. Krishna : incarnation of love

Date: 02 September 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

Love is God; the Cosmos is permeated with Love. Assuming the Love form, to save His beloved ones, Showering the nectarine stream of Love, Krishna came as the embodiment of Love for those yearning for Him.

Everything is born out of pure Love; All joy is derived from unalloyed Love; So are Truth, Sacrifice, Peace and Forbearance If Love is lacking, there can be no contentment. This is the path of Sai and the word of Truth. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Anuraga (affection) and Prema (Love) are mutually dependent and inseparable. When the mind is turned towards things of the world, it is called Anuraga (affection or attachment) and if it is turned towards God, it is called Prema (Love or devotion). Love is the fruit of love. Love is comparable only with love. Love can offer only love itself. Love cannot be described by poetry. It cannot be proved by the mind or the spoken word. Hence, the Vedas declared that it transcends the mind and speech. Love is priceless and indescribably precious. Its sweetness is unexcelled. The scriptures have described Amrit (nectar) as indescribably sweet. But Love is far sweeter than nectar.

Love can be got only through love

Love is a precious diamond which can be got only in the realm of love and nowhere else. The kingdom of Love is located in the heart, in a heart filled with love. Love can be experienced only in a mind flowing with love and a heart filled with love. The precious diamond of Love cannot be got through japa or meditation, through prescribed rituals or various sacred acts. These can only give mental satisfaction. Love can be got only through love. The different paths of devotion - santhi (peace), sakhya (friendship), vatsalya (material love), Anuraga (affection) and Madhura marga (sweetness) - are all based on love. The essence of all spiritual disciplines is contained in love. The greater a man's love for God, the greater the bliss which he experiences. When love declines in man, his joy also declines equally. The lover of God

sees God everywhere. Hence man's heart must be filled with the love of God. Love will not enter the heart of one who is filled with selfishness and self-conceit. Therefore, man should forget his petty self and concentrate his thoughts on God. Love of God makes a man oblivious to his own existence. Love becomes a form of intoxication. Love makes the devotee and God dance in ecstasy and becomes one with them. It induces self-forgetfulness. It generates an ecstasy in which everything is forgotten. Love cannot bear separation from the beloved. Today is the day when we celebrate the advent in human form of the Lord who came down to the earth from Gokula to instil love in human beings. The nature of divine love can be understood only when the Divine in human form teaches as man to man the nature of this love.

Love transforms man's animal nature

In ancient times, the sages performed rigorous penance in the forests, living among wild animals. With no weapons in their hands, they relied on their spirit of love to protect them. They performed their penance with love for all beings. Their love transformed even the wild animals which lived at peace with the sages. Love transformed even tigers into friendly beasts. Today because men have lost the feeling of love and are filled with selfishness and greed, they have become "tigers" (man-eaters). You read in the papers about the death of "Tigers" in Sri Lanka. Who are these "Tigers"? They are men who have turned into "Tigers." Today men are becoming man-eaters. In ancient times, tigers turned into creatures with love. It is to transform man's nature from the animal to the human that love has been serving as a powerful force. The hearts of men in the olden days were soft and loving. Although love inherently is soft and compassionate, in certain situations it assumes a stern form. This is because, even out of love one has sometimes to use punishment. The harsh words and the punishment are associated with love. When it rains, it is a downpour of drops of water. But sometimes the rain is accompanied by hailstones. The hailstones are hard, but they are only water in a condensed form. Likewise, softness or punishment are different expressions of love. Sometimes, even devotees use harsh words about the Divine. Kamsa, who regarded Balarama and Krishna as his mortal enemies, wanted by some means or other to get rid of them. Despite all his

stratagems, Kamsa could not get hold of them. On the pretext of performing a sacrifice, he sent Akrura to bring Balarama and Krishna to Mathura. Akrura was a kind hearted man, full of devotion to the Lord. Although he did not relish the prospect of going to Balarama and Krishna to bring them to Mathura, he could not disobey his master's orders. He reached Repalle and conveyed to Devaki and Vasudeva and Yasoda and Nanda, Kamsa's invitation to Balarama and Krishna and asked them to arrange for sending the two lads with him.

Gopikas' appeal to Krishna not to leave them

The gopikas got wind of this and immediately rushed to Yasoda's house and asked: "Who is this Krura (cruel fellow) who has come here? He has been named Akrura (a man without cruelty) by mistake, Are Balarama and Krishna to be entrusted to such a cruel person?" They decided to ignore Akrura and appeal directly to Balarama and Krishna not to go with Akrura. However, the main purpose of Balarama's and Krishna's advent was to destroy Kamsa. This task had to be accomplished. Therefore, they could not agree to the gopikas' appeal. They got into Akrura's chariot. All the gopikas surrounded the chariot. "Krishna will not give ear to our prayers not to go," they felt. So, they decided to appeal to him with all humility and intense love. Sobbing and praying from the depths of their hearts, they said: "We cannot bear separation from you even for a moment. Is it right for you to leave us like this? Is it a game of yours? Take pity on us, oh Lord! What is this farce of a yaga! It is Kamsa's roga (disease). Our sole prayer is this. Take us also with you, who have placed all our faith in you." (Swami sang the song of the gopikas). They prayed to Krishna, "Take pity on us, Lord!" Even as they were praying in this fashion, the chariot disappeared from the place by the Maya of the Lord.

Devotional love of gopikas is boundless

The hearts of the, gopikas were filled with love. Hence they saw only love everywhere. They felt that everything was throbbing with life and love. They ran to Brindavan, went to every plant and bush and flower and entreated them to tell whether Krishna was anywhere hiding amongst them, describing

the beautiful features of Krishna. (Swami sang the song in which the gopikas described Krishna).

For those immersed in love, everything appears vibrant, with life. The power of love. is boundless. The love-impulse is manifested in different, persons in different ways. Supreme devotees like the gopikas considered Sri Krishna as the very breath of their life and worshipped him. "You are everything for us," they declared.

Maternal love differs from devotional love

On the other hand, Yasoda's love for Krishna was that of the mother towards her child. After Krishna's departure, she waited for two days for news from Mathura. Note the difference between the devotional love of the gopikas and the maternal love of Yasoda. Yasoda looked upon Krishna as an ordinary child, the darling of her heart, who was innocent of the ways of the world. She was in anguish with the thought: "I cannot imagine what tortures the inhuman demons in Mathura have inflicted on Balarama and Krishna in the streets of Mathura. Oh Krishna! I cannot wait any longer for your return." (Swami sang a song full of feeling). There is a great difference between the love of devotees and the love of a mother. The intensity of the mother's feeling arises from the sense of maternal attachment. The devotees feelings are different. The gopikas' lament was: "Oh Krishna! Why don't you show your beautiful face and let us listen to the divine music of your flute?" The love of Radha, who was totally absorbed in the love of Krishna, was different. "Oh Krishna! Wherever you may be and whatever the form you may assume, bless me so that I may be one with you in that form." Radha yearned for this kind of union. But the love-principle in all these cases was one and the same. Love may be called by different names, but its expression is the same. The Brahman is the form of Love. It is suffused with love. One can have the experience of Unity with the Divine The Advaitic experience, only through love. Prema is a two-letter word in Telugu. But in this short and small word, Akshaya Jagat (the entire universe) is contained. But, alas, today there is so little awareness of the power of this love. Wrapped up in their trivial attachments, people are ignoring the power of this infinite, sacred and all-

encompassing Divine Love. Love is associated with immortality. It is nectar itself. There is nothing in the world comparable to it.

Love incarnates as Avatar to teach love

It is to teach mankind the truth about this Divine Love that Love itself incarnates on earth in human form. The scriptures declare that the Divine descends on earth to teach mankind the ways of Dharma, Justice and Truth. "Dharma samsthapa narthaya sambhavami yuge yuge". (I incarnate on earth from age to age to establish Dharma). This is Krishna's declaration in the Gita. Once people are filled with love, all Dharma, all justice and all truth will be installed in them. Without love, righteousness will be a mechanical ritual. What kind of righteousness can there be without love? What sort of justice can there be? It will be a lifeless corpse. Love is life. Without love, no man can exist for a moment. Hence, Love is the form of the Supreme Lord. It is to preach the doctrine of love that the Krishna Avatar and other divine incarnations made their advent on earth. According to the place, time and circumstances prevailing then, different names were given to the Lord. These differences are like the different figures made from sugar to appeal to the different preferences of children. These figures may be those of a peacock, or a dog or a fox and so on. But what is common to all of them is sugar.

Love is the basis for all Avatars

Likewise, the avatars in the four yugas incarnated to teach what were appropriate for that age' Dhyana (meditation) for the Krita yuga, Tapas (penance) for the Treta yuga, Upasana (worship) for the Dwapara yuga and Namasmarana (chanting the name of the Lord) for the Kali yuga. Common to all these is love of the Lord. In the same way what is common to the nine forms of worship (Sravanam, Keerthanam, etc.) is love. In all of them the chanting of the Lord's name with devotion is common.

Although there are many types of spiritual practices, they are of no avail without love. This love must be unchanging in all circumstances. The faith of the eldest of the Pandava brothers, Dharmaja, was of this steadfast type.

Whether as an exile in the forest or as an emperor, whether during the disrobing of Draupadi in Duryodhana's court or when Abhimanyu was killed in battle, or when the slaughter of the Upapandavas (by Aswathama) occurred, in all situations, his faith in Krishna never wavered. He firmly believed that Krishna was his sole saviour. At all times he was contemplating only the name of Krishna. Whether as an emperor ruling over a vast realm or when he lost everything in the game of dice, he was neither elated with success nor depressed by defeat. The primary trait of the Pandavas was to cherish such unflinching faith in the Divine. Unfortunately, in this age of Kali, it is characteristic of the small-minded people to praise God in times of prosperity and traduce God in periods of adversity. People must cultivate the feeling of love which will enable them to look upon prosperity and adversity with equal serenity. People must develop the conviction that it is the same Lord who is the indweller in all beings. Just as the body is an organic whole and any ailment affecting any part of the body is felt as a pain by the whole organism, people should feel that anyone's suffering is their own suffering and any relief done to the other is a help done to themselves. Differences between persons will cease when there is a recognition of the common Divinity present in everyone. The foremost purpose of the Divine as Avatar is to teach this truth to humanity.

Difficulties bring out human values in man

However, despite all the teachings, mankind is prone to go astray from time to time. Men should shed their pettiness and develop broad-mindedness by the cultivation of love. Human life is beset with ups and downs, joys and sorrows. These experiences are intended to serve as guideposts for man. Life would be stale if there were no trials and difficulties. It is these difficulties which bring out the human values in man. Because of the manner in which Harischandra faced all the trials in his life, his story has become a glorious chapter in human annals. Prahlada stands out equally as a great devotee who stood up to all the persecutions of his father. Today, however, people want instant salvation, without the slightest effort or sacrifice on their part. But if such instant salvation is achieved, it will vanish also in a trice. Only that which is got by hard effort will yield lasting benefit. People pray to Swami to rid

them of all difficulties and losses. This is a totally wrong kind of prayer. Difficulties must be welcomed and must be overcome. By overcoming trouble the Divine must be experienced. You cannot get the juice of the sugarcane without crushing it. You cannot enhance the brilliance of a diamond without cutting it and making many facets. The body is like a sugarcane stalk. It is only when it goes through various difficulties that you can experience the sweet bliss of Self-realisation. That sweetness is Divinity itself. Where does that sweetness reside in man? It is in every limb and organ.

How can we develop love for the Lord?

All have faith in the power of love. But how is this love to be fostered and developed? This question may arise in the minds of many. When people ask, "How can we develop our love for the Lord?" the answer is: "There is only one way. When you put into practice the love in which you have faith, that love will grow." Because you do not practise what you profess, your faith gets weakened. A plant will grow only when it is watered regularly. When you have planted the seed of love, you can make it grow only by watering it with love every day. The tree of love will grow and yield the fruits of love. Men today do not perform those acts which will promote love. When you wish to develop love for the Lord, you must continually practise loving devotion to the Lord.

Sahasa and Sadhana

The mind is allowed to wander and engage itself in external exercises like japa and puja. Here is a story to illustrate this: King Vikramaditya was once going round his country incognito to find out what the people were doing. He noticed an old Brahmin performing a yajna (tire-sacrifice). Apparently as the yajna had been performed over many years a huge mound of ash had come up near the sacrificial fireplace. Vikramaditya asked the old Brahmin what he was doing. He replied: "I have been performing a yajna for the past 60 years. This mound you see is the accumulated ash from the yajna. Though I have been ceaselessly performing this yajna, I have not yet had a vision of the Yajna-Purusha (the Lord of the Sacrifice)." Vikramaditya was deeply moved by the anguished utterance of the old man. He sat in meditation himself. He

performed a severe penance. Despite his long penance, he could not have a vision of the Yajna-Purusha. He felt: "Of what use is all the penance I have performed? If I cannot get the grace of the Lord, what use is there in living?" Thinking in this way, he took out the sword from inside his cloak and decided to end his purposeless existence if he could not have a vision of the Lord. Addressing mentally the Yajna-Purusha, he said: "If you will not appear before me, I am offering my life to you." As he drew his sword to offer his head, the Yajna-Purusha appeared before him and seized the sword from the king's hand. He said to the king: "Oh Vikramaditya! This is a sahasa (an act of recklessness) and not a spiritual offering. Where am I? As Vaiswanara, I am dwelling in all beings as the digestive power. Is it a sign of spirituality for you to seek, on the one hand, externally a vision of the Divine who is within you, and on the other, to put an end to your life, because you do not have a vision of the Divine that is in you? This kind of act savours of the Rajasic tendency. A real devotee should not resort to such desperate actions. To realise me, what you need to practise is love and not reckless courage. Whatever you see, whatever you do, be conscious of the allpervading Divine. Only then work will be transformed into worship. What this old Brahmin has been doing for sixty years is to mumble the words of the mantra without understanding their meaning. He did not invite my presence with all his heart and soul. I present myself to one who prays for me with all his heart and with harmony in thought, word and deed. If one cannot offer such dedicated worship, he should adhere to my injunctions without hesitation."

Implicit obedience merits its own reward

Once there was a debate between Prahlada's son Virochana and Angirasa's son Sudhira in which Prahlada himself acted as judge and gave the verdict in favour of Sudhira. When Virochana had to forfeit his life as the loser in the debate, Sudhira gave him back his life, in his admiration for the supreme sense of justice of Prahlada and the readiness of Virochana to give up his life according to the conditions of the debate. A similar incident occurred in the life of Parasurama, son of the sage Jamadagni. One day when Jamadagni's wife went to the river to fetch water, the king Vichitravirya was going in his chariot. She was a pure-hearted lady. She just looked up to see who was

going in the chariot. She was struck for a moment by the beauty of Vichitravirya. When she returned to the hermitage, Jamadagni ordered Parasurama to cut off the head of his mother. Parasurama did not flinch for a moment. Carrying out his father's command implicitly, he cut off the head of his mother. Jamadagni then asked his son: "What boon do you want? You have implicitly carried out my command." Parasurama said: "Dear father! Restore the life of my mother." The sage gave back her life. Implicit obedience merits its own reward. This is the inner secret of how the Divine works.

Esoteric meaning of incidents in Krishna's life

In the life of Krishna, there are many incidents which have an esoteric meaning, but which have been misunderstood and misinterpreted by scholars and commentators. Such misunderstandings have been caused by stories that Krishna had eight wives and that he dallied with 16,000 gopikas.

In the spinal column, there are six chakras, of which two are important - the Sahasrarachakra in the brain and the Hridayachakra in the middle of the spinal column. The Hridayachakra is a flower-like chakra with eight petals. The eight petals are symbols of the eight parts of the earth, whose master is the Lord Himself. The esoteric meaning of this is that God is the Lord of the eight-petalled lotus of the heart in man. The Lord of the heart is described as Madhava. "Ma" means Lakshmi or Maya or Prakriti. "Dhava" means husband. God is the Lord of Lakshmi, or Maya or Prakriti. Krishna is thus the Lord of the eight-petalled lotus of the heart. Sahasrara is the topmost chakra of the spinal column. It is pictured as a thousand-petalled flower. In each petal, God dwells with all his sixteen kalas (potencies). Altogether, there are 16,000 potencies, which represent the gopikas. "Go" means sound, speech, and life breath. God is the Lord of this thousand-petalled Sahasrara.

Spiritual significance of Bhagavatha episodes

The inner significance of the reference to 16,000 gopikas should be understood in this manner.. Few attempt to understand the spiritual

significance of many episodes in the Bhagavatham. Young men may easily be misled by references to Krishna's eight wives or his association with 16,000 gopikas. The real meaning is that each one should awaken the sixteen thousand potencies within him. This can be done only by implicit obedience to the commands of God. The Kundalini-sakti, which starts at the Mooladhara (the root of the spinal column), ascends to the Sahasrara to attain its fullness. The life-breath for this power is Prema (Divine Love). This love has to be generated at the Mooladhara and taken upto the Sahasrara. In this age of science and technology, students should try to understand the inner meaning of the concept of Ardhanareeswara (the combination of the male and female principles in Easwara). No scientist has attempted to explain this concept. Consider the similarity between the ancient sages concept of Ardhanareeswara and the ideas of modern science regarding the atom. There are many such ancient concepts which have contemporary validity Every object is composed of atoms and in every atom (Anu in Sanskrit) there is a proton and an electron. The electron is described in Sanskrit as the Vebhaga (the left half) of the atom and the proton is described as the Dhanabhaga (the right half) of the atom. The Vebhaga represents the female principle and the Dhanabhaga the male principle. The coming together of these two constitutes the material base of each object. This process of coming together is represented in the concept of Ardhanareeswara - the coming together of the female and male aspects. Ardhanareeswara means half-feminine and half-masculine. The electron represents the feminine aspect. The proton represents the male aspect. The atom is formed when they come together. Every object in the universe is made up of atoms. Hence, the ancients regarded the entire cosmos as an embodiment of the Ardhanareeswara principle.

Customs are based on scientific truths

Similarly, many of the ancient Bharatiya customs and practices are based on profound scientific truths. For instance, during festive occasions, green leaves and plants are displayed at the entrance of houses. The scientific principle behind this custom is noteworthy. During festive occasions, large groups of people used to gather in houses and they exhale carbon dioxide which fouls

the air. The green leaves and plants serve to absorb the carbon dioxide and give out oxygen, which is essential for the health of the people. As the houses in old days had only small windows, this practice helped to ensure fuller supply of oxygen. Could the display of green leaves be called a superstition? Similarly, the use of cow-dung for cleaning floors in houses has a scientific basis. The cow-dung has antiseptic properties and its use in cleaning floors served to eliminate germs. When cowdung water was sprinkled in front of houses, all disease-causing germs were destroyed. Such practices helped to promote the health and longevity of people. Let any scientist today experiment with the use of cow-dung. Unfortunately, the scientists seem to be more concerned to conduct experiments on remote objects than with those lying at their doorstep.

The properties of turmeric and kumkum

The ancient seers established practices which were designed to make life more healthy and joyous. For instance, in the past women were accustomed to making use of turmeric for cleansing the body. Turmeric was also used for adorning the threshold. This turmeric also has antiseptic properties. The use of turmeric served to destroy germs entering the houses. People today wish to substitute yellow paint for turmeric! The paint may look attractive, but has no antiseptic properties.

Thus, the ancients always had in view the inner purpose of each small practice which they prescribed. The use of kumkum and turmeric by women was based on hygienic principles. (Swami recited a song composed by Him in His early years in which He had lamented the replacement of kumkum and turmeric by face powder). The application of turmeric helped to prevent the growth of hair on the face. By the giving up of these practices, diseases like Oesonophilia and asthma have spread among women. In the olden days, people valued health as the key to happiness.

If we study the Indian cultural tradition in this manner, we will find that its emphasis was always on what was beneficial and good for the individual and society. The Vice-Chancellor (in his address earlier) made a reference to the

doctrine of surrender. Surrender does not mean that the devotee and God are different. True surrender implies the sense of oneness with God. "Without you I cannot exist," should be the attitude of the devotee. This was the feeling which the gopikas expressed about Krishna. (Swami sang a song in which the gopikas express their love for Krishna and how they cannot bear separation from him). The love of the gopikas was pure and sacred. This is exemplified by the story of Suguna, who was so completely lost in thinking about Krishna that she was not conscious of her fingers being burnt while she was getting her lamp lighted in Yasoda's house. When Yasoda asked her what had happened to her, she said that she was seeing the charming face of Krishna in the flame of the lamp.

Devotion should flow from the heart, as was the case with the gopikas. Much of what passes for devotion nowadays is artificial. Develop pure and sincere devotion and sanctify your lives.

24. Vinayaka worship ranks first

Date: 12 September 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ganesh Chaturthi

One may have mastered the Vedantic texts, and perfected the art of expounding them; If his mind is not well filled with good qualities, his scholarship is like the crop grown on barren soil; If you cannot comprehend the Swami in front of you, and wander in search of God all over; You are like the man who went in quest of ghee, while having butter in his hand.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Prakriti (the phenomenal world) is what is directly apparent to man and which deludes him. It is an aggregation of objects. In its natural state, every object is mutable. Such impermanent objects are incapable of giving enduring Ananda (bliss). The object which gives you pleasure is transient. The individual who experiences that pleasure is also impermanent. How can an impermanent being derive lasting bliss from a perishable object? It is, therefore, necessary at the outset to forget the impermanent so that one may be qualified to experience the eternal and unchanging Reality.

The presence of three gunas in the cosmos

The entire cosmos is a manifestation of the three gunas: Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. They have been identified with the three colours: white, red and black. It is impossible for man to conceive of a world without these three qualities. It is not possible to find in Nature a situation in which these three qualities are present in equal measure. When the Satwic quality is predominant, the Rajasic and Tamasic qualities are quiescent. When the Rajasic quality is dominant, the other two are subdued. When the Tamasic quality is dominant, Satwa and Rajas are subdued. It is seldom that all the three qualities are equally balanced and in harmony with each other. Likewise in the human body, these three qualities are present in every limb. It will be

clear that these three qualities are manifest in the physical universe, in the human body and in the human mind. The Srutis (sacred texts) have also declared that the universe is made up of these three qualities.

With reference to man, there is the view that there are three states: Prakriti, Avidya and Maya. In course of time, the term Prakriti was applied to man's body. In some parts of the country, people are in the habit of referring to individuals as Prakriti. In North Canara, people say: "My Prakriti is not well," when they want to convey that their body is not well. Prakriti refers to that which is subject to all kinds of Vikriti (distortions and changes). This Prakriti is the basis of all creation. The second term is Avidya. Avidya means that which is the opposite of knowledge. Avidya makes one treat what is unreal as real and what is real as unreal and thereby deludes him and makes him pursue sensual pleasures. This Avidya follows Prakriti in the world as a shadow. Because of this Avidya, man is unable to recognise his true nature. Avidya is the cause of man's inability to comprehend his true form. As long as Avidya remains, man can never be free from troubles.

Combined power of Prakriti, Maya and Avidya

The third term is Maya. Maya is the delusion which makes one imagine the presence of that which is not present. As long as this state of bhrama (delusion) remains, it is impossible to comprehend the Brahman (the Omni-Self). What is this delusion? Here, for instance, is a rope. But in the twilight of dusk, one mistakes it for a snake. When a lamp is brought, it is found that there is only the rope. The snake was never there and the rope was always there. Only the momentary delusion caused the appearance of the snake and the absence of the rope. This is called Maya. It makes one imagine the presence of what is not there and not perceive what is really there. To believe in the existence of that which is nonexistent and in the non-existence of that which is the real truth is the effect of Maya. It is the combined power of these three - Prakriti, Avidya and Maya which accounts for man forgetting his true nature.

Man often imagines that he has accomplished many things. Presuming that

all that he achieves are entirely due to his own efforts and abilities, he deludes himself and forges his own bonds. He forgets the truth that there is higher power which is the driving force for action as well as the author of the results thereof. This is the primary nature of bhrama (delusion).

Prayer to Vinayaka gets rid of delusion

To get rid of this delusion and enable man to comprehend his inherent divine nature, the ancient sages taught a prayer. This prayer is the one that is addressed to Vinayaka. Who is Vinayaka? In the sloka beginning with the words, "Suklambaradharam Vishnum," only the form of the deity is described. But there is another inner meaning for the name Vinayaka. "Suklambaradharam " means one who is clad in white. "Vishnum" means, He is all-pervading. "Sasivarnam" means His complexion is grey like that of ash. "Chathurbhujam" means He has four arms. "Prasannavadanam" means, He has always a pleasing mien. "Sarvavighnopasanthaye" means, for the removal of all obstacles, "Dhyayeth," meditate (on Him). Vinayaka is the deity who removes all bad qualities, instils good qualities and confers peace on the devotee who meditates on Him. This is how the theistic believers interpret this prayer. The atheists have made a parody of it by construing the prayer as a description of a donkey, which carried white clothes on its back, is ash-grey in colour, wanders everywhere, has four legs, and has a bland look.

There is no master above Vinayaka

The Vinayaka-principle, however, has only one meaning, which is relevant to everyone irrespective of whether he is a believer or a non-believer. "Vinayaka" means that He is totally master of Himself. He has no master above Him, He does not depend' on anyone. He is also called Ganapathi. This term means He is the lord of the ganas - a class of divine entities. This term also means that He is the master of the intellect and discriminating power in man. He possesses great intelligence and knowledge. Such knowledge issues from a pure and sacred mind. This knowledge leads to Vijnana (wisdom). Because He is the master of Buddhi (intelligence) and Siddhi (wisdom or realisation), He is described as the Lord of Buddhi and Siddhi. Buddhi and

Siddhi are referred to as the consorts of Vinayaka. The mouse is the vehicle of Vinayaka. What is the inner significance of the mouse? The mouse is considered as the embodiment of the sense of smell. The mouse is a symbol of the attachment to worldly vasanas (tendencies). It is well known that if you want to catch a mouse you place a strong-smelling edible inside the mouse-trap. The mouse also symbolises the darkness of night. The mouse can see well in the dark. As Vinayaka's vehicle, the mouse signifies an object that leads man from darkness to light. The Vinayaka-principle, thus, means that which removes all the bad qualities, bad practices and bad thoughts in men and inculcates good qualities, good conduct and good thoughts.

Another name for Vinayaka is "Vighneswara." Easwara is one who is endowed with every conceivable form of wealth: riches, knowledge, health, bliss, beauty, etc. Vighneswara is the promoter of all these forms of wealth and removes all obstacles to their enjoyment. He confers all these forms of wealth on those who worship him. Vinayaka is described as "Prathama Vandana" (the first deity who should be worshipped). As everyone in the world desires wealth and prosperity, everyone offers the first place for worship to Vighneswara. It is only when the inner meanings of various aspects relating to the Divine are understood that worship can be offered to the Divine meaningfully. Unfortunately, as only the superficial and worldly meanings of the scriptural texts are expounded these days, men's devotion is growing weaker continually. It is essential for everyone to understand the inner meaning of the Vedantic texts.

Faith in God should never waver

One may have immense faith in God. But from time to time, the power of Maya may undermine this faith. In Mahabharata even staunch devotees of Krishna like Dharmaja and Arjuna displayed hesitancy in acting upto the advice of Krishna and had to be taught their duty through Bhishma and Draupadi respectively.

Faith in God should never waver. In no circumstance should anyone go against the injunctions of the Divine. Whatever worship one may offer,

however intensely one may meditate, if one transgresses the commands of the Lord, these devotional practices become futile. The reason is that the Divine has no selfish objective or aim. It is out of small-minded selfish motives that people act against the sacred commands of the Lord. Even small acts of transgression may in due course assume dangerous proportions. Like the clouds in the sky which are brought together or dispersed by the winds, the passage of time brings about for man the union or separation of associates and happiness or sorrow. Time is the form of God. It should not be wasted. It is to understand such sacred truths that festivals like Ganesa Chaturthi are celebrated.

Ganesa's intelligence

How did Vinayaka acquire siddhi (supreme powers)? His parents held a contest for their two sons - Ganesa and Subrahmanya. They said they will offer their grace in the form of a fruit to whoever came first in circumambulating the universe. The younger son Subrahmanya, set out immediately on his peacock to go round the universe. On seeing Subrahmanya approaching his parents, almost at the end of his trip, Vinayaka, who had been quietly sitting all the while, got up and went round the parents and sat down. Parvathi observed that Subrahmanya, who had taken so much trouble to go round the universe, should be declared the winner. Parameswara asked Vigneswara what was the inner significance of his going round the parents. Ganesa replied: "The entire universe is permeated by both of you. The entire creation is a manifestation of the Siva-Sakti form. It is an act of delusion to attempt to go round this phenomenal universe. To go round both of you is the true circumambulation of cosmos." Then Parvathi exclaimed: "Yours is the fruit." Ganesa became the Lord of ganas (the Divine hosts). Easwara was so much impressed with the supreme intelligence of Vinayaka that he told him: "All those who wish to worship Me, will offer their worship first to you." Such was the grace showered on Vinayaka. What is the reason? Ganesa's faith in the Lord and His omnipresence. The right path for all people is to develop faith in God and lead godly lives. Vighneswara is also regarded as gaja thelivi (one endowed with the wisdom of the elephant). The elephant is noted for its supreme

intelligence. It is also known for its absolute loyalty to its master. It is ready to sacrifice its life itself for the sake of its master. The direct proof of this is Sai Githa (Bhagavan's elephant). Ordinarily hundreds of cars will be passing on the road. Sai Githa will take no notice of them. But when Swami's car happens to pass that way, it will instinctively notice it. It will rush to the road raising its familiar cry. What love for Swami! It will be no exaggeration if faith is equated with the elephant. When an elephant moves among the bushes, its path turns into a regular passage for all animals. It is thus a pace-setter for all animals. Vinayaka is a leader for all deities. Faith in Vinayaka should be developed as the exemplar for all deities and he should be worshipped as the embodiment of Divinity

25. The Avatar of Love

Date: 18 October 1991 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

Love is God. The Cosmos is permeated with love. Assuming the form of Love, to promote love among mankind, Showering the nectarine stream of love, Love has incarnated as Sri Devi, Sai Devi, the Sai Mother. EMBODIMENTS of Divine is love! Love is one without a second. When this love is directed towards the world, it is called Anuraga (attachment) and when directed towards God it is called Prema (devotional love). Love is the fruit of love. Love is comparable to love alone. It is beyond expression in words or verse. Such sacred love can only be matched by love. It is sweeter than nectar, which has been described by the scriptures as the sweetest thing. Love is the fruit that grows on the tree of the Divine Name. The Love-principle proclaims the oneness of Name and Form. Brahman is the form of Love. Brahman is suffused with Love. Love matching love is the law. When one is strongly established in love, he qualifies for mergence with the Divine to become one with the Divine. The Atmic principle makes its advent on the Bhuloka (the earth) from the Go-loka (celestial abode) to propagate the Love-principle among humanity. Hence, everyone has to learn the true nature of love. The greater one's love for God, the greater the bliss which one experiences. The bliss one experiences shrinks in proportion to the contraction in one's love. When man aspires for enduring bliss, he has to cultivate one-pointed love for God.

Bliss is the fruit of Divine Love

Bliss arises from Love. There can be no joy in a dry, barren heart. Divine Love alone can make a dry heart fit for the sprouting of the plant of joy. That was why the gopikas appealed to Krishna' Oh Krishna, play on your magic flute, So that its divine music may drench Our barren hearts with the nectarine flow, That will make the saplings of love sprout in them. Let the sun of Krishna shine over Our hearts covered with dark clouds. Let love make a garland out of The scattered flowers in our hearts. Love is the vital force. Love is the governing principle. It is only when the precious diamond of love is shining in

one's heart that the sacred and divine thoughts about God will arise in his mind. This diamond of Love can be got only from the Shop of Love, in the Street of Love, in the Kingdom of Love.

Divine love is without any self-interest

Fill your hearts with love. Love based on self-interest cannot be called divine love. That love alone is sacred which is based on complete obliviousness to one's self and is solely concerned with the yearning for God. In days of yore, the sages lived in the forests amidst wild animals and performed penance. How were they able to live in peace amongst these animals? Because the sages were filled with divine love, they could extend that love to the wild beasts also and transform them into creatures of love. The sages had no lethal weapons with them. They used only the weapon of love, which could transform even the nature of the wild animals. Alas! Today even human beings are moving about like cruel beasts. Man is becoming a wild beast in this age of Kali. Compassion and love are vanishing. Ostentatious living is the order of the day. The manifestation of true love is totally absent. Everyone may claim that he loves God. Hardly one in a million is a true lover of God. True love should remain unaffected by weal or woe. To deride God during times of adversity and to praise God in conditions of prosperity cannot be called true love of God. Divine love is that which does not flinch in the face of difficulties and does not gloat over prosperity and remains equally serene in all circumstances. Life is full of vicissitudes, which are transient. Only Divine love is immutable and permanent.

A love-filled world

Hence, man should become the very embodiment of love. When he is filled with love, the entire world will be transformed into a love-filled world. The world will get divinised. The cosmos is permeated by the Divine. But this can be realised only when man is filled with love. As long as he is full of hatred, the world will appear as a hate-filled world. It is only when love is developed that the dualism of good and evil can be transcended and the joy of oneness with the Divine experienced.

How is this Love-principle to be developed in man? Anil Kumar (in his speech earlier) observed that fire emerges when one stick is rubbed against another. Does the mere coming together of two sticks produce the fire? No. It should be recognised that fire is already latent in both the sticks. Fire emerges from the rubbing of the sticks because fire is latent in them already. The fire is latent and not perceptible. The fire hidden in the wood is made manifest by sadhana (the process of rubbing the sticks). What do these sticks symbolise? The human body is like the sticks. In this body, which is inert, the fire of jnana is present in subtle form throughout. If you take the two palms, there is fire latent in each of them. When you rub the two palms, heat is generated. The heat comes from the latent heat in the two palms and not from any external source. "By the process of cognition, truth emerges. By the process of churning buttermilk, butter is got." (Swami quoted the poem from Anil Kumar's speech). Wherefrom did the butter come? The butter was originally in milk but it could be got only after the milk had been converted to curd and the curd was churned. The butter which was latent in the milk gets separated from the buttermilk, and will thereafter, not mix with it.

Keep the temple of body pure and sacred

Likewise, in the human body, a divine power pervades every part of the body, which, after the experience of a Sakshatkara (vision of the Divine) will not be attached to the body. It has been said: "The body is like a temple for the Dehi (indwelling eternal Spirit)." Hence, it should be put to proper use. You must develop good qualities. You must become a treasure-house of good conduct. According to the state of purity of the temple, the power of the Divine will be manifested. Every man enters a temple on seeing the temple tower and not after seeing the deity inside. The temple reminds man of the deity within. A doctor reminds you of illness. Likewise, a lawyer reminds you of litigation. In the same manner, when you look at your body you must remember God. It was to remind people in the villages to think of God that the ancients built temples which towered above all other buildings. The temple tower was the first thing the villagers saw when they woke up in the morning. The sight of the temple spire immediately aroused in them spontaneous feelings of adoration. It must be recognised that it was not a crazy feeling which inspired

the ancients to build huge temples at great expense. These multi-storeyed temple towers were built so that they might arouse constantly sacred thoughts about God in the minds of the people. Today, people's minds are filled with all kinds of wrong ideas and they are wasting their lives in meaningless mundane pursuits. Hence, the primary need is to develop love among the people. This love should not be concerned with the physical or the mundane. Many kinds of relationships between one person and another arise in the course of one's life. They are not born with him. Before one's birth, who was the mother and who was the child? Before marriage, who was the husband and who was the wife? The relationship of husband and wife occurs only after the marriage. It is only after one's birth that the relationship of mother and child occurs. These relationships are intermediate occurrences in one's life, which appear and pass away.

Only the Divine is present with you, in you and around you before your birth and all through your life's journey. Bear in mind this basic and permanent truth. Birth and death relate only to the body and not to the Atma. Temples may go up or decay, but God is unchanging and imperishable. The eternal Divine is dwelling in the temple of the human body.

Worldly relationships have no permanence

All relationships are incidental and temporary. Hence, each one should perform his duties. As long as one is involved in worldly life, the relationships of mother and son, husband and wife, brother and sister, and the like, have to be recognised as natural phenomena. All these relationships have no permanence. Separation is inevitable sooner or later. But between you and God, there can be no separation at any time. Even if you forget God, God will not forget you. Therefore, you have to develop faith in God and cultivate love. Krishna declared in the Gita that when men forget their Dharma (Righteousness) and unrighteousness becomes rampant, the Divine makes His advent. The purpose of the advent is to promote Satwic qualities, eradicate evil tendencies, propagate love and to install in the hearts of humanity the Divine who is the very embodiment of Dharma. God's advent on earth is for spreading Divine love which is the fountain-source of Dharma. There is no gulf

between love and love. Love is one. Krishna declared: "I incarnate to propagate this love." The various expounders of Bhagavad Gita, however, have given different interpretations to the message of the Gita and created confusion.

Sthree symbolises the three gunas in women

The world is a manifestation of the three gunas, (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas). The Divine is worshipped as "Devi". The term "Devi" refers to the feminine aspect. The term Sthree is used to denote a woman. There are three syllables in this term' Sa, Tha and Ra. "Sa" symbolises the Satwic aspect of a person. The Satwic quality is the very first quality that manifests in man. The feeling of love develops from the mother. It is impossible to describe the nature of maternal love. The mother converts her own blood into love and gives it as milk to feed the child. Therefore, the first quality represented by "Sa", is the Satwic quality. The second syllable is "Tha". This does not represent thathva or thamas. Anil Kumar described eating and sleeping as characteristics of the Tamasic quality. This is not so. In the term Sthree, the syllable "tha" represents bashfulness, modesty, self-esteem and such traits which are characteristics of women. Shyness is a predominant trait in women. They attach great value to their honour and reputation. It is because of these sacred qualities that their Tamasic aspect is significant. The common view regarding the Tamasic quality does not apply to them. The third quality, symbolised by the syllable "Ra", is Rajas. Such qualities as sacrifice and highmindedness in women reflect the Rajasic aspect of their nature. When necessary, women will be prepared even to sacrifice their lives to safeguard their honour. Without regard to the difficulties and troubles they may encounter, women are ready to make any sacrifice to protect their honour and self-respect. When the Tamasic elements attempt to subvert the Satwic qualities, they are ready to combat and vanquish them.

Inner meaning of Dasara festival

The term "Devi" thus represents the Divine power which has taken the Rajasic form to suppress the forces of evil and protect the Satwic qualities. When the

forces of injustice, immorality and untruth have grown to monstrous proportions and are indulging in a death-dance, when selfishness and self-interest are rampant, when men have lost all sense of kindness and compassion, the Atmic principle, assuming the form of Sakti, taking on the Rajasic quality, seeks to destroy the evil elements. This is the inner meaning of the Dasara festival. When the Divine Goddess is in dreadful rage to destroy the wicked elements, She assumes a fearful form. To pacify the dreaded Goddess, Her feminine children offer worship to Her with red kumkum (sacred red powder). The Goddess, seeing the blood-red kumkum at her feet, feels assured that the wicked have been vanquished and assumes Her benign form. The inner meaning of the worship of Devi with red kumkum is that thereby the Goddess is appeased. During the ten days of the Dasara, the Rakshasas (demons) in the form of wicked qualities have been routed. Rakshasas do not mean demonic beings. The bad qualities in men are the demons. Arrogance is a demon. Bad thoughts are demons. Ravana is depicted as the king of Rakshasas. He is said to have ten heads. He was not born with ten heads. Who is this Ravana and what are his ten heads? Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Moha (delusion), Lobha (Greed), Mada (pride), Matsarya (Envy), Manas (the mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (Will) and Ahamkara (the Ego) - these ten constitute the ten heads. Ravana is one who has these ten qualities.

Rajasic and Satwic qualities of Rama

Each one can decide for himself whether he is a Ravana or a Rama according to his qualities. Rama is the destroyer of the bad qualities. When engaged in this act of destruction of bad qualities, He manifests His Rajo-guna. But His Rajasic quality is associated with His Satwic quality. Even in cutting off Ravana's ten heads, Rama showed His love. This was the only way Ravana could be redeemed.

When the Lord metes out a punishment, it may appear harsh. But what appears externally as Rajasic is in reality Satwic. In a hailstorm, along with rain there will be hailstones. But both the rain and hailstones contain water. Likewise, there is Satwic quality even in the Lord's Rajasic actions. Similarly

there may be Satwic quality even in Tamasic actions. These depend on the time, place and the circumstances in which the Lord acts. Butter can be split with a finger. But a powerful hammer is needed to break a piece of iron. The Lord deals with Satwic persons in a Satwic way. He applies the Rajasic weapon against Rajasic persons. "Love is God, Love pervades the Cosmos" People worship the Lord as Roudrakara, attributing dreaded forms and qualities to the Divine. This is not proper. The Divine has only one attribute' the embodiment of Love. It has been said: "Love is God. Love pervades the Cosmos." Hence, one should not view the world from a worldly point of view. It should be viewed through the eyes of love. Embodiments of Divine Love! All the festivals of Bharatiyas have been designed to promote Divine love among the people. It is to confer such love on the people that the Lord incarnates on earth. He Himself demonstrates how love should be expressed. He showers His love and teaches everyone how to love. Hence, experience this love and joy in your life and live in peace.

26. Light the lamp within

Date: 05 November 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Diwali

Peace has vanished
Truth has become rare
Arms have become a menace
Selfishness is at the root of all these calamities
This is the word of Truth - the word of Sai.

Sathya, Dharma, Ahimsa, Prema and Santhi
Are the five life-breaths of Man in this world.
Love is the foremost of these five.
Install love in your hearts.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love!

Bharatiya culture is boundless and unexcelled. Every Bharatiya festival is saturated with profound spiritual significance. These festivals did not originate to provide occasions for merriment, feasting and ostentation. When you examine them from the spiritual or scientific point of view you will find that they are full of sacred meaning. For the Bharatiya every object is fit for worship. All objects, whether they are visible to the eye, audible to the ear, arising in the mind or inspiring the heart, are pregnant with the Truth of the Spirit. Every object, ranging from a piece of stone to a precious diamond, from a blade of grass to the celestial Parijatha tree, from an ant to an elephant, from a sinner to a saint, conveyed to the Bharatiya the truth of the Divine.

Bharatiya concept of social justice is unique

The great Mahavakyas (profound aphorisms) like

"Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" (Verily, everything here is Divine),
"Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath" (The entire cosmos is permeated by the Divine),
"Isavasyam idam sarvam" (All this is dwelt in by the Lord)

were based on this concept and proclaimed to the world. The Bharatiya concept of social justice has no parallel in any other country in the world. Ignoramuses who are not aware of these profound truths tend to revile Bharatiyas. They refer mockingly to Bharatiyas as worshippers of stones and trees, of forests and mountains.

Bharatiyas are animated by the magnificent conception that love is not confined to living beings but is present in every object, animate or inanimate. It is natural for human beings to see the many in the One. But Bharatiya culture comprehends the divine concept of unity in diversity. Every festival is intended to awaken in man the consciousness of his inherent divinity. The Bharatiya scriptures call upon men stridently:

"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached."

They exhort men to get rid of their ignorance, realise their primal divinity and strive for the realisation of that consciousness.

Dipavali ushers in the light of prosperity

From the very name of today's festival - Dipavali it can be seen that the Divine effulgence is manifest in it. Dipavali means "the array of lights."

"Thamasoma jyotirgamaya" (Lead me from darkness to light) is an

Upanishadic prayer.

This means that where there is darkness light is needed. What is this darkness? Sorrow is one form of darkness. Peacelessness is another. Loss is another. Disappointment is one form of darkness. Misery is yet another. Lack of enthusiasm is another. All these are different forms of darkness. To get rid of the darkness of sorrow, you have to light the lamp of happiness. To dispel the darkness of disease, you have to install the light of health. To get over the darkness of losses and failures, you have to usher in the light of prosperity.

These apparently opposing conditions are not totally separate from each other. They are interrelated. You see in the world the prevalence of heat and cold. They appear to be opposed to each other. But nevertheless, according to the prevailing situation, both are useful for man. During the cold weather, we welcome heat. In the summer, coolness is desired. Hence, it is clear that both heat and cold are aids to man and not harmful to him. Likewise, joy and sorrow, loss and gain are helpful to man and not inimical. If there is no sorrow, one cannot know the value of happiness. If there is no darkness, the value of light cannot be appreciated. Hence, if the greatness of light is to be realised, darkness is necessary. It is rightly said: "Pleasure is an interval between two pains." The truth about sorrow and joy will be realised when they are considered as equal from the spiritual point of view. From the practical worldly point of view, the festivals have one aspect. From the spiritual viewpoint they carry a different significance. But there is a common purport in both. Only the ignorant will give diverse meanings to them and miss the essential significance.

Origin of Dipavali from scientific point

Looking at the Dipavali festival from the scientific point of view, it should be noted that at one time in the distant past, our ancestors lived in the Arctic region (the polar region). In this region, darkness prevailed for six months. The sun appears on *Mesha Sankranthi* day (the sun entering the Aries sign of

the Zodiac). The sun sets in this region on *Tula Sankranthi* day (when the sun enters Libra). In the movement between these two signs, there is an interval of six months. After the sun sets in Libra, the dark half-year starts. Today is *Chathurdasi* (the fourteenth day) in the month of *Karthik*. It is *Amavasya* (New Moon day). The month is called *Kaumudi*. The people in the polar region used to start lighting their lamps from this day. The lighting of the lamp is not without other significance. As they would be in darkness for a long period, they described the lamp that was lit as *Nithya jyothi* (the perennial light).

Different events that caused the celebration

Five thousand years ago there were some planets going round the earth. Some of these planets disappear from time to time. There was one planet called Naraka which used to go round the earth. In the course of their orbits, sometimes the moon and the Naraka planet used to get close to each other. At one time, the Naraka planet appeared to be approaching close to the earth. The inhabitants of the earth were filled with dread of the approaching catastrophe. They prayed to the Lord for averting the imminent disaster and saving them. At that stage, Sri Krishna used His *Prajna* (extraordinary knowledge) to destroy that planet. This extraordinary knowledge of Krishna was termed *Sathya*. That is to say, Krishna destroyed the Naraka planet in association with Sathya. The denizens of the world started celebrating that day with lighting of lamps and adoring the Lord who saved them. That day of the Lord's triumph was celebrated as a festive occasion.

It was on Dipavali day that Sri Rama's coronation took place after his victorious return to Ayodhya from Lanka vanquishing Ravana and his Rakshasa brood. For a long period Ayodhya had been plunged in darkness when Rama was in exile in the forest. In the absence of the effulgent Rama, Ayodhya was a city of darkness. The forests were filled with light. The return of Rama was hailed by the people of Ayodhya as the return of divine effulgence and hence they celebrated the event by the lighting of lamps everywhere. Nor is that all. Today's festival is marked by other significant features. This is the day on which the Lord in His Vamana incarnation sent the Emperor Bali to the Nether World after He had got the promise of three feet

of ground (measured by the Lord's foot) from Bali. Vamana (as the incarnation of Vishnu) used the gift of three feet of land to put down the *Ahamkara* (egoism) of Bali. Bali is described as *Chakravarthi* (sovereign lord).

Dipavali signifies suppression of the ego

In every human being there is a sovereign who presides over all his qualities. That sovereign is the Ego. This sovereign Ego - Ahamkara Chakravarthi suppresses all the good qualities in man. Ahamkara has another meaning. It is the very form of Aham the "I". The egoist is one who identifies the body with his Self. But you are not the body. The body is only an instrument. It is an agglomeration of material substances. How can this inert body be equated with the Self? It is the association of consciousness with the body that it is able to undertake various activities. Dipavali is a festival which is designed to celebrate the suppression of the Ego by the Higher Self. Man is plunged in the darkness of ignorance and has lost the power of discrimination between the permanent and the evanescent. When the darkness of ignorance caused by Ahamkara (the ego-feeling) is dispelled by the light of Divine knowledge, the effulgence of the Divine is experienced. Dipavali is also the day on which Emperor Vikramaditya ascended the throne.

It is for these various reasons that Dipavali has been observed by Bharatiyas, young and old, as a day of great rejoicing.

However, the lights lit on Dipavali day remove only the external darkness and not the darkness within man. Even when the sun shines brightly, his light cannot dispel the inner darkness. For this purpose, you have to learn a lesson from the external light. For instance, if you want to light a lamp, you need a container. You have to fill it with oil and place a wick in it. You need a matchbox to light the wick. Only when you have all the four accessories can you light the lamp. The lamp cannot be lit if any one of them is lacking. This lamp dispels the external darkness. As the wick burns, the oil is consumed. When the oil is exhausted the flame goes out. Saint Ramadas compared human life to a lighted lamp and declared in one of his songs that when the oil of life ebbs away, neither the wick nor the light will follow the departed.

Man has to dispel the darkness of ignorance

If the darkness of ignorance is to be dispelled, man needs a container, oil, wick and a matchbox corresponding to what an external lamp needs. For man, the heart is the container. The mind is the wick. Love is the oil and vairagya (sacrifice) is the matchbox. When you have these four, Atma-jyothi (the Divine flame of the Spirit) shines effulgently. When the light of the Spirit is aflame, the Light of Knowledge appears and dispels the darkness of ignorance. The flame of a lamp has two qualities. One is to banish darkness. The other is a continuous upward movement. Even when a lamp is kept in a pit, the flame moves upwards. The sages have therefore adored the lamp of wisdom as the flame that leads men to higher states. Hence, the effulgence of light should not be treated as a trivial phenomenon. Along with lighting the external lamps, men should strive to light the lamps within them. The human estate should be governed by sacred qualities. This calls for the triple purity of body, mind and speech - *Trikarana Suddhi* (purity of the three instruments).

Where there is guilt, there is fear

The first requisite is purity of the heart. This should be accompanied by purity in speech. And one's actions should be in harmony with the purity of the heart and the speech. Where there is this triple purity, there will be no fear. The man who practises this threefold purity needs no other protector. Where there is guilt, there is fear. Where fear prevails, security is sought. There are many persons in the world who seek security. What for? Because they are filled with fear. The fear arises out of a sense of guilt. The innocent man has no need to fear and hence has no need for protection.

Man today is haunted by fear all the time because he is full of guilty actions. These have to be got rid of. Then he will be free from fear. Moreover, he must ensure that he does not commit the same faults again. Only the Divine perennial light of spirituality can redeem man from a life of anxieties, miseries, frustrations and insatiable desires. The spiritual light will be a divine

lighthouse for him. For everyone caught up in the coils of worldly life, this divine light is essential. This light is like a compass which reveals the course you should take. All the pleasures, positions and riches of the world will not confer on you real peace and security. Only faith in the Self can ensure this. Man today has faith in everything except the Spirit. It is because it has lost its faith in the Spirit that Bharat today is racked by so many troubles. Here is an illustration of how this lack of faith may be seen. Today is called Sunday. Who determined this name? Did it announce its name when the day dawned? No. You derive the name by looking at the calendar. You also note that it is the 5th day of the month. Who drew up the calendar? One who is versed in astronomy and astrology. You have full faith in the calculations of the astrologer. Wherefrom did he get his knowledge of astrology? All this knowledge has originated from the *Manu Dharma Sastra* (the Code of Manu). People today have no faith in the Code of Manu but place their faith in something derived from his scripture. The source is forgotten, but what has come in between is prized. This is the state of things today.

Abuse of Purusharthas

There are four *Purusharthas* (the goals of human life): *Dharma* (Righteousness), *Artha* (material welfare), *Kama* (desire) and *Moksha* (Liberation). Ignoring the first and the last goals, men are immersed in the pursuit of the two middle goals. The paradox of human existence today is that life is without a head or feet but has only the trunk in the middle. What meaning can there be for such a life?

This shows that man is not realising what is most important in life. All the scriptures have declared:

"Tath Twain Asi" (That thou art),
"Aham Brahmasmi" (I am the Brahman),
"Prajnanam Brahma" (Awareness is the Supreme).

While these profound truths have been proclaimed by the Vedas, people are not relying on them. Though people talk about selfconfidence, they have really no confidence in the Self (the Spirit). It is essential for every man to have *Atma visvasam* (confidence in the Self).

Self-confidence is the foundation for the mansion of Life,
with Self-satisfaction as the walls,
Self-sacrifice as the roof and,
Self-realisation as the dwelling.

The Self (Spirit) is at the root of everything. Without confidence in the Self, life becomes utterly meaningless. Life is infinitely precious. It should not be wasted in mere eating and sleeping. It should be lived for realising the Supreme. Man is endowed with a body for realizing the Divine. He must lead an ideal life. Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a dream, realise it. Life is a game, play it. Awareness means total understanding. All other forms of knowledge are only partial and incomplete. Awareness calls for a total comprehension of the nature of the cosmos. This is called *Chith*. Who can recognise Chith? Only *Sath* can recognise Chith. Sath means that which is permanent - Being, which is unchanging and immutable. When Sath is comprehended, Chith can be properly understood. The unified form of Sath and Chith is *Ananda* (Bliss).

Difference between Santhosha and Ananda

Today people seek Ananda (Bliss). But what kind of "Bliss" do they want? Is it momentary or enduring bliss? Can momentary "bliss" be equated with Ananda? Bliss is that state of joy which is lasting and unchanging. The joy that is experienced from moment to moment can only be termed *Santhosham* - temporary happiness. It is to be regarded as "some-thosham" (a little joy). To seek it is a *dosham* (error). Revelling in the transient and the momentary,

men lose themselves. Ananda is bliss. Santhosham is pleasure. There is a wide gulf between "Bliss" and "pleasure." The latter is temporary. When one is hungry, he takes some chapatis and feels satisfied and happy. But again hunger appears after a few hours. Hence, this happiness comes and goes like birth and death. This is not the kind of happiness man should seek. He must aspire for the Ananda that is everlasting. This Ananda has been described in many ways as *Nithyananda* (perennial joy), *Paramananda* (Supreme bliss), *Brahmananda* (Divine bliss), and so on. In all these states, what is ever-present is Sath-Chith-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Are Sath, Chith and Ananda separate entities? No. They are one.

Being is Awareness and Awareness is Bliss.

The same state (of bliss) indicates the three attributes. For instance, if you consider the example of *Agni* (Fire), it has three qualities: Redness, light and heat. These three are not separate from each other. They are the combined qualities of fire. Likewise, in the state of Atmananda (Spiritual bliss), all three - Sath, Chith and Ananda - are present. It is three-in-one.

The manifestation of Divinity

In man, all the three gunas - Satwa, Rajas and Tamas - are present. The three qualities manifest their nature in different situations. When there is a manifestation of what is permanent, the Satwic quality is to the fore. When one's fullness is manifested, Chit comes to the fore. When both these states come together, divinity is manifested in the form of Bliss. Sath may be compared to sugar, whose quality is sweetness. Water is tasteless substance. But when the sugar is dissolved in water, you have neither sugar, nor water, but syrup. Likewise, when Sath and Chit combine, you have Ananda, which is not pure Sath or Chith. Hence, man should regard himself as the embodiment of bliss. Man perpetually seeks bliss in one context or another in passing an examination with distinction, thereafter securing a good job, and then getting

married, and getting a son, and so on. After realising all these, he encounters some trouble or other. Life becomes a perpetual pursuit of happiness, which all the time eludes him.

Man's goal is one, but paths are many

Man will experience real happiness only when he has recognised his true nature. As long as he identifies himself with particular physical form and name, happiness will elude him. Man constantly refers to "my body", "my mind", etc., but does not enquire into the nature of the 'I' that claims this ownership. Men have to learn to put these questions and seek the answers for them. It should not be imagined that there is only one answer for a question. There may be different answers. Teachers in evaluating answer papers should have regard for the possibility of different answers to the same question. This applies equally to life. The goal is one, but the paths are many. Concentrate on the goal. For instance, Swami is in Puttaparthi. Devotees use many different kinds of transport to come here planes, trains, buses, bicycles and by foot. Whatever the mode of transport, the goal is one. No one is entitled to claim that his mode of conveyance is the only right means.

Thus, to realise the Divine, there are many paths. Of the nine forms of devotion - *Sravanam*, *Kirthanam*, etc., any method can be followed. But people must note that the basic truth underlying all the different forms is only one. This was why the Upanishads called upon all the aspirants to realise the One in the many (Unity in diversity). The desires, the methods, the doctrines and practices may vary. But the fruit is one and the same.

Light the lamp that is ever shining within

The inner significance of Dipavali is to lead man from darkness to light. Man is perpetually plunged in darkness. Every time he is enveloped in darkness, he should light a lamp that is ever shining within him. Carry that lamp wherever you go. It will light your path wherever you may be.

Hence, the first requisite is the practice of the *Karma Marga* (Path of Action).

For instance, if you have to travel ten miles in the dark and have a hurricane lantern with you, you cannot keep the lantern in one place and expect it to light your path all the way. If you carry the lantern with you, it will serve you all the way, even though it can illumine only ten yards at a time. Make the divine effulgence within you accompany you all the time by faith in its illumination. **Students in particular should bear in mind the main purpose of life and prepare themselves to lead ideal lives. Shedding selfishness, they must learn to serve others by cultivating Divine love. Then they will experience the Bliss Divine, which they can share with others.**

27. Lead ideal lives

Date: 22 November 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 10

STUDENTS! Preceptors! Educationists! From times of yore, Bharat has been promoting peace and security in the world by its spiritual message. The quintessence of that message is contained in the pronouncement: "Let all the peoples of the world be happy." The culture of Bharat is based on the eternal truth, which is unaffected by time and place, unchanged by circumstances, untainted by historical changes and untouched by natural calamities. The ancient Vedic texts proclaimed the dictum: "Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara" (Speak the truth. Live righteously). Students should be the guardians of Truth and Righteousness. They need not be the protectors of the nation. Truth and Righteousness will protect the nation. "Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshitah" (Righteousness protects him who protects it). We are able to see the Divine aspects of man only in the mirror of education. Education is the primary means of comprehending and controlling manifestations in creation. What students have to acquire are human values. Together with the acquisition of every conceivable knowledge and the pursuit of scientific studies, they should cultivate human values. They need good qualities even more than intellectual abilities. Of what use is a mountain of knowledge without good qualities?

Virtue lends beauty to man

It is virtue that lends beauty to man. "Knowledge is a secret treasure for man. It is the source of fame and peace and security. It is the teacher of teachers. Such knowledge is like a kinsman when one travels abroad. Knowledge is an additional eye for man. Kings honour knowledge and not wealth. A man without knowledge is a mere animal." (Bhagavan recited a Sanskrit stanza and translated its purport).

It is not enough if one becomes a scientist. To equate science with all knowledge is a travesty of truth. Together with knowledge, the student should acquire humility, egolessness, and selflessness as essential ingredients. Education should be pursued for the development of one's personality and

cultivation of the heart. To make one a full man it is necessary to instil in him faith in the Antahkarana (Indwelling Motivator). Education today seems to be concerned with artificial things rather than the understanding of the Chaitanya (inner consciousness). Discarding the idea that education is for acquiring degrees, Students should engage themselves in social service And promote the progress of the nation.

Education: then and now

In olden times, in the hermitage of the preceptor, when the disciples completed their term of education, the preceptor used to offer them wise and wholesome counsel such as: "Truth should not be neglected. Duty should not be ignored. Speak the Truth. Follow Dharma. Revere your father and mother as God. Revere your teacher as God." Today there is no evidence of unity among the people. Hatred and jealousy are growing. The reason for the loss of peace in the world is the disappearance of fear of sin and love of God. Without wisdom and good conduct, can there be right education? The ancient system of education has gone and a misdirected system has taken its place. Consequently, truth and righteousness have assumed bizarre forms. Sacred Nature has turned away from the people. Qualities like compassion and goodness have given place to their opposites because fear of sin, love of God and social morality have declined. Students! Remember that every atom in Bharat is sacred. You owe a great deal to Bharat. You must strive to serve the Motherland, earn her grace, and share the joy derived therefrom with others. Devotion and faith are essential for man. Divinity is present in invisible subtle form in the human being. Only the student who manifests this divinity within him is worth the name. Good qualities, truth,

Devotion, discipline and duty Are what students should Learn through education.

Students should develop sense control

Discipline, which should be the primary characteristic of a student, is seldom in evidence today. Students seem to think that an easy and physically

comfortable life is conducive to happiness. This is not so. True happiness can come only from Indriya nigraham (control of the senses) and from Atmanandam (the bliss of the Spirit). The first requisite is for students to develop sense control. The Goddess of Knowledge, Saraswati, confers her blessings only on the student who practises self-control.

Unfortunately, educational institutions, which ought to be Temples of the Goddess of Learning (Saraswathi), have become today abodes of the Goddess of Wealth (Lakshmi). Money has to be used for getting admissions, for manipulating marks, for securing a pass, and so on. This process of commercialisation of education has led to the flight of the Goddess of Knowledge from the educational institutions.

Students! Bharat lost its sacredness from the moment the sale of food, the sale of knowledge and the sale of medical services started in the country. Education should not be a saleable commodity. It is high time teachers took a pledge to impart education to students without regard to emoluments or rigid timetables. Education should be for life and not for earning a living. Students who are interested in education only for the purpose of getting a job and earning an income, should remember that "Money comes and goes. Morality comes and grows." Education should aim at making a man a full human being. It should go further and make him an ideal human being. This was the aim of the ancient culture of Bharat. It laid stress on a system of Samskaras (refined practices). But today Samsara (family life) has taken the place of Samskara. Students should bear in mind that what will keep company with them all through life are their samskaras (good actions) and not the domestic exercises. Your fortunes in life depend upon your good actions. Developing your thoughts on right lines, I wish that students going out from this University should serve as ideal examples in the world, promoting peace and prosperity wherever they go. Bear in mind four important sayings: Sow an action, reap a tendency, Sow a tendency, reap a habit, Sow a habit, reap a character, Sow a character and reap a destiny. You are the maker of your destiny. You can do or undo it.

Bhakti is an unchanging attitude, a desirable bent of the mind, standing steady through joy and grief, for the Ananda comes through Atma Jnana, the Bhakta is the true witness.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

28. How to win the Lord's grace

Date: 23 November 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 66

Oh good and noble people assembled here! May you be filled with mutual affection and unalloyed Joy! May you be compassionate towards all those who are afflicted! May you lead righteous family lives and be an example to all; May you be ever earnest in the pursuit of Dharma and Jnana! This is my benediction for all of you. What more can I tell you? EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! All the animate beings in the cosmos emerge from the Divine, are sustained by the Divine and merge in the Divine. The Divine is the root cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution.

Man is born out of desire, lives on desire and passes out by desire. Man's life is based on desires or thoughts (sankalpa). As are his thoughts, so are his actions. As are the actions, so are the fruits thereof. The fruits determine the goal. It follows that man's destiny is determined by his thoughts.

Embodiments of Divine love! Cultivate sublime thoughts, lead ideal lives, realise the highest fruits and strive to reach the supreme goal.

Man should possess Divine Consciousness

Man's life is based upon his qualities and character. A true man is one who acts according to his Atma-Dharma (the integrity of the Spirit) and not according to the impulses of his senses. Atma- Dharma is the true Dharma of man. Acting according to the dictates of the senses is the code of the animals. Man should elevate from the animal to the Overlord of the animal nature (Pasupathi or Siva). What man should have is Iswara-bhava (the Divine Consciousness) and not the Prakriti-bhava (instinctive nature). It should also be recognised that all Nature is an embodiment of the Divine. Creation is the primary symbol of the Divine Consciousness. It is called Prakriti (Nature). Every man who is a product of Nature should have the consciousness of his divinity and proclaim the Divine basis of creation. Human existence is supremely sacred. It is precious, divine and should be lived befittingly. The

divinity in man, who is part of creation, is not something distinct. To demonstrate the inherent divinity of man, Avatars (Divine incarnations) appear from time to time.

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! God does not exist as something apart. All of you are embodiments of the Divine. "Iswaras-sarvabhoothanam", "Isavasyam idam sarvam" "Vasudevassarvam" (The Divine dwells in all beings, All this is dwelt in by the Lord, Everything is Divine). Men are forgetting these profound, sacred declarations and are wasting their lives in the pursuit of petty mundane pleasures.

Spirituality exists in every aspect of life

It is supreme folly to consider that the spiritual is divorced from the physical and that the material world has no connection with spirituality. Spirituality runs like an undercurrent through every aspect of life social, political, economic and moral. This basic truth has been forgotten today. People have faith in the transient, the ephemeral and the illusory. Everything is constantly changing in the world. This ever-changing world is based upon the unchanging Divine. It is only when the Adhara (Divine base) is understood can one derive bliss from the experience of what is based on it. In whatever action men do and whatever paths they pursue, they should be conscious of the Divine. Men today seek power, position and pelf, but not virtues. Power and position, bereft of good qualities, are of no value. The foremost need of man is virtue. It is in this spirit that man should remember God. Prakriti (Nature) is not to be despised. When Nature is viewed from the egoistic point of view, it assumes a distorted form. When it is regarded from the spiritual point of view, it presents a sacred aspect. The differences in the role of Nature arise out of men's attitudes. Everything has emerged from Truth. Truth is the form of the Divine. Everything is based on Truth. "Sathyanasthi Paro Dharmah" (There is no greater Dharma than Truth). Everything has been created out of Truth And all creation is embedded in Truth. There is no place where Truth does not shine. Realise that this is the Supreme Truth.

Bharatiyas have forgotten their Divine heritage

Goodness is the most important thing for anyone. Whatever be one's wealth, his knowledge or position, the most essential quality is character. Even if one possesses many good qualities, it is only devotion to the Divine that makes them blossom forth. Bharatiyas in the past have had the reputation of having recognised this truth. What greater misfortune can there be than that Bharatiyas should forget their Divine cultural heritage? In the supremely sacred land of Bharat, forbearance is the highest wealth. Of all forms of rituals, the most severe one is adherence to truth and integrity. What can be prized greater than the feeling that 'This is my Motherland?' Discarding the belief that honour is greater than life itself, men are going after exotic practices, hugging strange concepts of freedom and are forgetting the real source of their strength even like the elephant that is not aware of its massive strength. Not relying on one's own strength, to depend on the strength of others is precarious. The entire culture of Bharat has been based on reliance on one's own inherent strength and confidence in one's self. Self-confidence is at the root of all achievement. It is because it has lost its selfconfidence that India is a prey to all kinds of troubles. Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! When you are embodiments of the Divine, it is a sign of weakness for you to lose confidence in yourselves. Recognise your true nature. Then your powers and talents will manifest themselves and be a source of joy to you. Self-confidence is essential because it is the source of all prosperity and accomplishment.

Bharatiyas' duty is to serve others

The world today is plunged in strife, disorder and discontent. What is your duty at this juncture? Have you the power to banish this disorder? Do not give room for the idea that one man by himself is powerless to combat this situation. If every Indian goes forward with self-confidence to face this crisis, the country can be rescued from disorder in no time. Because of lack of selfconfidence, men are unable to go forward.

Above all, everyone must take a pledge to serve others. Everyone is of Divine origin. If one cannot be loving towards others, he ceases to be human.

Everyone should act on this basis, display love towards all and lead an ideal life. Man should not regard himself as a weak and imbecile creature.

What, then, is our duty today? The Government is seeking to provide various amenities in the villages. But, it is one thing to proclaim one's intentions and quite another to fulfil them. Speaking is easy, acting is difficult. Neither the authorities nor the leaders appear to be concerned about the state of the villages. The villagers are also apathetic. Bharat is not lacking in resources. It is well endowed in every respect. Had it not been so, it would not have attracted so many invaders from outside.

Today Bharatiyas themselves are considering the country as poor and belittling its status: This by itself is not a great danger. The greater danger is the development of Avisvasam (a mood of cynicism). It is only when the pessimism among the people is transformed to a robust optimism will the country go forward. The retrograde movement has to be reversed. Material prosperity, which is transient, is not very important. Real and lasting wealth lies in good qualities and morality. It is this form of wealth that should be acquired.

New hospital at Puttaparthi for poor villagers

With a view to setting an example to the authorities, to the community and to every individual, Swami is undertaking activities, small and big, in various spheres. This hamlet of Puttaparthi had a population of barely 800. To conceive of a University for such a village was a fantastic dream. Another amazing phenomenon is the construction of an aerodrome near such a village, when there are no aerodromes even at district headquarters. Puttaparthi has become the cynosure of all eyes in the world. Above all, you should enquire why a highly sophisticated and most modern hospital, which should be located in a well-developed metropolis, has been set up in this rural area. The wealthy can go anywhere and get medical relief with their abundant resources. But the rural poor cannot go far from their villages for treatment. It is for the sake of such poor folk that this Hospital has been established. I told our doctors to examine the heart ailments of the villagers

around here. Today an auspicious announcement has to be made. Within fifteen minutes of the inauguration of the Hospital by our Prime Minister, the first operation was begun in the Hospital. Within three hours four operations were performed. One was a very complicated case. There was a hole in the heart of the patient. All the operations were performed successfully and all the patients are doing well.

The hospital will provide relief to villagers

You should know how this Hospital came up. The firm of Larsen & Toubro are known for their big constructions in India and abroad. But nowhere else was such enthusiasm and zeal displayed by the workers engaged in the construction as in this Hospital. Even the smallest worker did the work of ten persons with zeal and joy. All workers performed their jobs with enthusiasm and devotion.

Work on the Hospital began in May after my return from Kodaikanal. Within five months from May to November, work has been done which would have taken five years. This is a gigantic project. It is intended to benefit people for a thousand years. Our purpose is to provide for cardiac cases in the first phase. Then, it will be the lungs. The third wing will be concerned with kidneys. The fourth will be the neurology wing. This hospital has been set up to provide relief to villagers suffering from these four kinds of ailments. No distinction is made, however, between villages and cities. Diseases do not afflict only villagers. They make no territorial distinctions. Likewise, there will be no differentiation in providing relief. Our intention is to provide relief to all comers. For achieving anything in the world, a sound body is essential. The body is the primary requisite for the pursuit of Dharma (righteousness). The body has to be in good health. Even for the realisation of the four goals of human life - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha - sound health is essential. Having regard to the basic importance of health for all purposes, Swami had launched such medical institutions.

But what is the purpose of having a healthy body? It should be utilised for healthy activities. Unfortunately, all over the world people are forgetting

Dharma and Moksha and are immersed only in the pursuit of Artha and Kama. This is totally wrong. Men should pursue equally all the four goals and divinise their lives. Good health is essential for utilising the body for good deeds. Of what use is a body used for evil purposes?

Divinity experienced through the elements

Embodiments of Divine Love! Esteem the whole cosmos as the embodiments of the Supreme. The Lord, who is the possessor of the Ashtaiswarya (eight forms of divine wealth), is the creator of this universe. The most vital requirement for man is water. It sustains life. Three-fourths of the earth's surface is covered by water. Water is described in the Upanishads as Jivam (the lifeforce). Hence, the foremost form of the Lord is water. The second essential requisite for man is Agni (Fire). This fire is residing in every man's stomach as the Jataragni (digestive fire). Without this digestive fire, man would be unable to digest the food he consumes and receive the sustaining energy from that food. All the seven secretions in the stomach are caused by the digestive fire. The blood, the muscles, the bones, etc., in the body are sustained by the Rasa (vital essences). Hence, the Lord is described as Angirasa - One who is present in every anga (limb) as Rasa (essence). Angirasa has the form of fire. The third requisite is the earth. The process of birth, growth and dissolution is taking place on the earth. All the food that man needs comes from the earth. Because the earth is a source of joy for man, it is also an embodiment of the Divine.

Air proclaims the truth of Oneness

The fourth is air. Air is intimately associated with life. Every man utilises air in respiration. Human life is based on inhaling ("So"...) and exhaling ("Ham"...). In respiration, this process of So-Ham is continually going on. In Sanskrit, Sah ("So") means "He" and aham means "I". So- Ham demonstrates the truth, "I am He." Who is this "He"? It is God. Air thus proclaims the truth of Oneness. In breathing, every day man inhales and exhales air 21,600 times. If there is no air, life will be extinct. Therefore the fourth embodiment of God is Air. The fifth is Akasa (space). It is the basis for all the five elements. Sound is its

form. Sound is also the form of the Brahman (Absolute). Sound is all pervading. When one is asked, "Where is Akasa?", people point to the firmament. But that is not so. Everything is permeated by Akasa (ether or space). Wherever there is sound (or sound waves), there is Akasa. It encompasses everything and is present everywhere. Hence it is the embodiment of God.

Sun is the Lord of intelligence

The sixth is the Sun. He is fire incarnate. How does this fire emerge? Heat is produced when hydrogen in the sun is converted into helium. This is borne out by science. In this process, eight forms of energy are noticed' Yantra sakti (kinetic energy), Ushna sakti (heat energy), Kanthi sakti (light), Ghana sakti (magnetic energy), Vidyut sakti (electrical energy), Rasa sakti (chemical energy) and Anu sakti (atomic energy). Scientists have calculated that every second the sun is losing many billion units of energy. Nevertheless the Sun will continue to be a source of energy for millions of years. The Sun is the presiding deity of the Buddhi (intellect). He is the lord of intelligence and he illumines the intellect in man. Thus, sun is also an embodiment of the Divine.

The seventh is moon. Moon is the presiding deity of the mind. It is through the mind that sublime ideas are experienced. The world is the projection in form of the mind. Without the mind the world cannot be conceived. The speed of the mind cannot be equalled. For instance, you might have come here from Hyderabad or Delhi. But in one moment your mind can take you to any place. The speed of thought is greater than that of light. The eighth is Karma-sakti (the power of action). Karma also is Divine in form. Man is born out of action, is sustained by action, and ends in action. Action is the life-breath of man. This karma was described by the ancients as yajna. "Yajno-vai Vishnuh" (Action or sacrifice is Vishnu). The cosmos is the embodiment of Vishnu. It follows from this that the entire creation should be regarded as the manifestation of the Supreme Lord who is the possessor of the eight divine potencies.

Man is misusing and abusing the elements

Man today is not using properly the five elements of which the cosmos is constituted. Consequently man is afflicted with a myriad troubles. The benefits to be derived from the five elements (in the form of sound, touch, light, taste and smell) are not being rightly enjoyed. They are being misused. Because man is abusing the God-given elements and faculties he is forfeiting God's grace and is becoming a victim of Divine displeasure. The five elements have also turned against man. They are despising man for the way he is degrading them. The result is' the sounds that one hears are a cacophony of scandal and gossip. Are these the sounds that man should produce?

Man should manifest his sublime, perennial, Divine nature. Unfortunately, his entire vision today is tainted. He is filled with bad thoughts. Hence his sight has turned against him. When you examine man's faculty of hearing, what do you find? He hears all the time scandalous gossip about all and sundry, while his ears turn away from the sweet praises of the Lord. As the ears are abused in this manner, the mind gets polluted by listening to bad things. Even the air one breathes is polluted. The entire atmosphere is polluted. The food one consumes is also polluted.

If we try to find out what is at the root of all the troubles and worries men experience today, it will be seen that man's abuse of the five elements is the cause. Therefore, see good, hear what is good, and be good. When people behave in this manner, the five elements will shower their benefits on them. It is only when man secures the grace of the five elements that he will experience the grace of the Divine. How can we get the grace of the elements, which nourish and sustain us, if we misuse them?

Travesty of progress in education

This is the kind of progress that the world has made. Biting the hand that feeds, Reviling the preceptor who imparts knowledge, This is the 'progress' in education today. People seek a good life, position and wealth. But they will not seek good qualities, Right knowledge and right conduct. Wealth has become all-important And righteousness has receded. This is the 'progress' in

education today. Character and morality are confined to books. The mind is totally polluted. All actions are based on selfishness. This is the 'progress' in today's education. Can this be real "progress" at all? Are these the things that should be learnt by anyone? All that is learnt today serves only to pollute the heart. Education is confined to what promotes selfishness and self-interest. What ought to be learnt is how to be helpful to others and how to realise the Self. Education should make one realise the unity of all beings. I cannot find any truly educated person wherever I turn. All appear to be uneducated. Many read books, but mere book knowledge is not education. Degrees do not make an educated person. Without wisdom and good qualities education has no meaning.

How to divinise human life

Education should be for leading a good life and not for earning a livelihood. To learn from a scientist the chemical composition of water is a kind of knowledge, which may help a man to get a job. But how to make the right use of water so that all can share its benefits is knowledge of the Spirit. This higher knowledge elevates life and makes it meaningful. When worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge come together, human life is divinised. There is a Kannada saying: "For water, lotus is the ornament. For a town, the home is the ornament. For the ocean, the waves are the ornament. For the sky, the moon is the ornament. For man's life, virtue is the ornament." Without good qualities, all other ornaments are worthless. The beauty created by the Divine cannot be excelled by any other ornament. It is that beauty which should be esteemed. Beauty is God. Why attempt to enhance it? When you have natural beauty, why go after artificial cosmetics? True beauty consists in good qualities. Embodiments of Divine Love! Today we have to recognise the importance of the body. To make right use of the body, good qualities are essential. With a healthy body and good qualities, you can lead ideal lives. When this infinitely precious human life is filled with good thoughts and good actions, the nation will flourish. Eschewing all thoughts of "mine", "my people", fill every moment of your waking life every day with thoughts of the well-being of others. When all are happy, you will also be happy. Promote the welfare of society, with which is bound up your own

welfare.

"All are alike to Me"

Love even your enemy That is Sai's ideal. Indeed, in the entire world there is no one whom I do not like. Some may dislike me or be opposed to me. But I have no feelings against them. All are alike to me. Try to cultivate at least a fraction of that equal-mindedness. Some devotees bemoan their lot saying, "God is described as an ocean of kindness, the embodiment of compassion, but He has done nothing to relieve me of my woes." The Lord is verily the embodiment of Love and Truth and is an ocean of Compassion. But, to what extent are you carrying out the injunctions of that Lord? Ask yourselves that question. You don't act properly, but seek favours. God's grace will be showered on you only when you put into practice at least a few of the Lord's injunctions. Today the Gita is being propagated in many ways. But how many are practising even one of the teachings of the Gita? Men are heroes in aspiration and zeroes in practice. Likewise, people are eloquent about the Ramayana and the way Rama adhered to the pledge given by his father. But how many carry out the words of their parents? The Ramayana, Bhagavatha or the Gita are not to be regarded as scriptures for mere ritualistic reading. They are texts whose teachings have to be followed. This applies equally to other sacred books like the Bible, the Quran and the Granth Saheb.

There are some others who spend their entire lives in the quest for knowledge. When will they ever start practising what they have learnt?

For the consummation of human evolution, and the realisation by man of his highest goal, religion and spiritual discipline are very essential. Religion is the link between the individual and the Universe, between Jeeva and Deva. If that does not exist life becomes chaos. A cow caught on a hill wanting to go to the hill opposite, but confronted with a flooded river in between, needs a bridge between the two. That is what religion is.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

29. Develop spiritual oneness

Date: 25 December 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

Religion teaches self-discipline and promotes one's well being; It enhances one's spiritual power and makes one effulgent. If people live without knowing Its inner secret

The community and its culture decline and suffer.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Innumerable waves arise from the vast ocean. The waves appear to differ in form from one another. But these multifarious waves are not different from the ocean. In all the waves, the nature and qualities of the ocean are immanent. Likewise, the innumerable beings which you see in this boundless cosmos appear to be different from one another, but all of them emerged from the same cosmic source whose form is Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

Religions are not different from each other

When rain pours down from the sky, pure water falls on the earth, mountains, rivers and the sea. But the pure water acquires the colour and taste of the region or spot where it falls. Likewise, prophets and messiahs, coming down in different forms of the world at different times, imparted their message in terms appropriate to the time, the place and the conditions of the people concerned. Religions' cannot be considered different from each other for this reason. All religions have taught only what is good for humanity. Religion should be practised with this awareness.

If the minds are pure,

how can religion be bad? It is a mark of ignorance to consider one religion as superior and another as inferior and develop religious differences on this basis. The teachings of all religions are sacred. The basic doctrines are founded on truth. Atma-tathva (the truth of the Spirit) is the essence of

religions, the message of all the scriptures and the basis of all metaphysics. The primary duty of human beings is to recognise that the paths indicated by different religions may vary but the goal is one. Love, sacrifice, compassion, morality, integrity and similar qualities are common to all religions. In different ways all religions sought to promote unity in diversity. Bharatiya philosophy, culture and sacred way of life permeate and shine like an undercurrent in all religions. Bharatiya culture has affirmed the profound Vedic truth "Eko vasi sarva bhootha antaratma" (It is the One Spirit that dwells in all beings). This unity of the Spirit is proclaimed in various contexts in the teachings of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Although in terms of physical form, human beings appear different, in terms of the Spirit they are all one - this is the truth propagated by Christianity. It has declared that all are the children of one Lord and believing in the Fatherhood of God, all should live in harmony.

"Namaskar" is the message of unity

This basic truth of the spiritual oneness of all creation is emphasised at every stage in Bharatiya culture. "Ekam Sath-vipra bahudha vadanthi" (The Reality is One; the wise call it by different names). The Ultimate Reality is One only. Your mental reactions give rise to multiplicity. What you have to offer the Lord is Ekatma bhava (the sense of spiritual oneness). Bharatiyas are wont to fold the two palms together and offer Namaskar (salutation). What is the inner significance of this form of greeting? It is an expression of the unity of the many in the One. In Islam, the expression salam is used as a form of greeting. "Sa" in this term signifies the combined expression of Salokyam, Saroopyam, Sameepyam and Sayujyam (Seeing the Divine, having the vision of the form of the Divine, nearing the Divine and merging in the Divine). When these four expressions are combined and merged into one - "La" signifying merger - you have Salam (the merging of the many in the One). In Christianity, the term "Esu" (Jesus) is used to describe Christ. This term also signifies the oneness of Divinity. The inner significance of the term "Esu" is the recognition of the One Divine in all beings.

In Jainism also, the same truth was taught by Mahavira. When the senses are

allowed to have their way, all kinds of reactions occur. It is only when the senses are brought under unified control that the nature of Divinity can be comprehended. The eyes have the power of sight. The ears can hear. The powers of all the sense organs - seeing, hearing, speaking, etc., are derived from the Divine. It is the Divine that enables the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the mind to think and to have various experiences. It is when all these sensory processes are brought under unified control (by the conquest of the senses) that man becomes a conqueror a "Jina" - as termed by the Jains. Because he had conquered his senses the title of victor was conferred on Mahavira.

Love is the life-breath of every being

Even as ornaments are varied but gold is one, religions are varied but their basic spiritual truth is the same. Buddhism also enunciates the same oneness. It declares that in every human being what should emanate is love. For every being, love is the life-breath. When such love animates a person, he will not resort to violence; he will practise Ahimsa (non-violence). Buddha urged that if human life is to be redeemed, men should cultivate love. Thus, if we try to understand the basic truth of every religion, it will be seen that it teaches only Unity. Religious differences poison the mind. No one should give room for religious differences. All are spiritually one.

In this context, it should be realised that from time to time, prophets, messiahs and avatars manifest themselves on earth to proclaim the glow of the human estate and make humanness blossom among mankind.

The advent of Jesus

Two thousand years ago, in Palestine, a province of the Roman empire, there were Jews professing Judaism. The Jews believed in one God called Yehovah. They believed that God would send a messiah for the people of Israel. Jerusalem was the sacred city of the Jews and continued to be so even under the Romans. This was the time when Jesus was born. From his childhood Jesus displayed such sacred qualities as compassion, love and sacrifice. Realising

from his early years that the discharge of one's duties was the primary obligation of a human being, Jesus used to help his father in his work as a carpenter. The father passed away in Jesus's twelfth year. For a while he carried on his father's work, but in due course he set out his ministry in the service of the people. Like the fragrance in the bud of a flower, Jesus's divinity was evident from his boyhood. Three kings from the East came to see him at the time of his birth. One of them, on seeing the child, felt that he would be a lover of God. Another felt that he would be loved by God. The third king felt that he would one day declare his oneness with God. The first one's thought indicated Jesus's role as a "Messenger of God." The second one's thought indicated that he would be the "Son of God." The third person's thought indicated that the child would indicate one day that "I and my Father are one." Who is a "Messenger of God"? He is the one who comprehends the purpose of his life. The "Son of God" is one who appears as divine to others. "I and my Father are one" signifies the true nature of the individual, his identity with divinity. It is in this manner that Christ progressed in his ministry. He conveyed His message in simple and convincing terms. Changes in time, place and circumstances bring about changes in religious ideas and institutions. This is evident in the history of all religions and creeds. Such changes can be seen in the history of Christianity and the career of the Catholic Church. One of the notable changes was effected by the Reformation brought about by Martin Luther.

Basic teachings of Jesus Christ

Christ's basic teachings were related to promotion of compassion, sympathy, love, sacrifice and fellowship among human beings. Jesus was named the Christ as he was regarded as the "chosen" messenger of God.

The growth of Christianity in the Middle Ages culminated as it were in its acquiring the status of a State religion under Emperor Constantine. With the growth of Christianity, schisms also developed in the religion. The growth of schisms often results in a decline in spirituality. As men develop worldly desires, religious faith declines. Men do not realise that the pursuit of physical pleasures is like the pursuit of a mirage to quench one's thirst. Embodiments

of Divine Love! Realise that human happiness is not to be found in sensory objects or experiences. Whatever pleasure is derived from these is transient and momentary. Real and enduring bliss is to be derived from within one's self. Body is a thing of matter - Annamaya. Life is based on Prana (lifebreath) - Pranamaya. Mind is subtle - Manomaya. In all, man is enveloped in five sheaths - Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijanamaya and Anandamaya kosas. The first two are gross and the last three are subtle. Man is a product of his mind. The mind consists of a bundle of thoughts. Thoughts lead to actions. Actions are the source of joys and sorrows experienced in daily life. It follows from this that if the world today is in bad shape, it is because men's actions are misdirected. All the good and the evil in the world are based on the actions of men. When men's actions are sublime, the world will be great and noble.

Man is a combination of body, mind and Atma

When we speak of man, we should consider him as the combination of body, mind and Atma. The body is an instrument for performing actions. Mind is the faculty that determines what is right or wrong. The Atma is that which is ever pure, unchanging and permanent. "Man" implies three things: doing, knowing, being. It is when the body, mind and the Atma are present in union that a human being can be said to exist. When the body alone acts without regard to the mind and Atma, that person is said to be in the state of Pasuthvam (animal state). When the mind alone acts in association with the body, without regard to the Atma, that condition is described as Danavatvam (demonic). When the Atma functions according to its true nature, without concern for the body and the mind, that state is described as Daivatvam (oneness with the Divine).

The four categories of men

Hence, man has in him, these four possibilities: animality, humanness, demonic nature and divinity.

"Brahmanishtaratho devah," says a Vedic aphorism. This means that one who

is ever immersed in the contemplation of the Brahman (Supreme) is divine. Such a person is ever dedicated to righteousness and integrity and leads a life of purity. Ever seeking to be helpful to others, he showers love on all and does no harm to anyone. "Sathyanithyaratho marthyah" (One who is always wedded to Truth is a true man). This means that one who adheres to truth and righteous conduct in daily life is alone entitled to be called a man.

The third category is described as "Madhyapanoratha danavah" (One who is addicted to intoxicating drinks and meat eating and leads a sensuous life is a demonic being). Such a person is intensely selfish and has no feeling or consideration for others. A wicked person, swayed by evil motives and evil actions, is described as a demon. The fourth category consists of beings who only lead a life devoted to eating, sleeping and sexual indulgence with no awareness of the real meaning of human existence. Such ignorant beings have been described as Pasubhis-samanah (equal to animals). Such persons are immersed in sensual pleasures. The senses should be regarded as instruments for rendering service to others. The foolish idea that all pleasures consist in indulgence of sensual appetites should be given up. Only animals are content to derive all satisfaction from the senses alone. Hence every man should firmly declare, "I am a man and not an animal." Only when he has this double conviction will man cease to be an animal and assert his humanness. Unfortunately today men claim to be human, but are engaged in animal activities. All religions have emphasised the same truths in their basic teachings, But few people try to understand the inner import of religions. Out of a narrow feeling that one's own religion is superior and other faiths are inferior, members of different religions are developing hatred towards members of other faiths and acting like demons. Such narrow ideas should be given up totally. All should develop the awareness that though names and forms may be different, the essential truth is one in all religions.

Firmly believe that "Love is God: God is love"

Today all over the world because of these narrow-minded attitudes, conflict, disorder and violence are rampant. To overcome these troubles, there is one simple method. Men must firmly adhere to the idea that "Love is God and God

is Love." Live in Love. This is the task before every one. Where love prevails, peace will grow. To promote love, the first requisite is faith. It is only when you believe that one is your mother that you develop love towards her. If you do not regard her as your mother, you will not have that love for her. Therefore, faith is the starting point. Where there is Love, there is Peace. Where there is Peace, there is Truth. Where there is Truth, there is Bliss. Where there is Bliss, there is God. There is constant quest for peace. Everyone is seeking it. But peace is not to be had from the external world. Peace is within you. Only the divinity within you is the basis of peace within. When you turn your vision outward, what you have are only pieces. Try to comprehend your own true nature. When you go on affirming, "I am God, I am God," you realise your divinity, as declared in the Upanishadic saying "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi" (The Knower of the Brahman becomes Brahman itself).

Eschew hatred; develop love

First of all, strengthen your faith. Without faith all kinds of worship and all spiritual disciplines are of no use; they are a waste of time. To begin with, cultivate love. Everything grows out of love. That love will reveal to you your true self. That love will confer bliss on you. Therefore, eschew hatred; develop love. What matters in the world is not what you eat. How important, for instance, is bread? Is it bread that sustains your life? Not at all. It is God alone who sustains and protects you. How many millionaires are there in the world living in the lap of luxury? But only God's grace can protect them. Without it, all their wealth will be of no avail. What you should pray for is God's love. With all your scholarship, all your power and pelf, and all your scientific achievements, how far have you succeeded in raising your status as a human being? How far have you preserved your humanness? Without ensuring humanness, man cannot ensure peace or security.

(Bhagavan then referred to the activities of the old students of the Sathya Sai College for Women who are members of the organisation called "Messengers of Sathya Sai." This part of Bhagavan's discourse is published separately in the next chapter).

Not only in this Kali Yuga but even the earlier yugas, the Kritha, the Thretha and the Dwapara, Namasmarana has been the secret of liberation from bondage. The temple is the place where Namasmarana is natural and automatic and undisturbed.

Therefore, going to them is imperative, especially in the Kali age when the air is full of wicked and ungodly thoughts.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30. Earn a good name

Date: 25 December 1991 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

DEAR Students! Today you have listened to reports about the service activities carried on by the "Messengers of Sathya Sai." As pointed out by their office-bearers (in their speeches earlier at the meeting), women all through their lives labour under many constraints. During their tenure as students they are in the custody of their parents. Then they come under the regime of their husbands and parents-in-law. As they grow older, they get involved in the responsibilities to their children.

In spite of these constraints and obligations, they have been able to adhere to the disciplines acquired in their college and engage themselves in service activities and develop their organization "Messengers of Sathya Sai" continually. Whether one is a student or any other person, one should always remain grateful for the benefits one has received from others. The foremost quality every human being should have is gratitude. Without it, man ceases to be human. It is because today men have ceased to cherish gratitude that they have become a prey to many ills.

Sun-God's penalty for ingratitude

In the worship of the Sun-God, certain mantras are used (invoking the different attributes of the deity). Among the names recited in praise of the Sun-God are: "Himaghnaya namah" (prostrations to the dispeller of snow!; "Tamaghnaya namah" (prostrations to the "Kritaghnaya namah" destroyer of darkness), (prostrations to the destroyer of the ungrateful). The Sun is hailed as the melter of snow and the dispeller of darkness in the first two names. The third name describes the Sun-God as one who gives up those who forget the good done to them. How does the Sun-God give up the ungrateful? The Vedas have declared that the Sun emerged from the eyes of Virat Purusha (the Cosmic person). The Sun's radiance illumines the eyes of a human being. When the mantra declares that the Sun-God goes away from the one who is ungrateful, its inner meaning is that the Sun-God makes the ungrateful

person blind and withdraws from him the power of sight. Today persons guilty of ingratitude go about as blind persons or as ignorant beings devoid of the real power of sight. Every person should therefore cherish the sense of gratitude. These former students (of the Anantapur College) after the completion of their studies, when they took up some jobs, resolved to offer to Swami their first month's salary as a token of gratitude. There are several thousands of such old students. Many of them, even after marriage, have been coming to Bhagavan regularly and often bringing their husbands and children with them. This kind of devotion stems from their deep sense of gratitude. During the past year, they engaged themselves in a variety of service activities out of their devotion to Swami. On the occasion of Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday, sixty cottages were built for the poor. The enthusiasm and spirit of sacrifice of these old students were responsible for the construction of these cottages.

Offer not money but love

Last year, with view to offering to Bhagavan their first month's earnings, the old students brought two lakhs of rupees to be given to Swami. Their love is priceless. Wealth has value, but love is invaluable. Your gratitude is the most precious thing. It is enough if you cherish this feeling. There is no need for you to make this kind of offering of money. Even now, they have brought cheques for lakhs of rupees (as offering to Swami). But what I desire from you is your love. It is enough for Me if you adhere to the disciplines of the Sathya Sai Institute wherever you may be. If after you get married, your parents-in-law hold you in high esteem as girls who were educated in the Sathya Sai Institute and if your husbands feel that they have been specially fortunate in marrying girls educated in the Institute, that will be sufficient reward for Me. What you must offer to Me is the good name that you are able to earn. You have to set an example of ideal womanhood. You have to impart right ideals to the children. Only then will Bharat achieve real prosperity. There is nothing greater than being exemplary mothers and women of good repute. Dear girl students! I desire that you should devote yourselves to social service in the villages, run educational classes for the children and render whatever service the elderly people may require. I am returning your cheques so that you may

use the funds for these service activities. I bless you all (Swami returned the cheques to the President of the Organization).

Cherish gratefulness

Do not seek to offer such monetary contributions to Me in the future. Engage yourselves in pure activities with pure hearts and earn a good name. What you have to offer to Me is the good name earned by you. This is the highest expression of your gratitude. You should earn the approbation of the public as students of the Institute. Do not bring a bad name to the Institute by your conduct in the outside world. It does not matter much if you fail to bring a good name to the Institute, but in no circumstances should you bring it a bad name. Even if you fail to be helpful to others, do not cause harm to others. Students should bear this in mind. Not students alone, but all spiritual aspirants should cherish in their hearts with gratitude the good done to them by others and always remember whatever form in which help was rendered to them. Only those who lead such grateful lives will be able to find peace and happiness in their lives. I desire that all of you ("The Messengers of Sathya Sai") should constantly think of God, continue to render social service, lead ideal family lives and enjoy peace and happiness. This is My benediction for all of you.

Students must bear in mind that their life is determined by their actions, whether they are good or bad. The other determining factor is Time. Time is all-powerful. It is not subject to anyone. All are subject to it. It rolls on without beginning or end. Rama's exile, Ravana's death, emperor Bali's descent to the nether world, Sibi's supreme sacrifice, the ordeals of the Pandavas - -are all examples of the power of Time over the destinies of men. It is only when one's actions are harmonised with the dictates of Time can one enjoy the bliss called Thrupti.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



32. Talk to Westerners

Date: April 1991

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It is a talk given to westerners in Kodai Kanal. He is sitting in His chair, not standing, and he holds short conversations with people in the audience a few times. The interpreter is Narasimha Murthy, then Warden of the Brindavan campus of the Sathya Sai University. This text was transcribed from a video, which appears on www.saicast.org. The video is special: Swami says a lot of things in English.

What is life? Who is a human being? The proper study of mankind is man. Human life is very precious and valuable. It is very sacred and holy. It is a life worth living. Today's man, without recognizing the value of life, is misusing it by immersing himself in only worldly pleasures and sensual pleasures. Worldly pleasures, bodily pleasures are enjoyed even by beasts and birds and animals. If man also tries to enjoy only physical pleasures, what is the difference between man and beasts and bird - animals? Where is man at present? At the lower level is the animal taste; in the middle is the human quality; at the top level is Divinity. Man, who is in the middle, has to look upward; he should not go downward. Today's man is not looking up but is always looking down. Therefore, man is becoming an animal. How can man attain Divinity? We keep saying God and Divinity, but to attain Divinity, we have to look upward and give up lower thoughts.

Man may get many types of education, he may attain any number of powerful positions, but he is not able to get to the higher stage of life. First and foremost, man must try to control his desires gradually. As desires go on increasing and multiplying, human qualities go on declining and decreasing. There are three types of states: doing, seeing, and being. Doing means indulging in only bodily actions. With mind, he is experiencing. Being is with the Self or Atma . Being is Atma . It is changeless. If we want to attain the changeless Divinity, to some extent we have to control the body, which does, and the mind, which thinks. The body is like a water bubble. The mind is a

mad monkey. We should not follow the body, which is a water bubble, or the mind, which is a mad monkey. We have to follow the conscience, or the Atma principle. But today's aspirants are not following their conscience. They are following only the body and mind. Man should have a firm mind.

Make better use of your time here

Today, you have come from very long distances, after spending a lot of money, giving up lots of comforts in order to follow the spiritual path. But after coming here, what are you doing? What is your aim? What is your feeling? With what purpose did you come here? What are you doing? You have to inquire into this properly.

You are coming with a spiritual goal, but you are developing more and more worldly thoughts. You are developing too many connections and attachments. You are developing new relations. You have given up all - your fathers, mothers, and relations. But here you are developing unnecessary bondages, but you came with the purpose of getting rid of bondages. It is wrong.

Divine Discourse April 1991 2 You should have only superficial relations like, "Hello, hello!" and nothing more than that. Otherwise, you are going to spoil your goal, your aim.

There is too much mixing of men and women, and the mind is becoming a mad monkey. Not monkey, you are becoming an animal. This is totally wrong. In Vedanta , our philosophy, we have to develop detachment (vairagyam). As you go on developing detachment from the world, your divine attachment will increase. You may be doing repetition of the name (japam) or meditation, but what results are you attaining thereby? You are closing your eyes and sitting. That is not meditation. Your mind is wandering like a monkey. Actually, doing meditation like this is a waste of time. Time waste is life waste.

If you cannot control the mind, involve yourself in actions. Do some work. Don't idle and waste your time.

In some situations, you are not able to understand what Divinity is. Divinity is everywhere. You are yourself a divine power. Try to recognize your own divine power. Don't go around like mad people here and there in search of it. It is a waste of money, a waste of energy, a waste of time. Follow only one path and have only one thought. Less talk and more work. There is too much talking. Spiritual energy will be wasted because of talking. Here is a small example. There is a radio. When you turn on the radio and hear the sound, there is waste of electric power. The body is like a radio, the intellect is the switch, talk is the sound, and our energy is the current. Lots of energy is being wasted because of talk.

Because of waste of energy, allergy is developed. With allergy, we develop weakness, and because of weakness, we are not able to do anything. Ultimately, we become a mad man. That is not the result of spiritual practice.

All work is godly

Whatever work you do think that it is godly. That is real spiritual practice. Here is a small example.

You have a pot of water. Suppose you put some salt into the water in the pot. Before putting the salt into the pot, the salt is in your hand. You can see the salt in your hand. Once you put the salt into water, it dissolves. You see the water, but you can't see the salt, and you can't get it with your hand. But isn't the salt there? It is there. How do you know it is there? You can't feel it with your hand, you can't see it with your eyes, but you can taste it on your tongue. You can know that it is salty, that salt is there.

The taste of salt is real experience. You can know God is omnipresent and omniscient only by experience, not by studying books.

Attaining experience

For getting experience, first you should have confidence, but your confidence is not steady. You need determination. Whatever may be the trials and

tribulations, your confidence should be steady and firm.

But your mind is full of bumps and jumps. That is not right.

You come here with great interest and devotion, but you do not know the right path. Nobody has taught you the path correctly. You think that whatever is done is good. First, discriminate whether it is good or bad, right or wrong. Ask whether whatever we're doing is good or bad. Your conscience itself will give the right answer. If you are doing the wrong thing, your conscience is not satisfied.

First and foremost, you have to control the mind. You should reduce physical connections as far as possible. The body is an instrument; it is an inert thing. The mind is also inert. The inner power is Atma, which gives splendour, energy, and power to everything. Think of a car. A car has some lights. There are bulbs in the lights. Because of the bulb, you get the light. Does the bulb give the light? No! It is the electric power that goes through the bulb and gives light. We also hear the horn. The horn cannot work by itself, no. The horn gives the sound on the basis of the electric power. The tires are moving, but they cannot move by themselves. It is the power of the engine that moves the tires. The body is like a car. The eyes are the bulbs, and our mouth is like the horn. The legs are the tires, and the mind is the engine. The intellect is the switch. Divine power is the current. Without divine power, the body cannot move. Divine power is the most important thing.

The body, mind, senses, and intellect are but instruments.

This is a cloth (Sai Baba holds up a handkerchief). But this is not the cloth; it is nothing but a bundle of threads. It is not threads, it is cotton. First it was cotton, then it became threads, and finally it became cloth. Without cotton there is no thread. Without thread, there is no cloth.

Thought is like cotton, desires are the threads, and the mind is the cloth. Mind is nothing but a bundle of desires. To destroy the cloth, you have to remove

the threads one by one. If you reduce the desires gradually, there will be no mind.

Less luggage, more comfort, makes travel better. Life is like a long journey. Desires are luggage. Reduce the luggage, and our travel becomes more comfortable. We have too many desires, too many desires. That is very bad. The more desires we have, the more restlessness we develop. When we reduce desires and attachments, we'll get peace of mind.

Attaining peace

Many people keep saying, "I want peace of mind, I want peace of mind." "I want peace, I want peace." The sentence has three words: I want peace . I is ego, want is desire, remove them and peace is there. You want a book from Swami. Swami sends it in a parcel. But when it is arrives, how do you get the book? You have to remove the outer covering of the parcel to get the book. Without removing the outer covering of the parcel, how can you get the book? Peace is given to you in a parcel. So this peace is packed in two things: I , the ego, and want , the desire. Remove the ego and desire, you naturally get peace. That is what peace is. Because of ego and desire, peace is hidden inside.

The body is a temporary one. One day or other it has to perish. But we need not try to protect this body too much. The body is like a steel cabinet (godrej almirah). The steel cabinet is inert. Why do we have this steel cabinet? Because we want to keep very precious and valuable materials in it. Otherwise, the steel cabinet has no value. But the valuable things are inside the cabinet. The valuable things in the body (steel cabinet) are thoughts, sacred feelings, sacred actions and sacred thoughts.

You kept all the diamonds inside the steel cabinet. You took care of the steel cabinet because of all the valuable things in it. If there are no precious things, you don't care for the steel cabinet and throw it out. What is satsang (good company)? We have to develop good things in good ways.

Get nearer to God

There is God. There is the individual soul. God is light, like fire. Here is coal. Coal means jiva , that is ignorance. If we want to get the individual soul into (spiritual) wisdom, we have to get them near. When the coal Divine Discourse April 1991 4 comes near the fire, the fire enters the coal. When there is breeze from the fan, the the coal easily catches on fire. When both near and dear are there, we can become one. If we want to attain Divinity, we have to come near. Not physical nearness but mental nearness. Bodily, you are very near me, but mentally you are far away from me. You are all having mad thoughts, mad friendships, and mad desires, so how can you get Divinity? The frog sits on the lotus flower, but bees come from far off and take the honey and go away. The frog does not enjoy the honey. You are coming near, but what is the use? You are not taking the Divinity. You should become like the bee, not the frog. The frog is always jumping around the lotus.

First and foremost, develop confidence

You are full of doubts, doubts, doubts and should not become "doubting Thomases." Here is a small example.

You love your wife. You love your mother. Why do you love them? You have confidence that she is your mother, confidence that she is your wife, and confidence that he is your son. Because of that confidence, you develop love. If you don't have confidence that she is your wife or mother, you don't have that love.

Where there is confidence, there is love. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is truth. Where there is truth, there is bliss. Where there is bliss, there is God.

You don't have confidence. Always, you're full of doubts. With all these doubts, in any number of years, you will not be able to attain peace of mind. First and foremost, you must develop confidence. Self-confidence. Where there is self-confidence, there is self-satisfaction. Where there is self-

satisfaction, there is self-sacrifice. Where there is self-sacrifice, there is self-realization. Selfrealization depends on self-confidence.

You are sitting in this shed. What is the basis for this shed? The foundation is the basis. Without the foundation, the wall will not be strong. Without the wall, you cannot have the roof. Without the roof, you cannot live there. Self-confidence is the foundation of the building, self-satisfaction is the wall, self-sacrifice is the roof, and self-realization is life. Realization is life.

Not this, not this â€¦!

You say, "I want realization." Know yourself. Who are you (who am I)? This is my body, This is my hand. This is my head, my leg. But who am I? Ask this question. This is very important.

You say, "This is my body. This is my leg, my mind." Then who am I ?

I am separate from the body. I am separate from the mind. This is my handkerchief; the kerchief is separate from me. This is my chair; the chair is separate from me. When you say that this is your body, you are separate from the body; you are not the body. This is the first inquiry.

When you say that this is your mind, you are separate from the mind; you are not the mind. You are always separate from the body â€¦! In Vedanta , this is the process of saying, "not this, not this, not this." I am not the body. I am not the mind. I am the Atma . Atma is changeless.

The mind is always changing. The mind is like a monkey, like a mad monkey. Don't follow this monkey.

When the body is born, it is a child. After ten years, he is called a boy. After thirty years, he is called a man. After seventy-five years he is called grandfather. Child, boy, man, grandfather - there is only one person, who gets all these four names. The body changes. But God is changeless. God is immortal. He is ever present.

What is immortality?

What is the meaning of immortality? Ask the question.

Removal of immorality is the only way to immortality. What is immorality? Bad thoughts, ego, jealousy, hatred, anger - these are the bad qualities. When you remove the bad qualities, immortality is on your palm. That is most important.

I don't like just doing meditation. Sitting as if posing for a photograph. But the mind is wandering here and there. Do not believe such people. They are only stunt makers. They are mind killers and mind hunters. Don't follow these people.

Be always happy. Think that, "I am God." You are also God. Think that.

Conscious, conscience, consciousness

You are not just one person, you are three: The one you think you are (that is the physical body), the one others think you are (that is the mind), and the one you really are (the Atma). The one you think you are is only the body. "I am body, I have aged this much, I am a man, I am a woman, etc." - all this is only body, what you think you are.

What others think you are is the mind. That is, they think whether you are good or bad, you have good qualities or bad qualities. The one you think you are is what is conscious . Senses. What others think you are is conscience . The one you really are is consciousness . You are consciousness . Consciousness is permanent.

Conscious is changing. It is full of ups and downs. It's like a water bubble, the body. Don't follow the body, don't follow the mind. You are consciousness; you are God. Think that "I and God are one." It cannot be right. No, "I and you are we (laughter). We and we are one!" "I and you are one" is not right. I and

you are not one. "I and you" leads to "we". We and we are one. There is not any difference.

You have to develop the confidence that Divinity is within me (you). You are Atma swarupa (embodiment of Atma). The is Vedanta . That is, "I am Brahman and Atma ." That is Atma .

You have to develop this confidence. You have to avoid this external vision.

Don't misuse love

You have come from a long distance. Swami knows that you have a lot of devotion. There is a lot of love for Swami. But you are misusing that love.

Let there be direct love between you and God. Don't divert that love in other directions. There is only one love, but there are many forms. There are many paths.

Husband and wife - the love between them is called attachment or lust. Between mother and child, it is call maternal love. The love of relations and friends is called friendship. And the relation between God and you is devotion (bhakthi). It's only a difference of names, in forms. But love is one and the same.

Live in love; love is God. That is the most important thing. Do not keep on changing this love.

The only real connection: with God

Divine Discourse April 1991 6 Many people come alone. When Swami ask them, "How many people have come?" they say, "I came alone." Next week, he has a girl friend. Second week, "She is my wife." (laughter) This is very bad. Why are you coming here? You can have this type of friendship and wife back home. Why should you come all this distance, spending all this money? Why should you waste so much money? What have you obtained after

coming here? Even your life has to be a bit away, because life is only one and not double. Husband and wife sleep on a single cot, but dreams are separate. They won't get the same dream. Where is the connection?

Before marriage, where is wife, where is husband? Before birth, who is the son, who is the father or mother? All relations are like passing clouds. They come and go like passing clouds. But Divinity comes and grows. This is not important: connection, connections, connections. The only connection should be with God. That is real devotion. Don't mix with others too much. Don't go here and there.

God is within you - with you around you, below you, around you. That is real love. Real love should not change. It should not be deluded.

Sometimes, you may get some thoughts. You have to control your thoughts. You are the master, not the slave. When you control the sense, you become the master. If you allow the senses to roam around freely, you become the slave. Become the master, and not the slave. Master, master. Always have the master plan. That is most important. All of you, many of you are becoming real devotees. If you were not devotees, you wouldn't come from such a distance. Swami loves you. But sometimes your mind goes here and there. Even during meditation also, the mind wanders here and there. The mind is bumping and jumping. Like air pockets. It is not good.

Think of God. Think about God's name. That is most important. There is only one God. Many gods do not exist. Think of any name or any form of God. Think Ram, think Allah, think Buddha - whatever you like. That is unity in diversity.

Jewels are many, but gold is one. Stars are many, but sky is one. Beings are many, but breath is one. Nations are many, but earth is one. Names are many, but God is one. You have to develop and attain this type of oneness. That is real devotion.

Do not keep changing the mind. When mind becomes fickle, life becomes a

waste.

Embodiments of divine love,

You came here with great sincerity and devotion. Follow the right path. You came to India spending a lot of money. You have wasted lots of money and time. After having come here, get the diamond and go from here. What is a diamond? Die mind. The mind should be eliminated. That is "die mind." The diamond is very precious. When mind is there, you don't get the precious jewel. You found the way to God. That is valuable. If you already have that value, you should have a good mind. Develop this type of feeling after having come such a distance. Don't develop too much attachment. Attachments increase, then restlessness also increases. Because of restlessness you are not able to concentrate. This is the reason for not being able to concentrate.

If you are interested, get married, but don't spoil your mind by having friends. Better to have marriage rather than friendship. This "friendship" is very bad, it is not good. Have friendship only with God. The only real friend is God. Worldly friends - they are Divine Discourse April 1991 7 changing people. When you have money in your pocket, when you are in a position of power, all the people come. When you have no money or power, they don't even say goodbye. But God is not like that. He is always with you.

When the tank is full of water, thousands of frogs are there. No water? No single frog. That is worldly friendship; that is not real attachment. That is not real friendship. The only friend is God, in your life. Others are only companions, that is all.

Also, don't worry about detachment. What is the shape of worry? Worry is nothing but mentally created shape. Worry has no shape. I am very happy, I am happy. What is the shape of happy? Happiness has no shape. It is only enjoyment and experience. You say you are worried. What is the shape of worry? Worry has no shape; it is only experience. "I am peaceful," is also an experience. It has no shape. Enjoy and experience this peace.

There are many types of knowledge in this world, but they are not important. You have to develop practical knowledge. You have to do it alone, in solitude. When you have two bangles on your wrist, there is sound. Only one bangle? No sound. One is peaceful and enjoyment and bliss, and being two is confusion. Sit alone, walk alone; you can be very happy. When two people get together, mind becomes restless. There may be argumentation, controversies, hatred, and finally they may divorce.

You have to have relationships. Detachment is not going away to the forest. Have relation between mind and mind, heart to heart, love to love. Not body to body. The body is only temporary and full of grief. You have to develop faith in the Atma . Wherever you sit, think of God. If you are not able to control the mind, then involve yourself in some social work, social service.

Don't give money to beggars

One more important thing. So many foreigners are coming. Many beggars approach you, begging for money. Because you have a good mind, you will be giving them money, but that is bad. Why should it be so? You give money to the beggar, but he misuses the money, and because of the misuse, you become responsible for it. They use it for alcohol. Who is responsible for spoiling them? The one who gives money is responsible for it. That sin will be for you and not for him.

If he wants food, give food. If he wants clothes, give clothes. Don't give money. Giving money is bad.

Because you give money, so many people come and go around you. Finally, they may steal from your pockets or bags. And you are encouraging their bad habits.

Never give them money. Give them food, clothing. Money makes many wrongs. Money makes many thieves.

Money is not important, it is of no value. Money is just like a shoe. If the shoe

is the right size, you can walk properly. If it is too big, or too tight (small), you can't walk. Have enough money, but not too much. Man with too much money cannot sleep properly. He is always afraid.

Surrender only to God

Today, man surrenders to everyone and every little thing. When you are sitting in your car, you surrender your life to the car driver. When sleeping in your house, you entrust your life to the watchman, you are surrendering to the watchman. With confidence in the laundry man, you give your clothes and surrender to him. With a barber with a knife, you bend your head and surrender to him. You Divine Discourse April 1991 8 surrender to a barber, to a laundry man, to a watchman, but not to God.

Surrender to God. But that type of fortune man is not getting. Surrender to God; don't surrender to all others.

Man is an equal. He has neither the authority to get surrender nor the authority to surrender. There is only one master. One. That is God.

Follow one master, have one name and

form

Don't go after different types of gurus; you just get confused. If you like God, think about God; that's enough.

Many Indian gurus just want money and nothing else. That is not a good thing. They are not good leaders. They are nothing but beggars. They are not big people. The real big man is one who wants only your love. Wherever they ask for money, they are beggars. Don't trust them. Real big man will have a heart to heart relation, a connection with heart-to-heart love.

You are not able to recognize it properly. You go around here and there and go to people who want money. And you also lose your devotion.

Whatever path you want to follow, follow that one path; follow one master; have one name and one form. Swami does not force anyone to do this or that. That is your source, it is not by force. That is real Divinity. I don't want anything from you. Swami wants only your love, love, love. That is pure love. That is the biggest value. It is worth millions of rupees. Materials are less valuable. Love is invaluable. Have that valuable love. If you go to any sacred place, wherever they demand money from you, don't stay there. That is not real spirituality. Real spirituality is only love to love, heart to heart. If you develop this type of devotion, you really get spiritual peace.

You are all very good people. You have come with great aspirations. You are living in so much discomfort. You are spending a lot of money. But you are unable to get enough commensurate peace and joy. The reason is your fickleness of mind. Don't have that fickleness. Swami's grace is abundant. You think Swami is not talking to you and you get worried about it. Puttaparthi or here, Swami doesn't waste his time. He grants interviews both morning and evening, but the crowd is so big - how can he help you? Have a heart-to-heart relation. When the time comes, Swami will speak to you.

Without worrying, with love, think of God. Don't have too many connections. Have only limited relations. Only say what is necessary. Don't talk too much on the road; it is not good. Other people mistake your thinking. If you are quiet, that silence itself is God. In that silence, you can develop your heart (love) properly. You get expansion of love. Talking leads to contraction of love. Contraction of love is death. Expansion of love is life. Therefore, cultivate love. Love everybody.

Have limits

But have a limit; without limit, there is no happiness. What is the temperature of the body? 98.4. That is a perfectly normal temperature. 99 degrees means that a fever is starting. For blood pressure, 80/120 is perfect normal. 90 means there is heart trouble. Similarly for eye power, you can see only one intensity of light. With too much intensity of light, the retina gets burned. Life is nothing but a limited company. You have to live within limits. Talk limited.

See limitedly. Eat limitedly. If you are within limits, it is safe.

Divine Discourse April 1991 9 See no evil; see what is good. Hear no evil; hear what is good. Talk no evil; talk what is good. Think no evil; think what is good. Do no evil; do what is good. This is the way to God.

Bad thoughts, bad looking, bad doing - these are animal and not human qualities. With bad thoughts, you cannot get human qualities. Don't say bad things. Don't talk evil. Don't hurt anybody.

Always be happy. Happiness is nothing but union with God. What is the secret of happiness? The secret of happiness is not doing what one likes but liking what one has to do. You have to know the right path. Swami's grace is abundantly there. He is always experiencing your love. Swami has no aversion. Swami is there for you, and you are also there for Swami: Have these two connections properly connected.

[Swami now talks to a few people in the audience.]

(Speaking to someone) You are wasting money, wasting energy, wasting time. Time waste is life waste. Time is very important. Don't waste time. Whenever you have time, sit down and think of God. Think in whatever way you want. Be spiritual. Don't think of marriages and this and that. What happiness is there in married life? There is no happiness at all there. 5 minutes happiness per day; 23 hours and 55 minutes of worry (lots of laughter).

Many things cannot be disclosed to others. They are worried within themselves. There is no happiness.

If you want to get married, I don't say no. Be happy. But don't go from one to the other to the other. The human heart is a single sofa, not a double sofa, not a musical chair. One wife, one husband. Suppose wife dies, he can have a

second wife; otherwise, no. Tat is real character. Life is three-fourths character. No character, without character life is a living death. Develop that character. Boy, where do you come from, Argentina? "Yes Sir." What do you want? "Peace of mind." Peace of mind! I told you about peace of mind. Remove the ego and desires. Too much desires. Look at it. What can I do? Good boy.

What is that ring? Marriage ring? "Yes sir." Where is your wife? "Outside." Always fighting, fighting, fighting. Yes, I know. Jesus said, "You are one." You want peace. Because there is no peace." Don't worry. Come on. (Swami materializes a ring for the man and puts it on his finger.) Be happy.

Am I giving you trouble? "No." No. Are you happy? "Yes." Always happy life, healthy life, peaceful life, divine life. (Pointing to a man and wife) Don't fight with here. Because of a lot of doubts, misunderstandings, â€¦; Yes, I now, I know. Sometimes she is crying. I know. â€¦; Don't do that, boy. Long journey, life is a long journey. â€¦; Be adjusting and understanding. It's very important. Are all happy here? "Yes!" Be always happy.

Some people sing a song, bhajan ? (The audience sings a bhajan .) Today evening, Thursday, any group, today for this bhajan ? Practice. Practice. â€¦; 4:30. All come here, do bhajan . Bhajan is a very important thing. It is a high road to God, a royal road. Very very very happy.