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1. Divinity protects and safeguards man

Date: 14 January 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi, Sports Meet

If you cannot achieve what you want, do not waver or get depressed. He is a realised one who is cheerful in the face of all adversities.

[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love! Students - Boys and Girls!

"Ekamsena Sthitham Jagat (the whole universe is based on one aspect of divinity)." Just as the sun's rays do not exist in the absence of the sun, so also the world cannot exist without divinity, the primordial basis. Here on this table you find a flower, a cup, a mike, and a handkerchief. The word 'is' is used to connote the existence of all these items. Here the emphasis is on the word 'is'. There is a picture, there is a pot and there is a person. The word is proves their existence.

This 'is' explains the principle of divinity in full. The shakti (power), leelas (divine play), and the effulgence of God are limitless. The five elements are responsible for the protection and sustenance of the world. The first element, the earth, is the basis for mountains and hills, rivers and oceans, villages and cities, and forests. You can very well imagine the immense power of the earth, which supports all these.

Power of the elements

The earth is endowed with infinite power. Scientists have discovered that the earth rotates. True. Logically speaking, the rivers, oceans, mountains, villages, and cities should also rotate when the earth, the basis, rotates. It is not so in reality. It is only the earth that rotates. The railway track is the basis

for the train to move. If the track also starts moving, what would be the plight of the passengers? From this, it can be inferred that the track is the adhara (basis) and the train, the adheya (the object based on it). The table is the basis (adhara) for the mike -adheya- to rest upon. Make an effort to understand the relationship between the support (adhara) and the supported object (adheya). The earth, which is the repository of all powers (electrical, magnetic, etc.) forms the basis, sustains, and protects all the objects on it. There is no power that is not present in the earth. The earth is able to support all the beings on it because of its infinite power.

Seen or unseen, water, the second element, is present all over the earth. It is water that sustains the life principle of humanity. It supports life on earth and is responsible for the evolution of life.

The third element, agni (fire), is also all-pervasive. It is present in the form of jataragni in the human body. It is this jataragni that maintains the temperature of the human body at 98.4 degrees Fahrenheit. There is fire even in the ocean. That is termed as badabagni. There is fire even in trees. When two branches rub against each other, fire is generated. Fire is immanent even in a stone. Fire emerges when two stones are struck against each other. Investigations on these lines will reveal that there is no place without fire.

Similarly, the fourth and fifth elements vayu (wind) and the akasha (ether) are also all-pervasive. The akasha is the basis for all. It is the origin of sound. In fact, all the other elements originated from akasha.

Therefore, we can conclude that the divine power, which is omnipresent and omnipotent, is present in all the five elements. When the five elements themselves are so powerful, how much greater the power of God should be! Though the five elements, which are essentially divine, are present in man, he is in quest of divine power, which he feels is present elsewhere. These powers are insignificant for God, who is aware of the past, present, and future. So, make an attempt to understand the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent nature of God.

Swami has no body attachment

The whole world is also a conglomeration of the five elements. The world cannot exist in the absence of even one of the elements. Whether you see them or not, the five elements are present everywhere. Here is a small example. Though air is invisible and intangible, it is everywhere. Similarly, divinity is invisible and intangible, yet is omnipresent. Without realising the divinity within him, man becomes egotistic and feels that all his accomplishments are due to his education, intelligence, and physical prowess. But, in reality, it is the divinity that protects and safeguards man at every step from womb to tomb. No one has the power to protect one's own self. It is only the divine power and divine will that enables man to protect himself. Only divinity has free will, none else.

Whatever God says or does is for the welfare of humanity. God is selfless. There is no trace of selfishness in God. What is the benefit accruing to the sun by rising and setting? None at all. Sunrise and sunset are for the benefit of mankind. It enables man to discharge his duties during the day and rest during the night. Similarly, every act of God is for the benefit of mankind, not for His own.

As Narasimhamurthi pointed out, Kasturi once urged Me not to neglect this body in the process of saving a devotee. I replied, "This body has come for the sake of devotees and shall be utilised for doing anything and everything for their welfare." Body attachment is human and total detachment is divine. Attachment to the body is responsible for all suffering and misery. Since God does not have any body attachment He does not attach any importance to the suffering of His body. Once He assumes a body, many things are bound to happen to the body. Whatever happens is for the welfare of the whole world.

Students' Safety Pleases Swami

Students, both boys and girls, are very good. Students participate in various activities, be it academic or sports, only with a desire to please and satisfy

Swami. I am very well aware of this fact. No doubt, students strive to please Swami and make Him happy. But, they do not enquire what actually pleases and satisfies Him and makes Him happy. Will Swami be pleased if you display your valour by jumping through a ring of fire or for that matter from a lorry moving at a high speed? Will it satisfy Swami if you display your courage by doing dare-devil stunts on motor bikes like jumping over 10-20 people lying on the ground? I am pleased when you are safe and sound and the audience are pleased and happy with your performance. He is the blessed one who conducts himself in a manner in which neither he is hurt nor others. You should be safe and secure and at the same time desist from activities, which cause apprehensions in others. This is what I want. I am pleased with nidarsana and not with pradarsana (exhibitionism). Even a small action done with a heart full of love pleases Me.

What happened on the Sports Meet day?

While returning from Bangalore (in the month of December), I instructed the Warden not to bring the boys for the Sports Meet. They attributed various reasons to this word of Mine. There may be many reasons (karana) but what I am interested in is the action (karya). After coming over here, I told the Vice Chancellor that I do not object to boys participating in various sports and games such as badminton, tennis, volleyball, etc. At the same time, I cautioned him to ensure that no harm is caused either to the participants or to the audience during the course of the programme scheduled for 11 January.

Students are tender hearted, full of noble feelings and love for Swami. They planned various programmes with a view to please Me. I was very well aware of the impending danger. But, students were not receptive to My words. I felt there was no point in advising them in such a situation. Only when they face the consequences of disobeying My command will they realise the value of My words. Till this moment nobody is aware of what exactly happened on the morning of January 11. They said that the Sports Meet was a grand success. I am also happy when you are successful. Students performed extremely well. Each contributed to the success of this event based on his capacities and

capabilities How Swami protected the students That morning, as I entered the stadium, I spotted two lorries. Immediately, I could visualise the danger lurking in the corner. I saw the lorries with huge scaffolding placed over them. The boys planned to perform a few acrobatic feats on them. I knew that one of the rods was not fitted properly and was about to give in. If the were to happen, the boys would suffer a major head and spinal injury. I willed the boys should be saved and decided to take it upon Myself.

Prior to this, one boy had suffered a spinal injury and had been admitted to the Manipal Hospital in Bangalore. Without any delay, I arranged for an ambulance to shift the boy to the hospital in Bangalore and gave 10,000 rupees to defray the immediate expenditure. I also ensured that our doctor accompanied him. Parents shed tears of gratitude when they came to know of the love showered by Swami on their son.

The doctor said that the boy would not be able to sit or lie down as his spinal column was badly damaged. I told him, "Don' t entertain any misgivings. Do as I say." Miraculously, by the time the boy reached the hospital, he could sit. He could sit on the bed in the hospital. He regained sensation in all his limbs, which were numb till then. No danger whatsoever. He was protected because of My infinite mercy and boundless grace. I willed that such an untoward incident should not recur. Once the spinal column is fractured, it is impossible to set it right. All students should be safe and secure. I have repeatedly declared that students are My property. I consider student welfare as My welfare and their happiness as My happiness. I never think of My happiness and My comfort. My one concern is that the students should not be disappointed or put to any inconvenience.

A day before the Sports Meet, I had instructed four boys to surround the chariot and keep a vigil. They are also full of love and devotion for Swami. But I noticed that none of them was present at that spot. Nobody is to be blamed. No one does this deliberately. Swami is the very life-breath of the students. I asked for the chariot to be stopped. A senior devotee was driving the chariot with all sincerity, love and devotion. He stopped the vehicle in accordance with My command. Just when I was about to speak to the Vice-Chancellor, he

accidentally lifted his foot from the clutch. That resulted in a jerk and I fell down in the chariot. As a result, I suffered injuries on my head, hand, and spinal column. What the boys had to face, I took it upon Myself.

A Glimpse of Swami's Divinity

Many men and women were seated in the gallery, but I took care that none noticed My injuries. I pretended as though nothing had happened. The Vice Chancellor was worried, thinking that Swami was unable to get up. I knew that any further delay would cause anxiety in the minds of devotees. So, I immediately got up, forgetting the pain, and started blessing the devotees waving My hands. The pain was very severe, and the cut on My hand was so deep as though it was pierced with a knife. Actually the sleeve of the robe covering My hand should have been torn before I got the injury. But the cloth was not torn at all. This incident gives you a glimpse of the infinite power of Divinity.

I found Myself in an awkward situation. I had to walk up to the dais without My injuries being noticed. So I willed that no one should notice My injuries, lest they should become anxious. I walked up to the dais and took My seat. But in the meanwhile the dhoti below the robe was drenched in blood. Concerned that the devotees may get to know of this, I walked into the bathroom discreetly. The available towels were insufficient to wipe the oozing blood. I did not want to leave the bloodstained towels in the bathroom, lest someone should notice them. Though there was excruciating pain, I washed the towels Myself with soap, squeezed them and put them up for drying. Under no circumstances do I reveal My suffering, pain, and fatigue.

Some boys were curious to know why I went to the bathroom repeatedly. I replied, "Why are you concerned? It is My job." Usually, I go to the bathroom only twice a day, morning and evening. Since it was bleeding profusely, I had to go to the bathroom five or six times in that short duration.

In the meantime, two students came and prayed that the flag may be hoisted. When I got down from the chair, the sensation was such that it seemed as

though I was subjected to electric shock. I smiled at My own Divine leela. I could not stand firmly on the ground. I thought I should not be deluded by the attachment to the body and walked forward smilingly to hoist the flag. Then I lighted the lamp. I found Myself in an embarrassing situation. I could not sit in any posture comfortably. When I exhort all devotees to give up body attachment, I should set an example Myself in this regard. Saying this to Myself, I conducted Myself accordingly.

The Primary School children performed extremely well and desired to have a photograph with Me. Acceding to their prayers I walked up to them to be photographed, as I did not want to disappoint them. Subsequently, I had to walk up to the playground five more times to be photographed with the remaining students. In this manner, I detached Myself from the body. My body was numb. There was no sensation whatsoever. My head was reeling. I resolved to make them happy no matter what happened to the body. I decided to keep this to Myself. Concerned that the bloodstains may be visible while returning to the dais from the playground, I ascended the steps leading directly to My seat. Is it possible for a human being to conceal such a major injury from the public gaze for a long time being amidst such a huge gathering? No. I was seated on the chair for five long hours.

Comprehend the nature of divinity

I am relating all this so that students and devotees may comprehend the nature of divinity. Anyone in My predicament would not have been in a position to sit in the chair even for a second. It would have been impossible even to put a step forward. It was as though the electric shock was piercing My body. It is the electric current that gives shock, but when I am the current Myself, where is the question of Myself being subjected to shock? With that feeling, I sat through the whole proceedings and returned to the mandir.

The Central Trust members followed Me, but they were not aware of what had happened to Me. I asked them to have their food. The senior devotee who drove the chariot apologised for what had happened. I told him, "Why do you worry about the past? Past is past. I am happy. Do not worry about Me." All of

them had their lunch. After the lunch, it started bleeding again. Students and band boys were waiting outside for photographs.

Again I went into the bathroom to wipe the blood. Noting this Indulal Shah cried out, "Swami, what is this?" I told him lovingly, "Indulal Shah, whatever had to happen to the body has happened." Saying so, I showed him My injury. All of them cried out in agony. They noticed blood all over the body. I told them that I would not reveal anything in future if they expressed their sorrow like this. No one knew about it until I reached the mandir.

Whatever is bound to happen will happen

Likewise, I take upon Myself the untold suffering of students and devotees at various points of time in order to protect them. No one is responsible for this mishap. You may find fault with one individual or the other, but no one is to be blamed for this. Whatever had to happen happened. That's all.

You are bound to experience the pain and pleasure that you are destined to even if you hide yourself in a dense forest. When the time comes, your body is bound to perish, in spite of utmost precautions.

[Telugu Proverb]

Even mighty emperors and kings who had taken all precautionary measures had to give up their body at the appointed hour. Whatever is bound to happen will happen. One should not resist this unduly.

January is the first month of the New Year. If you experience happiness in the beginning, you will be happy throughout. Start early, drive slowly and reach safely. The year Pramadi (Telugu New Year) is fast approaching. There will be dangers in all fields. This is an indication of the forthcoming dangers. No one needs to worry about My welfare. I can do anything and everything. Here is a

small example.

How Krishna protected Arjuna in the war

During the Mahabharata war, Krishna was the charioteer of Arjuna. Bhishma was shooting arrows at Arjuna. Krishna diverted these and all other arrows aimed at Arjuna toward Himself, protecting Arjuna in the process. As a result, every arrow wounded Krishna and He was bleeding profusely. Since Krishna was the charioteer, He had to receive instructions from Arjuna regarding the direction in which the chariot should move. In those days, there were no indicators like left and right as we have today. Therefore, Arjuna had to press the region beside the right eye of Krishna with his iron shoe to indicate that the chariot should move to the right. Similarly, he had to press the region beside the left eye to indicate to Krishna to turn the chariot to the left. Consequently, Krishna's face was also bleeding.

The whole body of Krishna was drenched in blood. No one observed this, since it was wartime and all were busy in discharging their duties and also due to the fact that Krishna was seated at a place much lower than that of Arjuna. Therefore, only Arjuna could be seen and not Krishna.

Krishna protected Arjuna as promised by Him earlier. When Arjuna and Duryodhana approached Krishna for help before the war, Duryodhana opted for Krishna's seven-lakh strong army, whereas Arjuna preferred Krishna to the army. Then Krishna assured him, "Arjuna, you don't need to fear. The army is comparable to the compartment of a train, whereas I am the engine." Compartments can move only when the engine pulls them. So, do not worry, the engine is with you, Arjuna." Arjuna also responded saying "Krishna, it is enough if you are with me." Therefore, all the dangers that were to befall Arjuna were taken by Krishna upon Himself. Many such incidents of God protecting His devotees have taken place in the past.

Follow the divine command, be safe and secure

So, whatever happened on that day was entirely due to My Will. Neither the

students nor anyone else are responsible for this. Every day, the students used to enquire as to why I was walking so slowly. I told them, "I don't have enough place to run, if only it was there I am ready even to run." I was conversing with them with a smile on My face. I am narrating this episode only to affirm the fact that I go to any extent to protect My devotees who obey My commands. When I returned to the mandir, I called those four boys. They noticed My injuries and were crestfallen. I chided them for not obeying My command. I asked them, "Why were you not present there at that time as commanded by Me? If only you had obeyed My command, this incident would not have occurred." I told them not to feel sorry about it.

All those things that were destined to happen during the course of this year have already happened. So, follow the divine command, be safe and secure, and earn a good name for the institution and make your parents happy.

Free food for seva dal

Tomorrow marks the commencement of holy Uttarayana. It is for this auspicious moment that Bhishma waited for fiftysix long days lying on a bed of arrows to give up his mortal coil. Tomorrow, the sun begins its northward journey, which is most auspicious. In olden days, people used to sing songs describing the arrival of Sankranti:

The sun appeared cool and serene,
The day started getting shorter,
The cold wind blew fiercely,
The fields were filled with golden harvest.
The farmers rejoiced in singing at night With the moon shining bright.
The buds of flowers blossomed Like garlands of pearls
On the banks of rivers;
Chillies were looking red, Farmers were bringing home
The newly harvested grain, Hailing the advent of
The joyous festival of Sankranti.

Telugu Poem

Whatever I will has to happen and none can come in My way. I would like to mention one more point. Last year, on the 19th of November, all the ladies gathered to celebrate Ladies Day. They said, "Swami, we are wearing the saris gifted by You and experiencing the bliss of Your divine presence. What can we do in return to express our gratitude to You? Please give us a chance to serve You." I replied, "You don't need to do anything. Be always happy. That is enough." But some of them pleaded that they be given a chance to provide food to the seva dal, who are coming in large numbers from various parts of the country to render service in Prasanthi Nilayam.

I assured them that I had already willed it and that it would materialise in a short time. I have willed that the seva dal should be provided good food entirely free of cost for all the 365 days of the year. Every day we have about 3000 seva dals here. They will have very good food. I have already made arrangements for this. I have got the sheds put up. All the necessary items like gas cylinders, utensils, plates, spoons, rice, dals, etc., have already been procured. None is aware of this. Sathya Sai is a silent worker. From tomorrow onward food will be served to seva dal free of cost forever.

Travel concessions for seva dal

Then I summoned the members of the Central Trust and asked them what work they were doing. What is the use of occupying high positions if you do not discharge your duties sincerely? People from all walks of life and from different strata of society are coming to serve as seva dal every year. I may give them food free of cost, but who will bear their travel expenses? The railway fare is increasing day by day. In olden days, just 20 rupees were enough to reach Madras from here, but these days even 200 rupees are insufficient. I commanded them to approach the railway authorities for travel concession for the seva dal. I talk sweetly but at the same time I am stern

when it comes to the question of discharging one' s duty. I told them either you do this work or resign.

The Central Trust members have negotiated with the railway authorities and got the travel concessions sanctioned for seva dal. Due to the effect of Kali Age, people have become selfish. This selfishness makes them lazy. So, they plunge into action only when told strictly. The railway authorities were very happy. They thanked Me saying, "Swami, it is our good fortune that we got an opportunity to serve Your devotees." Not only this. In order to ensure that the seva dal and devotees reach Prasanthi Nilayam without any inconvenience, the Central Government has sanctioned 50 crore rupees for the construction of a railway station near the petrol pump. We will have trains connecting Penukonda, Dharmavaram, and Puttaparthi. The other day, the officials of the railway department had a meeting in Delhi and arrived at this decision. Everybody should be able to reach Prasanthi Nilayam comfortably for Swami's 75th birthday. One may board a train in Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Hyderabad, etc. to reach Prasanthi Nilayam.

Unprecedented marvels!

Once upon a time, this Puttaparthi was a small hamlet, with a population of barely 100 people. In such a small village as this, who would expect a university, an airport, a super specialty hospital, and a railway station to come up in such a short period of time? All these things are happening during the lifetime of the Avatar, which is unprecedented in the history of mankind. During the time of no other Avatar were such stupendous tasks achieved in such a short period of time. Many more wonderful things are going to happen. Today you are able to see Me from close quarters. But after some time, you may have to see Me from a distance of a few miles.

So, make the best use of the divine proximity of Sai. Once you lose this precious chance to serve the Lotus Feet, you will never regain it. Sai confers devotion, power, and ultimately liberation on you. Never get misguided by the words of others. Keep this in mind and redeem yourself.

I had taken upon Myself this suffering only for your sake, and in response to your prayers I have decided to cure Myself now for your sake. Do not give room for any anxiety. Now Swami is 100% perfect, perfect, perfect.

Follow Swami's command, earn a good name, secure good marks, and set an ideal to the rest of the world. That is what I want. In addition to more facilities for the volunteers, we are making efforts to provide adequate accommodation for the devotees by constructing 100 more sheds. To provide accommodation to the foreigners, a suitable piece of land of 150 acres has been acquired on the hillock. On the 75th birthday, who knows where one would be placed? But, if you have Swami's grace, you belong to Swami, wherever you may be. Swami is always with you. Never entertain the feeling that Swami will be away from you. Have firm faith in Swami.

Spirituality is the sole remedy

Students! In future, you can conduct your programmes without hindrance. In the coming year, you can organise the Sports Meet in ways more grand than this. I will not put any brake on your activities. But in certain aspects, you must follow My commands. It is for your good and not Mine. Be safe and secure and lead an ideal spiritual life.

Today we find restlessness, anxiety and worry prevalent everywhere. Spirituality is the only solution to all these ills of society. Due to lack of spirituality, man is a victim of depression and disease. Diseases are the products of the mind, not the body. Lack of peace of mind results in depression, which in turn leads to disease. Develop physical strength, have faith in God, experience bliss and share it with your fellow beings.

Whatever may happen, never give up spirituality. It is only devotion to God that protects Bharath, nothing else. Distance yourself from animal qualities and develop human qualities and be one with the divine. How can you understand divinity when you are not able to understand the importance of human values? First practice human values, then divinity manifests itself. Take to the path of spirituality, and go to the four corners of the country

propagating spiritual ideals and strive for the welfare of the world at large.

Be always happy ... from tomorrow.

2. Cultivate love in your heart

Date: 14 February 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

One who cultivates the crop of love in the field of one's heart is a true Christian, a true Sikh, a true Hindu and a true Muslim. In fact, he is a true human being on earth who cultivates love in his heart.

[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the life breath of man. It is the consciousness in all the beings. It is the goal of human life. Human life is suffused with love. Unable to comprehend the eternal principle of love, man is weighed down by the physical, worldly worries and anxieties.

There is the principle of Hiranyagarbha within every individual. Hiranya means gold. When gold is mixed with other metals such as copper, silver, brass, it loses its brilliance, value, and identity. Then it becomes impossible to ascertain whether it is gold or silver or brass or copper. Similarly, man's heart, which is Hiranmaya, is losing its brilliance, value, and identity on account of its association with vishaya vasanas (sensual desires). Consequently, it is impossible to ascertain whether one is a human being or an animal or a devil or a demon.

Life devoid of love is a devil's life

There is no love at all in human beings today. Life devoid of love is a devil's life. Can a man be called a human being if he has qualities of devils, demons, and beasts? Man is leading the life of a demon, unaware of the path of truth, righteousness, peace, and love. God has not created creatures such as devils

and evil spirits. These are the creations of man.

Here is a small example. During the exile of the Pandavas, Krishna visited them to enquire about their welfare. He spent a night with them. The Pandavas had to undergo untold suffering during the period of their exile. Since they had Draupadi also with them, the Pandavas would keep vigil in turns for one hour each every night. Krishna also volunteered to keep vigil for one hour.

Dharmaraja wondered, "When You are the protector of the entire universe, what is the meaning in Your offering to do security duty for an hour to protect us?" But at the same time he cautioned Krishna saying, "Krishna, beware of the devil in the vicinity. My brothers and I encounter it every night. On many occasions, it tried to attack us. Therefore, we pray to you to desist from this act. You have come to enquire about our welfare. It is not proper on our part to put you in danger. So kindly take rest." Krishna replied, "Dharmaraja, is this what you have understood of My divinity? On the one hand, you extol Me as the protector of the entire universe and on the other you are apprehensive that I cannot protect Myself. You are worried that the demon will harm Me. Rest assured that no demon can touch Me. Therefore, permit Me also to join you all in doing the security duty." Having completed one hour's duty, Krishna sat on a rock smiling to Himself. Thereafter it was Arjuna's turn. He rushed to Krishna, a bit worried thinking that the demon might have attacked Him. Seeing Krishna smiling, Arjuna fell at His feet and enquired whether He had vanquished the demon.

Krishna replied, "Arjuna, I have never created demons and evil spirits. Then, how can the non-existent demons appear in the forest? The demon you are referring to is not a demon at all. It is just a reflection of the evil qualities within you such as hatred, anger and jealousy, etc. The anger in you is manifesting in the form of a demon. Its power is increasing in proportion to the intensity of anger in you." Good and bad are man's own creations. The evil qualities of man are the real demons troubling him today. Man is under the mistaken notion that demons exist and that they are responsible for his suffering. These are all nothing but creation of his imagination and

psychological fears. In fact, it is only man who puts another man to suffering. There are no demons and evil spirits in this creation.

Arjuna realised the truth of Krishna's words and thereafter did not encounter any demon. Arjuna was beholden to Krishna for opening his eyes. He fell at His feet and expressed his gratitude. Good and bad are man's own creations.

After Buddha became a renunciant, he traveled far and wide. People were wonder-struck to see his brilliant and handsome form. Attracted by his effulgence, a lady named Ambashali approached him and said, "O great one, you look like a prince in ochre robes. May I know the reason behind your donning ochre robes at this young age?" Buddha replied that he had taken to the path of renunciation in order to seek the solutions to three problems: "This body, which is young and handsome, is bound to become old at some point of time and will be subjected to sickness and will perish ultimately. I want to know the cause of old age, sickness and death." Impressed by his quest for truth, she invited him for lunch. In no time, the entire village came to know of this. The villagers started coming to Buddha one by one and requested him not to accept her invitation, since she was a woman of bad character. Buddha listened to all their complaints patiently.

Then he smiled and asked the village headman, "Do you also affirm that she is a woman of bad character?" The village headman replied, "Not once, but a thousand times I will vouch for the evil character of Ambashali. Please do not visit her house." Holding the headman's right hand, Buddha asked him to clap. The headman said that he could not do so as one of his hands was in Buddha's hold and it was not possible for anyone to clap with a single hand.

Buddha replied, "Likewise, Ambashali cannot be bad by herself unless there are men of bad character in this village. If all the men in this village were good, this woman would not have turned bad. Therefore, it is men and their money that are responsible for the bad character of Ambashali." Saying so, he wanted to know if there was any individual in that gathering without any trace of evil in him, so that he could visit his house for lunch. No one came forward. Then Buddha said, "When there are so many bad men in the village, it is not

proper to point an accusing finger at one woman. She turned bad due to bad company." That is why it is said, "Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are." Realising their folly, the people fell at Buddha's feet and sought his forgiveness. Since then they started treating Ambashali as one amongst them. Inspired by the teachings of Buddha, Ambashali also took to the path of renunciation and led a pious life.

No one else is responsible for the good and bad in an individual. Each one is responsible for their own good and bad. Who is good, who is bad? First eliminate all that is bad in you and then imbibe all that is good. It is a sin to accuse others when there is a mountain of evil within you. The same sentiment was echoed by Jesus.

He is true human being who sees only good in others

Man today is not making an attempt to recognise the innumerable faults in him; instead he is magnifying the minutest faults in others. In fact, he is searching for mistakes in others with a thousand eyes. This is the sad state of man today. Man is losing his true identity because he has allowed the evil qualities to enter his heart. People today are more interested in finding others' faults rather than seeing their merits. He is a true human being who sees only good in others.

He is a true Christian, a true Sikh, a true Hindu, a true Muslim, who cultivates love in the field of his heart. Unfortunately, today no one is sowing the seeds of love in his heart. Then how do you expect the harvest of love? How do you call a person a true Hindu if there is no love in him? When the members of the Viswa Hindu Parishad came to Me, I asked them the meaning of the word 'Hindu'. Many answers came forth. One said, the word 'Hindu' refers to a person with compassion and righteousness. I asked them for the spelling of the word Hindu in English. They replied H-I-N-D-U. Then I told them: H stands for Humanity, I for Individuality, N for Nationality, D for Divinity, and U for Unity.

A true Hindu is one who embodies these qualities in him. Love is the

underlying principle in all these five qualities. A true Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian should be the embodiment of love. Muslims pray "Allah Ho Akbar," which means God is great.

Islam means peace. So, a true Muslim is one who leads a peaceful life. Peace originates from a heart that is full of love. Without love one cannot be peaceful. So, for any caste, creed or religion, love is the basis. Love is sivam and mangalam, which means auspiciousness. Love does not hurt anyone. That which does not hurt is referred to as savam (corpse). The one with love is Sivaswarupa (embodiment of auspiciousness).

Do not distort scriptural teachings

Today we are celebrating Sivarathi. What does it mean? Ratri (night) is associated with darkness. The Vedas declare, "Chandrama Manaso Jatha, Chaksho Suryo Ajayatha (the moon was born out of the mind and the sun out of the eyes of the Purusha)." Moon is the presiding deity of the mind. So, mind should be pure and unsullied. There is an immense significance in every statement of Vedanta. Confusion prevails when these are misunderstood.

There is a practice of sacrificing innocent and dumb animals such as goats, sheep, etc., on this day in the name of yajna and yaga. One day, a noble soul noticed some animals being taken in a grand procession. On enquiry, he was informed that they were being taken to the sacrificial altar. He asked the owner of the animals what benefit was derived from sacrificing the animals. The reply was that the animals would attain liberation as a result of being offered to God.

Then the noble soul said, "O man, your mother, your father, your wife and your son - all crave for liberation. Why don't you sacrifice them and fulfill their desire in the process? Why don't you grant liberation to the people who aspire for it instead of the innocent animals, which do not know what liberation means? If you firmly believe that sacrifice grants liberation, then why don't you sacrifice your parents, your wife and your children?" Attachment leads to suffering Today, some people advocate the need for bhajans, charity, and

service, saying that they confer moksha (liberation). If they really believe in what they are saying, why don't they practice what they preach? It is easy to preach, but difficult to practice. Moha kshayam is moksham. (Total detachment is liberation). Attachment leads to suffering. So first and foremost, give up attachment.

Prior to their marriage, even if the girl is down with a serious ailment the boy is least affected. Subsequent to the marriage, if the girl develops a mild fever, the boy is extremely concerned. What is the reason for this? It is attachment. Before the marriage, there was no relationship between the two whatsoever. But after the marriage, the boy feels that she is his wife. It is only this attachment that is the cause of all suffering. The closer we move towards attachment, the farther we drift from liberation. Attachment should be within certain limits.

One who is immersed neck deep in water may be able to speak, but not a person who is totally immersed. Likewise, a person who is immersed in divinity completely will have no words to describe the glory of God. Only those who have understood God only partially will try to describe Him in various ways. You should immerse yourself completely in divine feelings and pure love. It is due to lack of love that there are today conflicts between individuals, villages, states, and countries.

Pravritti marga and nivritti marga

Vedanta declares, " Know thyself." A person who follows pravritti marga (outward path) is interested in collecting information about others and their whereabouts. He keeps asking others "Who are you?" "Where do you come from?" etc. A person who treads along nivritti marga (inward path) looks within and enquires, "Who am I?" "Where do I come from?" Nivritti marga is positive and pravritti marga is negative in nature.

How can you expect positive results when your heart is full of negative feelings? External is the reflection of the internal. You will reap what you sow. Having eaten mango, how can you expect the belch of a cucumber? So, in

order to get positive results you should fill your heart with positive feelings. Love, peace, and compassion, which originate from the heart, are positive in nature. All the negative thoughts are the products of the head.

Science and technology are associated with the head. Today technology has become 'tricknology', because you are traversing along the negative path. What is the use of having high intelligence in the absence of positive qualities?

Man today has acquired all forms of knowledge, yet he does not know himself.

In spite of having acquired various forms of knowledge,

A mean-minded person cannot give up his evil qualities.

All this worldly knowledge bolsters excessive argumentation,

But not total awareness.

After all, one has to die in spite of acquiring all the worldly knowledge.

So, study that which makes you immortal.

[Telugu Poem]

Today as the acquisition of worldly knowledge is on the rise, noble qualities in the heart are on the decline. What is the use of ten acres of barren land? A small piece of fertile land is better than ten acres of barren land. Develop at least one noble quality, which emerges from the heart instead of ten from the head. All the thoughts that emerge out of the head are useless. Most of the activities of the scientists are based on the head rather than on the heart.

Students are well aware of the fact that it was Newton who discovered the existence of the gravitational force. As a result of excessive dependence on head, Newton had to spend five years in a mental hospital before his death. So, you should not overstrain your head.

Today students spend most of their time in studies. While traveling in the car many a time, I have noticed small children carrying big load of books on their backs. You yourself can imagine the plight of the young children who have to stuff their heads with lots of information contained in the books. As result, their tender hearts are being polluted with unnecessary information. So, your studies also should be within certain limits. Only then you can retain your intelligence and memory power.

Worst of sins is to search for mistakes in others

The feelings that emerge out of the heart are immortal and nectarine. But are you making use of at least one of them? It is enough if you can develop peace. Everyday at the conclusion of the bhajan session, you chant santhi (peace) three times, but there is no trace of santhi in you. Even if there is the slightest disturbance caused by the person sitting beside you, you feel irritated and your tone of santhi becomes harsh, due to anger. Even while chanting santhi, there is no trace of santhi in you!

How do you expect to experience peace if you do not cultivate love in the field of your heart? Instead of cultivating love, you are cultivating the evil qualities of jealousy and hatred. If someone criticises you, do not take it to heart; consider that it is for your own good. It is the worst of sins to search for mistakes in others. In the first instance, correct your mistakes accept the good in others.

If you do not grow the harvest of love in your heart, you are not a true Christian, true Sikh, true Hindu or true Muslim. You are a demon in human form. When you develop love in your heart, you are verily God. You become God or demon on the basis of your feelings. Do not find fault in others. Buddha was criticised by many when he accepted the invitation of Ambashali. She alone was not responsible for her character. There were many who encouraged her.

For every act of sin, five persons are mainly responsible. One who commits the sin, one who is the cause, one who encourages the act of sin, one who

shows the ways and means to commit the sin, and one who witnesses it. All five will have to face the consequences.

When Draupadi was being humiliated by Duryodhana and Dussasana in the court, elders like Bhishma and Drona remained as spectators. They did not oppose Duryodhana's heinous act. It is in this context that Vidura has pointed out that not only the sinner but the other four persons mentioned above will also go to hell. Since Bhishma, the one of wisdom, was a silent spectator to the humiliation of Draupadi, he had to lie on the bed of arrows for fifty-six days. Had he prevented the humiliation of Draupadi, he would not have suffered thus.

Plunge yourself in sacred activities

It is rather difficult to say how one gets merit or sin. In order to escape from sin, one should take to the path of spirituality. Knowingly or unknowingly, you commit sin. Consequently, you suffer. You are unable to trace the root cause of your suffering. So, undertake meritorious deeds. Cultivate sacred feelings. Serve your fellow beings. Taking to this path amounts to devotion.

Devotion does not mean performing worship and offering flowers to God. Worship amounts to good actions alone. One should have good thoughts within. One will not be redeemed if one undertakes good actions with bad intentions.

For instance, if someone offers a donation of 10 lakh for a charitable cause, another person may come forward with a donation of 15 lakh only to attract public attention. In reality, he may not give even 10 rupees. Such people are heroes at platform and zeroes in practice. There should be unity in thought,

word, and deed. That is what is meant by "the proper study of mankind is man." This is true humanness.

One should shed only tears of joy, not tears of grief

Embodiments of Love! In order to redeem yourselves, you should grow the harvest of love in the field of your heart; water the field of your heart with love. Water is the very life of man. How can you sanctify your life if you cannot provide at least drinking water to the people who are in need of it? Water is divine. Water in Sanskrit is called naram. Eye is known as nayanam. So, the naram, which comes out of nayanam, should be for the sake of Narayana (God) alone. One should shed only tears of joy, not tears of grief. When do you get tears of joy? Only when you are successful in your endeavours.

You all know that here are many people from Mahaboob Nagar and Medak districts in this gathering. Swami has consented to provide drinking water to these two districts. Many people hailing from these two districts have never seen Swami before. Their joy knew no bounds when they came to know the love and grace showered on them by Swami. Men and women, young and old, were ecstatic. Every week many people from these two districts come to Swami to express their gratitude. You should all plunge into such sacred activities for the benefit of mankind at large.

Sage V yasa declared, "Paropakara punyaya papaya Parapeedanam (help ever, hurt never)." If possible try to help others. Never hurt anyone. Love even your enemies. Never use harsh words and hurt the feelings of others. If you hurt someone today, you will have to suffer ten times more in future.

You will be observing Sivaratri in the true spirit of the term only when you give up bad qualities and cultivate divine love.

Merely observing vigil on Sivaratri is not sufficient. You have to contemplate on God incessantly. Many people claim that they have observed jagarana (vigil) on Sivaratri night by playing cards. The fisherman goes on watching intently to trap the fish in the net. Can this be termed meditation? If one abstains from food on account of quarrel with one's wife, can it be called fasting? No. Similarly, observance of sacred vigil on Sivaratri night is not achieved by playing cards the whole night. You should spend this night chanting the name of God, using the time in doing good deeds.

Follow in My footsteps

You should not waste your valuable time in vain gossip. Instead undertake service activities in villages and slum areas. Provide the basic necessities of life such as food and clothing to the poor and needy. It amounts to the greatest service. I am practising this right from My childhood.

When someone appeared at the doorstep begging for alms, the people in the household would say 'not now, not now,' but I would surreptitiously dole out alms. If anyone needed clothes, I would provide them. The griham ammayi (mother of this body) used to recollect and narrate all these incidents. Believe it or not, I had only one pair of school uniform to be used throughout the year. Everyday after returning from school, I used to don a towel and wash My only dress, put it up for drying, and then press it by using a container with embers as an iron box. When I was provided with a new dress, I used to give My old dress to the poor and needy. The griham abbayi (father of this body) never reprimanded or punished Me. He would compliment Me by saying, "You are a mahathyagi (one of great sacrifice). It is impossible for us to be like You." He would endearingly address Me as Vedanti (philosopher).

The same was the case with griham ammayi. She looked after Me with great love and affection. People used to fall at her feet, pour out their tales of woe and plead with her to recommend their case to Me. But, I used to put her off softly by saying, "Don't worry about others' problems." In spite of this, she used to carry on, saying, "Swami, what is the use of My human birth if I don't help people in distress? My sincere feeling is that they will be relieved of their suffering if I convey their problems and feelings to You. So, I will not refrain from doing this even if you object or scold Me." In this manner, the parents of this body led a very pious and sacred life. The whole clan has benefited from this.

Never blame God for your difficulties

Develop good qualities. Do not give scope for evil by joining bad company. In

this train of life, youngsters are the long distance passengers. The elders may get down at the next station, but you have a long way to go before you reach your destination. First and foremost, you need to have selfconfidence. Today people suffer because of lack of selfconfidence. If you have total faith in God, you will be able to overcome all difficulties. There may be a few difficulties in your way, but do not be unduly perturbed. You should face all hardships with courage and conviction. Only then you will attain true happiness. Never blame God for your difficulties. You are bound to face the consequences, whether good or bad,

of your actions. But if you have God's grace, even bad will be turned into good. So, develop faith in God more and more.

You trust your friend whom you have met only a few years ago, but not God who is with you, in you, around you, throughout your life. You believe in the dhobi and part with your valuable clothes. You are prepared to bend your head in front of the barber. You are prepared to put your life in the hands of the driver. But you do not believe in the omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient divinity. Why can't you bend your head in front of God? There are some evil-minded persons who criticise people for bending their heads before God. Such people will never have the good fortune of bending their heads before God.

The real worth of the human head

One day, King Bhoja was proceeding to a village in his chariot along with his minister. On the way, he found a Buddhist monk coming from the opposite direction. Immediately, he got down from the chariot and paid his respects to him by placing his head on the feet of the monk. The minister did not relish this act of King Bhoja. He said, "O king, how could you keep your most valuable head on the feet of an ordinary monk?" The king waited for an opportune moment to give his reply. One day the king, giving his minister the head of a sheep, a goat, and a human being, asked him to sell them in the market. The minister succeeded in selling the head of the sheep and the goat, but not that of a human being. He returned to the king and said, "O king, no

one is willing to buy this human head." Then the king said, "O minister, do you remember the day when you objected to my falling at the feet of a Buddhist monk saying mine was the most valuable head. At least now you would realise the value of the human head." One should prostrate at the feet of noble souls when one is alive, for even the vultures and dogs do not value human head after death.

Self-confidence cannot be purchased or obtained through learning. It is based on deservedness. Develop the divine thoughts to attain deservedness. In fact, you are the most fortunate people. Otherwise, how could only a few thousand of you have come here when there are millions in this world? Make the best use of this golden opportunity. Follow the divine path. If you have faith in God, He will protect you in the face of all adversities. He is always with you, in you, above you, beside you, around you.

Do not give scope for bad feelings and bad thoughts. Do not criticise anyone. You are well aware of the fact that everyday in the newspapers you find headlines describing the conflicts between various parties. One party criticises and finds faults with the other. They are accumulating sins by doing so. That is why I do not read newspapers. Why should I go through all this? Many people waste so much money buying these newspapers. It is a form of madness. Read good books. Slander is the worst of the sins.

Emergence of Atmalinga

Embodiments of Love!

As pointed out by the Vice Chancellor in his speech, I used to bring out Atmalingams from this body on the occasion of Sivaratri in the earlier years. Lingodbhava (emergence of Linga) used to take place on every Sivaratri. To witness this sacred event, lakhs would gather in a small hall. Consequently, there used to be stampede resulting in injuries to devotees. Due to this, I discontinued Lingodbhava in public.

There is a specific time for this. It may take place at any moment between 8

and 10 in the night. It takes place at the right time irrespective of the place I am in. It is bound to take place. It is natural on Sivaratri night. Those who are fortunate to witness this sacred Lingodbhava are freed from all sins. One must see how it emerges. But, some people may not be able to see this even if they are sitting close by. Witnessing the emergence of the Lingam is of utmost importance. Once it emerges, everyone will be able to see it and it has its own benefits. There are many such important aspects attached to this auspicious occasion.

You will be immensely benefited if you keep awake and sing the glory of God at least on this night. Moon is the presiding deity of the mind. Moon has 16 kalas (phases). On Shivaratri, 15 kalas merge in God and only one remains. By constant remembrance of God, the 16th phase also merges in God. Can you not spend a single night in the whole year singing the glory of God? Sanctify this night by participating in bhajan. The bliss that you get from bhajan, the sweetness you experience in the divine name, the happiness you derive from visualising the divine form cannot be obtained elsewhere. Everything is possible only through love. So, cultivate love and sanctify your life.

3. Manifesting Divinity in Lingodbhava

Date: 15 February 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

He is a realised one who forgets the past, Doesn't worry about the future,
and Discharges his duties in the present.

[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love!

Past is past, future is uncertain, only the present is in our hands. It is the foremost duty of man to live in the present and share his joy with his fellow beings. Truly speaking, the human being is the most fortunate one among all the living beings. Compared to the entire cosmos, man is very small, like an atom; yet he is able to comprehend the magnitude and vastness of the creation, which is very startling indeed. He attains immortality by understanding the unity between the microcosm and macrocosm. As mentioned by Me yesterday, whosoever cultivates the harvest of love in the field of his heart is a true Christian, a true Sikh, a true Hindu and a true Muslim. In fact, he is the true human being on earth.

Love originates from Hiranyagarbha

Man cannot exist without love. This Principle of Love is Hiranyagarbha. This Hiranyagarbha is situated on the right side of the human body, with the physical heart is on the left. The physical heart on the left side has to be left one day or the other, in some circumstance or the other. Hiranyagarbha, located on the right side of the human body is always right. It is immortal, divine, eternal, and all-encompassing. It is present not only in human beings but also in birds, beasts, and all other living beings. The Vedas declare: "Eswara Sarvabhoothanam (God is present in all living beings)," "Isavasyam

Idam Jagat (God pervades the entire cosmos)." Love is the reflection of Hiranyagarbha and originates from it. The three principles of reaction, resound, and reflection have also originated from Hiranyagarbha.

Unable to recognise his true identity, man is wasting his life in this pursuit of temporary, fleeting, transient, and ephemeral pleasures. As I told you yesterday, gold loses its value, brilliance, and identity when it is mixed with different metals such as silver, brass, and copper. So also, the heart, which loses its value, brilliance and identity on account of its association with the impurities of worldly desires. This is the present plight of mankind. Man is behaving like a demon, devil, and a beast because he has forgotten his divine nature. Divine love originates from Hiranyagarbha. This selfless divine love lives by giving and forgiving, whereas selfish love lives by getting and forgetting. Such divine love is essential for man.

Here is a small example to illustrate this. After Ravana was killed in the battle, Hanuman went to Sita and conveyed to her the good news. Sita was overjoyed and started extolling Hanuman thus: "O Hanuman, you are the Puravarashoura (the valiant one), who entered Lanka in the face of all dangers; you are the Bhadrarakama (the performer of acts of valour) who crossed the ocean in a single leap, and you are the Kapi Rajashikamani (the crown jewel of the monkey clan) who fulfilled the command of Rama." But Hanuman did not relish any of these titles conferred on him by Sita.

Sita then said, "O Hanuman, I have not seen a virtuous one like you. There is none equal to you in terms of physical strength in this world." She also conferred the titles of Gunavantha (full of virtues) and Balavantha (full of prowess) on Hanuman. None of these titles pleased Hanuman.

In the end, Sita blessed Hanuman saying, "May Rama love you forever and install Himself in your heart." Then Hanuman leapt in joy. He said, "O mother, there is nothing greater than God's love in this world. I do not crave any title. I pray only for Rama's love. In the absence of the love of Lord Rama, I would not be happy even if the whole world were to come under my control. My life will find fulfillment only when I am the recipient of His love." Such a virtuous,

valiant and ardent devotee like Hanuman craved only the love of Rama, nothing else. So, a sincere devotee should yearn for God's love and love is everything. Human quality lies in kindling love within, speaking with love and acting with love. On this basis, it is said, "The proper study of mankind is man." Controlling the senses is the highest sadhana. Once, a pundit challenged Buddha to enter into a debate with him. The terms were that if he was the loser, he would follow Buddhism along with his 3000 disciples and serve Buddha lifelong. But, if Buddha was the loser, it would be obligatory on his part to become a follower of the pundit.

Buddha smilingly said, "Pundita samadarshina" (a true pundit is one who has equal-mindedness). A true Pundit makes no distinction between the dualities of life, such as pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow. A person with anger and ego is unfit to be called a pundit. In pilgrim centres such as Haridwar, Rishikesh, Badrinath, Kedarnath and Amarnath, you find pandas who give mantras that would grant liberation to the departed souls. These pandas cannot be called pundits. In this world, there are many who have gone through sacred texts. Knowledge of the Self cannot be acquired by mere scholarship or by sitting at the feet of a guru.

True meaning of 'Kavi'

There are many who go through voluminous books, but is there a person who practices at least one teaching? When you spend all your life in reading, when are you going to practice it? Scholarship bereft of practice is futile. The Bhagavad Gita declares: Kavim Puranamanushasitharam (the Supreme Being is all-knowing, Indweller and Ruler of all).

Who is a kavi (poet)? A kavi is one who knows the past, present, and future; not one who merely plays with words. This implies that God alone is kavi (poet).

What is the inner meaning of Purana? Body is pura in which divinity pervades. The divine principle that pervades from top to toe in the body is referred to as Purana. So, God Himself is Purana.

Next comes anushasithara (one who commands and controls). You may imprison a person who has committed a crime, but you cannot prevent his mind from going all over the world.

There is no judge in this world who can punish the mind. It is only God who has the power to command the mind of man. Therefore, God alone is Anushasithara.

Explaining thus, Buddha silenced the pundit and advised him to shun the pride and ego of his scholarship. He told the pundit not to get carried away by the worldly knowledge. He exhorted him to acquire and practice divine knowledge and surrender to God. Buddha said, "I undertook spiritual practice for a long time and went through various sacred texts in quest of knowledge of the Self. Ultimately, I realised that mastering the senses is essential for acquiring knowledge of the Self. The five senses are the gift of God. Make proper use of them. Only then you can realise the Self. What is the use of going through sacred texts and undertaking spiritual practices without proper utilisation of the five senses? I have controlled the five senses and put them on the right path, as a result of which I am experiencing bliss." Nirvana is nothing but merger in bliss. Buddha attained Nirvana by controlling his five senses and making proper use of them. What is Nirvana? It is nothing but merger in bliss. Water bubble is born in water, is sustained in water and ultimately merges in it; likewise, human being is born in bliss, is sustained in bliss and ultimately merges in it. Bliss can be experienced by controlling the five senses. This is the true sadhana. Mere chanting of the Lord's name will not suffice. First and foremost, the senses have to be controlled.

At the time of attaining Nirvana, Buddha saw his cousin, Ananda, shedding tears. He called him near and said, "Ananda, true to your name, you should experience ananda (bliss). You should never shed tears of sorrow. You are the embodiment of ananda. All of us are embodiments of Brahma." Saying so, Buddha put his hand on Ananda and attained Nirvana.

Whoever understands this truth can experience bliss and attain divinity. When attaining liberation is so easy and simple, why do you struggle hard for

it? It only means that you are not making any effort to understand the inner truth. You are mixing the metals of worldly desires with the gold of your heart. As a result, the heart has become polluted and has lost its true identity, i.e. bliss. Ancients have said that bliss lies in visualising and experiencing your true form, that is, the Principle of the Atma. Proper utilisation of the senses will lead to the knowledge of the Atma.

Sage Patanjali said, Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha (control of senses is true yoga). No sadhana is greater than this. All spiritual practices such as japa (chanting the Lord's name) and tapa (penance) will be of no avail if senses are not controlled. You may be under the impression that it is not possible for a human being to control the senses. Here control does not mean total cessation. Discharge your duties as a householder, student or businessman. But whatever you do, do it with a feeling that it is to please God (Sarva Karma Bhagavath Preethyartham). Once you develop this feeling, all your senses will naturally be controlled.

Total faith makes surrender easy

Embodiments of Love! You feel that arptham (total surrender) to God is rather difficult, but according to Me, nothing is easier than this. It may be difficult to make a garland out of flowers or to pluck the petals of a flower, but total surrender to God is easier and simpler than this. You find it difficult because you do not have steady and firm faith in God. God is.

There is no place without God. There is no being without divinity. Each and every being is the embodiment of God.

If you have total faith in this truth, you will never have difficulties. When your faith is defective, you find it difficult to achieve anything. Have faith in God and love Him. Love is God. You are bound to be successful in all your endeavours if you have faith in God. Any task, however difficult it may be, can be accomplished with God's grace.

That is what happened in the case of Hanuman. With Rama's grace he leapt

across the ocean, reached Lanka, and found Sita. He returned to Rama and described the untold suffering of Sita:

"O Rama, please listen to what I say.
I saw Mother Sita surrounded by demons,
shivering like a fear-stricken parrot in a cage."
[Telugu Poem]

On hearing this, Rama and Lakshmana immediately took their bows and arrows. Rama said, "I cannot bear the suffering of Sita. Let us not waste even a moment, let us go to Lanka" Rama reacted in this manner not because of attachment toward His consort. Sita symbolises prakriti (nature). God cannot bear the suffering of nature. In order to alleviate the suffering of nature, Rama decided to go to Lanka immediately.

Objectives of human life

Dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation) are considered to be the four objectives (purusharthas) of human life. In fact, these correspond to the four stages of human life: brahmacharya (student), grihastha (householder), vanaprastha (hermit) and sanyasa (renunciate).

They do not correspond to Purusharthas in the true sense of the term. Today, people are under the mistaken notion that the term purusha corresponds to man but not to woman. But actually, Purusha means Atma or Chaithanya or Prana or Jivi. For Atma, there is no gender like masculine or feminine. So, Purushartha means Atma Dharma or the dharma of the Awareness Principle or the dharma of the Life Principle. This is the true Purushartha, the prime objective of human life.

Without understanding the true meaning of the term Purushartha, people talk of one dharma for men and another for women. Sayujya (merger) is the true Atma Dharma, and that is true Purushartha.

The second objective is artha. Artha does not mean money or gold. Earning money or gold is not the objective of life. Money comes and goes. Wisdom is the true wealth. Advaita Darshanam Jnanam (vision and experience of Divinity is true wisdom). One has to earn this wealth of wisdom.

The third objective is kama (desire). This does not correspond to sensual desires. One should have desire for liberation (moksha kama). One should have the desire to understand the Atmic Principle and attain divinity.

Liberation is complete merger with the Divine

These are the main objectives of human life. Each word in Vedanta has many meanings associated with it. Different people interpret it in different ways. Today, what people understand of the four objectives of human life corresponds to the ashrama dharma such as brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha, and sanyasa. They do not correspond to Adhyatmika dharma (Spiritual dharma). Spiritual dharma is the true dharma. Only that can confer liberation.

What is liberation? It is not just reaching God, it means complete merger with the Divine. Rivers like Ganga, Godavari, and Saraswathi have different names and forms, but once they merge in the ocean, they lose their name and become one with the ocean. Similarly, once you merge in God, there will be no difference whatsoever. Experiencing such nondualism is the true objective of human life.

Unity of Purusha and Prakriti

Embodiments of Love! Today is the sacred day of Sivaratri. Legend has it that when Siva, in order to save the world, swallowed halahala (poison), He lost consciousness and fell down. The resultant heat affected the world. In order

to cool down the world, Siva created the Himalayas. Then He placed the Himalayas on His stomach. As a result, the Himalayas absorbed all the heat from His body and He got up. People celebrate this event as Sivaratri. But, this is only a worldly interpretation.

Truly speaking, the Himalayas are within you. In fact, the whole world is within you. The Divinity within you has neither birth nor death. The body may undergo change, but the Divine Principle remains the same. Love never undergoes any change. It remains love always. The quality of sugar is sweetness. It does not change whether it is added to coffee, tea, water or rice pudding.

That which remains changeless is referred to as Sath (Being). This Sath is within you. Love is its sweetness. We have to turn this love toward Visweswara (God), but not towards vishayas (sensual pleasures). Sath can be compared to sugar, Chith (Chaithanya) to water. When sugar is added to water, it becomes syrup. Likewise, when Sath and Chith come together,

what results is ananda (bliss). Sath is associated with the Atma and Chith with the body. The Atma is Purusha (Brahman) and the body is prakrti (feminine principle). The unity of Purusha and Prakriti is human life.

So, every human being is ardhhanareeshwara (androgynous). The Principle of Siva (Sivathatwa) teaches the unity of Prakriti and Purusha. This is the true meaning of Sivaratri. Forgetting this principle, man considers this physical body to be made up of merely blood, flesh and fecal matter. No doubt, it has these constituents, but one should not forget the fact that divinity permeates this body. To set an ideal to this world, the body is very important.

Attachment to the body leads to dualities

Embodiments of Love! The body is Parvati, and the Atma is Eswara. There was a spiritual aspirant who used to repeat the mantra Sivoham, as commanded by his guru. One day, someone asked him the meaning of the mantra. He said Sivoham meant, "I an Siva." But when questioned what his

relationship with Parvati was, he slapped his own cheeks and said with a tone of having committed a great sin, Aparadham (blasphemy)! If he really had faith in the mantra he was chanting, he would have surely said, "Parvati is a part of my own being." He could not say so because he was attached to his body. Attachment to the body leads to dualities, because of which man is suffering.

Eswara and Parvati are present in every individual. The combination of these two aspects constitutes Manavatwam (mankind). Manava refers to human being. Ma means 'not', nava means 'new'. So, mankind is not new, it is ancient and eternal. But you are not able to understand this truth.

Here there are three letters: ma na - va. Ma means maya (illusion), na means without, va means varthinchuta (to conduct oneself). He is a true human being who conducts himself without being under illusion. But today, man is acting in a contradictory manner. At least from today try to understand the truth. Your deha (body) and desha (country) can be compared to object and reflection. Just as you safeguard your body, keep in mind the welfare of the country too.

Significance of Lingodbhava

Understand the true meaning and inner significance of Sivaratri. Hiranyagarbha Lingam is present in everybody's hridaya (spiritual heart) and is on the right side of the body. The principle of Hiranyagarbha permeates My whole body. It assumes a form when I will it. Whoever has seen this Lingam at the time of its emergence will not have rebirth. One should see its form as it emerges. In order to sanctify your lives, such sacred manifestations have to be shown to you every now and then. Only then can you understand the divinity in humanity. This Lingam will not break even if it is dropped from a height with force. This is amruthatwam (symbol of immortality). It is changeless. You cannot see such a manifestation anywhere else in the world. It is possible only with Divinity. This is the manifestation of changeless Divinity.

For the past twenty years, devotees did not get the opportunity to witness Lingodbhava. The reason was that lakhs of devotees used to gather in the Poornachandra Hall to witness this grand spectacle. Since the Poornachandra Hall cannot accommodate large gatherings, there used to be stampedes. As a result, devotees were put to a lot of inconvenience. In order to avoid this, Lingodbhava was discontinued.

Not only this; three types of Lingams emerge. They are bhur, bhuvah, and suvaha. Bhur refers to materialisation (body), bhuvah to vibration (prana), and suvaha to radiation (Atma). I often say, you are not one, but three: The one you think you are (physical body), the one others think you are (mental body), the one you really are (Atma). On every Sivaratri, all the three Lingams used to emerge. Even now, the other Lingams had started to emerge, but I prevented them, because there are many things to be told to you. In the future, you will be a witness to many more manifestations of Divinity. Understand that this bliss can be experienced only in the proximity of the Divine and nowhere else.

There is no trace of selfishness in Me

Don't get deluded just because I talk, laugh, walk, and eat like you. Don't get deluded by the body feeling. All My actions are selfless, selfless, selfless. There is no trace of selfishness in Me. Have firm faith in this truth. If you have total faith, wherever you are, all your desires will be fulfilled without your asking. Only those who don't have total faith suffer. Develop self-confidence. That is the first sadhana you have to undertake.

Truly you are all most fortunate. Today is Somavar (Monday), very endearing to Somasekhara (Eswara). That is why Siva is extolled as Someshwara and Somasekhara. This body was also born on Monday. In every Siva temple, special prayers are offered on Mondays.

Hanuman is worshipped on Mangalavar (Tuesday). When Ravana was killed in the battlefield, Hanuman rushed to Sita to convey the good news. Sita was overjoyed and blessed Hanuman profusely saying, "Hanuman, I don't know

what day it is, but since you have conveyed the much awaited mangalakara vartha (auspicious news), this day shall be called Mangalavar (Tuesday), and may you be worshipped on this day!" In the Treta Yuga, names of the days such as Monday and Tuesday were not in existence; they are of recent origin. Therefore, in the culture of Bharat each term has an inner significance. But, the Bharatiyas themselves are not making any effort to understand them and are going along the wrong path. Culture is important, not caste. We have to uphold the culture.

Embodiments of Love! Understand the truth that love is the Atma and the Atma is love.

Man has to pay attention to three basic duties in his quest for happiness: (1) He has to forget what he has to forget, namely, the world around him and its tantalizing pleasures; (2) He has to reach where he has to reach, namely, the goal of the Divine, the Presence of the Almighty; and (3) he has to give up what he has to give up, namely, material desires and pursuits.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4. Give up enmity, develop unity

Date: 12 March 1999 / Location: Delhi

In this sacred land of Bharat, forbearance is the real beauty.
Of all forms of rituals, adherence to Truth is the greatest penance.
Is there any ritual more sacred than the feeling of love toward the mother?
What else is to be communicated to you more than this?
O members of this noble and august assembly!
[Telugu poem]

Embodiments of Love!

Bharat (India) is the birthplace of spirituality, charity and righteousness. It is the abode of peace and non-violence. Having been born in this sacred land of Bharat, it is the bounden duty of every Bharatiya (Indian) to foster the noble qualities of truth, peace, charity and non-violence. This sacred land is the birthplace of the Adi Kavi (first poet), Valmiki, and sage Vyasa, who classified the Vedas. This is the meritorious land that gave birth to Gautam Buddha, who declared Ahimsa paramo dharma (nonviolence is the highest dharma). This is the noble land that was ruled by Lord Rama Himself. This is the divine land where Lord Krishna sang the song celestial, Bhagavad Gita. It is most essential for the Bharatiyas to follow the ideals of these sages and Avatars. Having taken birth in this sacred land of Bharat, the Bharatiyas should make every effort to keep their hearts sacred.

This Motherland of ours gave to the world noble souls renowned in all the continents.
It is the land that ousted the foreign rulers and achieved freedom.
This Bharat is reputed for its scholarship.

It is the sacred land that stood forth as the exemplar in the realms of music, literature and sacred lore and is noted for its fine arts and natural beauty.

Born in the land of Bharat, oh devotees, it is your bounden duty to foster the glory and prosperity of the Motherland.

[Telugu Poem]

Bharatiyas should develop unity

Embodiments of Love! The Bharatiyas achieved independence, but not unity. The pristine glory of Bharat can be restored only when the Bharatiyas achieve equality, integrity, unity, and fraternity. These sacred values should be imprinted in the heart of every Bharatiya. There are many men of sacrifice, highly educated and affluent people, eminent statesmen and politicians and very good administrators in this country. But what is the use? There is no unity and cooperation among them. That is the reason for the present plight of the country. They should give up individual differences and work for the welfare of the society. If all Bharatiyas stand united, none can ever attempt to attack us. Since the unity is on the decline, others are trying to take advantage of this situation.

Bharat stands first in respect of adherence to truth

Embodiments of Love! In the past, foreigners ruled over the country for hundreds of years treating the Bharatiyas like slaves. At least from now onward, take care that no foreign force enters our country. That is the vow all the Bharatiyas should resolve to take. The Bharatiyas have immense strength and power. But, they are facing hardships because of lack of unity.

Spirituality is very essential for the welfare of the country. Since ancient times, Bharat has radiated peace and happiness to the rest of the world through the message of spirituality. It occupied the exalted position of

teacher to the rest of the world. Bharat stands first in respect of adherence to truth. No other country in this world can ever match Bharat in respect of charity and sacrifice.

Our ancestors took great pains and made great sacrifices in order to protect and safeguard this country. But, unfortunately that spirit of unity and sacrifice is lacking among the youth today. Moreover, it is not enough if we have unity unless we resolve to work for the welfare of the society. Only when you realize the value of service to the society, can you achieve the noble qualities of unity, integrity, and fraternity. For this you have to take to spirituality. Eswara sarva bhoothanam, the same divinity dwells in all beings. The same was declared by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita: Mamaivamso jeevaloke jeevabhutha sanathana (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). The culture of Bharat has propagated this principle of unity in diversity.

Uphold the culture of Bharat

Since ancient times, Bharat has advocated the ideal Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (may the whole world be happy!). But, due to the effect of modern age, selfishness and self interest are on the rise. The need of the hour is to develop spirituality, love, unity, and forbearance. All these can be achieved only through God's grace. In fact, you do not need to undertake any rigorous spiritual practices. Japa, meditation, and yogic practices confer only temporary satisfaction. It is enough if you develop love in your heart. There is no God other than love. Love is God, live in love. it is only love that can bring about unity.

But, today everyone is struggling for their selfish ends. Individual differences are on the rise. There may be individual differences and party differences and differences in ideology, but when it comes to protecting the country, you should stand united, giving up all differences. Sacrifice all self-interests and develop love. Experience bliss and share it with others. This is what the culture of Bharat teaches.

There is no culture greater than the culture of Bharat. This culture is eternal,

universal, and acceptable to everyone. But, unfortunately today the Bharatiyas are imitating the Western culture ignoring their own culture. As a result, they are losing their identity. There is no greater misfortune than forgetting one's own culture. A true Bharatiya is one who upholds Bharatiya culture. The epithet Bharatiya does not mean a person born in the land of Bharat. Whoever follows the culture of Bharat is a Bharatiya. But the modern educated people are not fascinated by this culture because they have not understood it properly. The culture of Bharat is vaster than oceans and mightier than mountains. In order to understand this glorious culture, you need to develop broad feelings, become broadminded and expand your love. Extend your support to those administrators who adhere to these sacred principles. Do not get carried away by those who give platform speeches but practice none. You should be prepared to sacrifice even your life in order to uphold the culture of Bharat.

Unity rests on Truth and Love

Hastasya bhushanam danam (charity is the true ornament of the hand); sathyam kanthasya bhushanam (truth is the true ornament of the throat); srothrasya bhushanam sastram (listening to sacred texts is the true ornament of the ears). This is the teaching of the culture of Bharat. Sathyannasthi paro dharma (there is no greater dharma than Truth). It is truth that protects the world. It is love and nonviolence that sustain the world. Unity can be achieved only through truth, nonviolence and love. My advice is that all parties should unite. Only then Bharat will become a divine land.

Very soon this is going to happen. The present-day administration is noble and good. You should safeguard it because it supports spirituality and divinity. It was lack of unity among the Bharatiyas that was responsible for Bharat to be under British rule for hundreds of years. Past is past. At least in future take care that India will never be under foreign rule. Do not hate anybody. Love even the worst of your enemies. Develop love. Only then the country will progress. Imagine what a formidable force India will be if all its 98 crore people stand united! Bharat will not have any problems.

Very soon, peace and security will prevail in this land. Today we do not find peace anywhere, only pieces! Peace is present in the hridaya (heart). You can experience peace only when you develop heart to heart relationship with your fellow beings.

Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows

The Vedas declare, "Anoraneeyan Mahatomaheeyan (God is subtler than the subtlest atom and vaster than the vastest object)." The Vedantins say the Atma pervades the entire world. The scientists say the whole world is made up of atoms. Names are different, but the power is the same. Einstein referred to matter and energy. But matter and energy are not separate from each other. Matter becomes energy and vice-versa. This energy is divinity. You should lead your lives taking divinity as the basis. You will ruin yourself if you take the world as the basis. All the worldly matters come and go like passing clouds. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. Morality fosters spirituality. Humanity will progress only when there is morality. So, today we have to foster morality.

A good government should always be supported. One should not hate the government on the basis of individual differences. It has been fifty years since this country attained independence. But what have we achieved? Murders, hijacks, and kidnappings! Is this what we dreamt of? Today, fear and restlessness are rampant all over the world. Man is haunted by fear wherever he is: at home, in a car, in a train or in a plane! Why? Because the human mind is polluted with desire, greed, anger, etc. If man wants to enjoy peace and security, he should get rid of these bad qualities and lead his life keeping in view the welfare of the society. He should give up selfishness and develop unity. Only then the pristine glory of Bharat can be revived.

Our ancient sages coronated thyaga (sacrifice), welcomed Truth, and upheld righteousness. Today there is no trace of thyaga in man. He is always immersed in bhoga (worldly pleasures). As a result he is subjected to roga (disease). The culture of Bharat teaches that only sacrifice confers immortality. But today, unfortunately, the Bharatiyas themselves do not have

faith in the Bharatiya culture.

Motherland is greater than heaven

After the annihilation of Ravana, when Rama was requested to take over the reins of Lanka, He declared: Janani Janmabhoomischa Swargadapi Gareeyasi (mother and motherland are greater than heaven itself). One who does not have love and regard for one's own motherland, one's own mother tongue and one's own religion is a living corpse! But, one should not show disrespect towards other countries. Adveshta Sarva Bhoothanam (one should not hate anybody). One should not criticize anybody. But, today if one goes through the newspapers one finds one party criticizing and abusing the other. It is nothing but mean-mindedness. No one has any right to criticize others. Each party should see to it that it is free from all defects instead of pointing an accusing finger at others.

All of you know what a nice person Vajpayee is. Even in olden days, whenever Vajpayee or Jayaprakash Narayan would visit Andhra Pradesh, people, especially the youth, used to gather in large numbers to listen to their speeches. Naturally,

the people are attracted to those who adhere to truth and righteousness. Such a leader should be given all support.

Pleasure it an interval between two pains

You should strive hard to uphold dharma. In the process one may have to face hardships, but one should not get disheartened. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. One should be prepared to face all challenges and work for the uplift of the society. Today, no one seems to be interested in the welfare of the society. Each one is concerned about his position and power. A true leader is one who works for the wellbeing of society. The government is safe only when the people are safe and secure and vice versa. So, the government and the people should stand united and work for the progress of the nation.

Bharat (India) is the land of merit, the land of sacrifice. When Humayun, son of Babar, was ruling over this country, one day his father wrote a letter to him describing how fortunate he was to become the ruler of this sacred land. He wrote, "Humayun, it is your great good fortune that you have become the ruler of Bharat. See to it that Bharat does not suffer any hardships. Understand the cultural values of Bharat and put them into practice. Make the people of Bharat happy." So, you see, even the Muslim rulers had great regard for the culture of Bharat. Since ancient times, the Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs have been living in amity in this sacred land. Due to the effect of Kali age, hatred and enmity are on the rise among different religions. There will be no scope for hatred and enmity if people realize that there is only one religion, the religion of love, there is only one caste, the caste of humanity, and there is only one language, the language of the heart. Give up hatred and enmity from today. Develop unity. The country cannot progress unless and until hatred and enmity are uprooted.

When the safety of the country is at stake, all parties should stand united giving up individual differences. Dharmaraja stood as an ideal in this regard. Once, while speaking to Krishna, he said, "Krishna, the Pandavas and the Kauravas belong to the same family. When there is any difference of opinion within the family, we are five on one side and they are hundred on the other. But if there is any external threat and the safety of the country is at stake, all 105 of us will join hands." Similarly, all political parties should come together to safeguard the interests of the nation.

Develop friendship with other countries

I have been observing Vajpayee for the last so many years. Now this body is seventy-four years old. Vajpayee always keeps the welfare of the society in mind in whatever he speaks or does. He is broadminded. There will certainly be peace and security in the country if these principles are followed.

Vajpayee and Kulwant Rai have requested Me to visit Delhi at least once in a year. Today we have inaugurated the International Sai Center. We should cultivate broad and noble feelings. I will certainly come to Delhi every year

provided you develop broad feelings, and put them into practice. In the Sai Organization, there should be no differences of opinion. All should live like brothers and sisters. More than a hundred years ago, when Vivekananda spoke in a religious congregation in Chicago, addressing the audience as brothers and sisters, he was greeted with a thunderous applause. In olden days, brothers and sisters attained supreme state living in harmony with each other. But, today brothers and sisters go to Supreme Court due to lack of unity.

Develop love. Devotion bereft of love is no devotion at all. You may undertake any number of spiritual practices, but love should be the underlying principle. Friendship is one of the nine paths of devotion propagated by the culture of Bharat. So, develop friendship with God. God is not separate from you. You are God. God is in you and around you. God is all pervasive just as an atom. Conduct yourselves with the firm conviction that God is everywhere. Only then will Bharat regain its pristine glory of being the leader of all nations.

I want Vajpayee to develop friendship with countries like Russia, Japan, and Pakistan. How nice will it be if all these countries come together! Vajpayee is also making efforts in this direction. He has full control over his mind, but how can he be expected to have control over the minds of others? He has spiritual feelings in him. That will give him all the necessary strength and courage and ultimately confer success. Vyasa declared, "Paropakara punyaya papaya arapeedanam (helping others is meritorious, harming others is sinful)." So, Help ever, Hurt never. This is what I want you to do. Delhi is the stomach of Bharat. If the stomach is good, the whole body will be good. Likewise, if Delhi is good, the whole country will prosper. So, see to it that there is peace and harmony in De/hi. The people of Delhi should stand united. If you have unity, there is nothing that you cannot achieve in this world. I bless you all and bring My discourse to a close.

5. Glory of Bharatiya Culture

Date: 12 March 1999 / Location: Delhi

Punar Vittham, Punar Mithram, Punar Bharya Punar Mahi Etath Sarvam
Punar Labhyam Na Sareeram Punah Punah
[Sanskrit Verse]

Embodiments of Love!

If money is lost, one need not be worried about it, for one can earn it again. If a friend is lost, one can have another. If wife is lost, one can marry again. If one loses one's piece of land, one can purchase another piece of land. All these can be regained; but if body is lost, one cannot get it back.

Human body is highly sacred and invaluable. So, it has to be looked after with utmost care. Janthoonam narajanma durlabham, human birth is the rarest and noblest of all living beings. But man, unable to understand his true identity, is wasting his life. Since time immemorial, the culture of Bharat (India) has propagated three important values. Sathyam bruyath (speak the truth). Never utter a lie to please someone. This is the moral value. Priyam bruyath (speak in a pleasing way). This is the social value. Na bruyath sathyamapriyam (do not speak unpleasant truth). This is the spiritual value. The Bhagavad Gita says, "Anudvegakaram vakyam sathyam priyahitham cha yat" (one should speak only truthful, pleasing, and well-intentioned words, which are beneficial to others).

Cultivate selfless love

Man today has forgotten his true Self and is getting carried away by illusion. What is the reason? A small example to illustrate this. Pure gold shines

brilliantly and has a very high value. However, when it gets alloyed with metals like silver, copper, brass, etc., it loses not only its identity but also its value. Similarly, man, who can be compared to pure gold, has lost his true identity and also his value as his mind is polluted with worldly thoughts and unsacred feelings. Man today cannot be called a human being in the strict sense of the term. He has lost his humanness because of bad thoughts and bad company.

What man needs to cultivate today is the value of the ever brilliant and effulgent Self. Human values cannot be acquired from outside. They are innate and inborn. But, man has forgotten these values, which are inherent in him right from his birth. Modern man is human only in form, but not in behavior.

Right from ancient times, Bharat has been in the vanguard of human values, namely, sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa. Man is gifted with love, but he has highly adulterated it with selfishness and self-interest. He should cultivate selfless love. Only then will his life shine brilliantly. When the electric current enters the bulb through the wire, you get the light. Truth, righteousness, peace, and love can be compared to the electric current, wire, bulb, and light respectively. So, in order to experience the light of love, you must cultivate truth, righteousness, and peace. Love is God, God is love. So, live in love. Right from a pauper to a millionaire, none can survive without love. Man loves his wife, wealth, and children. But greatness lies in sharing your love with everyone, not merely with your kith and kin.

Vedanta says, love everybody, but do not trust anybody. The reason is that the human body is temporary.

It is made of flesh and bones and is full of dirt. It is afflicted with many diseases.

It cannot cross the ocean of Samsara.

Oh mind! Realize that this body is ephemera, and take refuge at the lotus

feet of the Lord
[Telugu Poem]

This body is valued and considered to be Sivam (auspicious) as long as there is life in it. It becomes savam (dead body) and absolutely useless the moment life principle forsakes it. So, understand the transient nature of the body and conduct yourself accordingly. Share your love with everybody. Your entire life is based on love.

Man should realise his innate divinity

Embodiments of Love! Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has laid great emphasis on the need for good thoughts, good company, and good actions. "Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak the truth and practice righteousness)." Man can attain exalted heights by following this dictum. Only the Bharatiyas (Indians) understood this truth. But alas! Today the Bharatiyas themselves have forgotten it.

Today the Bharatiyas themselves are not making any effort to understand their own culture, which is suffused with noble and divine feelings. Humanness has become extinct in man due to the lack of fear of sin and love for God. What greater misfortune can befall on humanity than this!
[Telugu Poem]

Man should realize his innate divinity. This is possible only when man makes proper use of the five elements and five senses gifted by God.

Protect your senses from evil effects

The primary duty of man lies not in protecting his wealth and valuables but in conserving the five elements and protecting the five senses from evil effects. The same message was propagated by Gautama Buddha. In the beginning, he studied many scriptures, approached many preceptors, and undertook various types of spiritual exercises. But his spiritual thirst was not quenched. Ultimately, he realized that proper utilization of the five senses would alone confer peace of mind.

First and foremost, he stressed on the importance of samyak drishti (right vision). All that you see, be it good or bad, gets imprinted in your heart forever. So, see no evil; see what is good. Hear no evil; hear what is good. This is called samyak sravanam (right listening). Samyak drishti and samyak sravanam will lead to samyak bhavam (right feelings). Your life will be sanctified once you cultivate samyak bhavam. Human life is based on feelings. Human life sans feelings cannot exist. Today, man lacks peace of mind because he does not have samyak drishti, samyak sravanam, and samyak bhavam.

We blame others for our sufferings. Do not accuse others for your sufferings, because you are yourself the cause of your misery. Happiness or sorrow is of your own making. All that you experience is nothing but the reflection, reaction, and resound of what is in you. Buddha, having understood this truth, put his five senses to proper use through which he could attain Nirvana. He was in a state of supreme bliss at the time of attaining Nirvana. That state could be described as ever blissful, granting happiness, embodiment of wisdom, beyond duality, infinite as the sky, primordial, final goal, one, eternal, pure, immutable, omnipresent witness, beyond emotions, devoid of the three gunas (qualities).

When Buddha was at the verge of attaining Nirvana, his stepbrother Ananda, who was by his side, started shedding tears. Seeing this Buddha smiled and said, "My dear one, it is rather surprising that you should feel sad about my attaining the state of highest bliss. Instead you should also try to attain this state of supreme bliss by controlling your senses".

Sacred values of Bharatiya culture

Bharat is the motherland of many noble souls. It is therefore essential for all the Bharatiyas to understand the sacred history of Bharat. But, today, no one seems to be interested in knowing the history and culture of Bharat. The culture of Bharat is based on dharma. The word dharma has been misinterpreted as religion. Dharma is like a vast ocean, whereas religion is like a pond. The culture of Bharat is pure, unsullied, eternal, and immortal. In olden days, the children were taught the sacred values of Indian culture right from the age of five. Their education would begin with the sacred mantras like Aum Namah Sivaya and Aum Namo Narayana. But in the modern education system, the divine names such as Siva and Narayana have no place. The children are taught meaningless rhymes like "Ba. Ba. black sheep". People are not making efforts to understand the efficacy of these mantras.

In the Kali age, everyone is a doubting Thomas!

No doubt, worldly education is required, but along with this secular knowledge, one has to make an effort to imbibe cultural values too. It is because of the growth of worldly knowledge without cultural values that man has become a repository of doubts. Even the parents and children, wife and husband lack faith in each other. During the times of Jesus, there was only one doubting Thomas, but in the Kali Age, everyone is a doubting Thomas!

Rama and Ravana were equally proficient in 36 forms of knowledge. But sage Valmiki, the composer of the Ramayana, portrayed Ravana as a fool and Rama as a noble one because Ravana misused his knowledge, whereas Rama put his knowledge to proper use. That is why Valmiki described Rama as virtuous and noble. Ravana became the root cause for the death of his sons and brothers, because he was unable to control his lust. His entire clan perished due to his wicked qualities and wicked actions. Rama led an ideal life. Today, many people aspire to occupy positions of authority in the political field, though they do not deserve. But Rama renounced the kingdom itself though, being the eldest son, He richly deserved to be the king. He sacrificed everything for the sake of truth. He had firm belief in the Vedic dictum,

Sathyannasti paro dharma (there is no greater dharma than truth). He made such a great sacrifice and went to the forest to uphold his father's word. The Vedas also clearly state Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaikena amruthatwamanusu (immortality can be attained only through sacrifice; neither wealth nor progeny nor good deeds can confer it). In fact, tyaga (sacrifice) is true yoga. If you do not exhale the air that you inhale, your lungs will be affected. If you do not excrete the food you eat, you will have stomach disorders. Likewise, you should give money that you earn in charity with a spirit of sacrifice. There lies the bliss.

The culture of Bharat does not give scope for differences based on caste, creed, color, religion, and nationality. It says,

Let us move together and let us grow together.
Let us share the knowledge and improve upon it. Let us live in amity and peace without any differences whatsoever.
[Telugu Poem]

It speaks of the principle of equanimity. It says, Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May the whole world be happy!). It treats everyone alike irrespective of caste, creed, color, religion, and nationality. The same principle was stated by Jesus also. He said, "All are one, my dear son, be alike to everyone." In fact, the underlying principle of all the religions is one and the same. But, people have forgotten this unity and have become narrow-minded.

Search for Truth

Embodiments of Love! Love is life. So, one has to channelise this love in the proper direction. Do not let it go in the wrong direction. You can accomplish anything in life if you exercise control over it. The culture of Bharat speaks of

Sathyanveshana (search for truth). Why should one search for truth, which is all-pervasive? What is the inner meaning of the word Sathyanveshana?

The culture of Bharat gives a beautiful analogy for this. The eyes that see your mother, your wife, your daughter, and your daughter-in-law are the same, but the feelings with which you see them vary. Here Sathyanveshana refers to the enquiry into the feelings that you should have when you look at each of them. The culture of Bharat lays great emphasis on self enquiry.

God is everywhere and in everything

Some people say that since God has no form, He does not exist. But, God has form. In this world, there is nothing that exists without form. According to science, the entire world is made up of atoms. They too have form. The Vedas say, Anoraneeyan Mahatomaheeyan (God is smaller than the smallest atom and bigger than the biggest object).

The atom is God. Right from the water you drink and the food you eat, everything is pervaded by atom. It took thousands of years for the scientists to understand this truth. But the same truth was proclaimed by the tiny tot Prahlada ages ago. He said, "Do not have the feeling that God is here and He is not there. In fact, He is everywhere. You can find Him wherever you search for Him." Bharat has been the birthplace of many noble souls like Prahlada who had experienced the omnipresent Divinity. Since ancient times, the Bharatiyas worshipped earth, trees, anthills, and mountains because they believed that God is everywhere and in everything.

Sarvata pani padam tat, sarvatokshi siromukham, sarvata srutimalloke, sarvamavritya tishtati.

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

God is everywhere. This is the teaching of our ancient culture. Since the human mind has become weak, man is losing faith in these ancient values.

Just as the alloys mixed with gold make the gold lose its shine and value, so also the bad qualities and bad feelings have made man lose his value and brilliance.

Only the Atma is true and eternal

Embodiments of Love! Develop faith in God for your own happiness and bliss. If people develop faith in God, the whole country will be happy. You are subjected to misery because you lack faith in the Self. Self confidence is very essential.

Do not get carried away by the worldly education. In fact, all that is related to the mind and senses is nothing but ignorance. The annihilation of mind is true wisdom. Mind is a bundle of thoughts and impulses. So, all that is related to the mind is subject to change. Only the Atma is true and eternal.

Many changes occur in man with age, but man remains the same. At the time of birth, you are a child. After ten years, people call you a boy. After thirty years, you become a man. After 75 years, you are called a grandfather. The child, boy, man, and grandfather are one and the same. But you are getting deluded seeing the physical changes. You should always have the changeless truth in your mind. That is the real human value.

Worldly knowledge is also required, but that is not the beall and end-all of human life. Worldly knowledge is for the happiness in this world and spiritual knowledge is for the happiness thereafter. It is only the spiritual knowledge that is in you, above you, below you, and around you and that protects you.

Some people deny the existence of God because He is not seen by the naked eye. Can you, with the same analogy, deny the existence of air, which is also not visible to the naked eye? Though the human eye cannot see God, the hridaya (heart) can see Him, hear Him, and experience Him. This is the teaching of our ancient culture. This great culture has remained vibrant for thousands of years. Einstein said that energy can be neither created nor destroyed. It only changes its forms. The same thing can be said about our

ancient culture also.

Put into practice at least one sacred teaching

Among the numbers one and nine, one is greater because you cannot have the latter without the former. It is only out of the number one that millions have emerged. Zero gains value if the number one precedes it. The value becomes more and more with the increase in the number of zeros. One is the hero, world is zero. That hero is God. You are all like zeros. So, try to have the hero by your side.

Develop the faith that God is. Mere repetition of the names potato and chapati will not appease your hunger. Likewise, merely reading the spiritual texts or listening to the discourses of holy men will not grant you fulfillment. Instead put into practice at least one sacred teaching. Only then can you experience happiness.

Consider this example: Put two spoons of sugar in a tumbler containing water. The sugar gets collected at the bottom of the tumbler. If you drink the water without mixing the sugar, the water will not have any taste. Take a spoon and stir it; then the whole glass of water will taste sweet.

The human heart is like a tumbler containing water. Divinity can be compared to sugar. Stir it with the spoon of buddhi (intellect). The process of stirring is enquiry. Once this is done, the sweetness of divinity will spread to all the limbs of the body. Then all that you see, hear, talk, and do will be suffused with divinity. Your life itself will be filled with love.

You have to grow in faith in order to develop love. Many people consider faith as mere foolishness. But truly speaking, bookish knowledge sans practical knowledge can be termed foolishness. You should never be satisfied with mere bookish knowledge and superficial knowledge. You need to develop general knowledge and discrimination knowledge also. Only then you will attain practical knowledge, which is very essential. But, today very few seem to be having practical knowledge. Most of the people are wasting their lives in

acquiring superficial knowledge.

Surrender all your thoughts and worries to God

In the field of spirituality, you cannot attain anything if you do not have faith and determination. When you go to the market, you cannot get even a small handkerchief if you do not pay a certain amount of money. Likewise, you cannot attain divine grace unless you offer your love to God.

God is also like a business man. What sort of business is He engaged in? Not worldly business, purely spiritual. He receives your love and showers His grace on you. Surrender all your thoughts and worries to God and receive bliss in return.

This is the business you are supposed to do with God. But in this Kali age, people are engaged in a different type of business with God. Students go to temple and pray, "O God, I will offer two coconuts if You make me pass the examination." What will God do with your coconuts? It is because of such foolish vows that spirituality has become a matter of ridicule in the eyes of many.

Many of you may be aware that in Andhra Pradesh, there is a very famous pilgrimage center named Tirupati, where Lord Venkateswara is the presiding deity. Some people go there and pray,

'Swami, I will offer my hair to You if I win the lottery.' They do not realize that God is not in need of their dirty hair.

You have to offer all your wicked qualities and wicked thoughts to God and receive sacred qualities and sacred thoughts in return. Suppose you have a damaged currency note. None will accept it except the Reserve Bank, where you can get a brand new note in exchange of the damaged one. Likewise, your mind and heart, which are polluted with wicked thoughts, can be compared to damaged currency notes. Not even your wife and children would accept them. So, offer them to God who, like the Reserve Bank chairman, will

give you good mind and good heart in return. Thereafter, you will lead a happy life.

Take to the path of spirituality

According to the Vedas, human life is highly sacred. Do not make it profane by wicked thoughts and wicked actions. Fill your life with love and take to the path of spirituality. Spirituality does not mean outward worship and rituals alone. You should have the feeling of worship within. You may also do it externally if you are interested. There is nothing wrong in it. But it will be a futile exercise if it is not done with the proper feelings. All these rituals should awaken the spiritual awareness in you. Otherwise, you will be leading the life of an animal, always aspiring for the worldly pleasures and comforts.

Ahara nidra bhaya methuneshu Samanyametata pasubir naranam Jnanam naranam sdhikam visesham Jnanena soonya pasubhissamana.

Food, sleep, fear and progeny are common to mankind and animals.

Only man is endowed with wisdom.

Man bereft of wisdom is equivalent to an animal.

Today, people are amassing wealth, but only a few of them are making proper use of it. Many are receiving high salaries. But, their work is not commensurate with the salary they receive. "Sarvakarma Bhagavad preethyartham (whatever you do, do it to please God)." Only then your life will be redeemed.

Proper utilisation of wealth

Embodiments of Love! There are innumerable rich men, educationists, judges, scientists, and intellectuals in this country. But not many are putting their wealth and resources to proper use. Very few are discharging their duties properly. This is the reason the country is facing hardships today. All those

that amass wealth must realise that they cannot carry even a naya paisa with them when they leave this world. The money that you earn from the society should be used for the welfare of the society only.

You all know that Kulwant Rai spent crores of rupees to build this magnificent building. There are many rich people in this country, but how many are engaging themselves in such acts of service and sacrifice? Sacrifice is the highest virtue.

Some people are building hospitals and educational institutions with business motive, spending crores of rupees. If they invest 50 crores on a hospital, they expect a profit of 100 crores. Similarly, with the investment of 50 crores on an educational institution, they want to make 200 crores. This sort of business is an unhealthy practice. Whatever you do, do it for the benefit of others.

When you stepped into this world, you did not bring anything with you, nor can you take anything with you when you leave. No benefit accrues to you from having palatial buildings and huge bank balances if you cannot use them for the service of the society. Spend your money for the welfare of society. Only then you can win divine grace. Serve the needy by providing comforts and conveniences.

Consider every good work as God's work

There are many poor people in Delhi who cannot afford medical care. There are many more who are unable to send their children to school owing to financial constraints. Establish hospitals and schools, which will render free service to the poor. A third person need not tell you these noble ideas. You should take the initiative on your own. I never instructed Kulwant Rai to construct this building. It was his own idea that took this shape. Such noble ideas originate due to the merits done in past lives. There may be many people who feel jealous of him. It is his good luck to have built this building and it is their misfortune to feel jealous about it. Everyone must undertake work. Consider every good work as God's work. Truly speaking, Kulwant Rai has done a great service to the Organization by getting this beautiful building

constructed. He has done this not for his benefit, but for the service of others. Every rich man should develop the spirit of sacrifice.

It is a mistake to think that Bharat is a poor country. It is the very abode of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. In the olden days, in Punjab, there were houses made of silver. The foreign invaders plundered those houses and took away all the silver on camels. They looted all the gold from Somnath temple. If Bharat were a poor country, it would not have suffered such foreign invasions in the past. There is no dearth of wealth in Bharat. It is unfortunate that some people call Bharat a poor country. Bharat is the land of plenty and prosperity. Bharatiyas are not poor; they are very rich.

Who is the richest man in the world? He who has much satisfaction. Who is the poorest man in the world? The one who has too many. The one imbued with the spirit of sacrifice is the richest man. If you have, ten rupees in your pocket, give at least one rupee to the needy. However the beggars are not satisfied with one rupee because they cannot buy even a small piece of bread with it these days.

Whatever I do is only for the welfare of other

Our ancients used to attach more value to their word than to money. It is your good fortune that you are born in such a sacred land of Bharat. You should uphold and propagate dharma to the rest of the world, befitting your nationality. It gives me great joy to find anyone practicing and propagating dharma. Believe it or not, there is not an iota of selfishness in Me from top to toe. Whatever I do is only for the welfare of others. Be good, see good and do good. That is true human quality.

God is the embodiment of Sath, Chit and Ananda. Sath means Being (that which is permanent). Chit means Awareness. The combination of Sath and Chit results in Ananda. So, in order to experience bliss, one has to make friendship with God. God is the only true friend. All of you are aware how the worldly friends are. As long as there is water in the tank, you find thousands of frogs living there. But all the frogs desert the pond once it gets dried up.

Likewise, all worldly friends swarm around you saying hello, hello as long as you are in position of authority and have wealth. Once you lose both, none will look at your face even to say goodbye. But friendship with God is true and eternal. God is always with you in times of both pain and pleasure. King Harischandra underwent many trials and tribulations to uphold truth. He always had the protection of God because he stuck to the path of truth. So, have faith in God and tread along the path of truth. Money comes and goes like passing clouds and makes many rounds, but morality comes and grows. This is the thing you have to note today.

Delhi is the capital of Bharat. So, if Delhi is good, the whole country will be good. Anything can be achieved through unity. Give up individual and political differences. Have the national interest uppermost in your mind. Stand united and be prepared to sacrifice even your life for the welfare of the country. Uphold the prestige of the country and spread it far and wide.

Truth has to be conveyed in a fearless manner

Embodiments of Love! If you strive hard to put at least five of your fellowmen on the right path every day, you can bring about unity and transformation among the 98 crore Indian population. Pray for the welfare of the nation. Develop the spirit of patriotism. Then the society and nation will prosper. I hope I am not causing inconvenience to you by speaking for a long time. But, such sacred teachings have to be imparted. Truth has to be conveyed in a fearless manner. There is no need to fear if you are following the truth. Human life is governed by four F's:

Follow the master Face the devil Fight to the end Finish the game.

Your conscience is your master, so follow your conscience. Life is a game, play it. Life is a dream, realize it. Life is love, enjoy it. If you understand this and put at least one teaching into practice, your life will be redeemed. Always contemplate on God. The secret of happiness lies in chanting God's name. You can chant any name of God and redeem your life.

When you install God in your heart, there is no room in it for anything else. But today's aspirants treat the heart as a musical chair. They go from one "swami" to another and shift from one kind of sadhana to another. Of what avail is this kind of merry-go-round? It is a waste of time and of life itself. One heart, one thought, one God, one Goal. Whether you utter the name Allah, Jesus, Buddha, Zoroaster, or Guru Nanak - it is all the same.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. Put Ceiling On Your Desires

Date: 14 March 1999 / Location: Mumbai

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat.
Of all the sacred virtues, adherence to truth is true penance.
The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling toward ones mother.
Character is valued far more superior to the very life itself.
People have forgotten the basic principles of the culture of Bharat
And are following and adopting Western culture today.
Bharatiyas are not aware of the greatness of their own cultural heritage
Just as the mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength.
[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love!

Today man has taken to many paths to acquire wisdom. All the knowledge that he has acquired is not true knowledge in the strict sense of the term. Knowledge of the spirit, Atmic knowledge, is the true knowledge. That is Brahma Jnana. Atma, Brahman, and Jnana are synonyms. On this basis, the Vedas declare: Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma (Brahman is truth, wisdom and eternity).

Work, worship, wisdom

Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has laid emphasis on these three aspects: work, worship, and wisdom.

Work, worship, and wisdom all begin with service. No matter what service it is, if it is done with love and divine feelings, it becomes upasana (worship).

What is wisdom? All that is related to our senses, the fleeting objects of the material world, and our actions, speak of our ignorance. Wisdom dawns the moment the mind is withdrawn. The thoughtless state between two consecutive thoughts is Brahma Jnana (Atmic, spiritual wisdom). Man is not able to experience this thoughtless state of Brahman and is carried away by fleeting, ephemeral, and momentary things. True wisdom dawns when all thoughts are decimated. Sai's philosophy speaks of the unity of work, worship, and wisdom.

The culture of Bharat believes in unity in diversity, which is true wisdom. Many intellectuals observe multiplicity or plurality in unity, but there are very few men of wisdom who observe unity in diversity. Since ancient days, the inhabitants of this holy land have been practicing these principles and have been sharing them with the rest of the world. This country has always prayed for the advancement and welfare of the whole world. That is the meaning of the Vedic dictum, Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May the whole world be happy!) Our prayer is not limited to Bharat only. We pray for the welfare of the whole world. But the modern Bharatiyas (Indians) are not able to know the culture of Bharat, which is endowed with noble virtues of broadmindedness.

Embodiments of Love! You have to understand the sanctity of the culture of Bharat. You may go through any number of books, you may visit noble souls, you may listen to sacred teachings, but the reality is one. People read hundreds of books, but very few translate them into action. It is enough if you put into practice at least one principle.

Man is making every attempt today to be happy, blissful. Where do you get bliss? Is it in the material things, in the world, in individuals, in books? No, not at all. Bliss is within one's own Self. You have forgotten your true Self, the source of bliss. You are struggling hard for artificial happiness outside. You are not aware of the reality that lies in the heart. In fact, all the bliss is there. The principle of love originates from the heart, not from the world.

Everyone should develop love more and more. But, today, there is hatred and

anger everywhere. Wherever you see, there is desire, enmity, and fear. How do you expect to be in peace? How do you expect to be blissful? Light the lamp of love within. Then fear and illusion can be removed and you can have the vision of the Self. Otherwise you are bound to suffer.

You have to exercise a ceiling on your desires. There are rules for ceiling with regard to land and property. But you have no ceiling on your desires. Ceiling on desires means exercising control over them. You can be happy once the desires are controlled.

Your life is a long journey. You should have less luggage (desires) in this long journey of life. Therefore, it is said: less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure. So, ceiling on desires is what you have to adopt today. You have to cut short your desires day by day. You are under the mistaken notion that happiness lies in the fulfillment of desires. But, in fact, happiness begins to dawn when desires are totally eradicated. When you reduce your desires, you advance towards the state of renunciation.

You have many desires. What do you get out of them? You are bound to face the consequences when you claim something as yours. When you claim a piece of land as yours, then you will have to reap the harvest. This instinct of ego and attachment will put you to suffering. You will be blissful the moment you give up ego and attachment.

Independence without unity is meaningless

The Prime Minister, Ministers, Chief Justice of India, and other high officers assembled in the capital, Delhi. All of them mentioned that we underwent tremendous sufferings and hardships, and lost many lives to achieve independence. But we have not achieved unity in this country.

What is the use of achieving independence without unity? We find that murders, kidnappings, hijacks have increased after attaining independence. Is this the type of independence we wanted? No. Independence is meant to confer peace, and it should develop the culture of the nation. We should not

be dependent on others. We should be independent in every way.

Bharat is a sacred land. Noble souls were born here. Bharat was ruled by Sri Rama Himself. This is the land of the song celestial, the Bhagavad Gita. This is the birthplace of the first composer, Valmiki. This is the birthplace of Veda Vyasa, who classified the Vedas. This is the land traversed by Lord Buddha. This is a land of merit and sacrifice. This is the birthplace of spiritual aspirants, seers and sages.

But, the modern man does not have even an iota of sacrifice. "Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike arnritatvamanusu (immortality can be attained only through sacrifice; neither wealth nor progeny nor good deeds can confer it)." So, cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. It is possible only when you develop love within.

Develop love, practice sacrifice

There are many rich people in this country. There are many intellectuals. We have also men of valor. All are here. But what is the use? There is hatred between person and person. There is hatred and enmity between people of the same profession. It is a very bad quality. All are one; be alike to everyone. You have to love everybody. But, today, people are not broadminded. There should be expansion love. Today, there is only contraction love.

The man who goes by the mind will ruin himself. He is worse than an animal.
The one who goes by the intellect is the one of wisdom.

[Telugu Poem]

So, you have to grow in intellect. As long as the mind persists, you are bound in illusion, you are bound to suffer.

It is the mind that causes misery. It is the mind that is full of desires. It is the mind that makes heaven or hell. Mano moolam idam jagat (this world is the creation of the mind). Since you are caught up with the whims and vagaries of the mind, you have forgotten the eternal path.

Embodiments of Love! Love everybody, but do not trust anybody. You have to repose your trust only in God. What is the reason? Why should you not trust man? Man is not permanent. The Gita says the world is transitory, fleeting, and impermanent.

Human body is not permanent.
It is full of dirt and diseases.
It cannot cross this ocean of life.
Oh man, never think that this life is eternal.
[Telugu Poem]

Love is within you

People go by this body and forget the divinity within. Have strong faith in God. Do not have faith in this body, which is temporary. Body is like a water bubble, mind is like a mad monkey. Don't follow the body, don't follow the mind. Follow the conscience. That is the principle of the Atma. You will experience divinity only when you follow your conscience.

You may worship God in any name and form. God does not take into consideration your caste or community. He expects only love. You don't need to do penance or undertake any rigorous spiritual practice. You can cultivate love easily. Love is within you. Develop love, which already exists. You have to share this love with everybody. Love even the one who hates you. To harm a person who harmed you is nothing great. Real greatness lies in loving the person who harmed you.

Know your true identity

Embodiments of Love! Human life is full of love. What is the purpose of life? It is love and love alone. Love is God. Live in love. Divinity manifests only when you develop love. There is no need to search for Him anywhere. The Bible said so. Today, man is in search of God. Why should you search for God when He is everywhere? You are God. All sadhana (spiritual practice) will go in vain if you do not know your true identity. Instead of asking others, "who are you, who are you," better ask yourself, "who am I, who am I." This is my book. This is my tumbler. Then who am I? This feeling of "my", is maya (illusion). First know who you are.

All this is matter. All this is negative. You are the master of this material world. Master the mind and be a mastermind. You should make an effort to know your true identity. To know this, you should first give up body attachment.

This is my handkerchief. When I say this is "my handkerchief," I am separate from the handkerchief. Similarly, when I say this is "my body," I am separate from the body. "My mind" means I am separate from my mind. Then who am I? Constant enquiry on these lines would lead you to self realization.

People are heroes in doing experiments in the laboratory, but zeros in experience. You should be heroes in the practical field. It is useless to be a hero in reading books or in giving lectures. There is only one hero, and He is God. Ekam sath vipra bahudha vadanti is the teaching of the Vedas. God is the only truth. All the rest is falsehood. Everything becomes truth in the company of God.

Zero preceded by one becomes ten. As the number of zeros increases, the value also increases. If the number one is erased,

nothing remains. Therefore, hero becomes zero if he forgets God. You may be an intellectual with great erudition and exalted position. But, you cannot call

yourself intelligent if you forget God.

Easy way to know God

Science has progressed to a great extent in Bharat. Man has undertaken space travel also. But what is the use? Man wants to know what is there in space. He wants to know what is there at the moon. He wants to reach even the sun. First recognize the divinity within yourself. Open the doors of your heart. Develop love more and more. Understand the truth. Experience God. There lies the bliss. It is very easy to know God, but man does not understand this.

You have to make every effort to understand the immanent divinity. The divinity within is covered by ego and anger. Therefore, it is said, "Moham hithva punar vidya (real knowledge dawns when attachment is destroyed)." Where does this attachment come from? Excessive desires lead to attachment.

Embodiments of Love! All are embodiments of God. "Sahasra seersha Purusha sahasraksha sahasrapad (God has thousands of heads, eyes and feet)." You will experience it once you enquire deep within.

You may attain peace by undertaking Japa (repetition of the name), dhyana (meditation), and yoga. But this peace is not permanent; it is temporary. To attain permanent peace, develop love within. Love can turn earth into sky and sky into earth. This sacred love is within you. But, you direct it in the wrong direction and thereby it gets perverted. You are responsible for the loss and suffering. You are responsible for the wicked actions and agitations outside.

The previous speaker spoke about diseases and their cure. Why do diseases arise? The number of doctors is increasing day by day. Today, we have a doctor for every family. Each house has at least two patients. Most of the diseases are psychological. You are bound to be sick if you go on feeling you are sick. Never think you are sick. Always have the feeling that you are happy

and healthy. Develop sacred love and experience your innate divinity. This is the culture of Bharat. Bharata - Bha means effulgence. Effulgence is God, Rata means "to love". One who has love for God is a true Bharatiya (Indian).

Intelligence is gifted to mankind to know God, not to amass wealth. Why do you study? You have to study to get rid of ignorance. True education lies in giving up ignorance and recognizing divinity.

Man faces problems in life because he lacks unity

Embodiments of Love! Repeated teachings do not help you to understand Divinity. You are not able to understand Divinity due to the consequences of your actions in many past lives. Today, human values are on the decline. Man originated lakhs of years ago. But, till this day, he has not understood human values. It is said, "Proper study of mankind is man." What is this proper study of mankind? It is the unity of thought, word, and deed. Man faces problems in life because he lacks unity.

Let there be perfect harmony in thought, word, and deed right from this day. You should say what you think and do what you say. You do not need to search for God. You are God. God is in you, with you, above you, below you, and around you. Understand this truth and turn your vision inward. Only then you can attain bliss.

I have been coming to Mumbai for many years. What have you achieved during this period? What spiritual practices have you undertaken? What truths have you known? Today, people crave bookish knowledge, superficial knowledge, and general knowledge, but they do not have practical knowledge. The one who has practical knowledge will have understanding of the divinity. But, today, people are heroes at platform and zeros in practice. You should be heroes in practice. Put into practice at least one sacred principle. At least speak the truth or develop love. That is enough. There is no greater sadhana (spiritual discipline) than this. Sathyannasti paro dharma (there is no greater dharma than adhering to Truth). What is dharma? True dharma lies in developing love. It is love that unifies all. This love will help you

to experience unity in diversity.

Bhajan singing makes the heart sacred

Embodiments of Divine Atma! Whatever spiritual path you tread, it should help you to uproot ignorance. What is ignorance? It is the belief in all that is outside, the external scenario. You have to discriminate whether it is right or wrong, good or bad. You should have samyak drishti (right vision). Then you will attain deservedness.

I am always ready to tell you the easy path to Divinity. I will be happy only when you are happy. Make every effort to put into practice what you hear.

Bhajans are highly sacred. Bhajan singing makes the heart sacred. What is important is that it should come out from the heart. Bhajan is not just rhythm, tune and beat. You should sing God's name with love. You will see the manifestation of Divinity with your physical eyes when you sing His glory with all love.

Many noble souls merged in God through love. Don't you know Mira, who attained liberation by chanting Krishna's name? Prahlada was bitten by serpents, trampled upon by elephants, and given poison. Yet, chanted God's name and attained liberation. He considered everything divine. Yad dhavam tad bhavati (as is the feeling, so is the experience). So, you should think of God with love.

This Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting the entire mankind as one family through the bond of brotherhood; of affirming and illumining the inner reality of each being in order to reveal the divine, which is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests; and of instructing all to recognise the coming divine heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal and rise to the divine, which is his goal!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Start New Year with spirit of love

Date: 18 March 1999 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Ugadi

If the feelings and intentions
Behind your actions are good,
The results will also be good.
If your intentions are bad,
You will certainly meet with failure.
[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love! Thoughts are the permanent asset of man. Thoughts are based on feelings and feelings on the mind. As the thoughts, so the mind. If thoughts are good, humanity will blossom into Divinity. Today man's behaviour is not good because his thoughts are polluted. Because the thoughts and actions of man have become perverted, the country is passing through troubles and turmoil. Man has filled his mind with thoughts about mundane, ephemeral, and transient things. This is totally negative in nature. Only thoughts based on Truth are positive.

Spiritual wealth of Bharat

In ancient times, the Bharatiyas (Indians), before partaking of food, used to chant the prayer. "Annam Brahma, Raso Vishnu, Bhokta Devo Maheswara (food is Brahma, the essence is Vishnu, and the one who partakes of it is Maheswara)". The essence of food permeates the whole body and gives physical strength and satisfaction. It is the food that sustains the physical body. The subtle part of the food becomes the mind, and the subtler part of the food becomes speech. Human quality is expressed through thoughts, words, and deeds. The gross part of food is Brahma, the subtle part is Vishnu, and the subtlest part is Siva. So, the Divine Trinity is present in the food that

we eat. Sacred thoughts, good words, and noble deeds are the true human values. But modern man lacks in human values.

Today, man is bereft of gratitude, which is one of the most essential qualities. He forgets the help rendered to him by others. As long as man is alive, he should be grateful for the help he received from others. There are two things you have to forget: the help you have rendered to others and the harm others have done to you. If you remember the help you have rendered, you will always expect something in return. Remembrance of the harm done to you by others generates in you a sense of revenge. You should remember only the help you received from others. The one with these sacred qualities is an ideal man.

In this ephemeral and transient world, man always aspires for peace and security. But money, education, position of authority and physical comforts cannot confer peace and security. Peace originates from the heart. Man can experience peace and security only when his heart is filled with love. Love is God, love is Nature, love is life and love is the true human value. Bereft of love, man is equivalent to a corpse. You should lead a life filled with love. Love even the worst of your enemies. It is on the basis of the principle of love that the culture of Bharath has declared: Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May the whole world be happy!).

The land of Bharat is suffused with love

Since ancient times, this sacred land of Bharath has shared its spiritual wealth with the rest of the world to foster peace and security. It is because of its immense spiritual wealth that Bharat continues to be a land of peace and security in spite of many foreign invasions in the past. Without Bharat, there would be no trace of spirituality in this world. There is truth in the air of Bharat. There is dharma in the dust of Bharat. The land of Bharat is suffused with love. The water of Bharat overflows with compassion.

Having taken birth in this sacred land of Bharat, you must uphold and sustain the principles of truth, love, righteousness, and compassion. For whose sake

should you uphold these principles? Is it for the sake of society or for the country? No. You should uphold these principles for your own sake. Only when everyone fosters these principles will the country prosper.

Today man is engulfed in selfishness and self-interest and is leading an unsacred life. Our ancient seers used to partake of food with the feeling that food is Brahma, the essence is Vishnu, and the one who partakes of it is Siva. Such a feeling would foster pure and sacred thoughts in us. Today, man has strayed away from the path of truth and righteousness. People criticise those who follow truth and righteousness. It is very easy to criticise, but very difficult to understand. The Vedas say: Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak the truth and follow righteousness). Since ancient times, the Bharatiyas have considered these two as their two eyes.

True spirit of celebrating Ugadi

You would have celebrated many Ugadi (New Year day) festivals in your life. Certain traditional practices go with every festival, such as having a sacred bath, wearing new clothes, cleaning the house and decorating it with buntings of green leaves. Greatness lies in purifying our thoughts, not merely the transient human body. The significance of a festival does not lie in wearing new clothes but in cultivating new and noble thoughts. The house should be decorated not merely with the buntings of green leaves, but with buntings of love. Share your love with everyone who visits your house. Only then would we be celebrating the festival in its true spirit.

Today, we are celebrating Ugadi, which means the commencement of a new era. It denotes the beginning of Kali Yuga, not Krita Yuga or Treta Yuga. This is the beginning of Nuthana Samvathsara (New Year). Vathsara is another name of God. That is why God is extolled as Vathsaraswarupaya Namah (salutations to the one who is the embodiment of Vathsara). Time is God. Vathsara is its cosmic form. So, time and Vathsara connote the same Divinity.

The New Year has to be sanctified by sacred thoughts and broad feelings. Today, humanity is stricken with fear and restlessness. Courage and strength

are on the decline, because you have unsacred thoughts and wicked feelings. Your enemies are not outside. Your bad thoughts are your worst enemies and thoughts based on Truth are your best friends. But today, people do not befriend the thoughts based on Truth, which are essentially divine. You have to make friendship with sath, the eternal truth. Sath means Being, the ever-existent God. The worldly friends and enemies change with the passage of time, but sath is the true and eternal friend. This friend is always with you, in you, around you, above you, below you and protects you just as the eyelid protects the eye.

Exemplary devotion of Delhi seva dal

Embodiments of Love! There is nothing great in going round the world and getting accolades. Lakhs and lakhs of people in Delhi and Mumbai enjoyed the divine bliss during Swami's visit last week. It was not a temporary joy; it was the everlasting love etched in their hearts. That is why, while I was leaving Delhi, they expressed their feelings by putting up a huge banner with the words, "Thanks for the visit. Please come back soon!" The aerodrome is situated miles away from the city. During Swami's drive, thousands of youth of the age group of 25 to 30 flanked both sides of the road with devotion, discipline, and enthusiasm. Usually, one does not find such well-behaved youth in cities like Mumbai and Delhi. It was a clear indication of the transformation brought about in them.

What wonderful service they have rendered! I have been observing the service activities of various seva dal groups for the past fifty years, but the service rendered by the Delhi Seva Dal (the Sai volunteer service organisation) was of very high standard. They discharged their duties, forgoing even food and drink. They said, "Since Swami says duty is God and work is worship, we are ready to sacrifice even our lives in following Swami's commands. Only then we shall have pleased Swami." Such was their devotion!

No one exactly knew Swami's schedule. Therefore, one could find a seva dal every nook and corner of Delhi carrying a cellular phone to exchange minute

to minute information regarding Swami's movements. There was no complaint whatsoever from any quarter. You are all aware of the fact that neither the police nor the media take note of our seva dal activities. But this time in Delhi, the police personnel as well as the newspapers extolled our seva dal sky high. They said such selfless and dedicated youth are found only in Sri Sathya Sai Organisation.

The seva dal youth were ten thousand in number. Whomsoever I asked, "What do you want, boy?" the reply was one and the same, "Swami, I want You, I want Your love." They were very humble in their approach and spoke softly and sweetly. I often say, "You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly." That obliging nature was very much evident in Delhi Seva Dal. They brought a good name to the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation by their exemplary behaviour. In other states also, seva dal are doing good work. The whole world has recognised the truth that if there is any organisation where love, unity, friendship, co-operation, and selfless service are practised, it is only the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations. There are many organisations in this world, but nowhere would you find the idealism that is found in Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation.

Revival of ancient culture of Bharat

While I was in Mumbai, the Health Minister of Maharashtra came to Me and said, "Swami, we have many doctors here and we would like to work in collaboration with the Super Specialty Hospital in Prasanthi Nilayam. Every little activity that Sri Sathya Sai Organisation undertakes is an ideal to the rest of the world. We have seen many organisations, but the spirit of sacrifice that is found in Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is not found anywhere else. We have spoken to many members of Sai Seva Dal. They are all highly devoted, dedicated and disciplined. Such an ideal organisation should spread all over the world." Be "bigger", not beggar Swami does not ask anything for Himself. Today there are many Swamis and Ammas who are making money in the name of spirituality. The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation has no connection whatsoever with them. You should not have anything to do with them. The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation should progress with the spirit of sacrifice. Only

then will the pristine culture of Bharat be firmly re-established. It will not be long before you will be a witness to this. Very soon, we are going to revive the ancient culture of Bharat. All the members of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation should develop sacred thoughts and noble feelings. We should perform all our actions based on Truth. Then victory will certainly be ours.

Keep this in mind: never ask anything from anybody. If you want anything, come to Me, I will give. Only beggars stretch their hands in front of others, not devotees. You should be "bigger", not beggar. Help the poor and the needy, serve society, and lead an ideal life. Only then you will be called a true devotee. I have explained to you many times the qualities of a true devotee. They are: virtues, good intellect, truth, devotion, discipline, duty. Participate in service activities.

This morning I am going to Kadugodi to inaugurate a vriddhashram (home for the aged). There are many old people in society who are leading a miserable life, since they have been deserted by their children. Anybody is welcome in this home for the aged. This is started to see that the old people may lead a peaceful life till their last breath. One should be in bliss at the time of death, and not be shedding tears of sorrow. One's last moments are the foundation for one's next birth.

Life bereft of sacrifice is inhuman

All members of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation should cultivate the spirit of sacrifice and service to help others. There are many affluent people in the society, but few have this spirit of sacrifice.

Life bereft of sacrifice is inhuman. The Vedas said: "Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amruthatwamanasu (one can attain immortality neither by rituals nor by progeny nor wealth; only sacrifice confers immortality)." We do not need any publicity or advertisement. Work silently. Before leaving for Delhi, I instructed Kulwant Rai not to give any prior publicity about My impending visit. Why worry about newspapers? There should be heart to heart and love to love connection. Love expands automatically all over the

world. We are able to listen to the programmes broadcast from the Delhi radio station through radio waves. Similarly, good thoughts are like radio waves. These waves should spread through love, not through publicity. Prachar (publicity) is not the achar (practice) of Sai Organisation. We should work for the progress of the Organisation through practice and spread the message of love throughout the world. The entire humanity should unite and live like one family.

Ushering in an era of Peace

The name of the New Year is Pramadi, which implies dangerous prospects. But no danger would befall this world. The name may imply danger, but in reality the world will attain prosperity. We shall escape from all dangers. Be prepared to face anything with love and broadmindedness. There are no dangers either for the world or for the nation or for the society or for the family. A person bearing the name Dharmaraja may not follow dharma at all. Similarly, this year, although named Pramadi, will not bring any calamities.

Embodiments of Love! Do not get elated by listening to what happened in Delhi and Mumbai. They have done it for their satisfaction. I have nothing to do with that. Praise or censure does not affect Me. Your devotion also should be steady. Some people shower praise on Me only when their desires are fulfilled. Happiness is obtained not when desires are fulfilled, but when desires are destroyed. Whether your desires are fulfilled or not, always be happy. Strive to attain this state of bliss. Develop friendship with God. Worldly friends have their dwellings outside, but God, your true friend, resides in your heart. So, you need not search for Him outside. Turn your vision inward and there you will find God.

Love is the most essential of all the qualities we should possess. So, cultivate selfless love. Love is God, God is love. Today is the New Year day. In this New Year, drive away all bad thoughts, breed good feelings, and spend time in contemplation of God. When you tread this path, you can achieve anything. You will not have any problems. Many of you are apprehensive of what lies in store for you this year. Nothing will happen. What we encounter depends on

our thoughts. So, entertain good thoughts, and you are bound to be successful.

Keep in mind the welfare of nation and society

Embodiments of Love! I bless you with a long, happy and healthy life. Set an ideal to the rest of the country. Very soon, all countries will come together and will attain peace and security. I told Vajpayee, "Vajpayee, you are a good person, making efforts in the right direction. But develop friendship with Pakistan and China. If India, Pakistan, and China become united, they will make a formidable force." I told this on 11th evening. Vajpayee again came on the 13th and informed that he was happy that both Pakistan and China had responded positively to his invitation. He said, "It is Swami's Divine Will that has made it possible." But, in fact, there is no unity amongst Bharatiyas (Indians) themselves. Today, one finds several groups in a single party. Parties may vary, ideologies may differ, but all should stand united. Never attach undue importance to parties and ideologies. Keep in mind the welfare of the nation. The welfare of the world depends on the welfare of the nation. The welfare of the nation depends on the welfare of the society. So, whatever you do, bear in mind the welfare of the society and the nation. There may be differences of opinion, but they should not stand in the way of unity. This is what the ancient culture of Bharat taught in the beginning.

Let us move together, let us grow together In intelligence and share the knowledge That we have acquired.

Let us live in peace and harmony
without any conflicts.

[Telugu Poem]

Only then Bharat will prosper. Bharat is the leader and an ideal to the rest of the world in the field of spirituality. So, all Bharatiyas should foster broad

feelings. Today the country is facing problems because people have become narrow-minded.

The worst enemies of man

Every human being has the evil tendencies of kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), etc. in him. The great epics, Ramayana, Bhagavata, and Mahabharata, teach good lessons to control lust, greed and anger, which are the enemies of man.

Ravana, who had mastered all sixty-four branches of knowledge and was a great scholar and a mighty warrior, lost his life and caused the ruination of his entire clan because of lust. It is not enough if you merely read the Ramayana; you should grasp its real significance.

Hiranyakasipu was a great scientist. Today, scientists have traveled only up to the moon, but Hiranyakasipu could travel even to the sun. He had control over all five elements, but he became a victim of his anger. His anger was directed at God Himself. Ultimately, what happened? He ruined himself. He subjected his son to all sorts of trials and tribulations and sought to kill him by many means, like throwing him from the hilltop, casting him into the sea, putting him in a pit of poisonous snakes and making elephants trample upon him. Because Prahlada was chanting the name of Narayana (God) ceaselessly, all the obstacles became Narayana for him and he came out unscathed. That is why it is said, Yath bhavam, that bhavathi (as is the feeling, so is the experience). God manifests on the basis of the feelings of the devotee. If you pray to God with purity of heart and love, you will experience God.

In the Mahabharata, Duryodhana personified greed. He refused to share the kingdom with the Pandavas and denied them their rightful share. Due to this greed, he perished along with his entire clan.

These three illustrations echo the need for the eradication of the feelings of lust, anger and greed. The Pandavas emerged victorious because they

practiced all the human values of sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa. If you follow these values, success will follow automatically.

Today, New Year has begun. With sacred feelings and divine thoughts, cultivate the spirit of love in you. God is not found separately in a temple or in an Ashram, etc. Truth is God. Love is God. Dharma is God. When you worship God by following these principles, He will manifest Himself then and there. There is no doubt about this. Love God wholeheartedly. Pray to God and make friends with Him. You can achieve anything if you have God as your friend.

Learn today to fill your heart with love and adorn your hand with the ornament of sacrifice. Sacrifice is the jewel for the hands. Truth is the necklace one should wear. You must develop the habit of adorning these jewels in the New Year. In this New Year, develop divine love and foster peace in the country. Pray with a broad feeling: Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May the whole world be happy)! Start the New Year with this prayer. Then, you will lead a blissful and peaceful life full of enthusiasm. To lead such a life, cultivate noble thoughts. Love God and make friendship with Him, and you are bound to be successful in all your endeavours.

8. Relevance of Ramayana to modern life

Date: 25 March 1999 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Rama Navami

The whole universe is under the control of God. God is governed by Truth.
Noble souls are the guardians of Truth.

Such noble souls are verily
The embodiments of Divinity.

[Sanskrit sloka]

Embodiments of Love! All are essentially the embodiments of Divinity. Eswara sarva bhoothanam (God dwells in all beings). Isavasyam idam jagat (God permeates the entire universe). Where is the need to search for such an all-pervasive Divinity?

Sarvata Pani Padam Tath Sarvathokshi Shiromukham, Sarvata Sruthimalloke
Sarvamavruthya Thisthati.

[Sanskrit sloka]

How can you search for Him who is moving about with thousands of feet, thousands of eyes, and thousands of ears? It is utterly foolish to search for God. God is within you. Since you have forgotten your true Self and are carried away by the temporary and transient physical body, you are unable to understand the Divine. When you get rid of body attachment and develop attachment towards the Self, only then you can understand the divine Atmic Principle.

Values contained in Rama's story

Embodiments of Love! Life is like a game of chess; not merely that, it is like a battlefield. The story of Rama teaches us the threefold Dharma (code of conduct) pertaining to the individual, the family and the society. You have to make every effort to understand the duties of the individual, the family and the society. Rama is the ocean of compassion. He is love personified. It is possible to understand His divinity only through the path of love. Love is the undercurrent of human life. Man will be able to manifest his innate divinity only when he develops love within.

Modern society needs to follow the dharma that is contained in the epic Ramayana. Why? Today, the son is not paying heed to his father's advice, and the parents are not concerned about the future of the son. Devotion to the guru should be the aim of the students. But students are not having regard for their teachers and the teachers are not imparting anything good to them. In such a situation, everyone needs to follow the ideals of the Ramayana. The Ramayana speaks of the true identity of the individual, the real significance of the family, and the sanctity of the society. The Ramayana teaches the importance of human values. Today, corruption is rampant in all fields such as business, education, and politics. Under these circumstances, the principles of the Ramayana are very important. It explains in detail the relationship that should exist between brothers, the father and the son, the preceptor and the disciple.

The moral, social, and spiritual values om Ramayana

All of us live on the same earth. The same sky is above all of us. We breathe the same air and drink the same water. Ignoring this underlying principle of unity man visualizes multiplicity, which is a big mistake. The Ramayana centers on the principle of unity in diversity. Today, since man has lost the ability to see unity in diversity, he is immersed in restlessness. What we need today is to see unity in diversity and the divinity behind this unity.

The culture of Bharat says: Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath sathyam apriyam (speak the truth, speak sweetly and softly, and never utter

truth in an unpalatable way). Sathyam bruyath is the moral value. Priyam bruyath is the social value. Na bruyath sathyam apriyam is the spiritual value. So, the moral, social, and spiritual values are all contained in the above statement.

The Ramayana teaches these values in the simplest way. But man has forgotten the message of the Ramayana and is leading the life of a Ravana. Ravana did not understand this principle of divinity. There was no transformation in him, though he had acquired all forms of knowledge and had done severe penance. He ruined himself on account of excessive desires. Before his death, he gave a message to the people: "O people, with all my skills and expertise in different forms of knowledge I became a victim of desires. I lost my sons, ruined my clan, and burnt my kingdom to ashes, since I could not control my desires. Do not become a victim of desires like me. Follow the path of truth and righteousness and be like Rama. Experience divinity."

Put Ramayana's teaching into practice

The relationship that existed between the brothers of Rama is an ideal to the rest of the humanity. They lived in unity in spite of troubles and turmoil. Mother Kaikeyi wanted her son Bharata to ascend the throne of Ayodhya, but Bharata never had any such desire. He went to Chitrakoota mountain, fell at the feet of Rama, and prayed, He, being the eldest, should take over the kingdom of Ayodhya. But Rama did not yield to his request. Quoting the Vedic dictum Mathru Devo Bhava, Pithru Devo Bhava. He exhorted Bharata to obey the command of the father and fulfill the desire of his mother by becoming king of Ayodhya. Rama promised him that He would render all help and support. That is why even today, people extol Rama as Sathyavakparipalaka (one who adheres to truthful speech).

Today, many people read the holy Ramayana, but few understand its essence. They spend their time in acquiring bookish knowledge and superficial knowledge but fail to have practical knowledge. There are many people who can explain the teachings of Ramayana in a beautiful way, but

how many of them obey the command of their fathers in their daily life? Not many! What is the use of reading various texts if we do not put into practice the message contained in them? Can anyone enjoy the taste of various delicious items such as mysore pak, gulab jamoon, and jilebi by merely repeating their names? No. One can enjoy the taste only when one eats them. Mere textual information is of no use. But, today, man is interested only in information and not transformation. Intellect will blossom only when there is transformation.

If your ambitions are not fulfilled, do not waver or get depressed.
He is a realized one who is cheerful in the face of all adversities.
[Telugu Poem]

One has to face many obstacles in life, but one should never get depressed. Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a dream, realize it. Life is a game, play it. Life is love, enjoy it. Be cheerful and courageous in the face of adversities; never give scope to any weakness whatsoever. The Vedanta declared, Na Ayamatra balaheenena labhya (a weak-minded person cannot realize the Atma). A weak-minded person cannot accomplish anything. So, be strong-minded. Develop faith in that which is good.

Since there is no fear of sin and love for God, Humanness is on the decline in human beings. This is the cause for lack of peace in the world.

Therefore, man should cultivate Daiva preeti, papa bheeti, and sangha neeti (love for God, fear of sin and morality in society). Though Rama and Ravana were equally well versed in all forms of knowledge, sage Valmiki extolled Rama as Divine and condemned Ravana as a foolish one. What is the reason?

Ravana did not translate into action the knowledge he had acquired; on the contrary he used it for wicked purposes. On the other hand, Rama translated all his knowledge into action and gave joy to one and all. Sarvaloka hithe ratah (Rama was engaged in the welfare of all). Sarvajnanopasampannah (He was the master of all forms of knowledge). Sarvasamudhita gunaihi (He was the embodiment of all good qualities). These are the three aspects that manifested Rama's divinity.

Whoever has these three aspects is essentially divine. In fact, everyone is divine. But because of attachment to the body, man is not able to understand his divine nature. Man can experience and enjoy divinity only by treading along the path of love. Love is God; God is love. So, live in love.

Start the day with love
Spend the day with love
Fill the day with love
End the day with love
This is the way to God.

The best sadhana: love everybody

The cause for man's suffering is that he has constricted his love to himself and his family. He should develop the broad feeling that all are his brothers and sisters. Expansion of love is life; contraction of love is death. All are the children of God. All are sparks of the Divine. Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita: Mamaivamso jeevaloke jeevabhutha sanathana (eternal Atma in all bodies is a part of My Being). So, man should have the broad feeling to identify himself with everyone. Humanity can never progress without broad feelings.

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.

When there is such an easy path to divinity, why do you trouble yourself by undertaking rigorous spiritual practices such as japa, thapa, and yoga? Divinity cannot be attained by all these austerities. How easy it is to love everybody!

Love all and think of divinity. Moses used to think of Jesus all the time. As a result, his face shone with divine effulgence. He resembled Jesus so much that people used to mistake him for Jesus. Ratnakara, a robber, on being advised by Narada started chanting the name of Rama incessantly, as a result of which the radiance of Rama was seen on his countenance and he became sage Valmiki. Rama is Lokadatha (the giver of the world) and Valmiki became Slokadatha (composer of the holy hymns). There is no difference between the giver and the composer. The Vedas declare, Brahma vid Brahmaiva Bhavathi (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself). So, you should always think good, do good, talk good, and hear good. Only then you can become good. A true human being is one who is good. A wicked person can never be called a human being.

The divine nature in man

There are four qualities in man: the divine, demonic, animal and human. What is the divine quality in man? Sarvaloka hithe ratah. (engaged in the welfare of everybody). That is the divine nature. What is the human quality? Always undertake meritorious deeds (punya). Never indulge in sin (papa). Paropakara punyaya papaya parapeedanam (rendering help to others is merit, harming others is sin). Help ever, Hurt never. What constitutes the animal quality in man? Jnanena sunya pasubhir samana (devoid of wisdom man is equivalent to an animal). The purpose of human life does not lie in merely eating, drinking, sleeping, and indulging in materialistic comforts. Even animals indulge in such activities. But unlike man, animals do not possess the evil qualities of amassing, robbing, and stealing. Today man is human only in form, but not in behavior.

Less luggage, more comfort

Janthoonam narajanma durlabham (human life is the most difficult to attain of all living beings). The good that you experience in this life is the result of meritorious deeds done in several past lives. This human life is not new. This message is contained in the word manava. Ma means 'not'; nava means 'new', which means human life is not new.

Today man has degenerated to the level of an animal due to excessive desires. Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure. But, the desires (luggage) in man are multiplying day by day. Human life is a long journey. One should lead a divine life (divya jeevanam), not a mean life (deena jeevanam). Always be happy. Difficulties do come in life. That is the law of nature. Never get disheartened by them. Difficulties are like passing clouds. Difficulties come and go, but morality comes and grows. Unfortunately, there is decline in moral values in the society today.

Rama stood as a shining example of upholding the moral values in the society. Even when he was asked to leave for the forest at a time when he was supposed to be coronated, he was not perturbed in the least. Sukhadukhe samekruthva labhalabhau jayajayau (he is an equal minded one who treats the dualities of life - pain and pleasure, victory and defeat, gain and loss - alike). Rama displayed this virtue of equanimity. Today, man aspires for positions of authority though he does not deserve them. But Rama relinquished the position even though He deserved it. Rama was courageous in the face of adversities. He never gave any scope for weakness. He led the life of a dheera (courageous one), not a deena (weak-minded).

The same is the case of one who is in His company. Hanuman, by contemplating on Rama incessantly, became a dheera. He displayed this quality of courageousness in the court of Ravana. But the same Hanuman stood like a deena (humble one) in Rama's presence. This drives home the point that one should be a deena (humble one) in front of divinity and dheera (courageous one) in the face of evil.

Control your desire to the extent possible

Annihilate the evil qualities of kama (desire), krodha (anger), and lobha (greed). Ravana ruined not only himself, but also his dynasty because of kama. Therefore, to the extent possible control your desires. Today the Government has imposed ceiling on land and property through legislation, but what is essential is ceiling on desires. Not only did Hiranyakasipu refrain from chanting the name of Lord Hari, he also insisted that his son Prahlada follow suit. He developed hatred toward his own son for singing the praise of Lord Had against his wishes. This evil quality of anger led to his doom.

Duryodhana was greed personified. He was not prepared to part with even a small piece of land. He subjected the Pandavas to enormous hardships. What happened to him ultimately? He became a victim of his own greed.

Desire, anger and greed are the greatest impediments in the path of spirituality. Render help to others, if possible. Never hate anybody under any circumstances. The essence of eighteen Puranas is contained in these two maxims: Help ever, Hurt never.

Spirituality promotes spirit of unity

The story of the Ramayana reveals the ideal relationship that should exist between brothers. Lakshmana and Satrugna served Rama and Bharata respectively, with utmost devotion and sincerity. When Lakshmana fainted in the battlefield, Rama lamented, "In this world, I might find another mother like Kausalya, a wife like Sita, but definitely not a brother like Lakshmana." A brother should be like this - one who respects elders and brings name and fame to the whole family. It is the unity amongst the brothers that brought reputation to the whole family.

The same was the case with the Pandavas also. The five Pandavas could defeat hundred Kauravas because they stood united. Even though Vali and Sugriva were just two, they fell apart because of lack of unity. Rama restored

the kingdom to Sugriva, since he completely surrendered to Him. Similar was the case with Ravana, Vibhishana, and Kumbhakarna. Any big task can be accomplished if the five fingers are united. Otherwise even a small task becomes extremely difficult. So, everyone should strive for unity.

Spirituality destroys narrow mindedness and confers unity, cooperation and universal peace.

[Telugu Poem]

Unity is very essential. Through unity, you can understand spirituality. Do not hate anybody. Do not develop ill feelings towards others. Then you can become a true human being. Spiritual practices are just a waste of time if you cannot overcome your selfishness. Do not engage in spiritual activities aspiring for your own liberation, because it would amount to selfishness. Work for the redemption of one and all. Let everybody attain divinity and experience divine bliss. You should have such broad feelings. Your welfare lies in the welfare of the society.

Spend your life in selfless service

Embodiments of Love! You do not need to undertake any spiritual practices. Experience the innate divinity in everyone by following the path of love. Love is God. Spend your life in selfless service. This is the teaching of Rama.

In order to demonstrate to the world the ideal character of Lakshmana, Rama subjected him to a test. When Sita, Rama and Lakshmana were residing on Chitrakoota mountain, one day Lakshmana went into the forest to fetch some food. Taking this opportunity, Rama decided to test Lakshmana. He asked Sita to play her role in this divine drama. As Lakshmana was returning with food, Sita pretended to be asleep under a tree, keeping her head on the lap of Rama. Rama asked Lakshmana to keep Sita's head on his lap without

disturbing her sleep as He had some other important work to attend to.

Rama wanted to observe the feelings of Lakshmana. So, He assumed the form of a parrot and perched on the same tree. Considering Sita as his mother, Lakshmana closed his eyes and went into deep contemplation of Lord Rama. Rama in the form of a parrot started singing:

It is easy to wake up someone who is fast asleep, but is it possible for anyone to wake up a person who is pretending to be asleep?

[Telugu Poem]

Sita pretended to be fast asleep and even started snoring! In all respects, Sita and Rama were a perfect match for each other. After some time, Rama returned as if from somewhere and 'woke up' Sita. Sita opened her eyes as if from deep sleep and expressed her satisfaction to Rama that she had a sound and undisturbed sleep. The leelas (pranks) of God are mysterious, wonderful, and sacred. God tests a devotee in order to shower His grace on him and protect him. Lakshmana fell at Rama's feet and said, "I am Your servant. It is my duty to serve You in the way You want me to." Lakshmana's sincerity and devotion When Sita was being taken away forcibly by Ravana, she bundled all her jewels and dropped them from above. The vanaras (monkeys) found the jewels and took them to Sugriva. When Rama and Lakshmana met Sugriva, he showed them the jewels and asked if they belonged to Sita. Since Rama did not know, He asked Lakshmana to see. Lakshmana replied, "Brother, I don't know whom these earrings and bracelets belong to. But I am sure that these anklets belong to Mother Sita." On being questioned as to how he could recognize Sita's anklets, Lakshmana said, "It was my practice to prostrate at her lotus feet every morning. While doing so I had noticed Mother Sita's anklets." Rama was pleased with Lakshmana's sincerity and devotion and showered praises on him and said that he could not find a brother like Lakshmana anywhere in the world. Later Rama said that it was because of

Lakshmana's strength and support that He could defeat Ravana and bring Sita back to Ayodhya.

The Ramayana demonstrates that anything can be achieved through sincerity and devotion. The story of the Ramayana is so enchanting and captivating that one feels like listening to it again and again. Bharatiyas (Indians) have been singing the story of Rama since ancient times. Everyone should try to understand the essence of the Ramayana. The Ramayana teaches that one should have a good character, one should obey the command of the father and respect the parents, and there should be unity among brothers. If you follow these teachings in letter and spirit, your life itself will become a living Ramayana.

Heart is the real temple

Students should understand that God is their best friend. All the worldly friends are lured by your position, power, and pelf. Once your position and power are gone, gone are your friends too. God is the only friend, in the real sense of the term. The whole world is a book, and your conscience is your real guru. Why trouble yourself going after various worldly gurus? Follow your conscience and experience divinity. The Principle of the Atma, which reveals the secrets of your mind, is your true guru. Guru is one who is formless and beyond all attributes.

Gurur-Brahma Gurur - Vishnu Gurur Devo Maheswara, Guru Sakshath Param Brahma Thasmai Sri Gurave Namah.

Consider God as your mother, father, friend, and everything. Take God as your guru, follow Him and merge in Him. If you have God as your guru, you can achieve everything in life. Develop love for God and be recipients of His love and grace. Develop friendship with God and the whole world will be under your control. Troubles and turmoil are part and parcel of one's life. Overcome them by chanting the divine name. Be fearless.

Do not restrict God to temples and pilgrimage centers. He is Hridayavasi

(indweller of the heart). He is in you, with you, above, you, around you. You do not need to visit various pilgrimage centers. Your heart is the real pilgrimage center.

Mira also echoed the same feelings. When her husband asked her to leave the temple premises, she said to Krishna, "None can separate You from me. My heart is Your temple." In the Gita, Lord Krishna declared, Kshetrajnam Chapi Mam Viddhi (recognise Me as the indweller of all beings). The body is the field, and the Atmic Principle is the indweller of all fields. So, the kshetra (field) and the kshetrajna (knower of the field) are within you. Bliss is not present in a foreign land; it is present within you. In order to experience bliss, develop love in your heart.

You should pray to God to grant you that which He possesses and you do not. What do you lack? Peace and bliss. Ask and it shall be granted. Do not ask God for the fulfillment of mean desires. All the worldly things are fleeting and momentary. Only God is immutable, pure, eternal, and immortal. So, spend your time in singing the glory of God. By sincere prayer, you can discover your latent divinity.

At the time of his departure to the forest along with Rama and Sita, Sumitra counseled Lakshmana thus: "Never be under the impression that you are going to the forest. Wherever Rama and Sita are present, that itself is Ayodhya. This Ayodhya without Sita and Rama is a veritable forest. Consider Sita and Rama as your mother and father and serve them to the best of your ability with all love, sincerity, faith and devotion." You cannot find a woman greater than Sumitra in this world. She blessed her son to serve God wholeheartedly. The term Sumitra means good friend (Su good, Mitra friend). Such noble mothers like Sumitra and sons like Lakshmana with total devotion to God are needed today.

Unity is the need of the hour today. It is unity that protects the world. The prosperity and welfare of the society depends upon the individual. Our thoughts are our greatest asset. If the thoughts are sacred, you will have sacred results. Pleasure and pain are the consequences of your thoughts. So,

sanctify your thoughts. When thoughts are good and powerful, you can achieve anything.

9. Do Sadhana with pure Feelings

Date: 14 April 1999 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Tamil New Year, Baisakhi, Vishu

Truth is your true mother and Wisdom the true father,
Dharma is the true brother and Compassion the true friend;
The true wife is Peace and the true so Forgiveness,
These six are in fact the true relations of man. [Sanskrit sloka]

Embodiments of Love! Life is like an ocean with waves of joy and sorrow. Spirituality is the lighthouse to the people who are traveling in the ocean of Samsara. Spirituality does not mean rituals and worship alone. Spirituality is that which demonstrates unity in multiplicity. God is love personified and is installed in the heart of every man. That is why since time immemorial, the Bharatiyas have prayed for the welfare of all people in the world. Spirituality has a certain discipline. Na sreyo niyamam vina (Nothing noble and great can be achieved without discipline).

Spirituality and welfare of humanity

In Tamil, there is a sacred book named Thirukural, which is equivalent to the Vedas. It was written by Thiruvalluvar. He took to the path of spirituality, worked for the welfare of humanity, and led a disciplined and peaceful life. He used to ask his wife to keep a cup of water and a needle by his side while he ate his food. As per the command of her husband, his wife did accordingly day after day, but not even once did she find him putting them to use while having food. When his wife asked him for the reason, he replied, "I don't want to waste even a single grain of rice. The purpose of this needle is to pick up the grain of rice if it were to fall outside my plate and to wash it clean with water before putting it back in the plate. So far I have not used this needle, since I have been very careful not to spill rice grains." Annam Brahma, raso

Vishnu, bhokta devo Maheswara (food is Brahma, the essence is Vishnu, and the one who partakes of it is Maheswara). Food is called Brahma since its essence pervades the whole body and gives it strength. The prayer to Vishnu is to purify the mind, so that the body may be utilised in a proper way. The Eswara Principle demonstrates how to make use of the strong body and pure mind in a proper way. God resides in the heart of everyone in the form of love. But no one is making any effort to realise the Principal of Love in the heart. There is no life without love. Love is God. God is love.

Today, man is leaving no stone unturned in order to experience happiness. But his desires are increasing day by day, just as the ants that come out of an anthill. Increase in desires will only lead to restlessness but not happiness. Man aspires to be happy through the fulfillment of his desires; on the contrary,

he is becoming more and more restless. The lesser the desires are the greater the happiness will be. The Vedas teach that all the education that man acquires should be utilised for the welfare of society. The Vedas say, Sarvaloka hithe ratah (man should involve himself in the service of society). Sarvajnanopa sampannah (man should be a treasure of wisdom), Sarv asamudhita gunaihi (man should cultivate all good qualities). But today's education does not confer these noble virtues. Modern education bestows mere bookish knowledge, which in turn becomes superficial knowledge. Today, there is no trace of practical knowledge in man.

After his education, man should work for the welfare of society and the world at large. He should not have the narrow feeling that he and his family alone should be happy. Without the world, where is the family? Man and his family are dependent on society and the world at large. So, man and his family can be happy only when the world is safe and secure. Today in all fields of life, be it political or social, no one seems to be concerned about the welfare of the world. Selfishness and self-interest are widespread in all the fields. As long as there is selfishness and self-interest in the people of a country, it cannot prosper.

Brahma and Bhrama

Today man aspires to have the vision of Brahma, but is getting immersed in bhrama (illusion). Unity in multiplicity is Brahma and viewing multiplicity in unity is bhrama. Man has lost the vision of unity in diversity. He has become highly "intelligent", so as to divide unity into multiplicity. Fie upon such intelligence! Man should make an effort to see the unity in diversity. That is the real sadhana (spiritual exercise).

Practice the teachings of the Vedas to experience bliss

Reading the sacred texts such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Puranas does not confer the vision of Brahma. Narada had studied the four Vedas and six Sastras. He was a great exponent of the Brahma Sutras and the Upanishads. In spite of all this, he could neither attain peace nor get rid of his delusion. So he approached the sages Sanaka, Sanandana, and Sanat Kumara and requested them to grant him peace and wisdom. Sanat Kumara asked Narada what made him feel that he deserved to attain peace and wisdom.

Narada replied that he had studied the four Vedas, the six Sastras, the Upanishads, and the Brahma Sutras.

Then Sanat Kumara said, "Narada! No doubt, you have studied the Vedas and Upanishads, but have you put them into practice? It is a mistake to think that mere study of the Vedas and Sastras can confer peace and wisdom. One has to practice the teachings of the Vedas and Sastras in order to experience bliss."

Will the darkness in the world be dispelled by the message of light?

Can the disease be cured by merely listening to the efficacy of medicine?

Can the poor get rid of poverty by listening to the principles of Economics?

Can hunger be satiated by mere repetition of the names of various delicious dishes?

No. Similarly, you can attain bliss only when you put your knowledge into

practice.

[Telugu Poem]

Sanat Kumara went on to say, "Narada, you say you have gone through the Upanishads. But have you understood the first declaration of the first Upanishad: Isavasyam Idam Sarvam (God permeates the entire cosmos)? Have you recognised the Truth that God exists in everybody. You are chanting the slokas (verses), but you are not trying to experience them." Dharma leads to divinity Today spiritual aspirants are wasting their time in such futile exercises. Time is God. Time wasted is life wasted. Instead the aspirants should try to enter a path that will endow them with wisdom. There are nine paths of devotion. They are: sravanam (listening to the stories of the Lord), kirtanam (singing the glory of the Lord) Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on the form of the Lord), Padasevanam (serving the Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (servitude), sneham (friendship of the Lord), and Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). Are you putting any of these into practice in your daily life? No. You are merely mouthing words, but not practising.

The proper study of mankind is man. What is the proper study? Your thoughts, words, and deeds must be in harmony with each other. Manasyanyath vachasyanyath karmanyanyath duratmanam (he is a wicked one whose thoughts, words, and deeds are not in harmony). In the modern world, you find such wicked people everywhere. But there are good people also. If there are no good people in the world, how can the sun rise? Good people are there in the world, no doubt. But, the present-day scenario is such that only the wicked seem to be prospering.

Sathyam matha, pitha jnanam (truth is your mother and wisdom is your father). A true father is one who imparts the knowledge of non-dualism to his son. But the present-day parents are not concerned about truth; whatever untruths their son utters to cover up his mistakes, they take that as truth! It is only because of such parents that the children are going in the wrong

direction. Parents are to be blamed if the children take to the wrong path. As the parents, so are the children. If the parents themselves are found arguing with each other, the children will go a step ahead and engage themselves in fighting with each other! The condition of the country depends upon fathers and mothers. But today, the situation of the family is very unfortunate.

Humility bestows deservedness

Since ancient times, Bharat has radiated peace and happiness to the rest of the world with its power of spirituality. All the aspects of the culture of Bharat are suffused with divinity. The eyes, the ears, the nose and the hand are the different limbs of the body. Body is a limb of the society. Society is a limb of mankind. Mankind is a limb of nature. Nature is a limb of God.

It is because of the impact of modern education that man is misusing his limbs. He has forgotten the truth that humility is the hallmark of true education. Education confers humility. Humility bestows deservedness. Deservedness will lead to dharma. It is through dharma that one can attain Divinity. Modern education has become job-oriented. Without yoga, what is the use of udyoga (job)? One has to attain yoga, which means control of the senses.

Buddha did penance (thapas) for many years in order to attain yoga. Ultimately, Buddha attained Nirvana (liberation). But, today, people are ruining themselves because they are immersed in thamas (dullness). Buddha laid emphasis on samyak drishti, samyak vak, samyak sravanam, samyak chinthanam, and samyak karma. This can be interpreted as:

See no evil, see what is good. Talk no evil, talk what is good. Hear no evil, hear what is good. Think no evil, think what is good. Do no evil, do what is good.

Buddha made proper use of the five senses, experienced bliss and shared it with others. But, today all five senses are being misused. Actions are based on thoughts. So, man has to cultivate noble thoughts. Hridaya (heart) is the

temple of God. Thoughts, words, and deeds will be pure, steady and selfless only when man has a pure hridaya and noble feelings. Purity, patience, and perseverance are very essential for mankind. Without firm faith, man cannot achieve anything in life.

Happiness and sorrow co-exist

Ages have passed, years have rolled by, but there is no transformation in man. When you have a bitter thing in your mouth, even the sweet tastes bitter. Sweet will taste sweet only when you spit out the bitter thing and rinse your mouth. What is that you have to do in order to pour milk into a glass, which is already full of water? You have to pour out the water and then pour in the milk. Likewise, man has to get rid of evil thoughts in order to cultivate sacred feelings.

Man's life is like an ocean full of opposite waves of union and separation. These waves co-exist; in fact one cannot exist without the other. So, one has to be equal-minded.

Happiness and sorrow co-exist.
It is impossible to separate them.
One cannot have comforts alone.
Comforts accrue from troubles and sufferings.
[Telugu Poem]

Man should purify his mind with pure thoughts

Today we find pollution everywhere. The air that we breathe, the water that we drink, the sound that we hear, the food that we partake of, all are polluted. The root cause for all this is that the mind itself is polluted. It is because of evil feelings in the mind that everything appears evil. Mano

moolam idam jagat (the whole world is based on the mind). Even if man dies, mind will not die. So, man should purify his mind with pure thoughts. Pure thoughts can be cultivated only by chanting the divine name.

Some people may talk derisively about the efficacy of the divine name. But, the joy and bliss that you derive by chanting it is supreme. Today people think of only worldly matters, but not God. What is the benefit that accrues from thinking of mundane matters? Nothing at all. In fact, it makes you more and more restless.

People find the reflection of their own defects in others. Those that find mistakes in others do not know their own mistakes. How can you get the belch of a mango if you have not eaten it? The belch you get depends on the food you take. The good and bad that you see and experience are the results of your own thoughts. First recognise the defects in yourself and get rid of them. It is a great sin to criticise others. God is in everyone. So, criticising others amounts to criticising God Himself. Do not criticise or ridicule anyone. Respect everyone; only then will you be respected. It is foolishness to expect others to respect you without yourself respecting them.

If your feelings are good, you will see only good in everyone. Mind is the root cause for everything. Man cannot exist without the mind. A torch cannot function without cells. Body is like a torch, eyes like bulbs, and intellect like a switch. But, without the mind, which can be compared to a cell, the body cannot function. So, the mind has to be kept in good condition.

Cultivate noble qualities in New Year

Embodiments of Love! You have been celebrating the New Year Day year after year. But are you cultivating new and sacred qualities? No. You are unable to give up bad qualities. With each New Year, new and noble qualities should be cultivated. Desires have to be controlled. The lesser the desires, the lesser your sorrows. Excessive desires lead to the ruination of will power (ichcha sakthi). Decline in will power leads to loss of power of action (kriya sakthi). Develop unity of ichcha sakthi, kriya sakthi, and jnana sakthi (power

of wisdom). Will power will increase only when desires are reduced. Happiness is eluding man due to limitless desires. Excessive desires spoil health and cause depression in the mind. Reducing desires amounts to reducing the burden on the mind. Less luggage, more comfort makes travel a pleasure. Life is a long journey. How can you enjoy the journey if you are carrying heavy luggage? Go on reducing your luggage. The same message is conveyed in the Vedas too. Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutathwamanasu (immortality can be attained only through sacrifice; neither wealth nor progeny nor good deeds can confer it).

Have fear of sin and love for God. Only then there will be morality in society. If you do not have fear of sin and love for God, you will not be respected even by your own mother, wife, and children. If you have fear of sin and love for God, the whole world will love you. Sage Vyasa has given the essence of the 18 Puranas in the dictum, Paropakara punyaya papaya parapeedanam (to help others is merit; harming others is sin). Help ever, Hurt never. If you cannot render help, at least restrain yourself from hurting others. That itself is a great help.

Master the mind and be a mastermind

The sacred land of Tamil Nadu is the birthplace of many great saints and sages, who undertook many spiritual practices with great determination and led noble lives of peace and happiness. They gave up body attachment and developed love for the Atma. But, today, man is developing attachment to the body more and more, forgetting the Principle of the Atma.

This body is a heap of rubbish
and is full of diseases.
O mind, do not be under the illusion that body is permanent.
Take refuge at the feet of the Lord.
[Telugu Poem]

The body and the mind are negative; only the Atma is positive. You say, my body, my mind, my intellect, my senses, and so forth. When you say, my handkerchief, the handkerchief is separate from you. Similarly, when you say, my body, my mind, etc., you are separate from them. Then who are you?

Put a question to yourself. All this is matter and you are the Master. Master the mind and be a mastermind.

On the spiritual path, japa and dhyana are not that important. Purity of mind is most important. You do not need to undertake spiritual practice. Love everyone. Do not limit your love to you and your family alone. Do not spend your life in narrow-mindedness. All belong to the same universal family. All are one; be alike to everyone. Divine love is pure, selfless, attributeless, and eternal. He is a sinner who tries to find faults with divine love. Worldly love is negative and full of selfishness. Man can attain Divinity only when he gives up selfishness.

Develop morality. Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows. Today man entertains only negative thoughts. Man cannot expect to have positive rewards when his heart is filled with negative thoughts. When the heart is full of worldly desires, how can you have love for God? It is impossible. Cultivate positive feelings; only then you will have positive results.

Only God is your true friend

If you have selfless love, you need not be afraid of anything. Even if the sky were to fall on your head, be fearless. Never be afraid of following the truth. Truth is God, love is God. Live in love. Get immersed in the divine love. The wicked and evil-minded people cannot understand the divine love. Do not enter into friendship with such people. Only God is your true friend, who has no trace of selfishness and who helps you always under all circumstances. Have the firm conviction that God always helps and never hurts anyone.

Whether you are in the forest or in the sky or in a city or in a village or on the top of a hill or in the middle of a river, God is always with you, in you and around you.

Worldly friends are such that they say hello to you only when you have money and power. Hello becomes hollow once you lose both. As long as there is water in the pond, thousands of frogs gather there. Once the pond gets dried up, not even a single frog will be seen around. Same is the case with worldly friends. But God's friendship is not like that. He is with you at all stages and in all situations. Love him from the depth of your heart. Take refuge in Him. He will definitely protect you. Did He not come to the rescue of Prahlada, who surrendered to Him completely? Yad bhavam, tad bhavathi (as is the feeling, so is the result). God will come to your rescue if you have total faith.

Some actions will yield instant results, whereas others may take a few hours, a few days, a few years or a few births. For example, when your finger is cut, bleeding starts immediately. It takes a few hours for the food to get digested. It takes a few years for a seed to grow into a tree and yield fruit. Be it good or bad, you have to face the consequences of your actions. So, do not indulge in bad actions. Always do good, be good, and see good. This is the way to God. Do not say "I will try;" you must do it.

God is love, so He always gives only love

Some people, when faced with difficulties, think that God is punishing them. It is a mistake to think so. God never punishes anybody. It is only the king who gives punishment, not God. God is love, so He always gives only love. The punishment you suffer is the result of your own actions. God neither punishes you nor protects you. You are punished by your own sins and protected by your own good deeds. You may utilise light for writing wrong account or for reading the holy Ramayana. But, the light is not affected by what you do. Similarly, God is the eternal witness. He is like the light, not affected by what you do, be it good or bad.

Spiritual practices and purity of mind

Embodiments of Love! Many New Years have come and gone, but what is that you have achieved? You may have participated in bhajans any number of times. But, you still continue to be immersed in negativity. Put a question to yourself what have you gained by participating in bhajans. Bhajans should develop positive feelings in you. Any sadhana (spiritual practice) done with noble feelings will yield good results. You may be doing a lot a spiritual practices for many years without any result. But, never give up any spiritual practice. Continue your sadhana. One day or the other, you will get the reward.

You think that you have attained swatantrata (independence). Swa means Atma. So, the true independence lies in following Atma Dharma. Body is like a water bubble. Mind is like a mad monkey. So, do not follow the body; do not follow the mind. Follow the conscience. Your conscience always gives you the right prompting. It is a sin if you do not follow the dictates of your conscience. Conscience is your master.

Follow the master Face the devil Fight to the end Finish the game.

Some people say that they have not got any benefit in spite of chanting the divine name for twenty to thirty years. No benefit accrues from chanting the divine name if the mind is filled with impurities. First purify your mind and fill it with positive feelings. Only then you can experience the benefit of chanting the divine name. Bad thoughts and bad feelings will not help you in any way. Even if you happen to come across anything bad, do not let it enter your mind.

God's work will never fail. So, all the work that is done with divine feelings will never meet with failure. If you fail in your endeavour, it means you do not have divine feelings. You will always be successful if your feelings are pure and divine. At least from today onward, cultivate noble feelings. Talk sweetly and softly. You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly.

Embodiments of Love! On New Year day, it is a practice to mix sweet, sour and bitter things and eat them. It is to indicate that joy and sorrow have to be treated with equanimity. It is the tongue that tastes the delicacy and it is the heart that tastes love. The taste of love is peerless. It is sweeter than even nectar. Love alone can match love. God is love, love is God. Live in love. Whatever bhajans you sing, sing with love. God is Bhavapriya. He sees your feelings, not the rhythm or tune. If your feelings are pure, God will take care of everything.

10. Royal Path to Divinity

Date: 15 April 1999 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Tamil New Year, Baisakhi, Vishu

Run away from bad company;

Join good company.

Perform meritorious deeds day and night.

Embodiments of Love! Since times immemorial, Bharat (India) has been the treasure house of spirituality and has been radiating peace and serenity to all the other countries. But, today, people do not understand even the sacredness, significance, and uniqueness of the human body. Many people are under the false impression that the body is meant to eat drink, sleep, and make merry. You can understand the purpose behind God gifting you this body only when you understand the sacredness and mystery of human birth. The primary goal of man is to recognise the Truth in daily life.

Every man has a body. It not only acts as an instrument but also sets ideals in every respect. What are the ideals? It inhales the life-sustaining oxygen and exhales the poisonous carbon dioxide. It partakes of delicious items and excretes foul smelling faecal matter. What is the inner significance of this activity? Man has to accept those things that are beneficial to the society and the country and discard those which are maleficent to the interests of the society and the nation at large. Thus, the body demonstrates that man has to take in noble and sacred feelings and leave out the unsacred and worldly thoughts.

Life is a combination of body, mind, and Atma

Unfortunately, today, man takes in unholy and unsacred thoughts discarding pure and sacred feelings. What is truth and what is untruth? What is permanent and what is temporary? What is good and what is bad? Man does not undertake such an enquiry today. He is using his power of discrimination

for wrong purposes. He is accepting bad and giving up good. Do you prefer a rotten fruit to a luscious one or inhaling carbon dioxide and exhaling oxygen? No. If you do that, you will not only spoil your health, you will put your life also to risk. Man should achieve physical health, mental satisfaction, and Atmic bliss. Man's life is a combination of the body, mind and Atma. The body performs actions, the mind enquires, and the Atma remains a witness. These three are essential for the human life to blossom. But no one is trying to understand this mystery.

Nature also shows the truthful and right path. If you do not breathe out the air that you breathe in, your health will be spoilt. Likewise, if you do not excrete the body waste, your health will suffer. The lesson one has to learn from this is that one must accept good and give up bad. Tyaja durjana samsargam (discard bad company). Bad company does not mean the company of bad people alone. Even bad thoughts constitute bad company. You should not only discard bad company, but give up bad thoughts also.

However, one does not become a noble soul by just giving up bad company and bad thoughts; one has to join good company and also cultivate good thoughts. One can have good thoughts only by constant contemplation on God. Kuru punyam ahorathram (perform good deeds day and night). At all times, at all places and under all circumstances, man has to contemplate on God and involve himself in His work. Bhaja sadhu samagamam (join good company). You will get sacred feelings only when you are in good company.

Undertake sadhana right from childhood

Right from an early age, you should develop devotion to God. It will be of immense help in old age if you undertake spiritual sadhana right from your childhood. It is impossible to think of God in your old age if you squander your precious time in worldly matters in the early stages of your life. The divine feelings that you develop from your childhood are your true treasure. Thoughts based on Truth (sathya sankalpas) are your true wealth. But, you are giving up such sacred wealth and are hankering after the transient and ephemeral wealth. Start early, drive slowly and reach safely. It is impossible

to remember God and contemplate on Him in old age unless you think of Him right from your childhood. It is easy to remember Him in your old age only when you practice contemplating on Him in your childhood.

When the messengers of death start dragging you away,
When the relatives make hurry to shift you outside the house saying there is no hope,
And when the wife and children
start weeping and wailing bitterly,
Is it possible to think of God at that moment
[Telugu Poem]

Turn senses Godward from early age

I keep telling the students often that the childhood of man is like a tender banana leaf. At this age, this 'banana leaf' is very pure, attractive, and lively. This 'leaf', containing the delicacies of five senses (sound, touch, form, taste, and smell), should be offered to God. But, due to the impact of the Kali age, man is offering these five types of 'delicacies' to the six demons: kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya (lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and jealousy). After the demons eat away the delicacies, spoiling the leaf in the process, man is offering the leftover unsacred food to God in old age. Is it proper to offer to God the remains of the food eaten by the demons?

If man cannot recognise the uniqueness of humanness, what is use of taking the human birth? Janthoonam nara janma durlabham (among all beings, human birth is the rarest and noblest). Having got such a sacred human birth man should turn his senses Godward from his early age. From early age, man should contemplate on God and win divine grace.

In old age, when you cannot see properly, When there are wrinkles on your face,
When your hair turns grey,
When children start making fun of you,
calling you a decrepit monkemy, and
When your limbs start shivering, How do you expect to think of God?
[Telugu Poem]

Those that start thinking of God only in old age have no sense of shame.

Today man is wasting his youth by misusing his senses. He is seeing and listening to unsacred things and indulging in talking ill of others. In the early age, the five senses are like five delicacies. Your life will be sanctified, only when you offer them to God. Otherwise, it is better to be deaf, dumb, and blind! For what purpose are the eyes given to you? Is it to see anything and everything? No. Eyes are given in order to see God. The eye, which is not even an inch in size, is able to see the stars millions of miles away. Such a powerful and sacred eye is being used for seeing unholy things? Why don't you use your eyes for seeing the omnipresent God and the beautiful panorama of nature and having the darshan of holy men?

Peddalu or Gaddalu?

Today the so-called peddalu (elders) are discouraging the young from taking to spiritual path. They say one can start contemplating on God after retirement. Can such people be called peddalu? No. They are gaddalu (hawks)! They neither think of God nor allow their children to do so. Actually, some elders are spoiling the lives of their children. They are trying to make their children tread the wrong path as though they had benefited immensely by doing the same earlier. Tyaja durjana samsargam, give up the company of such evil-minded elders, even if they happen to be your parents.

This was the ideal set by Bharata in the Ramayana. Rama, being the eldest,

was the legal heir to the throne of Ayodhya,

but Kaikeyi sent Him to the forest, as she wanted her son Bharata to become the king. When Bharata came to know of this, he became very furious. He even did not like to look at his mother and set off to the forest immediately to bring back Rama.

Disassociate yourselves from wicked persons

Hiranyakasipu could not tolerate to hear his son, Prahlada, chant the name of Lord Narayana. He would at once close his ears whenever Prahlada uttered Om Namo Narayanaya. He even tried to kill him as he continued to chant the name of Lord Narayana against his wishes. Ultimately, Prahlada disassociated himself from his father as he was a durjana (wicked person).

Sukracharya warned Emperor Bali that the Vamana was none other than Lord Vishnu Himself and that it would be disastrous for Bali to make the gift sought from him by Vamana. Bali reacted to the preceptor's warning, saying that there was no greater sin than going back on one's word. He had given his word to the Lord Himself. Is it not a sin on the part of Sukracharya to ask him to break his promise? That is why Bali told Sukracharya, "You are not my preceptor; you are my enemy." So saying, he forsook Sukracharya and fulfilled his promise to Vamana.

Mira all the time thought of only Giridhara (Lord Krishna) and chanted His name. Her eyes were filled with the form of Krishna, and her mind was filled with the thoughts of Krishna. But her husband thought that she was crossing her limits in the name of devotion to Krishna. So, one day, he threw her out of the Krishna temple for the sake of false worldly honour. Then she wrote a letter to Tulsidas seeking his advice as to what she should do, whether to give up Krishna, the eternal companion, or to forsake her husband.

Tulsidas sent a reply saying, "Mother, God is the greatest of all and the path leading to God is the noblest of all. Husband is like a passing cloud, but God is always with you, even before your birth and after your death.

Trikalabhadbyam sathyam (Truth transcends all the three periods of time). How can you give up God, who is the Embodiment of Truth? Husband entered your life in the middle and will go away in the middle. You may serve him as long as he is alive. But, when he himself discards you, there is nothing wrong in leaving him for the sake of God." It is not proper to expect the wife to suffer at the hands of a wicked husband. If the wife commits a mistake, the husband may punish her. But, it is a sin to punish a woman who is absolutely faultless. Mira prayed,

Krishna, I went deep into the ocean of Samsara and caught hold of the pearl of Your divine name. How can I allow it to slip away from my hand? I will safeguard this 'pearl' even at the cost of my life.

[Tamil Verse]

Better die rather than lead an untruthful life

Worldly life is pravritti marga (outward path) and spiritual life is nivritti marga (inward path). It is a great mistake to give up God and His name for the sake of worldly gains. You need not be afraid of anybody when your conscience is clear. Truth and sacrifice are like your two eyes. Sathyam nasti paro dharma (there is no greater dharma than adhering to truth). But in this Age of Kali, people are giving up truth and righteousness. Better to die than to lead an untruthful life. It is better to live like a swan for a few minutes than to lead the life of a crow for a hundred years.

Education is for serving society

Today, students are becoming highly educated, acquiring degrees and occupying positions of authority. They think they are great intellectuals. What is the use of education and intelligence if they are misused? Why study and die ultimately. Study to be immortal. Bookish knowledge may feed your

stomach but will not help you attain Divinity. You should experience the bliss of your life after offering everything to God. The Vedas declare: Sarva karma Bhagavad preethyartham (whatever you do, do it with a desire to please God).

It is enough if you have God with you. Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita, Sarva dharman parityaja mam ekam saranam vraja (give up all the worldly dharmas and surrender only to Me). All the worldly dharmas are burdensome. They are like ten thousand naya paisas. A hundred rupee note is equal to ten thousand naya paisas. It is rather difficult to bundle up ten thousand naya paisas and carry them with you. So, offer all the ten thousand 'naya paisas' to God. He will give you a 'hundred rupee note', which is light in weight and also safe and secure. The former refers to quantity and the latter to quality. You should look for quality, not for quantity. One teaspoon of cow's milk is better than barrels of donkey's milk.

This country, Bharat, is the land of sacrifice, the land of love and the land of yoga. If you do not have love for your motherland, you are as good as a living corpse. The modern students are neglecting their motherland and are going abroad in search of greener pastures. You may go abroad, but never give up motherland. It is foolish to give up the motherland and get enticed by foreign countries.

Once, Vivekananda had gone to London and America. While returning to India, the American journalists asked him what he thought of his motherland, Bharat. He said, "I have a great regard and love for my country. I respect even the dust, the air and the environment of Bharat. I offer myself completely to the service of my motherland." He who has no love for his motherland, mother tongue and religion is no better than a living corpse.

Only good and bad follow you when you die

Today, people waste their time and energy in amassing wealth. They do not realise that one day or the other they will have to leave everything and go.

Many great kings like Harischandra, Nala, and Mandatha ruled over this land
But now, where are they?
Is Sri Rama, who built a great bridge across the
mighty ocean, alive today?
Many kings have come and gone, but none could
take even a fistful of
Earth when they left the immortal coil.
[Telugu Poem]

If the people could take even a fistful of mud with them when they die, there would have been rationing of mud also! No one can take anything. Only good and bad follow you.

Rama and Ravana were equally well versed in thirty-six forms of knowledge. But Valmiki called Ravana a foolish one and Rama a noble one. Why did Valmiki say so? Did he receive any favour from Rama? No. Here, Rama and Ravana can be compared to a cuckoo and a crow respectively.

The crow did not steal anybody's property but the people hate the very sight of a crow.
The cuckoo did not do any favour to anybody, but still it is loved by one and all.
One is respected if one's speech is good.
[Telugu Poem]

Though both look alike, people eulogise the cuckoo and criticise the crow. They throw stones at the crow when it caws, but feel joyous listening to the mellifluous singing of the cuckoo. Similarly, though Rama and Ravana were

equally well-versed in all forms of knowledge, Rama set an ideal by practising what He learnt, whereas Ravana suffered from 'indigestion', since he merely acquired knowledge without practising it.

Only God is your true property

Education is for life, not for money. Every educated young man should serve society. Youth is very precious; let it not be wasted. Start early, drive slowly, reach safely. You must resolve to work for the welfare of the society even if your parents at first oppose you. Never mind if they do not give you a share in their property. Only God is your true property. Do not aspire for temporary and ephemeral wealth. Enter the path of truth and lead a sacred life. That will make your parents also happy. If parents are not happy when the son leads a sacred life, then they are no parents at all. Such parents are fit to be called demons.

Today is the holy festival of Vishnu. All the Indian festivals are sacred and demonstrate great ideals. The Keralites celebrate their festivals Onam and Vishnu in the most sacred way. With each festival one should cultivate divine feelings. When you contemplate on God with all sincerity and devotion, you become God yourself. This is what the Vedanta says: Brahma vid Brahmaiva Bhavathi (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself.) You will become what you think. Ratnakara, a highway robber, was transformed into a great sage, Valmiki, because he thought of Rama continuously with a pure mind. His face shone with the divine effulgence of Rama. Even the young Prahlada's face reflected the divine radiance of Lord Narayana as he contemplated on Him continuously. He had no sense of fear; he always put on a smiling face in the face of adversity. All the time he was chanting the name of the Lord.

How can anyone, who steadfastly chants the divine name, be afraid of anything? Fear and grief will overpower those who forget the Lord and get immersed in worldly life. You will become divine if you contemplate on the Divine continuously. God is not somewhere else, He is within you.

What is true happiness?

Embodiments of Love! Every festival in India is suffused with divinity. On each festival day, people go to temples and offer their prayers to the Almighty. This is a positive trait. Forgetting God and always thinking of the world is a negative quality. Today, we find elaborate arrangements and gala celebrations in marriage functions. One is filled with joy when one gets married, but one does not realise that the happiness of married life is but momentary. Even dogs and foxes experience this happiness. This is not true happiness. Thyagaraja said, "O mind, tell me what gives the real happiness, is it nidhi (wealth) or the Eswara Sannidhi (divine proximity)?" Consider sannidhi (proximity) as your pennidhi (great treasure). Then your life will be full of joy and bliss. Only devotees can understand this joy and bliss.

Without peace, man is just pieces

A true devotee always keeps singing the name of the Lord. Radha and Mira were always deeply immersed in Namasankirtan. They had broad feelings and broad mind. Broad mind is life, narrow mind is death. Mind can be broadened only through divine contemplation. Peace is a precious jewel, without peace man is just pieces. So attain peace and bliss by contemplating on the divine. Divine contemplation is possible only for the fortunate. They wear the crown of peace. The unfortunate ones can never contemplate on the divine and can never attain peace. You may get fed up of eating laddus and other sweets, but you will never get fed up of chanting the divine name. The more you chant, the more you will feel like chanting.

Embodiments of Love! Today injustice, unrighteousness, and falsehood are on the rise because faith in God is on the decline. The nation can attain peace only when people think of God. God is always with you, in you, around you, behind you, above you and below you. Today some people are prepared to give up God for the sake of worldly relations. But how long will the relations last? This body is only a doll, which may perish at any moment of time. Bliss cannot be attained as long as one has body attachment. This body is Sivam (auspicious) as long as there is the divine breath of life in it. It becomes

savam (corpse) once it loses the divine breath.

When man is born, he cries asking the question, "Koham, Koham (who am I)." What is the use of living if he has the same question on his lips at the time of death too? At the time of death, man should be able to declare cheerfully, "Soham, Soham (I am God)." Realising one's own divinity is the purpose of life.

Man is never satisfied. He is greedy for more and more wealth. There should be a limit to greed for wealth. What man has to earn is divine grace. No matter what he earns, he cannot take a single pie with him when he leaves the body. Alexander conquered many nations and became a mighty emperor. But, when the hour of death approached, no doctor could save him. Before passing away, he summoned his ministers and told them to keep his empty hands raised above when his body was taken for the final journey through the streets so that the people would understand that even a great and mighty emperor like Alexander, who achieved so much in life, had to go empty-handed.

Only sacrifice will lead to immortality

Alexander wanted to conquer the entire world. Today also, we find one country trying to overpower the other. People are becoming power crazy. People who have greed for power can never be good leaders. In fact, they are the persons who destroy the nation. Many ministers, prime ministers, kings, and emperors have come and gone. But everybody was concerned only about their position and power. Fie upon such leaders, who had no concern for the welfare of the nation! Such leaders are not human beings; they are demons. Leaders should have a sense of sacrifice. Only sacrifice will lead to immortality.

Students! After you complete your education, do not confine yourself to your jobs alone. Work for the welfare of society. The culture of Bharat says: Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak the truth and follow righteousness). Uphold these principles even at the cost of your life. Help the poor and the

downtrodden. Have the national interest foremost in your mind. Your welfare depends on the welfare of the nation. Creation (srushti) emerged from the Creator (Parameshti); society (samashiti) emerged from the creation. From society emerged the individual (vyashti). There is no individual without society. So, the vyashti should serve the samashiti, then serve the srushti and ultimately merge in Parameshti. This is the royal path to Divinity.

Contemplate on God till your last breath

I am not perturbed by criticism. What I am teaching you is good, only good and nothing but good. If you follow these teachings, you are bound to attain your goal. Take to the right path right from your young age; otherwise you are bound to repent in your old age. Cultivate sacred thoughts and offer them to God right from the young age. Knowingly or unknowingly you might have committed some mistakes. There is no point in worrying about the past. At least now, wake up from your slumber, think of God and sanctify your life.

Divinity is the goal of life. You can attain divinity by following the path of truth, righteousness and love. Give up body attachment and develop divine feelings. Body is weak, made up of five elements and is bound to perish some time or the other. People say that the life span of a human being is hundred years, but you cannot take it for granted. No one can predict when death will occur. It may occur either in childhood or in youth, or in middle age or in old age. Death is certain. So, try to know yourself while you are alive. Contemplate on God till your last breath. That is your primary duty.

Discharge your other duties also such as taking care of your family and children, but consider even that as God's work and treat all your family members as divine. All actions should be undertaken for the pleasure of God. Many people undertake japa and dhyana only after their retirement. Their hand turns the rosary, mouth utters 'Ram, Ram, Ram,' but the mind wanders in the market, goes to the club and starts playing cards as they might have indulged in all this earlier in life. What is the use of such a japa? So, it is better to take to the spiritual path right from childhood. It is a great fortune and merit to take to the spiritual path from childhood.

Sanctifying your heart is true pudding

Embodiments of Love! Today the people of Kerala are celebrating the festival of Vishnu. The inner significance of Vishnu is to cultivate sacredness. It does not end with preparing payasam (pudding) and partaking of it. Sanctifying your heart is true pudding. You will be celebrating Vishnu in the true spirit only when you make efforts to purify your heart.

You may not undertake any sadhana (spiritual exercise), but never forget the Principle of Love. Never be afraid of troubles; sanctify your life with love. Love everyone. Where love is, there God is. Love is God. God is love. All the time we should think of God and contemplate on Him.

11. The ephemeral and the transcendental

Date: 26 April 1999 / Location: Kodaikanal

Life without love is like
An electric wire without power supply,
A field without water,
A temple without deity,
A school without teacher.
[Telugu Poem]

Speech is the cause of prosperity,
Speech is the cause of friendship,
Speech is the cause of bondage, and
Speech may even cause death.
[Sanskrit Verse]

In this world, speech carries also more value than the currency note. In ancient times, people used to give immense value to speech. With the help of speech they were able to become rich and prosperous; they could even win kingdoms. Man becomes virtuous only when his speech is good; he becomes evil when his speech is bad. Speech promotes friendship. It also brings about differences between friends. Speech promotes affinity among relatives. It also creates discord. Effects of speech are not confined to ephemeral and worldly matters only; speech affects our spiritual progress also. Speech may even cause death. Speech can save one's life, too. Sweet speech brings you name and fame. Since man today has lost his pleasant speech and sweet temper, he is subjected to innumerable ordeals and sufferings. That is why I tell the students now and then, you cannot always oblige but you can speak always obligingly. When the speech is good, man becomes a hero. But man will become a zero if the speech is not good.

Root cause of restlessness in the world

Who is hero? God is hero and the world is zero. So, you should make friendship with that hero. The eternal nature of Divine Love, which is blemishless, selfless, and pure, alone stands the test of true friendship. When you enjoy the proximity of such a friend, you will be free from fear even in the face of insurmountable difficulties. Lack of faith is the cause of fear in man. So, cultivating faith in the Divine is the foremost task of man. Endowed with such faith, one can achieve success in every kind of task. What is the root cause of disturbance and restlessness in the world?

Due to their ignorance, people have lost
Fear of sin and love for God,
Resulting in the depravity of human nature.
What a blow to the cause of peace in the world
[Telugu Poem]

Man today has made giant strides in all fields. But the progress he has registered can be compared to an electric wire without current, since he does not possess human values. Love of God has infinite power. Here is an example. People are coming here from far off places in India and from different countries, spending a lot of money and time. Why do they gather here? What is the reason? They find something here that they do not find in their family members, in friends, in relatives, in the society they live in, and also in their countries. If they were able to find it in themselves or in their societies or in their countries, they would never come here.

What do they find here? You find love here. For the sake of experiencing Divine Love, you all embark on long and arduous journeys. But, if you make a thorough observation and investigation into the matter, you will be able to

know that love is present within you only. In the Gita, Lord Krishna declared: Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhutha Sanathana (the eternal Atma in every human being is a part of My Being). Hence, Divine Love is present in every individual.

But the human being, unable to realize the truth that love is present within himself, thinks that it is something separate or different from him and undertakes long journeys searching for love. Know that the Divine is not different from you. Sarvata panipadam Tat sarvathokshi siromukham (That omnipresent Brahman has His hands, feet, eyes, and mouth everywhere).

Our foremost task is to cultivate sadgunas

To have a vision of God, who is omnipresent, you have to make certain enquiries. The Vedas proclaim that Brahman is all-pervasive. Easwara sarva bhutanam (the Divine is immanent in every being). Man should cultivate good qualities if he wants to realize the truth of these statements. Without such qualities, man cannot realize even a fraction of the truth of the statement saryam khalvidam Brahma (verily all this is Brahman). Only by means of good qualities can one recognize the Divine, who is omnipresent. Cultivating good qualities is the basic tenet of devotion. Cultivation of virtues, right attitude, adherence to truth, discipline, and sense of duty are the signs of devotion. Only those who develop these qualities can be called devotees.

Our foremost task is to cultivate sadgunas (good qualities). The Sanskrit word sath stands for eternity, which is called Being. We should acquire the qualities of Being. What are these qualities? They are attributelessness, purity, steadfastness and enlightenment. It is not an easy task to acquire all these qualities. However, there is one way out. Since all the virtues are embedded in pure, selfless, and divine love, if you develop love, all the virtues will manifest in you. The true nature of love should be cultivated to experience the Divinity latent in you.

Who am I?

Several ways were enunciated in Vedanta to clarify one question: "Who am I?" What is its inner significance? The "I" is all-pervasive. Question yourself, "Who am I?" A doubt may also arise as to why you should try to know "Who am I" when there are so many other things of interest in this age of information. If you find an answer to this question, you will be able to realize not only your true nature, your true identity, but also the true identity of the millions of people in the world. You will be able to recognize the true nature of every individual.

Whenever you come across a stranger you ask him, "Who are you?" and waste your time. Instead, question yourself, "Who am I?" By finding out the answer to this question you will be able to very easily find out who he is, since the true nature of every human being is one and the same. Every human being refers to himself as "I". The word "I" is applicable to every individual. If you understand this one word "I", you can understand the real nature of every being in the world.

There is only One without a second

Here is an example. Look at these bulbs and tube lights. Their colors, wattage, and shapes are different. You know that the electric current that flows through these different bulbs is one and the same. Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti (Truth is one, but scholars refer to it by many names). Likewise, forms are different, names are different, but the divine vibration is one and the same. So, there is only One without a second. That is Divinity. If you recognize Divinity, you will be able to understand the nature of the Self immanent in all individual beings. Everything has emanated from the Divine.

Here is an example. First you were alone. Later you got married. Before marriage you had only two legs and you enjoyed greater freedom. You could go wherever you wanted to go. After marriage, you acquired two more legs and your movements were restricted, since you did not feel like leaving your wife alone at home. This is bondage. Your wish to have a son might be fulfilled after two years. With the arrival of the son, you added two more legs. Your movements were further impeded. With the passage of time, you might

feel bad for not having a baby girl, though you had a son who could uplift your family and bring name and fame. Two more legs were added with the birth of a daughter. The greater the number of legs, the lesser the freedom would be. You would give away your daughter in marriage. Members of the bridegroom's family would become your relatives. With the arrival of the daughter-in-law, the members of her family too would become your relatives. In this manner one becomes many. Here oneness is the cause of multitudinous.

If you realize this truth, the Vedantic axiom Ekoham Bahusyam (one Brahman multiplies itself into many) can be understood easily. To realize this oneness as the unifying force of the multitudinous is the summum bonum of the Indian culture. But, man today is not thinking on these lines. He is dividing oneness into many. He is carried away by attachments at the physical level and is fully immersed in worldly relations like son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandson, and the like. This attachment leads to bondage, if he realizes the truth that the nature of the Self is one and the same in every being, there will be no suffering.

Cultivate purity and divinity

The world is like a cinema, and the Atma is the screen. The different projections that appear on the screen are transient, whereas the screen remains as it is. That is why Vedanta proclaims Brahma sathyam jaganmithya (Brahman is truth, the world is an illusion). The pictures in the form of projections on the screen come and go, but the screen does not change.

Let us analyze this from the standpoint of the Vedantic statement sarvain khalvidam Brahma (the entire universe is Brahman). When the pictures appear on the screen, it become invisible. Where does it go? It is there within the picture, but it is invisible. But without the screen you cannot see the pictures.

Observation reveals the fact that the screen is not at all affected either by the innumerable visuals or by the sound effects. The fire that appears on the

screen does not burn it. A tempest appears, it may even uproot the trees. The screen depicts the scenes, but it is not affected by them. Sometimes, we see floods on the screen. Rivers like the Ganga, Yamuna, and Godavari may overflow, but the screen is not drenched. What is the reason? Floods, earthquakes, and tempest that appear on the screen are not real, so the screen is not affected by them. It remains as a witness. Your heart is a big screen, which is changeless. On the screen of the heart, you see sufferings, happiness and ordeals. All these are transient scenes, like passing clouds. None of the scenes is permanent. Only the screen of your heart is permanent. That is Divine. It is also called conscience which is the eternal truth.

Where do you find consciousness?

The conscious perception of what is going around and the people we come across through bodily senses and mental powers is transient. Conscience is within. It vibrates throughout the body, whereas conscious perception is associated with the senses. Where do these two, conscience and conscious perception, come from? Both have their origin in the all-pervading universal consciousness. Where do you find consciousness? It is not confined to one place. It is infinite, immutable, invisible, and all-pervasive. First, you should understand this consciousness. You can then attempt to merge it with Divine Consciousness. This merger leads to bliss and liberation.

What should we do to attain this? Air is everywhere. It is invisible and we cannot catch it. But nobody has got any right to deny its existence. It is our life force. So, it does exist and it is all-pervasive. In your body, this air is in a limited quantity.

If you inflate a balloon, the air, which is all-pervasive, enters the balloon. But its quantity is limited. If you tie the balloon securely with a string, the air in it cannot merge with the air outside. What is the reason? It has a limitation, since it is encased in a balloon. What should be done to overcome the limitation? The encasement should be destroyed. How? Pump more and more air into the balloon till it bursts. Then the limited air in the balloon will get merged with the infinite air outside. Likewise, the body, which is only a

vesture of the divine, is the cause of bondage. In the body too there is the air of divinity. But it is limited and bound. If you cultivate purity and divinity more and more, attachment to the body gets destroyed, which will lead to liberation.

The body is composed of the five elements.
It is subject to change and death.
It is stated that life span of man is hundred years
but do not trust these words.
It may drop away in childhood or in youth
or in the middle age or in old age.
It may fall away, Oh man, in a village or
in a forest or in the midst of waters. The body is full of filth and is subject to
all sorts of afflictions and diseases.
It is bound by the cycle of birth and death.
It cannot cross the ocean of life.
Oh mind! Believe not that it will exist forever. Take refuge at the feet of the
Lord.
[Telugu Poem]

For the sake of physical gratification, you undergo many ordeals from dawn to dusk. What do you gain out of it? You are able to experience only ephemeral pleasures. But you should realize the truth that eternal bliss is within you. You should strive to experience that bliss.

God is not different from you. He is not confined to places like temples, mosques, and churches. He is omnipresent. He is the resident of your heart. The body is the temple of God. So, you should strengthen the feelings of love within you. You do develop love, but it is based on bodily relations. You love your son, father, and mother. You identify yourself with the body, so you direct your love toward those with whom you have got a relationship at

physical level. You are not able to manifest the kind of love that is beyond name and form. Love has no form. It does not differentiate between young and old or man and woman. Love is love. It cannot be compared to anything else. Love is the very form of the Divine. Love is God. Live in love. How to do that?

Start the day with Love Spend the day with Love Fill the day with Love End the day with Love This is the way to God.

You can cultivate love in several ways. But, do not limit it to the bodily needs and relations. However, as long as you live in the world, you do need the warmth of relationship. You can wish for the welfare and progress of someone else. You can also share his happiness. But all these feelings are limited to the physical relationship, which is transient.

The human being has both a head and a heart. Whatever comes from the head is related to worldly affairs only. Reading, writing, walking, and feelings of pain and pleasure belong to the head. These are all ephemeral.

Eternal values like truth, love, patience, and compassion emanate from the heart. What comes from the head is worldly and ephemeral. What comes from the heart is transcendental and eternal. That which comes from the heart leads to nivritti (inward path). But, all that comes from the head lead to pravritti (outward path). The head carries responsibility, whereas the heart is bestowed with right. Whatever is done by the head is temporary. You feel hungry. You go to canteen and eat two chapatis to satiate your hunger. But, after two hours. you feel hungry again. It is cyclic in nature. You feel hungry, you eat something, the food gets digested, and again you feel hungry. This can be compared to the cycle of birth and death.

Sankaracharya said:

The cycle of birth and death is repetitive. World is an ocean of woes;

win the grace of God and transcend it. Oh fool! Chant the Lords name instead of memorizing the rudiments of grammar. Grammar would not come to your help at the time of death
[Sanskrit Verse]

The three states of consciousness

As long as you are awake, you aspire for many things and indulge in many activities. You are also subject to manifold experiences. But you forget everything while sleeping.

The state of sleep can be compared to a short death, and death can be compared to a long sleep. It is not easy to understand the true meaning of birth and death. You forget in sleep state what you experienced during the day. So, sleep state can be considered as a short death. Similarly, waking state can be considered as long life. However, the waking state and the sleep state are temporary. But in both the states witnessconsciousness exists, which experiences everything.

Here is an example. During the waking state, you move around with the help of the body, listen to many things, and experience happiness. When questioned, you claim that it is you who is experiencing all this. But, in the dream state, who is experiencing the dream? It is you only. In the deep sleep state, you forget everything and enjoy bliss. Here, who is experiencing bliss? Again, it is you only. So, in all these three states - waking, dream, and deep sleep - you do exist, and it is you who experience everything.

Trikal badhyam sathyam (Truth is changeless in all three periods of time). You remain the same in all the three states. So, you are the very form of Truth.

Live in the present

Embodiments of Love!

Time undergoes change. Waking, dream, and deep sleep states are subject to change. Matter, worldly things and bodies composed of the five elements also undergo change. Mind, intellect, feelings, and senses also undergo change. Senses are afflicted with various diseases. So, they are all transient.

But you are permanent and experience everything. Do not brood over the past. Past is past; forget it. Future is not certain. It is beyond your perception. So, live in the present, since it is permanent. It is not ordinary present; it is omnipresent. How? Past is in the present, since the present is the result of past actions. Future is also in the present, since it depends on the present actions. So, you should pay attention only to the present.

Instead of giving importance to ephemeral pleasures, you should follow the right path. That is all you are supposed to do now. But you are not doing what you are supposed to do. You simply brood over the past and worry about the future. In this way, you ignore the present. As a result, you are subjected to suffering. Why should you not derive happiness from the present state of affairs?

Brooding over the past and worrying about the future are the main cause of man's suffering. Why do you think about the past? You treaded that path consciously. Then why do you look back? Be happy in the present. That is all you should aspire for. You may face many ordeals. But do not pay too much attention to them. Lead your life happily till the end.

Experience divine bliss, which is within you

Man yearns for happiness in every act, in every kind of experience. He pines for happiness. All his actions are aimed at deriving happiness. Whether he does business or work in an office, his aim is to derive happiness. But does he find it? No. It is a temporary phase only as it is worldly happiness. He may be

happy for a while, but permanent happiness is attained only by contemplation on God. So, contemplate on the Divine.

You must understand that the final product depends upon the original material. From clay you can make a doll of clay. Is it possible to make a doll of gold from clay? Your bodies are composed of the five elements. They survive on food. You may prepare a several course meal. But, you should eat it before it gets stale. If you waste time, the food may decay and become unfit for consumption. Likewise, you should experience the eternal divine bliss at the right time before the body decays and becomes decrepit. This is the task of the human beings today.

You try to experience many things.
Instead, experience the divine bliss, which is within you.
That is the supreme bliss.
It is the very form of supreme wisdom.
It is one without a second.
It is expansive and pervasive like the sky. It is eternal, pure and changeless.
It stands as a witness of everything.
[Sanskrit Verse]

Cultivate Divine Love

Look at those glowing lights. In this assembly, some persons are listening to My discourse, some are moving away. and some are sleeping. Different people are doing different types of work. The light stands as a witness. It is not affected by your sleep. It is not affected by your movements. It is not affected even though you do not listen to My discourse. It simply remains as a witness.

Divinity, like light, is the witness of everything. Its effulgence illuminates

everything else. Where does it exist? We find santhi (peace) within asanthi (unrest). In the depth of the santhi (peace), there exists prakanthi (supreme splendor). In this prakanthi, one can experience Param Jyothi (Divine Effulgence). Param Jyothi, in the form of Atma Jyothi, (the light of the Atma) is within you. That is the light of nonduality and eternity. That is the light of immortality. That is the light of the Self.

Since you possess that light within yourselves, why should you be afraid of anything else? Why should you worry? Be happy. Where is happiness? How to experience it? Union with God is happiness.

You should realize that love is the form of God. As long as Divinity, in the form of love, exists within you, unrest cannot reach you. But, these days, people are subjecting themselves to unrest and unhappiness by misinterpreting the nature of love and by attributing to it certain impure feelings. It is a blunder. Know that Divine Love is unsullied, selfless, and pure. Without any hesitation you should try to acquire that love. Strive to possess it.

The world today is full of misery. There is no place without fear and grief. People are afraid to travel by air, by trains or by cars, because they are wary of evil elements. Even walking has become unsafe.

People are not happy at home also, since they are haunted by numerous fears. They are terribly fear-stricken. What is the reason? They are unable to bear difficulties and ordeals. But, think who is facing ordeals? Who is undergoing suffering? It is the body only, which is the composition of the five elements. Reduce attachment to the body. Then you will experience eternal bliss. Reducing body attachment and increasing attachment to the Self is the true meaning of devotion. Attachment to body leads to pravritti (outward path), while attachment to the Self leads to nivritti (inward path). The combination of these is human life.

Embodiments of Love! Strengthen love, saturate your lives with love and live in that Divine Love.

12. Dwell in God Consciousness

Date: 27 April 1999 / Location: Kodaikanal

Bend the body
Mend the senses
End the mind.

This is one of the chief governing principles of the culture of *Bharat*. Every *Bharatiya* (Indian) is the inheritor of this legacy. So, Bharatiyas should make proper use of this legacy to redeem their lives. If a person abuses another, he really abuses his own self, because the abuser and the abused are both one and the same, because the indwelling Atma is the same in both. Who reprimands whom? The principle of the Atma is the same in all. On this basis, the scriptures declare:

"Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti (the truth is one, but wise men speak of it in many ways)."

There is water in this tumbler. Telugu people call it 'neeru', Tamilians call it 'thanni', Hindi speaking people call it 'pani',

Englishmen say 'water', while those who speak Sanskrit say 'vari'. Though it is called by different names, yet water remains the same; its basic quality does not undergo any change. In this vast world of diverse species, human beings have different names and forms. Despite these outward variations, the Atmic principle in all of them is the same. The recognition of this unity in diversity constitutes spiritual sadhana. When one enquires deeply into the question whom one is praising or denigrating, loving or trusting, it will become evident that one indeed praises, denigrates, loves, or trusts only one's Self and none

else.

Fundamental unity of mankind

Though lakhs of years have passed since the advent of man on this earth, yet he does not know his real Self even today. The entire creation has divine origin, and the Creator is God. He willed:

"Ekoham Bahusyam
(I am alone, let Me be many),"

and the creation manifested by His Will.

Srishti (creation) has its origin from *Parameshti* (supreme power). *Samashti* (society) is a limb of srishti. *Similarly*, *vyashti* (individual) is a limb of samashti.

Without srishti, samashti has no existence, and without samashti, there can be no *vyashti*.

Since man has limbs such as hands, feet, head, etc., which constitute his body, likewise man is a limb of society and society is a limb of creation (srishti). Man is therefore not separate from samashti, srishti, and Parameshti. All human beings are just the limbs of the same body of God.

If man realizes his intimate relationship with samashti, srishti, and Parameshti, he will not hate or abuse anyone because all are the limbs of the same body. To recognize the truth of the relationship between the limbs and the body, i.e., the relation between the part and the whole is a major element in Sadhana. One who recognizes this truth will be unaffected by praise or

blame.

Story of a noble person

Once, a noble person was proceeding from one village to another. He was followed by an ungodly man, who went on criticizing and abusing the noble person all the way. But the noble man was unaffected by the abusive attacks on him. He never paid any heed to them, nor did he show any anger or worry. As they approached the village, the villagers came in large numbers to welcome the noble man. This was noticed by the other man also. The noble soul spoke to one of the villagers, "Before attending to my needs, please serve this person with some butter milk and food, since he is very much tired from continuously abusing me all along the way."

The critic then realized the greatness of the person whom he had abused all along. He thought to himself, "He is unaffected by abuse and is indifferent to praise or blame. He must be very noble and worthy of veneration." He fell at the feet of the noble soul and said, "Swami, even though I abused you so much, you did not show any anger."

The saintly man replied, "You simpleton, you do not realise that the same spirit resides in you and me. What are you condemning, the body or the self? If you are condemning the self, you are condemning yourself, because the same self is present in you and me. If you are abusing my body, I am, myself, every moment condemning this body of mine, which is made up of the five elements and is full of foul smelling dirt and fecal matter. I decrying my own body because I am myself disgusted with it. So, if you are abusing my body, you are only helping me."

The nature of Brahman

Thinking that you are only a body is delusion (*Bhramatathwa*) since you see multiplicity in unity. On the other hand, when you see unity in multiplicity, you attain self realization (Brahmatathwa). So, the perception of unity as diversity is Bhramatathwa, while discerning unity in all things is

Brahmatathwa (perception of the divine).

The stories of the Lord (Vishnu Charitra) are full of wonder (*chitra*). They sanctify the lives of the people of all the three worlds (*Trailokya Pavitra*) and are the tools that cut the creepers of worldly bondage (*bhavalatalavitra*). They are like noble friends (*sanmitra*). For the gardens of sages and seers, they are like spring season (*munijanavanachaitra*).

The Divine is beyond description. Even great sages like Narada, son of Brahma, could not understand the majesty and mystery of God. Some people have a wrong notion that Narada is one who always creates discord. This is not correct. Narada means one who propagates wisdom. It was he who proclaimed that understanding nonduality is wisdom. He could go to Kailasa (Siva's abode) or Vaikunta (Vishnu's abode) in a moment.

The ever-wandering Narada once went to Vaikunta. He met Vishnu there. Vishnu wanted to test Narada. He said, "Narada, you have no attachments. You are constantly wandering in the three worlds, chanting My name continually. But have you tried to understand the mystery of My creation? I created the five elements. This entire cosmos is made up of these five elements. Which of these five elements is most important?"

Narada replied, "How can I not know this, my Lord? I have cognized everything in this creation. If I cannot understand this truth, who else can?"

The Lord then asked, "Which among the five elements is most important?"

Narada replied, "Water is most important, for three-fourths of the earth is enveloped by water. Land is only one-fourth of the earth's surface."

Vishnu remarked, "But the sage Agastya drank up the ocean in a single gulp. So, is Agastya greater or water?"

Narada replied, "You are right my Lord, Agastya is greater than water."

Vishnu asked again, "But this Agastya is a tiny star in the sky (akasa). Now, is this star greater or the sky?"

Narada replied, "It is the sky that is greater."

The Lord agreed and said, "Your understanding is correct. The sky indeed is greater. In His incarnation as Vamana, the Lord asked for three steps from king Bali. And in the course of taking the gift of three steps, Vamana assumed the form of Thrivikrama and covered the entire earth in one step, the space from the earth to the sky in second, and there was no room for the third step. King Bali had to offer his head for the third step. So now, is God great or the sky?"

Narada replied, "Swami, when the mere foot of the Lord covers the entire sky, how much greater His full form would be? God indeed is greater."

Vishnu now asked, "God, who envelops the entire cosmos dwells in the heart of His bhakta (devotee). So now, is the heart of the devotee greater or God?"

Narada replied, "Indeed, the devotee's heart is greater."

So, you see there is nothing greater than the heart of the devotee. The infinite God is enshrined in the heart of a true devotee in His subtlest form. That is why He is described as

"Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan" (subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest).

How can anyone grasp or describe the truth about the Divine?

Live like a lotus

If you want to understand the divine principle, you have to understand the essence of Bharatiya culture. The culture of Bharat teaches that to be reputed as a great man is of no consequence. To acquire a good name is all that matters. Ravana was a great personality in the Ramayana. But Rama was the embodiment of goodness. Ravana was great; Rama was good. What is the difference between greatness and goodness? A great man sees *nara* (man) in Narayana (God), while a good man sees Narayana in every nara. Greatness lies in seeing the divine in man. This is true Vedanta.

Sarvam khalvidam Brahma (all this is verily Brahman).

Sarvam Vishnumayam jagat (the universe is permeated by the Divine).

Ishwara sarva bhutanam (God is immanent in all creatures).

The one who knows this truth is a good man.

What is the difference between man and God? The one with the feeling of separateness and individuality (*vyakti*) is human, while God sees everything in the cosmos as His manifestation. Recognizing the truth that all are His forms is the perception of the divine. A noble man will perceive himself as part of society (*samashti*). The nobler man will perceive himself as part of the entire creation. The one who perceives the entire creation as the manifestation, of God (*Vishnumayam*) is a Paramahansa (fully self-realized one). He sees the divine in every part of this creation. What are the attributes of a Paramahansa? The heart of a Paramahansa is like a lotus. Where is the lotus born? It is born in mud. Where does it live? It lives on the surface of

water. The lotus is neither defiled by mud nor wetted by water. Yet it cannot survive even for a second without mud and water. Man's accumulated samskaras of past lives are like mud. The present life can be compared to water. A Paramahansa is one who is not affected by his past life. Though his present life is the consequence of his past samskaras, yet it can be pure and free from the mud of past traits.

Jealousy and its three sons

The divinity present in man endows him with sacred qualities as mere means of his worldly existence. He wastes time by spending it in mundane activities. Why? The main reason is man's ahamkara (ego) and mamakara (attachment). Besides these two, man is also a victim of asuya (jealousy). Jealousy is the source of great danger. No matter how great a scholar one may be, or a man of authority and position, or one with great virtues, when once one falls prey to jealousy, one loses everything in life.

Here is a green tree full of blooming flowers. A pest enters this tree and destroys it in a short time. The pest is not visible as it eats away the tree's roots. Jealousy is like this pest. The Kauravas met their ruin due to jealousy. A jealous man is not happy to see the happiness, health, wealth, or higher performance of others. The feeling that no one should excel one in life is the root of jealousy. Jealousy has three sons. They are *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger) and *dwesha* (hatred). But this jealousy has a sister named anasuya (one without jealousy).

Anasuya, the wife of sage Atri, made Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara, the Supreme Trinity, into babes. She could make the gods forget their Divinity. She could make Divinity her child. However, in this world, jealousy is growing beyond limits. It is highly dangerous. Jealousy causes the fall of man. One should eschew jealousy. Jealousy is totally contrary to the culture of Bharat. Bharatiya culture has always considered humanity as one entity. That is the import of the Vedic prayer:

Saha Navavathu
Saha Nau Bhunakthu
Saha Veeryam Karavavahai
Tejaswi Navadheethamasthu Ma Vidvisavahai
Om Santhi Santhi Santhih.

May we be protected and nourished together!
May we perform heroic deeds!
May we be filled with divine effulgence.
May we never have any hatred between us!
Om peace, peace, peace.

How sacred are these words of the Vedas, which are a part of the heritage of Bharat! There are so many similar sacred tenets in the samskriti (culture) of Bharat. What is samskriti? That which refines. Man has forgotten his tenet of refinement. He has also forgotten his humanness. He is fostering animal nature. This animal nature in turn becomes demonic. Strive to get rid of the animal traits and develop human qualities.

Offer the sacred food to God first

Man undertakes several spiritual practices today. But what is their effect on him? The body of man is like a tender plantain leaf. On this fresh green leaf, you serve five items of delicious food of nectarine qualities. These items of food are composed of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether), the five life principles (prana, apana, vyana, udana, and samana), and the five senses of man. To whom do you offer this sacred food first? Instead of offering to God first, you offer it to demons of kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsarya (desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride, jealousy). Thus, you offer all your five senses to these demons. After these demons have satiated themselves, and when the tender plantain leaf of the body has become a tattered remnant, you turn to offer it to God. Is this what you should do? As

soon as the food is served, it should be offered to God. Then you partake of it. Why do you offer this wonderful feast to the demons of desire, anger, greed, pride, jealousy etc.?

When old age overtakes you, the body becomes weak, vision fails, the face is full of wrinkles;

Urchins surround you and tease you as stuffed monkey

And your body itself becomes a burden of misery. Is that when you should offer your body to God? No, not at all. Offer yourself to God in your youth, when all your faculties

Are at their peak performance and the body is full of vigor and vitality.

[Telugu Poem]

Start prayer and devotion to God at early age

How can you do that? You can do it by following the principles of sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa. These are sacred delicious items of food to be offered to God. And they must be offered on the fresh, green plantain leaf of tender, supple, and efficient body. Prayer and devotion to God at early age will bring fulfillment in your life. You have forgotten this truth. When somebody asks why you don't think of God, you say, there is still time for it; you can do so after retirement. Even after retirement, some people run after re-employment.

What is the use of all your earnings, when your end is near?

You fool, think, who will follow you in death.

It is a folly to forget God while striving to live.

Look after your family, perform your duties, but hold in your heart always God.

[Telugu Poem]

Lead a worthy and noble life as a human being

That is the real meaning of manava (human being). What does manava imply? Ma means ignorance, na means without, and va is to act. Thus, manava is one who acts without ignorance. There is another interpretation of manava, viz. ma = not, nava = new. Man is not new. He has had several previous lives. He has not become a human being all of a sudden. So it is quite natural for him to know how to lead a worthy and noble life as a human being.

Here is a small example. A cow gives birth to a calf. The new-born calf instinctively goes to the udder of the cow to drink milk. Who has taught the calf? Similarly, a new born babe seeks its mother's milk. All this is only carryover from several previous births. A new-born animal needs no training to seek milk from its mother. You must realize from this that you are not a brand new creation, but one in fact truly ancient.

You have taken several births, but you are yet to realize God. Merely repeating Krishna, Rama, Govinda is of no use. You must have full faith in God. Only then can you attain salvation. You should consider viswasa (faith) as your swasa (life breath). Without swasa (life breath), you cannot live.

Where there is breath, there is life.
Where there is faith, there is love (prema).
Where there is love, there is peace (santhi).
Where there is peace, there is truth (sathya).
Where there is truth, there is God.
Where there is God, there is bliss (ananda).

Experience inner bliss

Human life should begin with faith and end in bliss (ananda). When you have no faith, how can you attain happiness? Increase your faith in God and attain peace (santhi). Through truth experience God. God is bliss. The experience of divinity is true bliss.

Bliss is with you. Bliss is in you. It is behind you, above you, below you and all around you. When you are immersed in bliss, what is it that you need to search? The way to experience this bliss is what I mentioned in the beginning - bend the body, mend the senses, end the mind. This is true culture. Have faith in this culture, lead a pure and meaningful life and attain the goal of human life.

Perform your duty.

Karthavyam yogamuchyate
(performing your duty properly is indeed yoga).

Duty is God. Today, you have forgotten *yoga* and are running after *udyoga* (job). In the job you may get promotion, but you have to face retirement too. There is no retirement in yoga. It is *nithya* and *sathya* (eternal and true).

Yoga karmasu kausalam
(perfection in action is true yoga).

Discharging one's duty efficiently and with love is yoga. Duty is God.

Divinity permeates everything in this universe. God has ingrained mystery

and beauty in nature. Everyone must try to discover this divine mystery in nature. Nature is invested with divine beauty. No man can create this wonderful beauty. At sunrise, everything looks golden. God's creation is described in various ways. If God's creation is so beautiful, how much more beautiful would God be? Before trying to visualise the beauty of Creator, discover and appreciate beauty of nature.

As long as you are in this world, carry out your duties diligently. While discharging your duties, spend time in thoughts of divinity. Today, you waste time. Time is the very form of God. The Vedas says: "Samvatsaraya Namah." In fact, Samvatsara is God's name. We even say *Nutana Samvatsara* (New Year). God is ever new. This ever new effulgent God takes the form of man, and is called Avatar. Actually, every new human birth is an Avatar as God resides in each heart as the Atma.

There is no living body without Atma. It is not possible to realize Atma without the body. The body and soul are related. They are interdependent. The body should be maintained strong and healthy to experience the divine bliss. Do not waste all your time in eating, sleeping, and in sensual pleasures. Perform your worldly duties at their proper time, and set apart the time when you offer yourself to God.

Start early, drive slowly, reach safely

Perform all your actions in the service of God.

"Sarvakarma Bhagavad preethyartham (all your actions should be to please God)."

Do not have any worldly preferences. Actions performed for personal satisfaction are attributed to pravritti marga (worldly path); those to please God relate to nivritti marga (inward path). Do not wait till you are unable to

move, your vision fails, folds and wrinkles appear on the face, and hair turns gray. Why don't you think of God from the beginning?

Start early, drive slowly, reach safely.

This should be your guiding principle for your life's journey as well.

Think of God early in life.

Be not proud, oh man, of your beautiful body,
youth, and power.

Do not forget the fact that very soon you will have
to face the misery of old age.

Your body is nothing but a mere puppet, a doll of
skin.

Understand the truth of this 'puppet dance'.

[Telugu Poem]

This is not life. Make proper use of the body and experience the ultimate reality. Within this *mrinmaya* (body of clay) is *Chinmaya* (awareness of the Atma), which imparts value to the body.

The body is a box of rusty tin.

Inside the box are priceless gems - diamonds,
emeralds, sapphires. The box is worthless,

but the gems are highly valuable. The body is of little worth,

but the indwelling Lord is of real worth. The body is a mud doll, leather
puppet,

a delusive toy.

[Telugu Poem]

But the nectarine, non-dual, eternal bliss (*amritananda*, *advaitananda*, *amarananda*) is in you. With this treasure inside you, you search around and undertake pilgrimages. No need. Bliss is inside you. Make it come out. This is real sadhana. Do not bother about worldly problems. They are passing clouds. There is only one permanent truth. This is the principle of the Atma. The body is temporary. But what is inside is the permanent, eternal Atmatathwa.

Embodiments of Love!

All of you are embodiments of divinity. God is in you as the Atma. Make proper use of the body. How? Speak in a pure way, speak the truth. Act righteously. Discriminate between right and wrong and act accordingly. Do not act under the impulses of anger and hatred. Do not lie or abuse. Do not cause hurt to anybody.

We see pollution everywhere. We should not give room to this. What is the solution? Fill your heart with love.

My mission is to raise the consciousness of man to a level at which he neither rejoices nor mourns over anything. In that supreme state, one is going through re-birth and re-death each moment, for these acts are one and the same, emerging from the formless into form, merging from the form into the formless. Then, there is no success or adversity, no joy or pain. When the devotee attains this Oneness, their journey toward Me ceases. For, they will be with Me endlessly.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



13. Nature of Self

Date: 28 April 1999 / Location: Kodaikanal / Occasion: Buddha Purnima

Trees bear fruit for the benefit of others;
Rivers flow for the betterment of all;
Cows yield milk for the benefit of others;
Human body has been given to man to help others.
[Sanskrit sloka]

In this world, trees, rivers, and cows help others without any trace of selfish motive. They do not expect anything in return. Without trees, rivers, and cows, the world cannot exist. In fact, it is they that sustain it. But the irony is that man does not make any effort to help and serve others. The spirit of sacrifice evident in trees, rivers, and cows is absent in man today. He spends all his time in fulfilling his selfish desires and does not give even a moment for doing good to others or for helping them. Sai Avatar has incarnated in this Kali age with the divine mission of making every individual realize his relationship with the community, and ultimately with Divinity.

True individuality of man

Transformation at individual level is absolutely essential. But today, man is wasting his time in evil practices. He indulges in unholy activities day in and day out. He demeans himself by his evil habits. He kills animals and eats their flesh. Instead of purifying his mind, he debases it by taking intoxicants. He defiles time, which is the very form of Divinity, by gambling. He nurtures evil qualities by indulging in evil activities. In addition to this, he involves himself in demeaning activities like stealing and denigrating others. He reads vulgar books, which generate evil thoughts and violent feelings in him. As he indulges more and more in wicked activities, he also pollutes and corrupts the

society. When individuals take to evil ways, the entire society degenerates. Teaching and propagation of spirituality is essential for the purification of the individual and the society.

What is spirituality? That which destroys man's animal nature, nurtures humanness, and finally transforms him into a Divine being is spirituality. Worshipping, singing devotional songs, and performing rituals are acts of secondary importance. They cannot be identified with true spirituality. The word SAI spells out to the world the significance of transformation at three levels. The letter S stands for transformation at spiritual level, A for transformation at association (social) level, and I for transformation at the individual level.

Individual transformation is the basis for the other two. Therefore, this is the first step. But, these days, the word individual is not properly understood. You usually take only the human form into consideration and identify it with an individual. Who is an individual? He, who manifests his Avayakta (unmanifest) Divinity through his conduct is an individual (vyakti). This latent divine principle permeates the entire being of an individual from head to foot and is called conscience. To manifest and demonstrate the presence of this conscience is the characteristic of a human being. Instead of manifesting the pure inner being, the Self, man today is manifesting evil qualities and evil tendencies, which are related to his outer being i.e. the body. The Chaitanya (Divine Consciousness) latent in every human being is his true individuality. This consciousness should be put on the right track.

Put your senses in right direction

I said the other day, "Sarvam khalvidam Brahma (verily all this is Brahman)." This is a mantra. "Easwara sarva bhutanam (God is the indweller in all beings)" is another mantra. It is essential for everyone to understand and realize the inner significance of these mantras. Every mantra is pregnant with deep inner meaning. It is impossible to understand the true meaning of the mantras without acquiring virtues.

What are these virtues? Right vision (samyak drishti) is one. Humanity will be in danger without right vision. The image of every seen object gets imprinted in the mind. Therefore, first of all one must have right vision. Right vision is that which is untainted by the baneful influence of evil feelings, evil thoughts, and evil deeds. See no evil; see what is good. That which develops your insight to understand what is good, eternal, and true is right vision.

Next comes right listening (samyak sravanam). You should lend your ear only to good speech. Under no circumstances should you listen to evil talk. For this, you should listen to sacred texts, bhajans (devotional songs), and talks about sacred acts.

Everything in this world is impermanent. The Vedas say, "Yath drisyam thannasyam" (all that is seen is bound to perish). All that you see will disappear one day or the other. For the nine-fold path of bhakti (devotion) good listening (sravanam) is the beginning. Sravanam, keerthanam, Vishnusmaranam, padasevanam, archanam, vandanam, dasyam, sneham, and Atmanivedanam (listening, singing the glories of the Lord, constant remembrance of the name of Vishnu, serving the Lord's feet, worship, salutation, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender) are the nine paths of devotion. The first step to the final act of self-surrender (Atmanivedanam) is sravanam (listening). Sruti (divine sound e.g. Vedas) is derived from sravanam only.

Right thoughts lead to right action

The next virtue is right speech (samyak vak). Right vision and right listening lead to right speech. Your speech should be good. Never utter harsh words. Speak softly and sweetly. That is why I tell you often, "You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly." Say what you have to say without harshness. Speak softly so that only the person for whom your words are intended may hear you. Such soft and sweet speech should be developed. Good vision, good listening and good speech lead to good thoughts. "Yad bhavam that bhavathi (as are your thoughts, so is the result)." Right thoughts lead to right action (samyak karma). Without good thoughts it is not possible

to perform good actions.

Buddha performed tapas (penance) for many years to put his five senses on the sacred path. Mere bookish knowledge is of no consequence. It is related to art, and is in fact artificial. Mere textual knowledge will not lead you to right vision.

Similarly, your sense of hearing does not become holy by listening to the expositions of a teacher. Good thoughts cannot be acquired by reading scriptures or by listening to the teachings of the preceptor. By self-effort you should put your senses of sabda (sound), sparsa (touch), rupa (form), rasa (taste), and gandha (smell) to right use. That alone leads you to proper sadhana (spiritual practice).

Senses are the cause for the wrong attitude of man

When you put your senses in the right direction, your life will also enter the right path. For the wrong attitude of man today, senses are the cause. As the senses become impure, the entire life too becomes impure and unsacred. If you want to make your life sacred, you have to first sanctify your senses. So, Buddha who did penance for several years, understood that all ritualistic practices were useless. He declared right vision, right listening, right speech, right thoughts, and right acts as the five primordial principles for the guidance of man.

These five principles are the pancha pranas (five life forces) and five koshas (life sheaths) of man. Physical body is annamaya kosha (food sheath). Body is transient. But you should nourish it, because only a properly nourished healthy body can support the pranamaya kosha (life sheath) and manomaya kosha (mind sheath). Pranamaya kosha helps in the balanced flow of prana (life force) in the body.

Human beings limit themselves up to these three koshas. Nobody attempts to reach fourth sheath, vijnanamaya kosha (wisdom sheath), which is beyond food sheath, life sheath, and mind sheath. This sheath is reached only after

transcending the first three sheaths. What is the nature of these three sheaths? The one you think you are is the food sheath (physical body).

What others think you are is the mind sheath. The one you really are is the life sheath.

When the human being enters the wisdom sheath, only then does he experience true bliss. So, man has to maintain sound body. But he should know that as the body is associated with the senses, he should channelise them into the right path. When the senses follow the right path, only then does the life force vibrate in the body properly. This vibration is Divine in nature.

In the Gayathri Mantra, the word bhur refers to the body. Body is composed of gross materials such as water, lime, lead, iron, etc. All these materials may not cost more than one rupee. But the value of the body is not one rupee. Its value is immeasurable. Bhur also stands for the earth. The earth is made up of matter, which is transient.

The word bhuvah in the mantra stands for vibration. The body is made up of gross matter, which cannot have any movement without the life force of vibration. In the absence of this vibration, the body is mere lifeless matter.

What is the source of this vibration? This vibration originates from radiation (suvaha), which is related to spiritual knowledge.

Purity in thought, word, and deed

This spiritual knowledge comes from the Vedas. The four mahavakyas (profound statements) of the Vedas that give this knowledge are Prajnanam Brahma (knowledge is Brahman), Ayamatra Brahma (Atma is Brahman), Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman) and Tatthwamasi (That you are). Life force (prana) or vibration works only through radiation. Without the radiation of prajnana, vibration cannot have any movement. It becomes inert. True humanness lies in harmonizing these three principles. Man should therefore

achieve the unity of materialization, vibration and radiation. Harmony in thought, word, and deed, is referred to as trikarana suddhi.

Example of trikarana suddhi

I shall relate to you an example from the Mahabharata to illustrate this. Dharmaraja, the eldest brother of the Pandavas, was an embodiment of sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa. Draupadi, born out of fire, represented prana. Bhima, the son of the wind God, symbolized chaitanya shakti (power of awareness). You know that life without awareness is jada (inert). Arjuna symbolized the antahkarna shakti (power of the inner motivator). Nakula and Sahadeva represented the jnanendriyas (organs of perception) and karmendriyas (organs of action), respectively.

Truth, righteousness, peace, and love join the senses of action and cognition, enter the antahkarna (seat of thought and feeling) with the help of life force called vibration and live there. So, Divinity, which exists in every individual, is associated with the five cognitive senses: sound, touch, vision, taste, and smell. To recognize the nature of this truth, man should first attain the unity of thought, word, and deed and bring about complete harmony in them. This is the real spiritual practice.

Today, the typical individual thinks something, speaks something else, and acts in altogether a different way. "Manasyanyath vachasyanyath karmanyanyath duratmanam." Such a manner of functioning is typical of a wicked person.

Arjuna was the epitome of trikarana suddhi (purity of the triad thought, word, and deed). Nakula and Sahadeva, who symbolized the senses of cognition and action, provided the right sources. Bhima, the son of the wind God, stood by the side of Dharmaraja. His presence was as vital as the presence of oxygen in the environment. Draupadi symbolized life force. Only with the help of this life force could Dharmaraja foster truth, righteousness, peace, and love. The Pandavas thus represent the proper use of all the powers in the body in purity and harmony.

Idealism of Draupadi

Epics like the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata and other Bharatiya (Indian) scriptures expound these spiritual realities. Though Bhima and Arjuna were seethed with anger and revenge when their sons were killed by Aswatthama, Draupadi pacified them. Though she was grief-stricken at the loss of her children, she maintained a perfect state of equanimity. When Arjuna, in a fit of anger, was ready to kill Aswatthama, she quoted the scriptures and changed his mind. Draupadi was known for her immaculate character. She was also called Panchali. This word is often misinterpreted as a woman married to five men. No, it is not correct. She was able to coordinate the functions of the five cognitive senses - sound, touch, vision, taste, and smell - in an impeccable manner. When Arjuna was about to kill Aswatthama, she advised him in the following manner:

Oh Arjuna, it is an unrighteous act to kill the one who is fear-stricken,
the one who is in distress,
the one who is asleep,
the one who is unaware,
the one who has surrendered himself, the one who is helpless,
the one who is unarmed, and the one who is a female.
Your speech is full of anger.
It is a dangerous trait.
No human being should possess anger.
The one who is filled with anger
achieves nothing but disgrace.
Anger motivates one to do evil deeds.
Such an individual is despised by everyone.
[Telugu Poem]

Bhima was also furious. Draupadi spoke to him thus:

Anger destroys one's riches.
It destroys one's respect.
It distances one from relatives. It causes loss of everything.
[Telugu Poem]

Aswatthama had killed all her five sons. One can imagine the state of her mind. She would have been justified in using the harshest language. But she did not have harsh feelings. She ran and fell at the feet of Aswatthama and questioned his ruthlessness in a gentle way:

They didn't wear weapons and rage against you. They were not in the battlefield.
They didn't cause you even the least harm.
They were not adept in fighting.
How did you feel like killing such innocent children who were asleep!
[Telugu Poem]

Draupadi spoke in such a gentle manner. She never used harsh words. Even in moments of extreme distress, Draupadi could speak softly and graciously. In fact every individual should speak softly.

What should a man learn today? He should utilize his senses in the right way and thereby make an endeavor to attain Divinity.

Purpose of the Avatar

In this human life, the most significant thing to know is devotion. Jnana (wisdom) is the root of the tree of love. Its fruit contains sweet juice. It is the juice of devotion. The juice or essence (raso) is the very form of the Divine. Raso vai sah (He is sweet essence). So, bhakti (devotion) is the very essence of Divinity. Sweetness of bhakti should reflect in your speech. Hence, every word uttered by you should be sweet. Only then do you deserve to be called a human being. When can you speak sweetly? When you contemplate on the Divine, your speech becomes sweet.

However, it may sometimes necessary to use harsh words to correct people who act and behave in evil ways. Though the words may appear to be harsh, the feelings behind them should be saturated with love. Sometimes when it rains, hailstones also fall along with the gentle raindrops. They are nothing but water in frozen form. In this context, I give you an example.

During the Mahabharata war, one day Aswatthama vowed that he would behead the Pandavas before the sun sets. Draupadi came to know of this vow. She prayed to Krishna, "I don't want anything. I don't want the kingdom. Save the Pandavas" Krishna said, "That is not in my hands. The vow cannot be changed?" Draupadi pleaded with Krishna, "Nothing in this world is beyond Your capacity. Everything is in Your hands. If You will, You can do anything." And she fell at His feet.

Krishna's plan to save the Pandavas

Lord Krishna blessed her and immediately chalked out a plan. In the darkness of night, He went to sage Durvasa. The Pandavas, who accompanied the Lord, waited outside as instructed by Krishna. To protect His devotees, the Lord has to enact many roles. If He does not act, the play simply loses its significance and it becomes uninteresting. Durvasa gave an ecstatic welcome to Krishna.

Krishna said, "I have come here with a purpose. It is a very difficult task. You have to help me." Durvasa said, "I am ready to do any task except telling a lie." Krishna said, "Uttering lies is not acceptable to Me also. I am Divine Myself. I always adhere to truth. How can I tell you to utter a lie? I have made

a plan. Please act according to it. That will fulfil My desire." "Lord, do You have a desire?" asked Durvasa. "I have desires for the sake of others. I have no desires for My own sake. Whatever I do, whatever I speak, it is for the welfare of others. I never seek My own welfare," Krishna replied.

"Lord! what should I do?" asked Durvasa. Krishna said, "Dig a big pit. Put a strong plank over it and place your throne on it. Then sit on the throne. The Pandavas will hide in the pit. When Aswatthama comes here along with his accomplices and asks the whereabouts of the Pandavas, tell him that the Pandavas are under you. But say this in a harsh tone." Durvasa was known for his temper. Aswatthama searched everywhere and at last came to Durvasa. He offered salutations to Durvasa and asked about the Pandavas. Durvasa said in an angry tone, "Pandavas are under me." He spoke truth but changed the intonation. Fearing that the sage would curse him, Aswatthama ran away from that place.

In this way, God has to contrive some situations for the protection of the world. His attempts are not only to protect the holy people but to protect holiness itself. This sacredness is present in every being. To protect this sacredness the Lord incarnates. "Paritranaya Sadhunam Vinashay Cha Dushkritam Dharma Sansthanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge (to protect the righteous and destroy the wicked I incarnate from time to time to establish dharma)." Righteousness can never be annihilated. It is ever present in every age. But occasions arise when its very existence is threatened. The Lord incarnates to re-establish dharma and to accord proper place to it. If dharma is vulnerable to destruction, how can we call it dharma? So, dharma can never be vanquished. But, it becomes obscure. To make dharma more manifest is the purpose of the Avatar.

Saturate your life with Love

The question arises, "Who is God?" You are all the forms of God. The Atmatathwa (Self) present in every being is in fact God. It is Divinity in its true sense. "Mamaivamso jeevaloke jeevabhuta sanathana," (an aspect of My Divinity is resident in each being). Do not search for God. Look within. Divine

will manifest in you.

Spiritual texts may be many, the teachings of spirituality may be different, but the Atma is the same. In any country, at any time, in any surroundings, the Atma is the same. There is no such thing as a Japanese Atma or American Atma or Atma of any other country. It transcends all divisions of creeds and castes. It has no distinctions like man and woman. It is beyond all distinctions. Nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathanam, nicketanam, nithya buddha mukta nirmala swarupinam (The nature of the Self is described as attributeless, pure, eternal, free from bondage, unsullied and immortal). This eternal Atma is present in every human being.

Love is the essence of all fruits

At one time, someone questioned Shirdi Sai Baba, "Are you God?" What was His reply? "All are the forms of the Divine. I am not only Divine, but also the Divinity that is present in the Divine," said Baba. So, the same Divinity is present in every being as all are the forms of the Divine.

But, people are not able to realize the Divine because they drink intoxicating wine of worldly desires. Wine leads to ignorance but not to the Divine. So, you should consume something that promotes Divinity. What is it? It is love. If you taste the fruit of love, you need no other nourishment. Love is the essence of all fruits. It is the goal of all goals. It is the end of all spiritual practices. Cultivate such love with pure and steady mind. For this, you should keep the body, mind, and senses on the right track.

I told you yesterday the three ways that would help you to streamline your life: Bend the body, mend the senses, and end the mind. What does the maxim, bend the body stand for? Is it bending the body to carry out some task? No. You should bend your body with humility, respect, and love when you see elders and your parents. In olden days, in town and country, the entrances to the houses were a bit low. Visitors had to bend their heads to enter the houses. To highlight the significance of the maxim, bend the body, the ancients used to keep the height of the entrances low deliberately.

Less luggage, more comfort makes travel a pleasure

Mend the senses. Through right vision, right listening, right speech, right thoughts, and right actions you have to control your senses. That is the end of the mind. Here is an example. This is a piece of cloth. You call it cloth as long as the threads are intact. If you remove the threads one by one there will be no cloth. The threads symbolize your desires.

It is said, "less luggage, more comfort make travel a pleasure." You are increasing your luggage day after day. This burden has become a great hindrance to your progress and happiness. You should remove this hurdle and move closer to Divinity. Salokya is closeness to Divinity. Sarupya is to attain the form of Divinity. How is this possible? The Vedas say, "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman)." Prahlada, who contemplated on Lord Narayana, became Narayana himself. The dacoit Ratnakara recited the name of Lord Rama and transformed himself into sage Valmiki. Hanuman contemplated on the name of Lord Rama. He is worshipped by the devotees of Rama. Sayujya is complete integration or merger with the Lord. This is the end of all sadhanas (spiritual exercises).

Several ways of spirituality are enunciated in the Vedas, the epics and the Puranas, but love is the essence of all these ways. Love is changeless. There should not be any change in love. Cultivate this changeless love and redeem your life.

Start the day with love, Fill the day with love, Spend the day with love, End the day with love, This is the way to God.

Saturate your life with love and end your life with Divine love. All other thoughts will disturb your equanimity.

Gifts of God

Man possesses all types of wealth except two. These two are possessed by

God. You can attain them by praying to God. These two are santhi (peace) and ananda (bliss). You may feel happy otherwise too, but know that such happiness is transient. Eternal peace and eternal happiness are the gifts of the Divine. So, you should pray for these gifts. Your prayer should be like this: "My Lord, I do not want anything that can be found in this world. Please grant me that which is with you alone, santhi and ananda (peace and bliss). I want nothing else other than these two." Pleasure and happiness obtained from objects of this world are short-lived. "Anithyam Asukham Lokam, Imam Prapya Bhajasva Mam," says the Gita. Let not your prayer to God be for these impermanent things. Pray to God for santhi and ananda. With such prayer you can win God's love and grace. Once God's love is obtained, you can win the whole world. When you pray to God for His love, your worldly desires also get fulfilled automatically.

Once, a king did penance. He had no children. God manifested before him and asked him to tell his wish. The king said, "Lord, I want to see my great grandson ruling the kingdom." How many desires are contained in one desire! He should have children. His children should also beget children. The kingdom should be under his control till his great grandson grows up and rules over it. His eyesight should be intact to watch this progress. This single desire expressed by him contains all the other desires. Likewise, if you pray to God for love, all your worldly desires too will be fulfilled.

Man is seated under a tree
Bearing twelve worries.
Birth is a worry, life is a worry,
Family is a worry, death is a worry,
Childhood is a worry, old age is a worry,
Success is a worry, failure is a worry,
Action is a worry, obstacles are a worry,
Joy itself is a worry, all uncertainties are a worry. Oh ye, all come and carry
away this gift.
All your worries will end.

[Telugu Poem]

This tamarind tree of worries is not a fit tree for shade. If you receive God's love, all these worries will vanish. This is your only need. This should be your only desire. All other spiritual practices are of no use. Love cannot be acquired by these practices. Prayer and bhakti (devotion) with intense yearning for Gods love and grace will fill your heart with love. Chant the Lord's name ceaselessly to attain that love.

I have repeatedly declared that students are My property. I consider students' welfare as My welfare and their happiness as My happiness. I never think of My happiness and My comfort.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14. Women Symbolize Sacrifice

Date: 06 May 1999 / Location: Kodaikanal / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

Rama's divinity blossomed under Kausalya's loving care;
Lava and Kusa could become powerful and famous
Due to their noble and virtuous mother Sita;
The love and care of Jijabai made Shivaji a great warrior;
Fostered with the love of
his mother Putlibai, Gandhi became a Mahatma.
Is there anyone in this world who can
Take care of you the way your mother does?
Amma (mother) is the first word that man picks up in life.
The first letter of the word 'Amma' also happens to be
The first letter of the alphabet.
Embodiments of Love!
[Telugu Poem]

In this world, there are many types of relationships, but none equals the relationship that exists between the mother and the child. It is because of this intimate relationship with the mother that one's own country is called motherland. Similarly,

one's own language is called mother tongue, not father tongue. Among the parents, the first place is given to the mother; next comes the father. Not only in day-to-day life but also in the field of spirituality, mothers and women are given the highest regard. For example, when we mention the names of Divine couples such as Sita Rama, Radha Krishna, Lakshmi Narayana, etc., the names of the goddesses come first. What is the inner significance of this? Mother represents Nature, which is the manifest aspect of Divinity. Similarly, the body and the Atma, the creation and the Creator, are closely interrelated.

The body cannot function without the Atma. The Atma cannot be experienced without the body.

The Bhagavad Gita refers to swadharma and paradharma. Swa refers to the Atma and para to the body. But today, people are under the mistaken notion that swadharma refers to the dharma of one's own caste and community such as brahmin, kshatriya (warrior), vaisya (merchant), and sudra (labourer). Swadharma is Atmadharma. The letter Sa denotes Divinity. It also signifies the four stages such as Salokya (contemplation on God), Sameepya (nearness to God), Sarupya (identity with God), and Sayujya (merger with God). Today, man performs all his activities having faith in the external world. All that is physical and external is temporary. Only the Atma is permanent and eternal. In fact, the Atma is the real mother. It is not proper on your part to forget this divine mother.

Mother is one's first God

Mother is given the utmost importance in human life. There may be a wicked son, but not a wicked mother. It is because of the noble feelings of the mothers that sons become virtuous, intelligent, attain exalted positions and earn name and fame. The Vedas declare: Mathru Devo bhava, pithru Devo bhava, acharya Devo bhava, atithi Devo bhava (worship the mother as God, the father as God, the preceptor as God and the guest as God.) It is the mother who fosters you and nourishes you. It is she who knows your choices and preferences and fulfils all your needs. So, be grateful to your mother always.

Though you cannot see Rama, Krishna, Siva, and Vishnu, you are worshipping them because you believe in scriptures and what the elders say. But how is that you are forgetting your parents, who are responsible for your progress in life? First and foremost, you should show gratitude to your parents, love them, and respect them. Your blood, your food, your head, your money are all the gifts of your parents. You do not receive these gifts directly from God. All that is related to God is only indirect experience. It is only the parents whom you can see directly and experience their love.

So, consider your parents as God. God will be pleased and will manifest before you only when you love and respect your parents.

Children can understand the meanings of the word fox or dog only when they see their pictures. Similarly, it is only after seeing the parents that one can understand the existence of God. When you love and respect your parents, only then you can understand the love of the Divine Parents (Jagatmatha and Jagatpitha). This is what I tell you often: if you understand the 'I' principle in you, you will understand the 'I' in everybody. Vyashti (individual) has emerged from samashti (society), samashti from srushti (creation), and srushti from Parameshti (Creator). Only when you understand the principle of creation, can you understand the Creator.

It is the mother who teaches you the sacred principles like love, compassion, forbearance, tolerance, and sacrifice. Mother shows the father, father takes you to the preceptor and preceptor directs you to God. That is why among mother, father, preceptor and God, mother comes first.

Woman is embodiment of virtues

When Hanuman went to Lanka in search of Mother Sita,
he found her sitting surrounded by demons under a tree in Asokavana.
Hanuman felt very sad seeing Sita being harassed by the demons.

He went back to Rama and told Him,

Lord Rama, I have seen Mother Sita
being harassed and frightened by
demons pointing sharp swords at her.

She was shivering with fear like a parrot in a cage

[Telugu Poem]

On hearing this, Rama and Lakshmana immediately set out to Lanka with the army of Vanaras, fought a battle with Ravana, and killed him. As per the

command of Lord Rama, Hanuman went to Sita and conveyed the good news to her. Then he requested Sita to permit him to punish the demons surrounding her, who had put her to great suffering.

Sita said, "O Hanuman, it is the responsibility of the subjects to obey the commands of the king. Just as you obey the command of Lord Rama, these demons also had to obey the dictates of their king. It is not their mistake. They acted according to the instructions of the king. So, it is rather unfair to punish these demons. In fact, I suffered not because of these demons, but because of separation from Sri Rama." So saying, she narrated the following story.

The story of the ungrateful man

Once, in a forest, a hunter, on being chased by a tiger, felt tired and climbed up a tree. There was a bear sitting on the top of the tree. The tiger was waiting under the tree, since it could not climb up. It was very hungry, so it wanted to gobble up the hunter. It asked the bear to push the hunter down, so that it could kill him and appease its hunger. The bear refused to do so, saying that the hunter was its guest and it was its moral duty to extend hospitality to guests. But the tiger continued to wait under the tree.

After some time, the bear started to doze. Noticing this, the tiger addressed the hunter, "O man, I am very hungry. It does not matter whether I eat you or the bear. I will go back once my hunger is satiated. The bear is dozing. So, push it down without delay. I will eat it and spare you." The man did not have the morality of even the bear. He thought he could escape from the clutches of the tiger by offering the bear as bait. So, he committed the ungrateful act of pushing the bear down. As luck would have it, the bear, as it was falling, caught hold of a branch, climbed up, and saved itself from the tiger.

The tiger said, "O bear, you should never believe human beings. This hunter tried to harm you, though you were kind enough to give him shelter and protect him. So, without further delay, push the ungrateful wretch down, I shall devour him." But the bear said, "I have done my duty. Each one has to

face the consequences of his own actions. I will not harm him just because he tried to harm me." Narrating this story, Sita said, "No doubt, these demons have put me to a lot of suffering without knowing what is truth and what is dharma. Being the consort of Lord Rama, I cannot stoop down to their level and seek revenge. I do not want to cause harm to anyone."

Hanuman said, "O Mother, it is but natural that you, being the consort of Lord Rama, are broadminded and noble hearted. You are the embodiment of dharma. It is a mistake on my part to think that you would permit me to punish these helpless demons."

Sita said, "Hanuman, not only me but all the women are endowed with the noble qualities like compassion and love."

There is a proverb in Telugu that the house mirrors the qualities of the housewife. The women, barring a few exceptions, never stray away from the path of truth and righteousness even in the face of adversity. When the mendicant stands at the doorstep stretching his hands for alms, the husband may possibly drive him away, but the housewife always comes forward to give alms.

There may be dispute over property matters between the father and the son, but the mother always tries to calm down the son with good counsel. The mother will always pray for the welfare of the son wherever he may be. At times, she may be angry or have a difference of opinion, but such differences are only passing clouds. One should not disregard one's parents yielding to the vagaries of the mind.

Easwaramma, the Divine Mother

Easwaramma, the mother of this physical body, was first christened as Namagiramma at the time of birth. But after her marriage, Kondama Raju, the grandfather of this physical body, being a jnani (one of wisdom) and blessed with a vision of the future, started calling her Easwaramma (mother of Easwara). He used to worship Venkavadhuta. His was a joint family. He had

two sons. The elder son, Pedda Venkama Raju, was the father of this physical body. His younger son was Chinna Venkama Raju. Two sons of his deceased brother, Subba Raju and Venkatrama Raju, also lived with him. One day, as there was some difference of opinion, it was decided to divide the property.

How Kondamu Raju craved Swami

At that time, this body was eight years old. Kondama Raju said he did not want any share in the property and told them to divide it among themselves. The four brothers asked Kondama Raju to spend the rest of his life staying with each one of them. But Kondama Raju said, "I do not want to stay with you, I do not expect anything from you. Whatever I have earned, distribute among yourselves. But give me one property, Sathya. If He is with me, I don't want anything else." He asked me, if I was willing to stay with him. I readily agreed.

Both of us were staying in a small room. I used to get up early in the morning, clean the vessels, and cook food for both of us. After making the food ready, I used to run to Bukkapatnam to attend school. The lunch bell would go at 1 o'clock. I would run back to Puttaparthi, serve him lunch, have it Myself, and then rush to school for the afternoon session. I maintained punctuality both at school and at home.

Kondama Raju, being one with wisdom, always craved Me. One day, he called Pedda Venkama Raju and told him to change his wife's name to Easwaramma. He told this because he felt the divine vibrations originating from within. His intention was to convey that she was the mother of Easwara, God Himself. But Pedda Venkama Raju was not aware of the inner meaning of this name. He implicitly obeyed the command of his father and changed the name of his wife to Easwaramma.

Kondama Raju's last desire

The new mandir was built before Kondama Raju left his mortal coil. He lived for 116 years. But, even at that ripe old age his eyes and legs were in good

condition. So, he used to walk from old mandir to the new mandir every day, without a walking stick.

I used to say, "Why do you walk the distance? There may be cows and buffaloes on the way. You can take the help of a walking stick at least?" He would say that his legs were in perfect condition and that he did not need the help of a walking stick.

He was an ardent devotee of Swami. He used to come to Me early in the morning at 5 o'clock. Seeing him coming at a distance, I used to cover Myself with a blanket, pretending to be asleep. He would come slowly, lift the blanket, touch My feet, and return. He used to come early in the morning because he did not want anyone to notice him touching My feet. He was a little apprehensive about what the villagers would think if they noticed a 116 year-old grandfather touching the feet of his grandson.

On a particular evening, I went to Puttaparthi to see him. At that time, he was sitting on a cot, deeply immersed in singing a ballad, which described Rama lamenting over the fainting of Lakshmana in the battlefield. He was very fond of this particular episode from the Ramayana.

Rama lamented, "In this world, I might find another mother like Kausalya, a wife like Sita, but definitely not a brother like Lakshmana." This is what he was singing to himself when I entered his room.

I said, "O grandfather, what are you doing?" He exclaimed, "O Swami, You have come," and fell at My feet.

He said, "Swami, I am fully aware that You are not an ordinary child, but Easwara Himself. You are born in our clan to redeem all of us. But, I pray that You fulfil a small desire of mine. Dasaratha did not have the good fortune of drinking water from Rama's divine hands at the time of his death. But Jatayu was fortunate enough to be the recipient of such an act of grace in his last moments. Swami, let me also have the good fortune of sipping water from Your divine hands when my end approaches."

I promised that I would certainly fulfil his desire.

Easwaramma's motherly affection for Swami

The following week, I went to see him again after visiting Subbamma's house. Kondama Raju came to know that I was coming to his house. Immediately, he called Easwaramma and told her, "I am not going to live any longer. Having known that my end has approached, God is coming to shower His grace on me?".

She responded in an innocent way saying, "Where is God? How do you know that He is coming?" Then Kondama Raju said, "O mad woman, still you are deluded by the feeling of a mother toward her son! Look there, God is coming." So saying, he pointed at Me as I was entering his house. She too was aware of My Divinity. But she used to get carried away by her motherly affection toward Me. Similar was the case with Yashoda. Though she had seen all the fourteen worlds in Krishna's mouth, she thought it was a dream or an illusion.

Kondama Raju told Easwaramma that Swami did not take sweets. Right from birth till today, I have not touched sweets.

Why? If I were to take sweets, thousands of devotees would start bringing sweets for Me. I do not take fruits either. I do not even touch milk or curds. I lead a very simple life. I take only ragi gruel and groundnut chutney.

Kondama Raju also used to relish this food. He used to say, "Sathya, serve me whatever you eat." Early in the morning, I used to prepare tasteful ragi gruel, groundnut chutney and some green leaves curry. The whole street was very fond of My cooking. Sometimes, on My return from Bukkapatnam, I used to find all those afflicted with fever making a beeline in front of the house waiting for Me. Kondama Raju would tell Me that they were all waiting to take the pepper rasam from Me as it would give them relief. Immediately, I used to prepare pepper rasam and distribute a glassful to each of them. They used to feel very happy, and later on expressed their gratitude saying, "Swami, your

pepper rasam has given us great relief."

Swami's culinary skills

In those days, on festival days such as Sankranti and Ugadi, the dhobis and barbers used to come to the house for food. In the house, there was no one else other than Kondama Raju and Myself. So, I had to prepare food for many people. Easwaramma (Swami's mother) and Venkamma and Parvathamma (Swami's sisters) used to prepare various delicious items including sweet puris in their respective homes on festival days. When they could prepare sweet puris, why couldn't I also prepare them and serve grandfather? So, I also would prepare sweet puris and serve not only grandfather but also the washerman, the barber, and others. On one such occasion, Pedda Venkama Raju (Swami's father) came to see us at lunch time. Kondama Raju invited him for lunch, since it was a festival day. Pedda Venkama Raju had his lunch with us and felt that the food items were very delicious. He went home and chided Easwaramma and Venkamma for not being able to make the items tasteful. He said, "Look at Sathya, what a fine cook he is! Why can't you prepare the food items the way Sathya does?" From the next day onward, he started sending them to Me asking them to bring whatever food items I prepared. They would come and complain that it was because of My cooking that they were being blamed at home.

How things happened they way they were destined

When I was nine years old, Seshama Raju, the elder brother of this body, decided to take Me with him to Kamalapur for studies. He felt that I was wasting My time staying with Kondama Raju. But, grandfather objected to this, saying that I did not require any studies. But things happened the way they were destined to happen.

After the construction of Prasanthi Nilayam, one day I went to see Kondama Raju. He asked Easwaramma to get a glass of water. He told her, "God has come to take me away. He made a promise that He would pour water into my mouth with His Divine hands, before I leave this body. He has come to fulfill

His promise." Puzzled by Kondama Raju's request, Easwamma said, "You are not suffering from any disease, you don't even have fever or a cold. What makes you think that your end has approached." Kondama Raju said, "Death occurs as per the Will of God. Just as birth has no reason, death too has no reason. This is the Truth of truths." Easwamma did not want to argue with him. According to his wish, she brought a glassful of water and gave him. He sat down on the floor and made Me sit on the cot. He kept his head on My knees and said, "Swami, please listen to My prayer." Easwamma was watching all this. She wondered, how is that he had so much love and regard for his young grandson. Kondama Raju said, "As You know, I was doing a small business to make both ends meet. Perhaps I may still have to pay a paisa or an anna to certain people. Please bless me so that I am not indebted to anyone in my death." I said, "So shall it be," and started pouring water into his mouth. He breathed his last as he was drinking water. His desire was fulfilled.

Before leaving his mortal coil, he told Easwamma not to get deluded by body attachment. He said, "Bodily relationship is temporary, whereas Atmic relationship is permanent. So, give up body attachment and develop attachment to the Atma." Three wishes of two noble mothers From that day onward, Eswamma never stayed at home; she started staying in Prasanthi Nilayam. Every day, in the morning and evening she used to come upstairs and talk to Swami. She also understood My Divinity very well. When I appeared in the form of Lord Siva to her, she would ask, "What Swami? Why are you adorning the snakes around your neck?" I would act innocent, "Well, I don't have snakes on Me." She would move away saying, "Look, there are some snakes inside." But later, on not finding any snake inside, she would ask for forgiveness. Like this on many occasions, she had the experience of My Divinity. Similar was the case with Kausalya and Yashoda. Though they knew that their sons were divine, they used to get carried away by their motherly affection toward them. Mothers are highly noble and virtuous. Their nobility cannot be described in words. It does not matter if you do not acquire worldly wealth, but try to win the wealth of your mother's grace. Only then your life will be sanctified.

Three wishes of a noble mother

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a noble soul. He was born in a poor family. He was living with his aged mother. He used to feel very sad seeing his mother wearing old and torn saris. After he completed his studies, he took up a job and started earning some money. One day he sat by the side of his mother and said. "Mother, please tell me if you have any desires. Now that I have started earning money, I am in a position to fulfil them." She said, "Son, I don't have any desires. It is enough for me if you lead a noble life." After some time, he got a better job and started earning thousands of rupees. Again, he asked his mother to tell him if she had any desires. She said she had three desires and could not live in peace unless and until they were fulfilled. "Ours is a small village, and there are many children who are wasting their time without going to school. So, please construct a small school out of the money you have earned." As per the wish of his mother, Vidyasagar got a school constructed in his village.

Then he asked his mother to express her second desire. "Our villagers are suffering for lack of medical facilities. There is nobody to take care of them when they are afflicted with fever, cough or cold. So, I want you to construct a small hospital." Vidyasagar built a hospital, too.

After some time, he asked his mother, what her third wish was. She said, "The villagers are suffering due to lack of drinking water. They are being afflicted with various diseases as they are drinking polluted water." Immediately, he got a few wells dug and provided drinking water to the villagers.

Story of Viduasagar's humility

As the days rolled by, Vidyasagar's name and fame spread far and wide. He was a good orator. His speeches were not based on bookish knowledge. He used to speak on matters of daily relevance. So, people in large numbers used to throng his meetings to listen to his speech. He was a very simple and humble man.

One day he was going to a neighboring village to address a gathering. He boarded the train carrying a small suitcase. An I.A.S officer, who was going to attend his meeting, was traveling by the same train. He was carrying a small handbag with him. He had not seen Vidyasagar before. As soon as he got down from the train, he started calling out for a coolie. Seeing this, Vidyasagar went up to him and asked where his luggage was. The officer showed his handbag. Vidyasagar said, "Why do you misuse your money? Do you need a coolie to carry your handbag? Let me carry it for you." He took the bag from the officer and carried it.

After reaching the destination, the officer asked Vidyasagar how much money he wanted for carrying the bag. Vidyasagar said, "I do not want your money, I did it as an act of service." The officer proceeded to the meeting place where Vidyasagar was supposed to deliver his speech. He was stunned to see the same person who carried his bag giving a speech on the dais. What a humble person he was, he thought to himself and felt ashamed of his behavior. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar spent all his earnings to fulfill the desires of his mother.

Easwaramma's similar wishes

Easwaramma had similar desires. Once, she told Me, "Swami, our Puttaparthi is a small village. Since there is no school in this village, the children are forced to walk long distances to attend schools in the neighboring villages. I know that You are the ocean of compassion. Please construct a small school in this village." I asked, where she wanted the school to be built. She said she had a piece of land behind her house. She wanted the school to be constructed there. As desired by her, I got the school constructed. Though it was a small school, the inaugural function was a grand affair, attended by many devotees.

The next day, Easwaramma expressed her happiness over the inaugural function and said that she had one more desire. She wanted a hospital also to be built in the village. She said, "Swami, I don't want to put You to trouble. If You are troubled, the whole world will be in trouble, and if You are happy, the

whole world will be happy. So, if it gives You happiness, please construct a small hospital." As per her wish, I got the hospital constructed. Bejawada Gopal Reddy, a highly reputed person in those days, was invited to inaugurate the hospital.

The inaugural function was a grand one, attended by thousands of people from the neighboring villages. Easwaramma did not imagine that this would be such a grand affair.

Next day, she came up to Me and said, "Swami, it does not matter even if I die now. I have no more worries, you have fulfilled my desires and mitigated the suffering of the villagers to a great extent." I said, if you have any more desires, ask Me now.

She replied hesitantly that she had yet another small desire. "You know that the river Chithravathi is in spate during the rainy season. But in summer it dries to a trickle and people do not have drinking water. So, please see that some wells are dug in this village." I told her that I would not stop with these small wells and that I would provide drinking water to the entire Rayalaseema region. Easwaramma said, "I don't know what Rayalaseema is. I am satisfied if our village is provided with drinking water." Easwaramma's sacred love for Swami Once, on a Sivaratri day, after I had completed My discourse, and the Lingas were ready to emerge from My mouth. I sat on the chair and was in severe pain. Seeing Me suffering, Easwaramma got up from the gathering, came up to Me and said, "Swami, why do You suffer like this? Come inside, come inside." I said I would not come inside.

She cried and tried to persuade Me, but I did not budge an inch. Unable to see My suffering, she went inside. As soon as she left, Hiranyagarbha Linga emerged. All the devotees burst into thunderous applause. Listening to this, she came back, but by then the Linga had already emerged and I was showing it to the devotees. All the people got up to have a glimpse of the Linga. As a result, Easwaramma could not see it.

Next day she pleaded with Me to show the Linga to her. I said I had given it to

somebody. But she said, "Swami, I have not seen. I want to see." I told her that she would see in the future anyway. She said, "I do not want to put You to inconvenience," and went away.

She never had put Me to trouble any time. Whenever she asked Me for something, she would come back and ask if she had given any trouble. To all the devotees who came, she used to entreat not to cause any inconvenience to Swami. She used to be very much worried whenever any minister came to have My darshan. The situation in those days was such that even a policeman with a red cap was enough to frighten the villagers.

Easwamma used to be very much afraid of the ministers, thinking that they might cause some problem to Me. This was only the result of her sacred love for Me. That is the greatness of mother's love. That is why she could lead a life of fulfillment and peace. In order to propagate this sacred ideal, this day is being celebrated as Easwamma Day. This is to emphasize that each one of you should make your mother happy. If your mother is happy, Swami is happy.

Sacrifice everything for God

Everyone should love and respect their parents. But, if any relation becomes an obstacle in your path to God, there is no harm in leaving them.

Here is a small example. Mira was the wife of Maharana of Chittor. She was always seated in Krishna's temple, forgetting herself while chanting His name. One day, Emperor Akbar came to the temple and offered a gold necklace to Lord Krishna. Mira accepted it and put it around Krishna's idol. Akbar was an enemy of Maharana. When Maharana came to know that Mira had accepted a necklace for Krishna from his enemy, Akbar, he became very furious. He took it as an insult and threw her out of the temple. Mira felt very sad.

Crows start cawing at the cuckoo when it begins to sing, but that does not deter the cuckoo from its singing. The people of the world are like crows. They speak as they like. But the noble souls will not be affected by what

others say.

Mira was in a dilemma, whether to give up Krishna or her husband Maharana. She resolved that she would not give up Krishna even at the cost of her life. Then she wrote a letter to Tulsidas seeking his advice in this regard.

Tulsidas sent her a reply: "From the worldly point of view, you should respect your father, mother, preceptor and husband. But when it comes to God, everything else is secondary. God alone is important. Bharata left his mother Kaikeyi for the sake of Lord Rama. Prahlada gave up his father Hiranyakasipu for the sake of Lord Narayana. Emperor Bali forsook his preceptor, Sukracharya, for the sake of God. So, there is nothing wrong in giving up your husband for the sake of Krishna." Taking the advice of Tulsidas, Mira left her husband.

She sang,

O mind, go to the banks of the sacred rivers Ganga and Yamuna, the pure water of which cools and purifies the body.

These two rivers stand for the primal nerves ida and pingala, which converge at the center of two eyebrows. She started singing the praises of Krishna and proceeded toward Brindavan.

You can sacrifice anything for the sake of God

Many such great devotees sacrificed everything for the sake of God. Women symbolize sacrifice. The Vedas declare: Na karmana, na prajaya, dhanena thyagenaike Amruthatwamanasu (immortality can be attained only through sacrifice; neither wealth nor progeny nor good deeds can confer it). You [Hindi Song] can sacrifice anything for the sake of God. But, sacrifice should not be done with a selfish motive or for self satisfaction.

Do not hurt mother's feelings

The Bhagavad Gita says that a woman has seven qualities, whereas a man has only three. So, never look down upon women. They are most virtuous. They are the very embodiments of nature.

Some women may think that they would have enjoyed greater freedom had they been born as men. This is a wrong notion. In fact, women are more powerful than men. With all the sacred feelings in your heart, respect women and be respected. Respect your mother, obey her commands. Mother protects her children in many ways. Even after death, she comes back and helps you in various ways. Never disrespect your mother or disappoint her. Do not hurt her feelings. Try to satisfy her in all respects. Only then will the seed of devotion sprout in you. Everyone should follow the dictum, mathru Devo bhava in letter and spirit and be a recipient of his mother's love.

15. Control Your Senses

Date: 30 May 1999 / Location: Brindavan

If money is lost, one need not be worried about it,
For one can earn it again.
If a friend leaves, one can have another;
If wife is lost one can marry again.
If one loses ones piece of land,
One can purchase another piece of land.
All these can be regained; but
If body is lost, one cannot get it back.
[Sanskrit sloka]

Embodiments of Love!

If wealth is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost, something is lost. If character is lost, everything is lost. This is the teaching of the culture of Bharat. But, for the modern man, everything is lost if wealth is lost; something is lost if health is lost and nothing is lost if character is lost.

Since time immemorial, the Bharatiyas have been adhering to the principles of spirituality. Thus, they attained bliss and shared it with others in the world. The Himalayan mountains form the boundary of Bharat on the northern side. Hima means pure and sacred. Mountains symbolize steadiness. Purity, sacredness, and steadiness are the hallmarks of the Bharatiyas (Indians).

The perennial rivers, the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswathi (underground) flow in this land. These three symbolize the threefold path of work, worship, and wisdom through which man can attain Divinity. The holy texts of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavata set noble ideals before

mankind. What is the inner meaning of the word Bharat? Bha means light, effulgence, and divinity. So, Bharatiyas are those who spread light and effulgence of wisdom. The Indian scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, and the Brahma Sutras are shining resplendently, showing the path of divinity to man.

Spirituality starts with faith

Buddha was born in this sacred land of Bharat. He declared to the world Ahimsa paramo dharma (nonviolence is the greatest dharma). He undertook penance for several years, met many noble souls, listened to spiritual discourses, and studied various scriptures. But he was not satisfied. Man aspires for bliss, but how can he attain it? 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 God. Where there is God, there is bliss. The path of spirituality starts with faith and ends with bliss. Bliss cannot be attained from materialistic pleasures or people of the world. It can be experienced only when the five senses are put to proper use.

Today, man reads sacred books to attain bliss, but all these books have their own limitations. One cannot get infinite bliss by studying scriptures. One must study an infinite book in order to experience infinite bliss. This world itself is an infinite book. There are so many things to be learnt from this world.

Who are your friends? Not your classmates or roommates. Only God is your true and eternal friend. It is only with the help of this friend that you will be able to study the infinite book, the world.

When one undertakes the study of this infinite book, one has to put into practice the five important teachings of Buddha. They are samyak drishti (right vision), samyak bhavam (right feeling), samyak sravanam (right listening), samyak vak (right speech), and samyak karma (right action). A true human being is one who follows the path of truth. Truth, righteousness and sacrifice should be the way of life. Buddha said, Buddham sharanam gachhami, dharmam sharanam gachhami, sangham sharanam gachhami. It

means: buddhi (intellect) should follow the path of dharma, and dharma should be fostered in society. Only then the country will prosper.

This is also the inner meaning of the word SAI. S denotes spiritual change, A denotes association (social) change, and I denotes individual change. Man's mind will become pure and sacred only when these three changes take place.

Life principles of man

Divinity is latent in every individual. But, today, man has forgotten his divine nature and is getting deluded by the worldly, ephemeral pleasures. Sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa are verily the five life principles of man. They are like his pancha pranas, namely, prana, apana, vyana, udana, and samana. Losing sathya amounts to losing one part of his life-breath. And when he loses all the four, viz., sathya,

dharma, santhi, and prema, he loses four parts of his vital life breath. As a result he is confronted with sufferings and violence from all sides. Who is responsible for this? Man himself is to be blamed for this.

Buddha said nonviolence is the greatest dharma. Love will be fostered only when nonviolence is practiced. When love is fostered, there will be peace in the world. When there is peace in the world, man will naturally take to the path of dharma. When man follows the path of dharma, he will attain Truth. It is, therefore, the primary duty of every man to foster these life principles.

The sacredness of Bharat is unmatched

Once, Buddha was traveling from village to village giving spiritual discourses. One day, he felt tired and asked one of his disciples to address the gathering. He went inside to take rest.

The disciple during the course of his speech said, "In this world, there has never been a spiritual master greater than our master, Buddha, and there will not be another like him in future." The audience gave a thunderous applause.

On hearing this, Buddha came out. One of the disciples told him the reason for the people's joyous applause. Buddha smiled and called the disciple who delivered the lecture. "What is your age?" he asked.

The disciple said he was thirty-five years old.

"How many kingdoms have you visited so far?" Buddha asked him again.

The disciple said he had visited only two kingdoms.

Buddha said, "You are thirty-five years old and have seen only two kingdoms. You have not understood the present completely. Then how can you say anything about the past and the future? It is meaningless to say that a master like Buddha was never born before and will never be born again. Many Avatars and sages have taken birth in this sacred land of Bharat. Many more Avatars and noble souls will be born here in future also. There are many noble souls in this world, I offer my respects to all of them." In this way, Buddha reproached his disciple. It is foolish for a man with little knowledge to behave like a learned man.

No one can estimate the sacredness and greatness of this country, Bharat. To be called an Indian is in a great qualification and honor. How can one describe the great good fortune of the Bharatiyas, for the Lord Himself has taken birth several times in this sacred land to show the path of divinity to mankind? Many saints, sages, and men of sacrifice were born here. The sacredness and renown of Bharat are unmatched. That is why Buddha chose this country as his motherland.

Character is important, not money

The story of Buddha is highly noble and sacred. He sacrificed everything and went around in search of truth. He said, "Dharmam sharanam gachhami (I take refuge in dharma)." One has to practice, propagate and experience dharma. But, today, dharma has declined. People think that money is everything. Just as the earth revolves around the sun, people go around

money.

Some people take to corrupt ways to earn money. They may cheat others,
But can anyone hoodwink God?
They will certainly reap the
Consequences of their misdeeds.
[Telugu Poem]

This was the teaching of Buddha. Character is important, not money. Bliss can be attained only through control of senses, not through penance, japa, or meditation. Neither by penance nor by going through scriptures nor by having a dip in holy rivers can one attain liberation. Only by serving noble souls can one cross the ocean of Samsara. There is no easier path to peace and bliss other than controlling one's own senses.

Right vision confers double promotion

But today, man has given up this easy path and is craving sensual pleasures, which confer only misery and grief. Even birds and beasts enjoy sensual pleasures. The happiness that results from sensual pleasures is no happiness at all. So, first and foremost, man should try to control his senses. This is possible only when the vision is properly utilized. Once the vision is controlled, other senses can also be easily controlled. But, today, man has no control over his vision. He looks at things that he is not supposed to look at. Whatever man looks at gets imprinted in his heart. So, develop sacred vision.

There are forty lakh light rays in the human eye. But their radiance is destroyed on account of wrong vision. When you look at wrong things, you waste the enormous power of radiance of the eyes. There are thirty lakh taste buds on the tongue. But they get destroyed because of bad talk. So, first and foremost vision and tongue should be kept under check. Otherwise man may

lose his humanness and ultimately ruin his life.

Along with right vision and right talk, cultivate right listening. If someone were to indulge in bad talk in your presence, leave the place at once. Right vision confers double promotion, it strengthens the will power and enhances the power of radiance of the eyes. Having understood this truth, Buddha made a concerted effort to control his senses. Meditation and penance confer only temporary happiness. Eternal happiness results only from control of the senses. Buddha was the crown prince and had the entire kingdom under his control, but he sacrificed everything and tried to control his senses. He could experience bliss and attained Nirvana only after controlling his senses.

Man can get limitless powers through love of God. But, today, man is not making any effort to understand the principle of Love. Man's love is like an atom when compared to divine love, which is infinite, eternal, and nectarine. It is foolishness and ignorance on the part of man to think that he knows everything without understanding the Principle of Love. He should see through the eyes of love, hear through the ears of love and cultivate the feelings of love.

Giving up body consciousness is liberation

No benefit accrues from doing spiritual sadhana if man does not have unity of thought, word, and deed. The unity of these three constitutes humanness. The proper study of mankind is man. What does MAN stand for? M stands for giving up maya (illusion); A for gaining the vision of Atma; and N, denotes attaining Nirvana. Man has to give up materialistic pleasures in order to attain liberation. What is moksha (liberation)? Getting rid of moha (attachment) is moksha. Giving up body consciousness is liberation. But, today, man is immersed in body attachment. He can attain liberation only when he develops attachment toward the Atma.

Humanness has declined in man

Since he lacks fear of sin and love for God. This is the root cause of Unrest in the world [Telugu Poem]

Man should develop love for God and fear of sin. Only then there will be morality in society.

Embodiments of Love! You may celebrate any number of festivals and undertake various types of spiritual exercises, but all this will go waste if there are no divine feelings in your heart. Do not look at things that are unsacred. Let your vision be suffused with divine feelings. You will understand and experience the sacred principles like Sarvam khaividam Brahma (Brahman is immanent in everything), Viswam Vishnumayam (Vishnu pervades the entire universe), Easwara sarvabhoothanam (God is the indweller of all beings) only when you cultivate noble qualities. In order to cultivate divine feelings and noble qualities, you have to control your senses. Your life will be ruined if you do not control your senses.

A doubting man perishes

A river should flow within its banks; otherwise it will flood the villages causing untold sufferings. Similarly, human life, which can be compared to a river, should also have two eightlettered dictums as its banks: sraddhavan labhate jnanam (only a person with steadfast faith can attain wisdom) and samsayatma vinashyati (a doubting man perishes).

Only then will the river of life merge in the ocean of grace. If your river of life does not flow within its two banks, not only will your life be wasted but you will also cause harm to others.

One who has doubts about God cannot have divine grace. One who has no sincerity of purpose cannot come up in life. A man with sincerity will make the best use of even the smallest opportunity given to him. For example, he can

turn even a small bit of live ember into a big fire.

On the other hand, a man who lacks sincerity cannot make fire even if large quantities of live embers are given to him. He will turn all the live embers into charcoal with his lackadaisical attitude. You should have utmost sincerity in matters pertaining to divinity.

Individual, society, creation, and Creator

You are struggling hard to acquire worldly education. You are spending hours together concentrating on it. What is the benefit that accrues from it? You acquire this education merely to fill your belly, Even this education can be used for the welfare of the society. Leave selfishness and aspire for the happiness of all. Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May all the people of the world be: happy!). This should be our prayer and aspiration. That is the true spiritual practice.

Vyashti means individual, samashti means society. So, you should progress from vyashti to samashti, from samashti to srushti (creation), and ultimately merge in Parameshti (God). You should attain the unity of individual, society, creation, and the creator. Only spiritual transformation can bring about social welfare. The first letter S in the name Sai stands for service (work), A for adoration (worship), and I for illumination (wisdom). So, the very name of Sai symbolizes the unity of work, worship, and wisdom.

Today, man has failed to understand the sacredness and purpose of human birth. Having taken human birth, you should try to experience bliss. You have the desire to attain bliss, but you are not making the necessary effort. You cannot collect even a drop of water if you keep the vessel upside down, although there may be a heavy downpour. Some water will be collected in it if the mouth of the vessel is turned upward. So,

if you want to attain divinity, you have to practice dharma. That is the meaning of dharmam sharanam gachhami. But, this must also lead to the welfare of all (Sangham sharanam gachhami). This is the inner meaning of

the teachings of Buddha.

Once, Buddha entered a village along with his disciples. A lady approached him and requested him to have food in her house. Buddha blessed her and accepted her invitation. Seeing this, many villagers, including the village headman, warned Buddha, saying, "O Buddha, you are one of wisdom and have renounced everything. She is not a woman of good character. It is not proper for you to have food in her house." Buddha smiled and asked the village headman to come forward. Buddha, holding the right hand of the headman, asked him to clap. The headman said, it was not possible for him to clap since one of his hands was in Buddha's hold.

Buddha said, "True, it is possible to clap only when two hands come together. Likewise, this lady cannot turn bad by herself unless there are men of bad character in the village. The men of this village are the root cause of her bad character." The villagers realized their folly, fell at Buddha's feet and sought his forgiveness. Through his teachings, Buddha instilled sacredness and wisdom in people. Buddha's teachings are highly sacred, with profound inner meaning.

Develop friendship with Truth

Buddha's mother, Mayadevi, passed away when he was just 8 days old. His stepmother Gautami brought him up. That is how he got the name Gautama. He was christened as Siddhartha at the time of his birth. He came to be known as Buddha because he developed buddhi (intellect) and discrimination power. Discrimination is of two types: individual discrimination and fundamental discrimination. Individual discrimination arises out of selfishness, whereas fundamental discrimination is concerned with the welfare of one and all. One should discard individual discrimination and have only fundamental discrimination. This was the teaching of Buddha to Ananda, son of Gautami, before he attained Nirvana.

When Buddha was on the verge of attaining Nirvana, Ananda started shedding tears of sorrow. Then Buddha consoled him, saying, "Ananda, why

are you unhappy over my attaining Nirvana? I have been craving this state of Nirvana for the past many years. Why do you shed tears of sorrow when I am experiencing supreme bliss?" Ananda understood the truth and followed the teachings of Buddha. Ultimately, he too attained Nirvana.

Divinity transcends space and time

True ideal is to give practical knowledge of dharma to others. One should be a hero in practice, not merely in preaching. This was the ideal of Buddha. All the Avatars and noble souls led their lives in the most exemplary manner and helped people experience divinity. Buddha said, "O man. you don't need to search for God anywhere. You are God yourself." The Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, and the Vedas also echo the same principle. The Vedas declare: Tat Thwam Asi (Thou art That). Man today does meditation in the morning like a yogi, eats sumptuous food during the day like a bhogi (pleasure seeker), and sleeps at night like a rogi (sick person). This is not the way one should lead one's life. Sathatham yoginah (one should be a Yogi all the time). Be filled with divine feelings all the time. Sarva karma Bhagavad pretyartham (whatever one does, one should do it to please God). Divinity transcends space and time. Sarvam khalvidam Brahma (everything is Brahman).

In order to understand this truth, one should cultivate sadgunas. Sadgunas do not denote good qualities alone. Sath means Being, that which is permanent. So, sadgunas mean having divine feelings. Similarly, the word sathsang means being in the company of the Divine, not merely in the company of good people. Divinity is within us. That is Sath. One has to develop friendship with Sath. That is true sathsang and true friendship.

Never depend on worldly friendship. Worldly friends come and go. Only friendship with God is true and eternal. God is your true friend, world is a text and hridaya (heart) is your preceptor. Your life will find fulfillment if you understand this truth and put into practice.

All the worldly gurus are not gurus in the strict sense of the term. How can they be called gurus if they cannot tell you the goal of life? Mind itself will

become your guru once you understand its mystery.

One God has many names

Embodiments of Love! You may call Him by any name, be it Jesus, Buddha, Allah, Rama, Krishna; God is one. Ek prabhu ke anek nam (one God has many names), if you understand this truth, you will realize that all are divine. Sarva jiva namaskaram kesavam prathigatchhathi (saluting the individual amounts to saluting God). Your life will be sanctified only when you cultivate such broad feelings. Develop broadmindedness. Never give any scope for any doubt on divinity. All such doubts are but imaginations. Never succumb to them. Follow only divine feelings.

Follow the Master, Face the devil, Fight to the end, Finish the game.
That should be the goal of your life.

Embodiments of Love! Many devotees from Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, and other countries have gathered here today with great devotion and dedication. Truly speaking, their hearts are highly sacred. Though they do not have many comforts and conveniences here, they have considered it a sadhana, treated everything with a sense of equal-mindedness, and are experiencing bliss. Their devotion is true devotion. In path of spirituality, have the determination to face any constraint that you may come across. That determination is the true thapas (penance). Bereft of determination, it becomes thamas (sloth).

You are determined to achieve something,
do not give up until you achieve what you want.
You have desired for something,
do not give up until your desire is fulfilled.
You have asked for something,

do not give up until you get what you have asked for.

You must pray to God forgetting yourself and make Him accede to your request.

It is not the quality of a true devotee
to give up half way. [Telugu Poem]

Cultivate the spirit of sacrifice and be prepared to face any difficulties. Na sukthath labhyathe sukham (happiness cannot be attained through happiness). Ancient sages and seers had to undergo a lot of difficulties. They had to live in the forest eating leaves and tubers. They could have the vision of God only after all this suffering. They declared to the world: Vedahametham Purusham mahantham aditya varnam thamasah parasthath (O people, we have seen God who is beyond the darkness of ignorance, shining resplendently like a thousand suns.) They also declared, "He is all-pervasive. We have seen Him not outside, but within ourselves. You can also see Him if you turn your vision inward." In order to attain divinity, one has to undertake spiritual sadhana. What type of sadhana? Not penance or meditation. One has to control the senses. Talk less and work more. Only then will the individual, society and country as a whole prosper. Don't waste time. Time is God. Time wasted is life wasted. The Upanishads declare that human life is highly sacred and unique. So, sanctify your life by contemplating on the Divine. Offer all your actions to God. Only then you can attain peace.

Santhi is full of spiritual feeling and wisdom that is the natural accompaniment of bliss. Genuine santhi is won only by control of the senses. Then it can be call prasanthi. The experience of that stage is as a stream of peace.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



16. Human Values and Education

Date: 26 July 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Valedictory Function of First Sri Sathya Sai Seminar on Values

Sadayam Hridayam Yasya Bhasitham Sathya Bhushitham
Kayah Parahithe Yasya Kalisthasya Karothikim
(Sanskrit verse)

What can the evil effects of Kali age do to a man whose heart is filled with compassion,
whose every utterance is truth, and whose body is dedicated for the service of others?

Embodiments of love!

Man should fill his heart with compassion, always speak the truth and dedicate his body for the welfare of society. The thoughts, words, and deeds of man should always be sacred. The heart unpolluted by desire and anger, the tongue not tainted by untruth, and the body unblemished by the acts of violence - these are the true human values. It is because of the lack of these human values that the country is facing hardships today. Bharat (India) has been the treasure house of spirituality since ancient times, but, today, it has lost both *sathya* (truth) and *dharma* (righteousness) and is enmeshed in unrighteous falsehood and injustice. It is therefore incumbent upon students to dedicate themselves to the task of restoring the pristine glory of Bharat. Just as the parents are worried and sad if their children lag behind in studies, so also Mother India feels aggrieved on seeing her children lacking moral and ethical values. You have to remember that all those whom you revere as ideal citizens and noble souls were once students themselves. Never forget that students of today are the future citizens and leaders of this country.

Take to righteous actions from an early age

The value of an individual depends on their culture. The real meaning of the word culture lies in giving up bad thoughts and bad actions and cultivating sacred thoughts and performing noble deeds. The country is not a mere piece of land; it is an assemblage of citizens. For the country to progress, the citizens have to cultivate moral, ethical, and spiritual values. It is not possible for the citizens and the leaders to cultivate these values unless they practice them right from childhood. Life becomes meaningless if one does not take to righteous actions from an early age.

Modern students are not able to refine their lives. So, the parents and the teachers should play an active role in shaping the lives of the students. First and foremost, they have to enquire as to how the students can get rid of their evil tendencies. Just as a boulder becomes worthy of adoration and respect when it is carved into a beautiful idol by a sculptor, so also the students will become ideal citizens if they are brought up in the right environment. The teachers and parents are responsible for the good and bad in students. But, unfortunately, they have not understood their role in shaping the lives of the students.

Spiritual education is for life

No doubt, teachers teach the students in the class. But, what is *vidya*? It is derived from the root word vid, meaning, 'to know'. Vidya is termed as education in English. The term education has its origin in the Latin word educare, which means 'to elicit. Educare has two aspects, the worldly and the spiritual. Worldly education imparts knowledge pertaining to the physical world. Spiritual education is essential, without which human life has little value.

But, in the modern education system, spirituality finds no place. Only worldly education is given prominence. Just as two wings are essential for a bird to soar high in the sky, and two wheels for a cart to move; so also two types of education are needed for man to attain the goal of life. Spiritual education is for life, whereas worldly education is for a living.

Only when man is equipped with these two aspects of education can he be deserving of respect and adoration in society. Possession of these two aspects of education will bring not only respect and adulation but also self-satisfaction.

Worldly education, which relates to the head, is ephemeral. Reading, writing, eking out a livelihood, and attaining name and fame - all these result from worldly education. Worldly education makes man great, whereas the spiritual education makes man good. Spiritual education relates to the heart, which is the origin of sacred qualities like compassion, truth, forbearance and love.

Today parents expect their children to go in for higher studies, amass wealth, and become great, but very few want their children to be good. Goodness is long lasting, whereas greatness is temporary. Goodness forms the basis for spiritual life.

There are crores and crores of people who have become great by amassing wealth, but what is their contribution to the welfare of society? Absolutely nil. Therefore, strive to be good, not great.

Man should become a composer, not a computer

Modern students are going to various countries for material education without realizing the fact that the heart, the source of true education is within. True education is that which makes man ideal. Parents are the first teachers. They should show their children the way to goodness. Man cannot become good merely by being highly educated. Worldly education confers only *artha* (wealth) and *swartha* (selfishness). Such education is responsible for the downfall of man.

Worldly education is information oriented, while spiritual education is transformation oriented. The information-oriented education makes man a computer, whereas the transformation-oriented education makes man a composer. Man should become a composer, not a computer. Who made the computer? The composer made the computer. Man should therefore

understand the meaning of real education.

Today, the moral, ethical, and spiritual values are on the decline. Modern students have no trace of these values in them. They have no respect for their parents and society. In that case how can they expect to be respected by their children?

Our ancient culture exhorts:

Mathru Devo bhava, pithru Devo bhava, and acharya Devo bhava
(revere your mother, father, and teacher as God).

Respect and be respected. Practice before you preach. A composer is one who practices what he preaches.

In the Mahabharata, there is a story of a king named Dushyantha. Having been born and brought up in a palace, he was inclined toward worldly and material pursuits. On the other hand, his son Bharata, who was born and brought up in Kanvashram (the hermitage of the sage Kanva) was a repository of moral, spiritual, and ethical values. Ashram education inculcates all noble values in man.

Bharata became a paragon of all virtues because he received ideal education right from his childhood. This enabled him to lead a life of peace and security. That is why it is said,

Start early, drive slowly, and reach safely.

Dushyantha had worldly and material wealth. He was a mighty emperor. What was the use of all that he possessed when he could not achieve spiritual

growth? This clearly demonstrates the difference between urban education and ashram education.

Values are our life principles

The five human values of *sathya*, *dharma*, *santhi*, *prema*, and *ahimsa* (truth, right action, peace, love, and nonviolence) can be compared to the five life principles of man, viz., *prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana*, and *saman*. A true human being is one who practices the five human values. Today man does not speak truth, lest it bring him harm, and does not practice dharma because he does not know what it really means.

Under any circumstances should you give up human values. Losing any of the five human values amounts to committing suicide.

If you do not speak the truth, you lose one of your life principles. Truth is your Atma. So, till your last breath, uphold truth. The culture of Bharat (India) teaches,

Sathyam vada dharmam chara
(Speak truth and follow righteousness).

These values are the same for one and all.

People all over the world are praying for peace. How can peace be attained? It is only through the practice of sathya and dharma (truth and right action). Today, man is leading a life bereft of sathya and dharma, resulting in lack of peace (santhi), which in turn has led to the absence of prema (love).

How can ahimsa (nonviolence) exist in the absence of these four values? Violence is rampant everywhere be it home, bazaar, or factory. Man, bereft of these five principles, has become a living corpse.

Life has to be infused into man today, for which faith in God is very essential. 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 God. Where there is God there is bliss. Human life has to begin with faith and end with bliss.

Ancient acharyas and modern teachers

Today, even the parents and the children, the husband and the wife lack faith in each other. The love they exhibit is only artificial. Under such circumstances how can love prevail? One should have deep faith in order to experience true love. Whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly. Fill your heart with compassion. When the heart is filled with love, all actions will be suffused with love.

Jumsai, in his talk, referred to EHV as 3HV. The first H stands for Heart, the second for Head, and the third for Hand. The harmony of heart, head, and hand symbolizes true human life.

Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam
(he is a noble soul whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect harmony).

Manasyanyath, vachasyanyath, karmanyanyath duratmanam
(he is a wicked one whose thoughts, words, and deeds are at variance).

The very name of *hridaya* (heart) - hri + daya - indicates compassion (*daya*). So, the heart should be filled with compassion. When there is love in the heart all that you utter will be truth.

Love in speech is truth.
Love in action is dharma.

Love in thought is peace.

Love in understanding is ahimsa (nonviolence).

So, love is the underlying principle of truth, righteousness, peace, and non-violence.

In olden days the teachers were called acharyas, meaning those who practice what they preach. Today teachers cannot be called acharyas because they do not practice what they preach. The modern teachers are experts in giving platform speeches, whereas the acharyas of ancient times were proficient in practical science.

Education should be free

How can the students heed the advice of the teachers if the teachers themselves do not practice what they preach? If the cow is grazing in the field, can we expect the calf to remain a mere witness? The calf naturally follows the cow. The relationship between the teacher and the student should be like that of cow and calf. It means the teachers should treat the students as their own children. But, today, one does not find such relationship between the teacher and the student. Both the teachers and students have become money-minded. As a result the students do not respect the teachers and the teachers do not have love for the students.

In many educational institutions seats are allotted to those who can pay large sums of money. This quota system has brought about all-round degeneration. Since the government is also encouraging this trend, the educational system has become totally bereft of values. To stop this unholy trend, education should be offered free of cost.

Everyone has an equal right on education. Education is the gift of God. No one has the right to sell it. Education should lead to elevation, not agitation. But, today, we find agitation everywhere.

The real "donation"

Today, money can buy admission, attendance, marks, and even degrees for that matter. The medical seats are readily offered to candidates who pay a sum of twenty to thirty lakhs. In order to earn the money spent by them to secure the medical seat, the doctors charge exorbitant fees from the patients. The same is the case with engineering, too. Even for admission in first standard, some institutions are charging twenty to twenty five thousand rupees.

Modern education has made man a beggar. One should be bigger not a beggar. I am not saying this out of sense of pride, but Sathya Sai Institute is the only institution offering free education. Jumsai said that more and more institutions should be established. It is a matter of pleasure, but care has to be taken to see that education is offered totally free of cost. Only then can we shape the students into ideal citizens. Teachers should share all their knowledge with the students wholeheartedly. They must practice before they preach. This is what I expect from the teachers.

The education that is acquired by paying large amounts as donation is no education at all. Only people having black money will resort to such illegal means to acquire degrees.

"Do (for the) nation" - that is the real donation. Make use of your education for the welfare of society and the nation. Share your knowledge with others. It is not necessary that you should become a teacher to do so. There may be a few poor students in your locality. Conduct special classes for them in the evening.

Today people fight for money and property right from dawn to dusk. They take to corrupt ways to earn even a single rupee. One should not live just for the sake of money. It is better to die rather than to lead a life just for the sake of money. If you have money in excess, help others; provide free education and free medical care to the poor.

Sathya Sai School in Zambia

In Zambia, there is a devotee by the name Victor Kanu. He is here right now. He has established a Sathya Sai School in Zambia. Many poor children are studying there. Both he and his wife are teaching the children with all love and care.

(At this juncture Bhagavan asked Mr. Victor Kanu, sitting nearby, as to how many children are studying in their school. Mr. Kanu said 520 children were studying there.)

They are imparting Swami's teachings and human values to all the children. It is going to become a college very soon.

There are many affluent people in the world. But they do not have the spirit of sacrifice to help such sacred institutions. Some of them do contribute something, but they do it for name and fame. They expect their names to appear in letters of gold. Sathya Sai institutions are not for name and fame.

I would like to narrate a small incident in this regard. At a particular place, when I was about to give discourse, one person switched off the fan. I asked him, "Why did you switch off the fan? We need it now. It is very hot here." That person replied saying it was he who donated the fan, and his name was written on the blades of the fan; unless it was switched off his name would not be visible.

Education leads to immortality

The culture of Bharat declares

"Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaikena Amrutatthwamanasu
(immortality can be attained only through sacrifice; neither wealth nor

progeny nor good deeds can confer it)."

All the activities and rituals you undertake must be for the welfare of society. You must inspire children to work for the progress of the country. It is only sacrifice that confers immortality. Participate in every good work according to your capacity. Select a few deserving students and give them free education.

Education is not for worldly progress. It is to set an ideal, experience happiness, and share it with others. All the elders, the educationists, the rich, and the students should come together and strive for progress in the field of education. Just as a thread binds flowers of different hues to make a garland, likewise the feelings of love and sacrifice should bring you all together. The flowers may fade away, but the thread remains changeless. A bud changes to become a flower. Similarly, with the passage of time, the child becomes man, man becomes father, and father becomes grandfather. But the feeling of love is changeless. It is true and eternal.

Man should never lose any of the five values. Leaving the values amounts to committing suicide. But man today is no better than animals. The spirit of sacrifice that is found even in animals is not visible in man today. The cow partakes of grass and yields milk. But man partakes of sacred milk and indulges in wicked deeds.

What is the use of all the education he has acquired if he cannot give up his evil qualities?

All the worldly education will only lead man to vain argumentation, but not total wisdom.

It cannot help you to escape from the clutches of death.

So, acquire that knowledge which will make you immortal.

[Telugu Poem]

The education should enable us to cultivate sacred qualities. Worldly education is negative, and spiritual education is positive. What is the use of having a bulb without electric current? Secular knowledge is like the bulb; spiritual knowledge, like the current. Both are essential for the progress of man and the world at large.

Make proper use of the knowledge you have acquired. Parents should take active interest in the education of their children. Never desire that your son should become a great person, instead pray that he become a good person, like Bharata. That is true human life.

The good and the great

If one goes through the sacred texts of the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, and the Mahabharata, one understands the evil effects of *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), and *lobha* (greed). In the Ramayana, Rama symbolized goodness, whereas Ravana, greatness. Though Rama and Ravana were equally proficient in all forms of knowledge, Ravana could not make proper use of his knowledge because he had no control over his senses. On the other hand, Rama exercised control over his senses and sacrificed everything for the sake of truth. The Ramayana is known as Ramacharitra (the story of Rama) and the story of Ravana is known as Kamacharitra (the story of desire).

The Bhagavata speaks of the consequences one has to face if one becomes a victim of anger. Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu were air-powerful, but ultimately perished because of their anger toward God. Hiranyakasipu was a great, scientist. Today man has traveled only up to the moon, but Hiranyakasipu could even reach the stars. But his anger ruined him.

In the Mahabharata, Duryodhana and Dussasana symbolize greed, which is a negative power. On the other hand, the Pandavas stand for the positive power. They adhered to dharma under all circumstances. Similarly, in the Bhagavata, Hiranyakasipu symbolises negative power and Prahlada, positive

power. Thus, wherever you see, you find positive and negative, good and bad co-exist. Accept the good and give up the bad and earn a good name. Then, you are not merely great, you are also good.

The method and the means

Teachers!

You have participated in this conference for the past three days. All of you have noble ideas, but you have to think of a proper way to implement them. Attach more importance to values than money and see that students make allround progress.

Students!

I want you to become ideal leaders. Make use of your education to serve the poor. Conduct free tuition classes for the poor children and share your books with them. Only then will the feeling of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God develop.

As I have told you earlier, educare has two aspects: one is *pravritti* (outward) and the other, which comes from the heart, is *nivritti* (inward). God is the *Hridayavasi* (indweller). So, all that originates from the heart is essentially divine. Therefore, let all your thoughts, words, and deeds originate from your heart.

Do good, be good, and see good. This is the way to God. Accept both pleasure and pain as gifts of God.

In order to get cured of malaria, one has to swallow a bitter mixture. Likewise, one has to face hardships in order to attain happiness. That is why it is said that a pleasure is an interval between two pains. Light has no value if there is

no darkness. Likewise, pleasure has no value without pain.

Consider every good work as God's work

Students!

To the extent possible, serve society. Of course, you need to take up jobs and earn your livelihood. But do not be avaricious. Be satisfied with what you get. Alexander conquered many kingdoms and seized a lot of wealth. When his end approached, he realised that he could not take even a single penny with him. He requested his minister to keep his two hands raised above the head during the final journey so that the people would understand that even the mighty emperor Alexander had to leave the world empty-handed.

Likewise, everyone has to leave this world empty-handed. Even a millionaire has to partake of only food; he cannot eat gold. So, be satisfied with the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter.

Do your jobs properly and undertake service activities in your leisure time. Develop faith in God. If you do not have faith in God, you will not have fear of sin. Then you will become a demon. So, fear of sin and love for God is very essential. If you have these two, you will be successful in all your endeavors. Consider every good work as God's work.

Work for your Motherland and serve the poor

Embodiments of Love!

Stop hankering after foreign lands after you complete your studies. Serve your Motherland. Lord Rama said,

Janani janmabhoomischa swargadapi gareeyasi
(mother and motherland are greater than heaven).

So, work for your Motherland and serve the poor.

The best way to love God is to love all and serve all, but serve only when it is necessary. You are born to experience love. Your life is full of love. But you are not able to understand this Principle of Love. There is nothing greater than love in this world.

Love is God, God is Love. So live in love.

Whatever you do, do it as an offering to God. Do not make a distinction between "my work" and "God's work". When you make a division, you give rise to enmity, because of differences. When there is enmity, there is no room for divinity, purity, and unity.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

17. Power of Love

Date: 28 July 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

A deep enquiry will reveal that Nothing equals Love in this world
Be it charity, sacred rituals, penance, Wisdom, purity, or
adherence to truth And Sanathana Dharma.
[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love! The main aim of human life is to acquire the knowledge of the Self. This is the true Purushartha (goal of life). Human life will find fulfillment if this goal is attained.

The ability to distinguish between that which is permanent and that which is transitory, the ability to control the internal and external senses, yearning for liberation and the path of inquiry - all these four (the four auspicious qualities) depend on devotion. The word bhakti (devotion) (derived from the root word bhaj) means pure, unsullied and selfless love toward God.

In this world, no other virtue is greater than love. Love is truth, love is righteousness, and love is wealth. This world originated from love, is sustained by love, and ultimately merges in love. Every atom has its origin in love.

There are innumerable powers such as atomic power, magnetic power, etc., in this world, but the power of love surpasses them all. Life bereft of faith and love is meaningless and useless. For man in this world, love is life and love is everything. It is from love that the five elements (pancha bhutas) have emerged. It is love that shines brilliantly in every individual. But man, not being able to comprehend the significance of love attributes physical relationship to it. The love of a mother toward her child is vatsalya (affection).

The love that exists between wife and husband is moha (infatuation). The love that exists among friends and relations is anuraga (attachment). The love toward material objects is ichcha (desire). Love directed toward God in totality is known as bhakti (devotion).

Never underestimate the power of love

It is only love that encompasses and permeates the entire world. None can exist without love even for a moment, be it human beings or animals or birds or insects. This love is the very form of God. But today, man is misusing this sacred love by diverting it toward the ephemeral world. Never underestimate the power of love. Our ancient Rishis, leading a life of solitude in dense forests, could live in harmony even with wild animals only because of the power of their love.

There is nothing that love cannot achieve in this world. It can even melt the hardest of rocks. When the principle of love in every human being is unified, it becomes cosmic love (viswa prema). Do you want to quench your thirst for love? Yearn for His grace and worship Him.

In order to experience bliss, develop love more and more. The more you develop love, the more you will experience bliss. Bliss (Ananda) cannot be attained without love. In fact, it is love that takes the form of bliss.

Chant the divine name always

Hiranyakasipu made every attempt to wean Prahlada away from the Godward path. But never did Prahlada give up chanting the divine name of Narayana. One day, Hiranyakasipu, on being prompted by Narada, called Prahlada and asked him, "Son, what is that you have learnt so far?" In reply, Prahlada sang a verse in praise of Narayana:

Narayana Param Brahma, Narayana Param Prema, Narayana Param Thapa
Saryam Narayana Sama.

He said, "Father, I have learnt that Narayana is the Supreme Lord. He is the embodiment of love. Repetition of His name is the greatest penance, and everything is Narayana only." Like Prahlada, you too chant the divine name always. Saints like Jayadeva, Gauranga, Thukaram, and Ramakrishna Paramahansa prayed to the Lord fervently and yearned for His love. Cry for the Lord, just as Sakkubai and Meera did, unable to bear the pangs of separation. They could have His vision and earn His grace only due to such intense yearning. But, due to the impact of Kali age, people want to attain divine grace without making any effort whatsoever. Wickedness, misery, and violence are on the rise because love for God is waning. Transform all your wicked qualities like jealousy and anger into love.

God presides over every activity

God is the creator of this world. He is the presiding deity of action (Karmadhyaksha). You cannot have a table unless there is a carpenter to make it. You cannot construct a house unless there is a builder. Likewise, for everything there is a creator. All that you see, mobile and immobile, is the creation of God. That is the reason, He is extolled as Karmadhyaksha. He presides over every activity.

Today, spiritual aspirants undertake various types of sadhana (spiritual exercise) such as meditation, penance, yoga, and chanting Vedic hymns. Love should be the undercurrent of all these spiritual exercises or else it will be a sheer waste of time. No benefit accrues from chanting mantras if they are not coupled with the feeling of love. The Vedas declare: Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaikena amritatmanasuhu (neither wealth nor progeny nor good deeds can confer immortality; it can be attained only through sacrifice). Immortality is nothing but love. Love is nectarine, it is infinite and all bliss.

Today people are not making any effort to understand this principle of love. It is only the power of love that can nullify a curse or a sin. It is only love that can remove all the bitter feelings and enhance the sweetness of life.

Every human being is expected to be a friend and well wisher of the world. But such feeling of friendship and love is lacking in man today. Just as a honeybee sucks nectar from a flower, so also man should be able to draw the water of happiness even from the well of misery. That is the true quality of love.

Pleasure is an interval between two pains. Pleasure and pain co-exist in God's creation itself. Take for instance how God has made the human body. The bright and beautiful face has pitch dark hair above it. But, in fact, that adds to the beauty of the face. Likewise, pleasure has value only when pain is associated with it. Good and bad co-exist in everything. But today, man is not attracted by good, he sees only bad in everything.

Incredible speed of Love

Every action is under the control of God. Earth revolves around itself at the rate of 18.5 miles per second. It takes one year for the earth to revolve around the sun. Light travels at an incredible speed of 1,86,284 miles per second. It takes 22,000 crores of years for the light to go around the universe.

According to the Vishnu Sahasranama sthotra, the entire universe is the very form of Vishnu (Viswam Vishnuswarupam). Even if man were to travel at the speed of light, it will take 22,000 crore years to circumambulate Lord Vishnu. Who can live for such a long period of time? Due to the evil effects of Kali Age, man is not able to live even for hundred years, let alone 22000 crore years!

But it is possible to go around the Viswa Swarupa (God in the form of universe) in one second. It is love that makes it possible. The speed of love is such that it can go around the universe in one second. The speed of light may be estimated, but not the speed of love.

But man has put barriers around such transcendental and infinite love and is using it for trivial purposes. That is why the world has become chaotic today. People may attribute various reasons for the lack of peace and security. But

the main reason is that man is not able to develop love within. He is not making any effort to realize the presence of the infinite, immortal, and nectarine love within.

Let your thoughts, words, and deeds be suffused with love. Let your life be filled with love. Nothing else is required to have the vision of the Divine (Sakshatkara). Love is God, live in love.

Divine grace is true wealth

Today, love finds no place in the human heart, since it has become a den of desires. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is truth. Where there is truth, there is God. So develop faith in God.

Yesterday someone asked Me how to develop faith. I replied that faith is way of life. It is but natural to a man. The feeling of I am itself signifies faith. I am means I exist. Am (existence) itself denotes faith. Without faith in your existence, you cannot live even for a moment in the world.

Truth, sacrifice, and righteousness constitute humanness. Truth is neethi (morality), Dharma is reethi (code of conduct), and sacrifice is khyathi (reputation). The combination of all these is manava jathi (human race). One cannot be called a human being on the basis of form. One has to adhere to truth, uphold dharma, and develop the spirit of sacrifice to deserve the title of human being.

Visualize the unity among all beings and conduct yourself with compassion in your heart.

With intense yearning, contemplate on God at least once a day.

Only then can you have the vision of God.

God does exist, but He cannot be seen by the naked eye.

He can be seen only when you get rid of worldly delusions.

What is the state of man today?

He is overjoyed when he has wealth and griefstricken when he loses it.
He indulges in pomp and show and loses everything in the process.
He conceives of dubious ways and means.
Just as earth revolves around the sun, he revolves around money.
[Telugu Poem]

Divine grace is the true wealth. Acquire that and you would have acquired everything. Character is important, not wealth. But man is wasting his life hankering after wealth. No doubt money is necessary, but it should be within certain limits. Spend your time in serving others. Love your fellowmen. Surrender yourself to God. Nothing surpasses divine love. The entire world is permeated with love.

The Vedas declare: Anther bahischa tat sarvamvyapya Narayana sthitha (That all-pervasive God is present within and without). All names and forms are His. Names and forms may vary, but the Atma is the same in all. Recognize the unity of all beings. That will result in universal love. The world is a mansion. All belong to the caste of humanity. Unity should prevail in such a mansion.

Let the mind shine like full moon

Embodiments of Love! Today is Guru Purnima. What is its significance?

Guru Brahma Gurur-Vishnu Gurur-Devo Maheswara
Guru Sakshath Param Brahma Thasmai Sri Gurave Namah.

The Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara are within us. That is why I often say you are not one but three. This is the meaning of the three words Bhur, Bhuvah, Suvah in the Gayathri mantra. Bhur means bhuloka (earth).

The earth is made up of matter. Therefore, the human body, which is also made up of matter, is called bhuloka. This can also be referred to as materialisation.

Bhuvaha means life force.(prana) It is this life force that makes the body move. It is known as vibration.

Suvaha means wisdom. This is known as radiation. The Vedas declare: Prajnanam Brahma. This Prajnana is nothing but radiation. Human being is a combination of materialisation, vibration, and radiation. You don't need to search for God outside. Turn your vision inward. There you will find God.

Today is full moon day. The Vedas say: "Chandrama Manaso Jatha Chaksho Suryo Ajayatha Mukha dindrascha Agnishcha (the moon was born out of the mind, the sun out of the eyes, and the fire and Indra out of the mouth of the Supreme Purusha)." Moon is the presiding deity of the mind. That day is Purnima, in the true sense of the term, when the mind is filled with pure love. Let your mind shine brilliantly like the moon on a full moon day. This is possible only when you fill your mind with love.

Currency for the Divine Bank

Embodiments of Love! Today, we find people depositing their money in banks. Likewise, deposit the power of your senses, your mind, and the wisdom in the bank of God. They will never diminish; they will continue to grow forever and will be returned to you in times of need. Sustain and safeguard sacred love. Never give vent to hatred. Consider whatever happens as good for you. You might have seen in newspapers that the Indian army had a confrontation at the border. But whatever has happened is good for India in the sense that the Chinese, the Americans, and the Russians have become more friendly with India and India has earned a good reputation in the international community. It is the peace-loving nature of India that has made this possible. Peace is the real virtue of India.

Only divine love and grace can protect the union

Once, when I went to Bombay, the then head of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Sri K.M. Munshi, convened a conference of intellectuals. He asked Me to address them. One person from the audience asked Me, "Swami, America and Russia are manufacturing more and more weapons. But India is lagging far behind in this respect. Should not India also manufacture weapons?" I told him, "Dear one, what Bharat (India) needs today is not arms and ammunition. It needs to uphold Dharma. Dharmo rakshathi rakshithaha (if you protect dharma, dharma will protect you in return). We should not waste money in manufacturing weapons.

Some countries are spending a lot of money on defense and, as a result, the people of those countries are suffering for want of proper food. Only divine love and grace and not weapons can protect a nation. You might have read in the Mahabharata that Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva implicitly obeyed the command of Dharmaja, the embodiment of dharma. Likewise, India, America, and Russia can be compared to Dharmaja, Arjuna and Bhima respectively. Just as Arjuna and Bhima obeyed Dharmaja, so also America and Russia will follow India provided India upholds dharma. What India needs to possess is Sathyasthra and Dharmasthra, the weapons of truth and righteousness. Both are inherent in the principle of love. Just as a gigantic tree emerges out of a small seed, the entire universe originated from love.

Music college in Prasanthi Nilayam

Embodiments of Love! In this world, you can achieve everything with love. I am the best example for this. Love is My greatest property. I love everybody and do not desire anything except love. The power of love can transform earth into sky and sky into earth. There is nothing in this world that cannot be achieved by love.

Here is a small example. Many students are coming here for studies. But modern education is not doing any good to the world. All the subjects like physics, botany, and chemistry will help only to eke out a livelihood. But none of them can attract the human heart as music does.

Even God is attracted by music. Once, Narada asked Vishnu, "Swami, You have various branch offices like Vaikunta, Kailasa, and Swarga. But I want to know the address of Your head office so that I can contact You without delay." Vishnu said, "Madbhaktha yathra gayanthi tathra thistami Narada (you will find Me installed wherever My devotees sing My glory)." That is why God is extolled as Ganapriya and Ganalola (lover of music). It is music that melts human heart and literally moves everyone.

So, music should be started in our colleges. I wanted to start a music college here. But I did not tell anybody about this. I usually do not tell what My plans are. Whatever I Will certainly happens.

Last week a devotee named Puri from Indonesia came here and prayed to Me to start a music college here for which, he said, he would donate 10 crore rupees. The modern music is essential. But along with that, street plays, Harikathas (singing the stories of God) have to be encouraged. Music plays a vital role in fostering Indian culture.

The construction of this college will commence in the next month i.e. Sravana. The current month is Ashada, in which, according to the elders, a new project is not undertaken. That is the reason I postponed the commencement of construction to next month.

Super specialty hospital in Bangalore

Last month when I was in Bangalore, one day, the Chief Minister of Karnataka came to Me and said, "Swami, You have constructed a Super Specialty Hospital in Prasanthi Nilayam, which is of immense benefit to the poor. But diseases are common for both the rich and the poor, urban and rural. It will be of great help to the people of Bangalore city if You would be kind enough to establish another Super Specialty Hospital here." I just smiled and did not say anything.

The very next week, the Chief Minister, the Finance Minister, the Revenue Minister, and many other dignitaries came here with the documents

concerning the registration of 70 acres of land. This plot is situated adjacent to the Information and Technology Park. They are supplying water and electricity. If you are prepared to undertake noble tasks, the whole world will support you.

An American devotee named Sinclair has come forward to donate money for this hospital. Previously he had donated for the Super Specialty Hospital in Prasanthi Nilayam also. I have not told about this project to anyone else, otherwise there would have been a shower of gold.

There are many men of sacrifice in this world. But I do not like to ask anyone. One should never doubt whether the good task undertaken will find fruition or not. Many more things are going to happen in the future.

Education of Love

Fill your hearts with love. There is no wealth, no dharma, no meditation greater than love. I expect all of you to live in unity like brothers and sisters. If you become embodiments of love, you will become divine. Brahmaivid Brahmaiva Bhavati (the knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman).

Students are the long-journey passengers, traveling in this train of society. All the elders are bound to get down soon. So, it is the paramount duty of students to develop sacred love. The main education offered in our institute is love alone. Do not love God for the sake of worldly desires. Love Him with spiritual outlook. Gopikas prayed to Krishna,

Let us listen to the melody of Your divine music so that the seeds of love to germinate
in the field of our heart, which has become barren due to the absence of love.

Let there be rain of love in our hearts, and
let the river of love flow incessantly through it.

[Telugu Verse]

I am giving you all free education and free medical care, in return you have to give Me only one thing, and that is love. Develop love. That is all I want from you. I want you to take a vow that you will lead a life suffused with love from today onward. With this, I bring my discourse to a close.

18. Recognise the principle of 'I'

Date: 05 August 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

Embodiments of Love!

Where the mind is active, all the three worlds exist there. Where there is no mind, nothing exists there. Mind is the main cause of man's suffering and misery. In order to control the mind, man has to keep his desires under check.

The trees demonstrate the sacred principle of equality by providing shelter to everyone
Regardless of caste, creed, religion, nationality.
The mighty mountains withstand the cold, rains,
and the severe heat, thereby teaching man
Not to be unduly attached to the body.
The birds are satisfied with what they get to eat
each day.
They do not store food.
Thus they teach the sacred lesson that
one should not be worried about the future.
Death conveys the message that body is temporary and
the feeling of I and mine is but an illusion.
Nature is the only school that confers on man
true wisdom, and God is the only Sadguru.

Embodiments of Love!

Nature sets an ideal to the entire humanity to imbibe the spirit of sacrifice and lead a spiritual life.

Anithyam Asukham Lokam Imam Prapya Bhajasva Mam
(the world is temporary and full of misery, so contemplate on God).

Under these circumstances, why is man not able to cultivate the spirit of sacrifice? In spite of his knowing the truth that the body is temporary, he is still bound by desires. Since there is no end to desires, man is subjected to endless misery. In order to get rid of his misery, man should follow the ideals of Nature. Nature is the best preacher. It exhorts man to cultivate love, compassion and spirit of sacrifice.

Since ancient times, in this sacred land of Bharat, many sages, seers, and also the kings propagated the spirit of sacrifice and the principle of spirituality, showing to mankind the way to peace and security. Bali was one such king who propagated the spirit of sacrifice through his own example, by undertaking many sacred rituals like yajnas and yagas. He even discarded the advice of his guru, Sukracharya, who tried to dissuade him from keeping his promise to Vamana. He told his guru that there was no greater sin than going back on one's own promise and that he would abide by his word to Vamana, come what may.

Let intellect control the mind

Bharat, which has given birth to such noble kings and has been the land of sacrifice, spirituality, and peace, has now become a place of injustice, untruth, and restlessness. One should never get carried away by this body, which is bound to perish one day or the other. Only the principle of the Atma is true and eternal. One should lead one's life keeping this eternal Atmic principle in view. and not the fleeting materialistic pleasures of the world.

Nature is endowed with two aspects. One is related to the worldly view and the other to the spiritual view. All that you see, hear, and think is related to the physical world. The unmanifest principle of the Atma is the basis for this

manifest Nature.

Here is a mansion. You can see its grandeur and beauty, but not its foundation. The body can be compared to a mansion and the mind to its foundation. Just as the mansion is based on its foundation, likewise the body is based on the mind. If the mind is steady, so too is the body, and vice versa. Having attained human birth, it is necessary to understand the nature of the body, the mind, the intellect, and the senses in order to make proper use of them.

Mind exists even after death

Before driving a car, one should know where the brake, clutch, accelerator, etc. are located and how to operate them properly. Our body is a car, the mind is the steering, eyes are the headlights, heart is the engine, stomach is the petrol tank, and the four objectives of human life, namely, dharma, artha, kama, moksha, are the four wheels. The tyres, which are outside, are under control of the steering, which is inside. Likewise, mind is the steering that controls the direction of the journey of human life. So, one should make every effort to understand the nature of the mind. Mind exists even after death. Purity of man depends upon the purity of his mind. If the mind is polluted, it pollutes all his life.

Though the mind of modern man is highly polluted with negative thoughts, he aspires to live in peace and happiness. But how can he expect positive results without giving up negative thoughts? The peace and happiness that he experiences in the world are only temporary. In fact, real happiness is not in the world outside; it is within. Mind is the cause for everything, good and bad, happiness and misery.

The Vedas declare:

Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo

(mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation of man).

If man follows the dictates of the mind, he becomes worse than an animal and ultimately ruins his life. His life will be sanctified only when he follows the dictates of *buddhi* (intellect). He who goes by the vagaries of the mind can never be steady in life. How can he then attain permanent happiness?

Truth originates from the hridaya

So, first and foremost, man should make his mind steady and sacred. Before undertaking any activity, he should discriminate whether it is good or bad, right or wrong. But man is using his power of *discrimination* (viveka) only to suit his selfish ends, which is individual discrimination. What is needed today is fundamental discrimination, that which is based on the sacred principles like truth, love, and righteousness.

Truth is God, love is God. So, live in love.

Truth is one and the same for all countries in all periods of time. Truth originates from the *hridaya* (heart). The mind can be controlled once you have total faith in truth and follow it implicitly.

The primary effort of man should be to control the mind. This is not possible unless desires are put under check. But, today, man is filled with excessive desires. No doubt one can have desires, but they should be within limits. Today, even the *sanyasins* (renunciants) do not have control over their desires, let alone common men. When their ashrams grow, their desires also grow more and more. Why should one have unlimited desires? Adi Sankara declared:

Ma kuru dhana jana yauvana garvam,
harathi nimeshath kalah sarvam
(Do not be proud of wealth, progeny, or youth;
the tide of time may destroy them all in an instant).

Youth and wealth are like passing clouds.

Keep control over mind in times of difficulties

One should keep one's mind under control and act according to the situation. You have just heard a singer singing Thyagaraja's composition, "Samayaniki Thagu Mataladene." Thyagaraja was one who understood the truth and had love for God. But, one cannot keep control over one's mind in times of great difficulties. It is because of this weakness that one even starts blaming God for one's own troubles. Thyagaraja was no exception to this. When he was unable to withstand suffering in the face of difficulties in life, he put the blame on Rama, saying, "O Rama, my *bhakti* (devotion) toward You is very strong, but You do not have the *shakti* (power) to protect me." Then he enquired deeply within and repented for his indiscreet statement. He sang,

O Rama if You lacked power,
Would a mere monkey jump across the mighty ocean?
Would Mother Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth,
become Your consort?
Would Lakshman worship You?
Would the intelligent Bharata serve You?
How can I, with my limited mind,
Understand the greatness and grandeur of Your divine power?"
[Telugu Poem]

One has to have a broad mind in order to understand the infinite Divinity. Today, man has become so narrow-minded that he has given up *asayalu* (ideals) and is leading his life only to fulfil his *asalu* (desires). Lead a life full of sacred feelings. Give up worldly feelings. Have total faith in God. You can accomplish anything with faith.

Only one with the mind is manava

Sathya (truth), *dharma* (righteousness), and *thyaga* (sacrifice) constitute humanness. Sathya is *neethi* (morality), dharma is *reethi* (code of conduct), and thyaga is *khyathi* (reputation). The combination of all these three is *manava jathi* (human race). But all these are missing in modern man. So, we find only *akara manava* (human in form) but not *achara manava* (human in practice).

Today man is restless due to the vagaries of the mind. But the mind is essential for man. Only the one with the mind is manava (man). Bereft of the mind, he is not man. Therefore, man should conduct himself fully aware of the divinity within. Unfortunately, many do not believe in the existence of God. Where is God? He is all-pervasive.

Sarvata Pani Padam Tath Sarvathokshi Siromukham
Saravata Srutimalloke Sarvamavruthya Thisthati.

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

Embodiments of Love!

More than physical prowess, man needs power of the mind. Man should have control over his emotions and keep them under check in times of distress.

Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a game, play it.
Life is a dream, realise it. Life is love, enjoy it.
Man bereft of love is lifeless. Love, love, love.
Love is everything. Live in love.
Love lives by giving and forgiving; self lives by getting and forgetting.

Experiencing Oneness is true wisdom

The present population of the world is approximately 600 crores. But the principle of 'I' is one and the same in everyone. Each refers to them as 'I'. How can one know these 600 crore people? Once you recognise the principle of 'I', you would have recognised all. Here, you find many bulbs glowing; the same current flows through all of them. Similarly, the principle of 'I' is the same in all. Instead of questioning, "Who are you?" question yourself, 'Who am I?' Know yourself first, then you will know all.

What is the cause of conflicts and restlessness in this world? Lack of recognition of principle of oneness is mainly responsible. If someone were to criticise you, do not get agitated. Remember that the same Atmic principle is present in both of you. The one who accuses and the one who is accused are not two different entities. There will be no scope for agitation if you understand this truth. Peace and serenity will reign supreme in the world once this principle of oneness is recognised.

Likewise, God and devotee are not separate from each other. Worshipper and worshipped are one and the same. The devotee worshipping God actually means worshipping himself.

Ekatma Sarvabhuthantaratra
(the same Atma is present in everyone).

This principle of oneness is Brahma. Viewing this oneness as many is *bhrama* or *bhranthi* (illusion). This bhrama is responsible for the restlessness in the world. True spiritual practice lies in cultivating the spirit of oneness. There is no greater sadhana than this. Whatever sadhana one undertakes, one should do it with love. Then, there will be no scope for anger and jealousy.

In order to understand the Vedic dicta,

Easwara Sarvabhuthanam (God dwells in all beings),
Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma (all this is verily Brahman),

one should inculcate noble qualities.

Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaikena amrutathwamanasu
(neither wealth nor progeny nor good deeds can confer immortality; it can be attained only through sacrifice).

People respect you as long as you occupy exalted positions in society. But nobody follows you when you lose your position and power. The Vedas address human beings as *Amrutasya Puthra*. Live up to that title. You are amrutasya puthra (sons of immortality), not *anrutasya puthra* (sons of falsehood).

Understand the truth that you are God

There is *chinmaya* (awareness) in *mrinmaya* (physical body). That awareness is true wisdom. The Vedas refer to this as *Prajnanam Brahma* (constant integrated awareness). This constant integrated awareness makes the body,

mind, and intellect function.

All four Mahavakyas, namely, Prajnanam Brahma, Ayamatra Brahma, Aham Brahmasmi, and Tattwamasmi, speak of this constant integrated awareness.

Understand the truth that you are God. You may think that you are separate from Swami. But in fact, I and you are not separate. 'I am yours, you are Mine,' 'You and I are one.' Understand this truth and act accordingly.

Abheda darshanam jnanam
(experience of oneness is true wisdom).

There is only one without a second. If you go on adding the number 1 to itself, the value increases. On the other hand, even if crores of 'I's are added to 'I', it still remains 'I'. That 'I' is Divinity. Once you understand this truth, you will realise that all are embodiments of Divinity. The essence of Vedanta is contained in these four Mahavakyas.

Vision of God through Love

You have all come from Kerala. You might have heard the arguments of many atheists that they do not believe in the existence of God, since He is not seen. Where can you find anything without form? One cannot deny the existence of air just because it is not seen. Likewise, one cannot deny the existence of God. God exists, but you cannot see Him. All names and forms are His. Once you develop this faith, you will develop love for God.

Gopikas could not bear the pangs of separation from Krishna when He left for Mathura. On deep enquiry, they realised that there was no separation between Krishna and them since He is present everywhere at all times. The

one that went to Mathura was not 'Krishna' but his body. Realising this truth they sang this song, "O Krishna, can we ever understand You? You are smallest among the small and mightiest among the mighty. You are present in all the 84 lakh species."

None can decide that God is here and not there. He is everywhere. Only through love can one have the vision of God. One can see one's own reflection in the mirror only when a particular chemical is coated on the other side. Likewise, coat the chemical of love on your hridaya (heart) in order to have the vision of God. Fill your heart with love; then there will be no place for evil qualities like jealousy, anger, and hatred. Wax melts when it comes into contact with heat. The heart also melts like wax when the rays of love fall on it.

The story of Prahlada is direct proof of this. He constantly chanted the name of Narayana with all love even in the face of innumerable hardships. He was pushed from the mountain top and thrown into the sea. Attempts were made to get him trampled upon by huge elephants and bitten by poisonous snakes. But not even once did he give up chanting Narayana. Love of Prahlada melted the heart of the Lord, and He came to His rescue in times of need. True devotion lies in being in a state of equanimity in both pleasure and pain. Prahlada stands testimony to this. He had neither grief nor fear in the face of severest sufferings. He had total faith that God was within him.

There can be no room for grief or fear wherever God's name is chanted, since God Himself manifests there.

Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau
(one should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat).

Such equanimity can be attained only through love.

Embodiments of Love!

All are embodiments of love. Love is the fundamental force. When once you develop love within, you will never hate anybody. Today, hatred is on the rise everywhere. Ego is the root cause for hatred. Give up ego and you can have the vision of Atma. All this can be accomplished only through love. You should lead your life with love. There is no greater devotion than this.

19. Develop intense devotion

Date: 03 September 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

Where the six noble qualities of uthsaha (enthusiasm), sahasa (determination), dhairya (courage), buddhi (intelligence), shakti (energy), and parakrama (valour) are evident, God' s protection and grace prevail there.
[Sanskrit verse]

Embodiments of Love! Lord Krishna has said that karma (action) is responsible for man' s birth as well as death. Man is bound by action in his daily life. Right from birth to death, man spends his time in performing some activity or the other. The path of action (karma marga) is very dear to God. In fact, He is the very embodiment of action and He is present in every activity.

It is Karma (action) that is responsible for birth, sustenance, and death of every being in this world. Karma is God for all beings. It is the cause of both pleasure and pain.
[Telugu Poem]

Action is the cause for everything

While karma (action) is responsible for pleasure, pain, birth, death, etc., kala (time) is also very essential for every karma. Without these two, man cannot live even for a moment. However, action is the cause for everything. What was the cause for King Harishchandra to become the caretaker of the

cremation ground, for the separation of King Nala and his spouse Damayanti, and for the imprisonment and suffering of Sant Ramadas? It was the karma alone.

As is the karma, so is the consequence thereof. These two are inseparable and interrelated. Time acts as a link between these two. A day is one unit of time. Seven days make a week, fifteen days a fortnight, thirty days a month, and twelve months a year. Time is moreover divided into three periods: past, present, and future. Multifarious activities take place in these three periods of time.

What is time? What is space? Here are two flowers. The distance between these two flowers is space. They were buds yesterday; they blossomed today and will fade away tomorrow. A bud cannot become a flower instantly, and the flower does not fade immediately. The change takes place gradually. That which is the root cause for this change is time.

You all know that the second-hand in a clock rotates continuously, making the sound 'tick, tick, tick...' You might wonder whether it takes rest at all. Yes, it does. The time gap between two consecutive ticks is its period of rest.

This world is a combination of kala (time), karma (action) and karana (cause). Every action has a reaction. When your finger gets cut with a knife, blood oozes out immediately. Here, the reaction is instantaneous. There is no time gap whatsoever. On the other hand, the food we eat takes at least two hours to be digested. Take the case of a seed. A seed sown today takes three to four days to sprout. Here the time gap between action and reaction is slightly more as compared to the previous instances. On the other extreme, we have a case where it takes years for a sapling to grow into a gigantic tree and yield fruit.

The consequence of one's actions are inevitable

Thus, the time gap between action and reaction may vary depending on the nature of action. But, know for sure that none can escape the consequences

of their actions. It is impossible to say when, how, and where one will face the consequences of one's actions.

Why should one pray, meditate, contemplate on God or engage in good actions when one is anyway bound to face the consequences of one's actions? You may not be able to see the transformation that comes within you by your good actions and prayer. You may not even be able to visualise it with your mind. Yet, this transformation in you is sure to attract God's grace. The benefits derived from prayer or good actions may not be visible to the naked eye. Yet the benefits do accrue in the form of God's grace.

Take the example of a bottle of pills. You may note the date of expiration date mentioned on the bottle as the year 1994. You may also find the bottle and its contents intact even in the year 1999. But this does not mean that the pills will be effective if used today. The pills may be there, but they lose their power after the date of expiry. Likewise, the consequences of one's actions are inevitable, be they good or bad,

but divine grace will let their effects lapse.

One has to face the consequences of one's actions

Once the demon Dundubhi challenged King Vali for a duel. Vali killed Dundubhi and, in a fit of rage, threw his battered and bruised body at a distance. It so happened that the bleeding body landed on the Rishyamuka Mountain, splashing blood on sage Mathanga, who was deeply engaged in meditation there. Enraged, Mathanga cursed Vali thus: "Whoever is responsible for this reprehensible act will have his head splintered into pieces if he were to set his foot on this mountain." That is why Sugriva, Hanuman and others chose to live on Rishyamuka Mountain when they were banished from the kingdom of Vali. They were certain that Vali would not dare to come there.

Who was responsible for all this? It was Vali himself. He could have stopped with the killing of Dundubhi. Instead, he flung the body away, driven by his

anger, ego, and hatred. These three evil qualities were responsible for his ruin.

Ekapada was a great and diligent teacher. But he was a hard taskmaster, too. He would not permit his students to relax at any point of time. His wife was in the family way. The babe in the womb of his wife questioned his father, "Father, how is it that you go on teaching the students without giving them any break for rest?" To this Ekapada replied, "Students should never be given free time, for an idle mind is a devil's workshop. It leads to many perversions." Furious at the impudence of his son, Ekapada cursed him, "You have the audacity to question my acts! May you be born as Ashtavakra (one with eight bends in the body)." Ashtavakra had to blame himself for this unfortunate situation because he questioned the propriety of the acts of his father without understanding the reasons behind them.

How to earn divine grace

King Shanthanu, father of Bhishma, wanted to marry Sathyavathi, daughter of Dasaraja. In order to fulfil the desire of his father, Bhishma approached Dasaraja and requested him to give Sathyavathi in marriage to his father. Dasaraja agreed on the condition that only the one born to Sathyavathi would be made the crown prince. Consequently, Bhishma took a vow that he would remain unmarried. He earned Divine grace by his devotion to his father.

Vinatha and Kadru were the two wives of sage Kashyap. While playing a game, they entered into a competition. The terms of the competition were that the loser and her son would serve the winner and her son for the rest of their lives. Kadru emerged victorious. As per the terms of the competition, Vinatha and her son served Kadru and her son.

One day, Kadru told Vinatha, "You are like my sister. I will make you free if you procure the amritha bhanda (vessel of nectar) from heaven." Unable to bear the sufferings of his mother, Garuda undertook this stupendous task and brought amritha bhanda from heaven, thus freeing himself and his mother from bondage. Pleased with the devotion of Garuda, Lord Vishnu showered

His grace on him by making him His vehicle.

What was the reason behind Garuda becoming the vehicle of Lord Vishnu? It was sathsankalpa (noble resolve) that earned him proximity to the Divine.

For every happening in this world, kala, karma, and karana (time, action, and cause) are essential. God acts after taking into consideration the three factors of kala, karma, and karana.

Such noble truths have been expounded in the ancient scriptures of Bharat. But alas! Modern students are not making any effort to understand them, let alone practice them.

Absolute faith is essential for God to manifest

Today we are celebrating the birthday of Lord Krishna. You attach importance to His body, but not to His teachings. You will be celebrating Krishna's birthday in true spirit only when you put His teachings into practice.

Mysterious are the ways of the Divine. It is difficult to comprehend how the Divine grace works. There are innumerable instances of God coming to the rescue of His devotees in times of need. Sant Kabir was a weaver by profession. One day he fell seriously ill and was unable to attend to his duties. The all-merciful Lord, in the form of Kabir, wove yarn and thus came to his rescue.

Similarly, God came in the form of a potter and helped Gora Kumbhar by making pots Himself, when he was in distress.

Sakkubai, an ardent devotee of Lord Panduranga, continuously chanted the Lord's name. One day, she could not perform her daily chores since she was running high temperature. Even under these circumstances, her husband and mother-in-law would not allow her to take rest. At this juncture, Lord Panduranga assumed the form of Sakkubai and performed all her duties.

It is indeed difficult to understand how, when, and where God would come to the rescue of His devotees. Absolute faith is essential for God to manifest.

Dasaratha had to send Rama to forest for fourteen years as a consequence of his promise to Kaikeyi. Though unused to any form of hardship, Sita had to endure the difficulties of forest life. But Lakshmana had no obligation to go through such an ordeal. Because of his intense devotion to Rama, he also followed Him like a shadow. He brought fruits, flowers, and tubers from the forest to serve Rama and Sita, and himself fasted. Every moment of his life, he spent in the service of Rama. He put both his body and mind in the service and worship of Rama as a sagunopasaka.

Bharata asked Rama to return to Ayodhya, but His efforts did not succeed since Rama refused to return. So, Bharata reconciled himself to returning, but stayed outside Ayodhya in Nandigrama. His body was in Nandigrama, but his mind was with Rama. Lakshmana worshipped Rama with body and mind, whereas Bharata's worship was purely mental since his mind was united with Rama. Since Bharata's worship was purely mental, he was a Nirgunopasaka.

Direct and indirect perception

In science, there are two modes of perception, direct and indirect (pratyaksha and paroksha). That which is directly perceived (conscious) is pratyaksha, while that which is indirectly perceived (subconscious) is paroksha. This difference between direct and indirect perception is similar to the relation between hypnosis and hypnotism.

What is hypnotism? A hypnotist has the ability to enter the consciousness of the object irrespective of distance or time. He can experience Divinity both with body and mind. The one who undergoes the experience with mind alone without the body is the hypnotised.

Lakshmana was well versed in this knowledge. The names of Rama and Lakshmana are inseparable. This happens naturally with no special effort as we always say RamaLakshmana. One hardly ever hears the combination

BharataRama. Though Bharata' s mind was one with Rama, his body was separated from Him by time and distance.

Hypnosis and hypnotism are not modern terms. These are found in the Vedas. Since people do not know these facts, they find new terms or new words for these concepts. Hypnotism is referred to in the sastras (scriptures) as ateendriya shakti (power beyond the senses). It means that one having this power can converse with one who is in deep sleep. Even the dead will come and converse with one having such power. Not only this, one can enter the mind of another sitting in front of him.

One with such powers can perceive a far away object. Hence, the term ateendriya. It is not the object of the senses, since it is beyond them. Our ancients possessed such powers. These powers are obtained by karma only. Therefore, all our actions should be pure and sacred. For this, purity of mind, heart, and thoughts is absolutely necessary. Only a person with pure body, mind, and intellect can be called a true human being.

Do not expect returns for your acts of service

There should be complete harmony in thoughts, words, and deeds of man. That is what we mean when we say, "The proper study of mankind is man." Axioms like "Work is Worship," and "Duty is God," are not of modern origin. These were the teachings of our ancient seers, though they used different terms for these.

Consider all activities as an offering to God and all work as God's work. Just as two wings are essential for a bird to soar high in the sky, and two wheels for a bicycle to move, prema (love) and seva (service) are essential for man to reach his destination. No benefit accrues from rendering service devoid of love. Do not expect any returns for your acts of service. The satisfaction that you derive from rendering service is itself a reward.

Be like Lakshmana

Today, many people are undertaking rural development activities. They come and tell Me, "Swami, we are doing grama seva (service to villagers)." For whose sake are you rendering service? Is it for My sake? No. You are serving for yourself. As long as you have the feeling that you are serving others, you are an egotistic person. It is not service in the true sense of the term, as long as there is the sense of ego in you.

You think that you are worshipping Me. It is a great mistake to think so. When the same Atma is present in everyone, who is the worshipper and who is worshipped? In the path of spirituality, it is a mistake to think, "I am your devotee, You are my guru." True wisdom lies in realising that you and I are one.

Krishna said to Arjuna: "Arjuna, you call yourself My devotee. When once you have surrendered to Me, then there is no difference between you and Me. So, there is no separate identity of devotee and God." "Ekatma darshanam jnanam (visualising the one Spirit in all is true wisdom)." Likewise, if someone were to criticise, you do not get disturbed. Remember that the same Atmic principle is present in both. There will be no room for misunderstanding if you realise this truth. Seeing unity in multiplicity is the principle of Brahma and viewing unity as diversity is bhrama (delusion). This delusion is the root cause for your suffering.

Embodiments of Love! First develop faith in yourself.

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 God. Where there is God, there is bliss.

True devotion lies in having faith and attaining bliss. If you have no faith, how can you have bliss? Many devotees ask Me, "Swami, I want happiness." Where is this happiness? Can you buy it in the market? Will any company supply you bliss? No. It is very much in you. You are not able to experience it since you do not have faith in yourself.

You do not have love for God. Love is within you, but you are diverting it toward the world, not toward God. Worldly love is like passing clouds. Develop the love that is unwavering. It neither comes nor goes, it is in you always. Have unflinching faith in its existence.

Question yourself, "Do I exist?" You get the reply, "Yes, I do exist." That is the true faith. Here is a flower, here is a handkerchief, here is a tumbler. The word 'is' denotes true faith. Have faith in your existence, "I am." That is true faith.

You do not need to enquire into the nature of God or to search for Him. Have total faith in Him. What is the use of living in Prasanthi Nilayam if your mind is constantly going around the market? Like Lakshmana, whose body and mind were both engaged in the service of Rama. Bharata was physically away from Rama; yet, his mind was always with Him. Consequently, Bharata resembled Rama in all respects. You might have seen in photographs of Rama's coronation that Rama and Bharata have the same blue complexion. Bharata's mind was totally centred on Rama. Because of such intense concentration, both became one.

Similar was the case of Lakshmana, who not only served Rama physically but also contemplated on Him day in and day out. Rama's love for Lakshmana was so intense that when Lakshmana fainted on the battlefield, Rama lamented, "O Lakshmana, I cannot live without you. I may get another mother like Kausalya, a wife like Sita, but not a brother like you." How can God lament! It was only a divine play enacted by Rama to show to the world the nobility and the greatness of Lakshmana. Such sacred love is like a powerful magnet. Such selfless, unattached love transcends action, space, time, cause, and effect.

People ask Me, "Swami, temples are built for Hanuman and Rama. Why has no one built a temple for Lakshmana?" I ask them, "You simpleton, is there a temple for Rama where Lakshmana is not there?" If you realise this fact, such a doubt will never arise.

Of what value is part-time devotion?

At the time of Krishnavatara, there were two sisters, Radha and Radhika. Radhika was a sagunopasaka and Radha, a nirgunopasaka. Radha constantly chanted the name of Krishna, while Radhika was engrossed in the physical form of Krishna. She was extremely sad because Krishna had gone away to Mathura. She gave up food and drink and said, "Krishna, in my heart I have been keeping Your lotus form fresh with my tears. Now even my tears have gone dry. How can I now preserve Your form in my heart? My heart, which is Your gift, I am now returning to You. What else is there that I can offer at Your feet? Accept my salutations and myself." She surrendered herself to Krishna.

Radha saw this. She had thought that nirgunopasana was superior to sagunopasana, but after seeing the total surrender of Radhika, she realised the greatness of sagunopasana. After this, she constantly meditated on the name and form of Krishna.

You must have heard this song of Tulsidas: "Nava Kanja Lochana Kanja Mukha Kara Kanja Pada." In this song, the hands feet, face, eyes, etc., of the Lord are all compared to the lotus flower. He prays for that lotus to stay in his heart forever. Both Radha and Radhika prayed to Krishna to dwell permanently in their heart.

Such intense devotion is rare these days. Today, people merely say, "Krishna, Krishna," as they go round or pass by a temple. Of what value is such part-time devotion? They are bhaktas (devotees) merely for name's sake.

You must strive to earn the great wealth of God's love. Only then will you enjoy the experience of unity. Sarvata Panipadam Tath Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tisthati (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, God permeates the entire universe).

Ramadas also had this experience of God's omnipresence. Thaneesha put him in jail, but he never gave up the name of Rama. "O Rama! When all is Your

form, how can I be separate from You?" Renounce trishna (desires), attain Krishna Devotees today have some form of divinity in their mind, but they perform rituals in a mechanical way without any consistency. All your charity and worship are of no significance to the Lord. Show your charity and wealth to the income tax department. God needs only your love. There is no tax on love. You may face any number of difficulties or hindrances. The Lord Himself may subject you to test. You should not waver because of these. All is for your good only. Do not grieve over any loss or exult over gain. Equal-mindedness in loss and gain is true sadhana.

Some sit in dhyana (meditation), but their minds are in the market or in the hair dressing shop. Is this dhyana or japa? The mind should be immersed in Krishna. Instead it is filled with trishna (desires). What is needed is Krishna, not trishna. Krishna will fulfil all your trishnas.

Dear Devotees! Mere chanting of the Lord's name is not enough. Offer your love to God. Love is not your property. In fact, it is the property of God. Surrender to God what is His. What is the use of a long life without this offering? You have no right to offer your love to anyone other than God. When you offer all your love to God, He will look after all your needs.

There is nothing that He cannot do in this world. In city or in hamlet, in forest or in sky, on the high peak or in the deep ocean, God is everywhere. He pervades space and time. All beings are His forms. Realise this truth, transform it into practice, and enjoy the bliss. This is true devotion. Human life attains true meaning only then.

Embodiments of Love! These days, wherever we go there is unrest, ego, and conflicts. You should develop love and share it with all relatives, friends, and even enemies. Then, everything will be enveloped in love. Therefore, live in love.

20. Truth emerges from Wisdom

Date: 13 September 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Jiva is Siva and Siva is Jiva; one who sees the Identity between the two is the realised one.

[Sanskrit sloka]

He who has understood the truth that Siva (God) and the Jiva (individual) are one and the same is the true Brahmajnani (one who has known the Brahman). Siva and Jiva are not different from each other, since the same divine Atmic principle is present in both. One who has realised this truth is a true human being. The objective of human life is to understand this truth.

One cannot be called a human being by his physical form alone. Human life is the noblest. Man must think how to lead his life in a befitting way. Man is called manava, meaning not new. But man has another name, Partha, which means Prithvi Puthra (son of Mother Earth). All the powers that are present in the earth are present in man also. None can visualise the powers that are latent in the earth. One can understand the presence of these powers by deep enquiry and investigation. These powers are infinite, unfathomable, and unrevealed. Man, since he is born of the earth, naturally has all these powers.

Perverted intellect ruins man

It is stated in the Mahabharata that the Pandavas spent twelve years in aranyavasa (exile) and one year in ajnathavasa (incognito), i.e. living amidst people without revealing their identity.

Likewise, though there are infinite powers in man, they are not revealed. These are known as ateeta shaktis (transcendental powers). These are

psychic in nature and have been termed so by scientists. Man is thus a repository of enormous energy of various kinds, viz. light energy, electric energy, radiation energy, and above all energy of the Self (Atmic Shakti). But for this energy, man cannot eat, drink, move, laugh, or do anything for that matter. Man, though blessed with such powers, is forgetting the latent divinity and is leading the life of an animal. The reason for this is the perversion of buddhi (intellect). Our ancient epics like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavata give many instances to illustrate this.

Krishna went to Hastinapur as an emissary to bring about a compromise between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Duryodhana, due to the perversion of his buddhi, did not pay heed to Krishna's counsel. Though he knew what dharma was, he did not put it into practice. What happened to him ultimately? He ruined himself.

Similar was the case with Ravana. Though he was one of great penance and wisdom, he did not pay heed to the good counsel of his wife, Mandodari, and the teachings of Narada and other saints and sages. Ultimately, he too ruined his life. The same can be said of Hiranyakasipu. He was a great scientist. Modern scientists could reach only the moon, but Hiranyakasipu could go even beyond the sun and the stars. Such a great scientist did not adhere to dharma and ultimately met his doom.

Vali, on being questioned by the sages as to why he banished his own brother, Sugriva, from the kingdom, gave a concocted version of the truth, magnifying Sugriva's mistake and concealing his own. Again, the reason was perversion of his buddhi.

In the Mahabharata, Amba put the entire blame of her predicament on Bhishma, ignoring her own folly, and developed hatred toward him. Similarly, Viswamitra developed enmity with Vasishta for no fault of the latter.

Modern society is not able to protect dharma

Great scientists also could not comprehend the reality and understand the

difference between truth and untruth due to lack of the power of discrimination. Today, modern man considers truth as untruth, dharma as adharma, and vice versa. Since ancient times, Bharat (India) has given utmost priority to sathya (truth), dharma (righteousness), and nyaya (justice). In spite of knowing what is truth and righteousness, modern man is not adhering to them due to the perversion of his buddhi (intellect). Modern society is not able to protect dharma and control injustice.

Not merely that, man is forgetting the truth and distorting the meaning of dharma itself. He gives various contradictory definitions of sathya and dharma. Does the fault lie with sathya and dharma? No. The mistake lies in the manner in which the buddhi is utilised. That is why we pray to God to illumine our intellect, as stated in the Gayathri Mantra. Sincere prayer earns divine grace. Ganapathi is the embodiment of buddhi (intellect) and jnana (wisdom). Truth emerges out of wisdom and ultimately leads to ananda (bliss). This is the teaching of Ganapathi. Where there is no truth, there can be no bliss. "Tri-kala badhyam sathyam (Truth is changeless in the three periods of time)." Dharma is also changeless in the three periods of time.

The injunction of the Vedas is: Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak the truth and follow dharma). But nobody pays heed to this dictum. Today, people misinterpret Truth as that which is expressed, seen, heard, and experienced by the senses. Similarly, dharma is also misinterpreted. This is in fact prakrita sathya and prakrita dharma (worldly truth and worldly dharma). This is related to the outward path (pravritti). The inward path (nivritti) is related to the fundamental truth and righteousness (sathya and dharma). But today no one seems to be taking cognisance of this, let alone practicing it. Vedokhilo dharma moolam. (The Veda is verily the basis of dharma).

God is the embodiment of sathya and dharma. So, whatever God says is sathya and whatever He does is dharma.

It is the primary duty of man to obey the command of the Lord. Disobeying the divine command amounts to transgressing the fundamental principles of sathya and dharma.

Truth is God. Today the world is in disarray because the principles of sathya and dharma are not scrupulously followed. Man feels proud of his medha shakti (intelligence). Greatness does not lie in merely possessing intelligence. It has to be converted into skill. Only then will there be balance in human life.

Man can acquire wisdom only when he converts his intelligence into skill. But due to the effect of Kali Age, man, instead of converting intelligence into skill, kills it. As a result, his buddhi (intellect) is perverted and there is imbalance in his life.

One should never disobey God's command

Under any circumstances, one should never disobey God's command. The consequences will be disastrous if one were to disobey the divine command.

Is it possible, oh man, to escape the consequences of your actions?
You may be a great scholar, worship the family deity or even go to the forest and
undertake severe penance;
Yet you are bound to face the consequences of your actions.
Whether you dip the container in a small lake
or a mighty ocean, the amount of water collected depends on the size of the
container;
you cannot expect more. Likewise, you get what you deserve. You may don
ochre robes and
turn the rosary innumerable times; Yet, you are bound to face the
consequences of your actions.
But, if you are the recipient of divine grace, you can overcome the effects of
any karma.
[Telugu Song]

Sunlight enables man to perform various actions. Yet, the sun remains unaffected by what man does. It is just a witness. Likewise, God is the eternal witness. He is unaffected by what happens around. Clouds, which owe their existence to the sun, cover the sun itself. But that does not in any way diminish the brilliance of the sun. Similarly, God does not stand to lose anything if man, who owes his existence to God, derides Him. Man will certainly reap the consequences of his actions; God is not affected by them.

Just as the clouds originate from the sun, likewise, manas (mind), buddhi (intellect) and chitta (subconscious mind) are formed out of the Atma. Mind is responsible for all suffering, and even rebirth. So, mind has to be diverted toward God in order to escape from the cycle of birth and death.

One can rewrite one's destiny with divine grace

One can overcome the evil effects of one's actions by focusing one's mind on God. Mountains of sin will vanish like mist by God's grace. For every action, there is bound to be a reaction. But divine grace can provide an escape from the consequences of one's karma.

In fact, one can rewrite one's own destiny if one gets divine grace, as was the case with Markandeya. He was given only sixteen years of life span. But he was unaware of this until the night before he turned sixteen. That night, he found his parents full of sorrow. On asking, he was told that his end had approached, and that was the cause of their sorrow. He went to the temple of Easwara, hugged the Sivalinga, and prayed intensely. At the appointed hour, Yama (God of Death) cast his noose around the neck of young Markandeya. Since he was hugging the Linga, the noose fell around the Linga also. Easwara manifested and remonstrated Yama, "How dare you cast the noose around Me?" He cursed Yama to death. Pleased with the devotion of Markandeya, He blessed him with the boon of immortality. This only drives home the point that through sincere prayer, you can earn divine grace, which helps you to attain everything. God is not separate from you. He is present in your body. Body is the temple of God.

Universe is divine creation

Newton wanted to know whether the creation had emerged on its own or whether an unseen force was governing it. He conducted extensive research for several years to know the truth. Ultimately, he gave up all the scientific experimentation and turned inward. Within a span of nine days, he realised that there a 'divine hand' was responsible for the entire creation, its sustenance, and its annihilation. Other scientists like Einstein, Schrödinger, etc., came to the same conclusion.

Many eminent modern scientists are also trying to find out the truth about the divine creative principle of the universe. They are not aware of the magnetic power and the electric power that are present in the human body, which is verily a small generator. The jataragni (digestive fire) is the source of heat energy in the body. Before partaking of food, you chant the sloka (verse):

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir Brahmagnou Brahmana Hutham Brahmaiva
Thena Ganthavyam Brahmakarma Samadhina.

Immediately, you get the reply from within:

Aham Vaishvanaro Bhoothva Praninam Dehamasritha

Pranapana Samayukta Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.

God, who is present in you in the form of Vaishvanara, digests the four types of food that you eat. Jataragni, like a generator, is responsible for the electric power in the body. Human body is a conglomeration of different powers - heat, light, sound, electricity, etc. Unfortunately, such divine powers of body are wasted in pursuit of worldly comforts and luxuries.

Do not crave luxuries but bear with patience whatever comes your way, because whatever happens in life is good for you. Never be disheartened when faced with difficulties or sufferings in life. Have firm faith in the power of the Atma. One who recognises the power of the Atma will not suffer.

Never be away from God's love

The panacea for all suffering is chanting God's name. Have the firm conviction that you are God. Never be under the mistaken notion that God is the master and you are His slave. You do not have a master; you are the master. Master the mind and be a mastermind. Never forget God's name. Never be away from God's love. Never leave truth and never forget dharma. With one-pointed concentration contemplate on God, nothing else matters in this world.

Many are under the illusion that they have achieved something great in life by amassing wealth, but they do not realise that they have to go empty handed when they leave this world. Do not get carried away by this illusion (bhranthi). Do not waste your life in this illusion. You should understand the difference between Brahma (God) and bhrama (illusion).

The principle of unity in diversity is Brahma, and viewing multiplicity in unity is bhrama.

Nations are many, but earth is one; Stars are many, but sky is one; Jewels are many, but gold is one; Cows are many, but milk is one.

Controlling the mind is true sadhana

This is how you should visualise unity in diversity. Try to understand the significance of the names Ganapathi, Vinayaka, and Vigneshwara. You are Ganapathi yourself. This morning, you all heard Susheela sing a song, "Adu gaduguna gudi undhi (there is temple at each and every step)." Our body itself is a temple of God. "Deho devalaya proktho jeevo Deva sanathana (body is the temple and the indweller is God)." The jeevanajyothi (light of life) that is present in the body is Paramajyoti (the Supreme Light) itself. This light is not subject to change and cannot be extinguished.

The body is bound to perish one day or the other. The body may die, but not

the mind. Such a mind has to be controlled. That is the true sadhana (spiritual exercise). You will not have any troubles if you offer your mind to God. Mind is very fickle. It is not steady even for a minute. So, it should be ever engaged in work. Only then can it be brought under control.

What work should you assign to the mind? Let the mind be a watchman at the gate of your nostrils. Let it observe what is going in and what is coming out. So is inhaled and Ham is exhaled. So symbolises that which is good (Divinity) and Ham stands for that which is bad (ego). Then the mind will understand that the Divinity has to be taken in and ego has to be given up. Mind is like a mad monkey. Unless it is kept busy, it will go according to its whims and fancies. The only way to keep a monkey busy is to make it go up and down a pole repeatedly. Likewise, the mind also has to be kept busy by contemplating on Soham Mantra.

Who is Ganapathi? He is the Adhipathi (master) of all ganas - five senses, five elements, and five life sheaths. The human body consists of five koshas (sheaths): annamaya kosha (food sheath), pranamaya kosha (life sheath), manomaya kosha (mind sheath), vijnanamaya kosha (wisdom sheath), and anandamaya kosha (bliss sheath). Man progresses only up to manomaya kosha. He is unable to go up to the sheaths of wisdom and bliss. Since Ganapathi is the master of all five koshas, one has to take refuge in Him in order to reach the state of bliss.

Shun bad company; seek good company

The elephant is known for its intelligence. Ganapathi is depicted as having an elephant's head since He is very intelligent. Ganapathi is also known as Vinayaka, meaning one without a nayaka (master). He is the master of siddhi (spiritual attainments) and buddhi (intellect). So, one has to pray to Vinayaka in order to acquire siddhi and buddhi. You have to make proper use of your intelligence in order to earn the grace of Vinayaka.

Shun bad company. Seek good company. Only then will your life be redeemed. Very often, I remind the students that by joining bad company,

you become slaves. You should be masters, not slaves. You all know what happened to Kaikeyi on listening to the words of Manthara. No one loved Rama more than Kaikeyi. But when her intelligence was clouded, she believed the words of the wicked Manthara. To one with perverted intellect, truth appears as untruth and vice versa. Due to the effect of bad company, the mind gets polluted. So, right from the tender age, "Tyaja durjana samsargam, bhaja sadhu samagamam, kuru punyamahoratram, smara nithyamanithyatham" (run away from bad company, join good company, undertake righteous actions day and night, and enquire into that which is permanent and that which is ephemeral). One should not develop unnecessary contacts. Your interaction with others should be limited to basic courtesies like, "Hello, how are you?" Never disobey the command of God Embodiments of Love! You are under the false impression that today is the birthday of Vinayaka. He had neither birth nor death. He has neither beginning nor end. He is the eternal witness.

This life is temporary. You should suffuse it with spirituality. All the festivals of Bharat have deep inner meaning. They are highly sacred. Festivals are not just meant for preparing delicious items and consuming them. They are meant to remind us of Divinity. On festival days you decorate your houses with buntings and green leaves, and you also wear new clothes, discarding the old ones. Likewise you should give up your old rotten habits and cultivate new and sacred ideas. You should step into a new life with sacred qualities.

Never disobey the command of God. If you do so, you will ruin yourself, like Ravana and Hiranyakasipu. They developed hatred toward God and ultimately met their doom. Never doubt the existence of God. He is everywhere. Ek Prabhu Ke Anek Nam (one God has many names). Never forget Him. Contemplate on Him incessantly. That is the main objective of human life.

What do you have to offer to Vinayaka on this day of Vinayaka Chaturthi? Today people spend a lot of money in offering various fruits and preparations to God. All these offerings are made only as a ritual. Ultimately, people themselves consume them! No benefit accrues from making these offerings. Patram, pushpam, phalam, toyam - these are the four things that you should

offer to God. Here patram (leaf) means body. This body may wither away at any moment. So, never develop attachment towards the body; instead offer it to God. Pushpam (flower) means hridaya (heart), the flower that will never fade. Mind can be compared to phalam (fruit), and toyam stands for tears of joy.

All these should be offered to God. This is the offering that God expects. I hope that you will put into practice what has been said and sanctify your lives. I bless you all and bring My Discourse to a close.

21. Install padukas in your heart

Date: 01 October 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Anapekshah Suchir Dhakshah Udhaseeno Gathavyathah
Sarvarambha Parichyagee Yomath Bhaktah Samepriyah

Embodiments of Love! This sloka (verse) mentions the qualities of a true devotee as taught by Lord Krishna in the Dwapara Yuga. The first quality is anapekshah (desirelessness). A devotee should not have any desires. How is it possible for man, being endowed with body, senses, mind, and intellect, to be in a state of desirelessness? He is bound to have some desire or other. On the one hand, there are desires pertaining to the senses that confer momentary joy. On the other hand, there is a desire that transcends the senses. Today man is filled with various desires.

Then what is the way to lead a desire-free life? Lord Krishna has shown the way for this. He said, "Son, there is nothing wrong in having desires, but all of them must be pleasing to God." "Sarva karma Bhagavad preetyartham (let all your actions be pleasing to God)." Ways to attain the state of desirelessness You should put into practice the eternal principles based on Truth and dedicate all your activities to God. Lead your life without the feeling of 'mine and thine' and offer everything to God. Only then can you attain the state of desirelessness. Today, man has both worldly desires as well as desires that lead to the inward path, but the number of desires that lead to the inward path pale in comparison to the number of worldly desires in him.

The second quality is suchi (cleanliness). Is it bahir suchi (outward cleanliness) or anthar suchi (inner cleanliness)? One has to develop both. Physical cleanliness alone is not sufficient; inner cleanliness is essential. Bharatiyas (Indians) are aware of this: If sambar is prepared in an uncoated

vessel, it gets spoilt. Likewise, if the vessel of your heart is not coated with love, all that you do becomes unsacred. Sanctify your heart by filling it with divine love. Never entertain any unsacred or wicked feelings.

The third quality of a true devotee is determination. You should be a dhaksha (one of determination) in order to attain divine grace. Once you have taken refuge in God, never lose faith, come what may. Do not get disheartened by trials and tribulations that come your way. Be equal-minded in times of both pleasure and pain. That is true determination.

The fourth quality is udaseenatha (total detachment). You should lead a life of total detachment without entertaining the feeling of 'I' and 'mine'.

The fifth quality is gathavyathaha. A true devotee is one who lives in the present without brooding over the past and worrying about the future. Past is past, forget the past. Do not worry about the future for the future is uncertain. So live in the present, it is not ordinary present. It is omnipresent. The past can be compared to a tree; similarly, the future. The present is the seed. This seed is a result of the past and the basis for the future. Therefore, one should live in the present with firm determination. Only then will success be ensured. It is only a waste of time brooding over the past since it cannot be retrieved no remedial action can be initiated. Likewise, there is no point in worrying about the future since it is not in your control. So live in the present and discharge your duties with determination.

The sixth quality is sarvarambha parithyagee. One should give up all desires and ego. Ego leads to attachment, hatred, jealousy, aggrandizement, and other vices. It is ego that is responsible for the downfall of man. One with ego cannot accomplish even a small task. An egotistic person is not respected even by his near and dear ones. Ego is the worst of all the enemies of man. Develop humility in order to get rid of ego. No amount of spiritual practices will help a man of ego in attaining tranquility and bliss.

One who possesses the above mentioned qualities is a true devotee. Only such a person is near and dear to the Lord (Yomath bhaktah samepriyaha).

You should cultivate these qualities to be a deserving recipient of God's love,

Live up to the name "manava"

All your outward actions and behavior should be a true reflection of the inward thoughts and feelings. When you say namaskaram (salutations), say so wholeheartedly. Do not give room for karam (bitter feelings) in your head. Ahamkaram (ego) is full of 'Karam'. Ahamkaram leads to aggrandizement, pomp, and show. Some people give wide publicity to each and every small act of theirs, be it worship or a spiritual practice. God wants only achar (practice), not prachar (publicity). Strive to put into practice whatever you preach and propagate. According to the Upanishads, the word manava means one with self respect. Live up to your name.

"Anudvegakaram vakyam, sathyam priya hitham Cha Yath." He is a true man who speaks the truth in a palatable way. The culture of Bharat (India) says, Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak the truth and follow righteousness). It also says Sathyam Brooyath, Priyam Brooyath, Na Brooyath Sathyamapriyam (Speak the truth, speak in a pleasing manner, do not speak the truth that is unpalatable). Man attains sanctity and fulfillment in life only when he puts these teachings into practice.

As you think so you become. If you entertain bestial thoughts, you become a beast yourself. On the other hand, divine thoughts will transform you into a divine personality. On this basis, the Upanishads have declared "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi (the one who constantly contemplates on Brahman becomes Brahman)." God is the only true friend Due to effect of the Kali Age, there is no trace of true love in man. Human heart is polluted. People, in particular the so-called friends, pretend to love, but in reality they do not have true love in their hearts. God is the only true friend. He is always with you, in you, around you, above you, below you, protecting, guiding, and guarding you. But alas! You are distancing yourself from your true friend and reposing faith in so-called friends, who may turn into foes at any point of time. This is bhrama (delusion). What is the difference between bhrama and Brahma? Viewing multiplicity in unity is bhrama and the unity in multiplicity is Brahma.

One should visualize unity in multiplicity. The Vedas say,

Sahanavavathu sahanau bhunakthu Sahaveeryam karavavahai
Thejasvinavadheethamasthu mavidhvishavahai

What does it mean? Let us grow together, move together; let us grow in intelligence, living together; let us live in harmony without any conflict. Vedokhilo dharmamoolam, the Veda is the basis for all dharma. Man is misusing his time and energy, disregarding the eternal teachings of the Vedas.

Practice is important, not publicity

Embodiments of love ! You may acquire worldly comforts and conveniences and earn worldly name and fame. But that is not all in all. All these are passing clouds. Do not get carried away by them. Follow the teachings of the Vedas and attain Divinity.

Practice is important, not publicity. Practice at least one of the innumerable teachings of the Vedas and share the bliss derived therefrom with one and all. This is your bounden duty. Human life is highly valuable. So, man should lead an ideal, noble and sacred life. "Sathyanasthi paro dharmaha (there is no other dharma greater than truth)." Build the mansion of your life on the foundation of truth.

The safety of the mansion depends on the strength of the foundation. Never utter a lie under any circumstances. It is an unpardonable sin to indulge in untruth. This body is gifted by God. Do not fritter away this golden opportunity by misusing it. "Deho devalayaproktho jeevo Deva sanathanaha (body is the temple and the indweller is God)." What is the difference between man and God? Vyashti (individual) is man and Samashti (collective

form) is God. Man should progress from the state of vyashti to Samashti. Only then can he attain Divinity. "Easavasyamidam jagat (God pervades the entire universe)." "Easwara sarvabhoothanam (God is present in all beings)." "Ekam sath vipra bahudhavadanthi (there is only one God, but the pundits call Him by different names)." In order to understand these Vedic dicta one needs to cultivate noble qualities.

Do not degenerate to the level of animal

It is a disgrace to lead the life of an animal, having been born as a human being.

Ahara nidhra bhaya maithunani Samanya metath pashubirnaranam. Jnanam naranam adhikam visheshah Jnanena shuunyah pashubirsamanah."

Food, sleep, fear and procreation are common to man and animals.

Only man is endowed with wisdom; bereft of wisdom man is equal to an animal.

Animals also eat, sleep and enjoy sensual pleasures. If you do the same, how can you be called a human being? You are also an animal! The only difference lies in the number of legs, i.e. you are a dvipadha pashuvu (two legged animal) and that is a chatuspadha pashuvu (four legged animal). Having been born as human being, you should strive to become Pashupathi (God). Do not degenerate to the level of pashu (animal).

Divinity stands for the principle of oneness. You are getting deluded by differences in names and forms and are wasting your time not making any effort to understand the principle of unity. Time is God. Time wasted is life wasted. Time once lost cannot be recovered. So never waste even a moment. Cultivate divine thoughts, undertake noble deeds and lead a sacred life. Have the welfare of society, not your self-interest, uppermost in your mind. You may have self-interest, but it should be within limit. There is no one in this world who has given up self-interest altogether. But one should not waste

one's life wholly in pursuit of selfishness and self-interest Make use of your education to serve society Embodiments of love! There are many students, educationists, intellectuals, and scholars in this country but how many of them are working for the nation's progress? Only a few! Aurobindo Ghosh was working as a teacher in Calcutta. Once he told his students, "Children, you are very lucky to have been born in this sacred land. Youth is very precious. Make proper use of this golden age. You are born and brought up in society. You acquire all your knowledge and skills from society. Make use of your education to serve and support society. Your education is a mere waste if society does not benefit by it."

A foolish person boasts of high education
And intelligence, yet does not know himself.
What is the use of all the education he has acquired
If man cannot give up his evil qualities?
All the worldly education will only lead him
To vain argumentation, not total wisdom.
It cannot help him to escape
From the clutches of death.
So, man should acquire that knowledge
Which will make him immortal. [Telugu Poem]

What a shame it is if education is used solely to earn money without serving society. Today, people adopt corrupt practices and device crooked ways to earn money. Just as the earth revolves around the sun, man goes around money. Is this the purpose of human life? No. Money is not important. "Money comes and goes. Morality comes and grows." So cultivate morality. Educate yourself to serve society and set an ideal to the rest of the world. You receive your education from society. In turn, dedicate it for the welfare of society.

God accepts anything offered with pure love
What do you have to offer God? Our ancients used to pray:

O Lord, I offer you the heart,
which you have gifted me.

What else can I offer at your lotus feet? Please accept my prayerful salutations:

[Telugu Poem]

The heart that God has given you must be given back to Him as it is - pure and sacred. This is the offering that God expects. God accepts whatever you offer to Him provided you do it with pure love.

In the Krishna Tulabhara episode, Rukmini could weigh Krishna with a small tulasi leaf because her heart was filled with love. "O Lord, if it were to be true that you are pleased with any offering made with pure love, be it a leaf (patram), a flower (pushpam), a fruit (phalam) or water (toyam), may this tulasi leaf balance your weight." So saying, Rukmini placed a tulasi leaf in the weighing pan, which balanced Krishna's weight. Here patram means body, pushpam means heart, phalam, is mind, and toyam is tears of joy. All these should be offered to God. This is the offering that God wants from you.

You do not need to spend money or strain yourself in order to make this offering. It is rather strange that you find it difficult to make such a simple offering. You are reading many sacred texts, learning many slokas (verses) by heart, but what is the use? You are not able to get rid of your shoka (misery). The only way to overcome misery is offering yourself to God.

Criticising others is the worst of sins

Sage Valmiki, after having composed the epic Ramayana, convened a congregation of saints and sages and wanted to know if there was any one who would propagate the story of Rama to the people. The saints and sages expressed their inability to do so, since they lacked the physical strength on account of their advanced age.

Lava and Kusa, who were sitting at a distance and watching the proceedings, came forward and expressed their willingness to undertake the task of spreading Rama's story far and wide. They took thambura in one hand, wore garlands of rudraksha around their necks, smeared vibhuti on their foreheads, and went to each and every street singing the glory of Lord Rama. They sang, "Oh people, listen to the sacred story of Lord Rama. Let your life be His Story." But modern youth feel shy to spread the message of the Lord. Not merely do they feel shy to participate in bhajans and to even smear vibhuti on their foreheads, some of them smear vibhuti only at home and wipe it off as soon as they step out on the street. They do not feel ashamed to do things, which they are not supposed to. Why should any one feel ashamed to participate in sacred activities and chant the divine name?

Some people feel ashamed to spread the divine glory, but do not hesitate to talk ill of others and ridicule them. They do not understand why the tongue is gifted. It is gifted to chant the divine name.

Criticizing others is the worst of the sins. Never criticize

anybody for everyone is essentially divine. You all know that in the present day politics each one accuses and abuses the other. It is nothing but the result of accrued sins from past lives.

Embodiments of love! Never indulge in slander. Sanctify your lives by undertaking sacred activities. This is the true purpose of human life. Human body is gifted to serve others. The story of Rama is suffused with great ideals and noble values. Yesterday the idols of Sita, Rama, Lakshmana, and Hanuman were installed. Everyone should follow their ideals.

Even Ravana acknowledged the nobility of Rama before he breathed his last. He gave a message to the people in his last moments, "Oh people, I lost my sons, brothers, my entire clan and kingdom as I could not control my desires. Do not become slaves to the senses, like me. Follow the ideal of Rama and sanctify your lives." Ramayana is replete with inner significance. Once, the mother of Lord Rama, Kausalya, the mother of Anjaneya, and the mother of

Agasthya met. Kausalya questioned them as to who they were.

Anjaneya's mother introduced herself saying, "I am the mother of the one who jumped across the ocean and went to Lanka in search of Mother Sita." Agasthya's mother said, "I am the mother of the one who drank the entire ocean in one gulp." On hearing this Kausalya laughed and said to them, "Your sons could accomplish such stupendous feats only because they chanted the name of my son, Rama." Exactly at that moment Rama entered the scene and told Kausalya, "Mother, Hanuman and Agasthya could accomplish those feats due to their sincerity and devotion. Hanuman is one of peace (shanthudu), virtue (gunavanthudu), and strength (balavanthudu). Agasthya is no less." So if you chant the Divine name you can achieve anything.

The epic Ramayana is replete with inner significance. All the ideals propagated by the Ramayana should be properly understood and put into practice by one and all. Only then will human life find fulfillment. The name and form of Rama is highly sacred. Ramayathithi Ramaha, (Rama is one who pleases everyone). So, all should emulate Him. Rama is a synonym for Atma. Hence the term Atmarama. So in essence, all are the embodiments of Rama principle.

Sarvathah Panipadham That Sarvathokshi Shiromukham Sarvathah Shruthimalloke Sarvamavrithya Thishtthathi.

Offer yourself to God; that is the goal of your life

God is all-pervasive. It is a great mistake to forget the allpervasive God and get immersed in mundane, ephemeral pleasures. You may not get this human birth again. So work for the redemption of your life by chanting the divine name. Offer yourself to God. That is the goal of your life.

Embodiments of love!

You all have come from different places for worshipping the padukas and deriving the bliss therefrom. It is indeed a good act. It is not sufficient if you

merely worship the padukas. Concentrate on them. Without concentration what is the point in worshipping padukas?

Here is a glass of water. Your thirst is quenched only when you drink water. Likewise you will be blissful only when you install the padukas in your heart. Share the bliss with one and all.

God is the embodiment of love. So you can be a recipient of His grace only when you develop love for God.

Detachment, faith, and love - these are the pillars on which peace rests. Of these, faith is crucial. For without it, sadhana is an empty rite. Detachment alone can make sadhana effective, and love leads quickly to God. Faith feeds the agony of separation from God; detachment canalises it along the path of God; and love lights the way. God will grant you what you need and deserve; there is no reason to ask, no reason to grumble. Be content, be grateful whatever happens, whenever it happens. Nothing can happen against His Will.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22. Follow Divine Commands

Date: 14 October 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

Though the Vedas were classified so that people could find them easy to study and experience, yet they were ignored.

Selfishness has become the motivating force for all activities of man today. His mind is filled with all types of desires, and violence has become the way of life. He is wasting his life, not knowing its purpose. He is straying away from the path of dharma (right action) and prema (love). Desires of man are crossing all limits and are ultimately leading him to misery. Man is in a state of confusion because he is unable to comprehend the true objective of life.

I have been giving discourses for the past sixty years, but you are not making any effort to put into practice even a few of the teachings. Students are like gold. Their hearts are suffused with sacred feelings. Their behaviour should also be in accordance with their feelings. Man will be ruined if his behaviour is not on the right lines. Not only students, but teachers and administrators are also not coming up to expectations. The situation is the same in the case of samithis and Organisations.

No doubt, devotees have immense love for Swami, but the same love is not expressed in the form of gratitude and sadhana (spiritual practice). It is rather surprising, even to Me, that for the past few days I did not feel like speaking at all. Since there was no marked change in you, I thought there was no point in continuing to speak to you. Hence, I decided to confine Myself to a few words.

What do you expect Me to speak? I have already taught all that ought to be taught. There is nothing more to convey. I am pained to see that all My teachings have gone waste and all My sweet words have become tasteless to you.

Today, ego is on the rise in devotees. They are becoming more and more

ostentatious. They pose as great persons before the world, thereby setting a wrong ideal to others. The knowledge acquired and the experience gained by them are not being put to any good use. They are not able to recognise that their ego will lead them to their downfall. They are not following the ideals set before them by Swami and are also not grateful for the love and grace showered on them by Me.

Understand profound truths of the Vedas

Since ancient times, the Vedas have been teaching profound truths. They form the basis for a peaceful and prosperous society. The term 'Veda' refers to 'wisdom', 'discrimination', and 'being'. There are many people who chant the Vedas from dawn to dusk, but no one is trying to understand the utility and significance of the Vedas. What is the benefit derived by chanting them? Many people attend Veda classes to study the Vedas, but they do so only for the sake of money, name and fame.

Sage Vyasa thought that it was well nigh impossible for man to study the infinite Vedas within his limited life-span. Therefore, he classified the Vedas into four broad categories: Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharvana Veda. Yajur Veda was further divided into Krishna Yajur Veda and Shukla Yajur Veda. The vastness of the subject of the Vedas is conveyed by their several other names, such as Sruti, Trayee, Chandas, Swadhyaya, Nigama, Agama, etc.

Each name is pregnant with a deep inner significance. Each Veda consists of three parts: Mantras, Brahmanas, and Upanishads, including Aranyakas. The Mantras are the hymns in praise of gods. The Brahmanas deal with the performance of sacrifices - yajnas and the yagas. Aranyakas consist of the Mantras chanted and practiced by the Vanaprasthas in the forest.

No one is giving due importance to the Vedas

Though the Vedas were classified so that people could find them easy to study and experience, they were ignored. Unfortunately, no one is giving due

importance to the Vedas, which are very sacred and are replete with profound truths. As a result, Indian culture is on the decline.

People from other countries understand the value of the Vedas better than the Indians. The Japanese and the Germans studied the Atharvana Veda deeply with the result that they could excel in the manufacture of arms and ammunition. But, unfortunately, the Bharatiyas (Indians) are not trying to comprehend the greatness and the grandeur of the Vedas. They are ruining their lives in the pursuit of materialistic desires. They undertake even spiritual practices only to fulfil their worldly ambitions. They can nourish this sacred culture only when they develop steady faith in Divinity. They are taking to pravritti marga (outward path) and forgetting the nivritti marga (inward path).

Wrong concept of education

Modern man wants everything to be done in a trice without any hard work on his part. He is not prepared to put in any effort or bear any hardship. Today, people are not prepared to accept truth; they are carried away by untruth. This is similar to the situation wherein people refuse to take milk delivered at their doorstep but are prepared to traverse long distances to consume illicit liquor.

What is the meaning of education? Education is meant to know oneself, not to amass wealth. In spite of his education, a mean-minded person cannot give up his wicked qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation but not to total wisdom. If the elders themselves take to the wrong path, the young are likely to follow in their footsteps.

Modern man thinks he is highly educated, but in fact he is totally ignorant. Since he is unable to understand the significance of education, he is using it only to earn his living. He is going through various scriptures and joining various spiritual organisations but is not making any effort to put into practice even a few sacred teachings. There is no sin worse than this. It is all right if a mistake is committed unknowingly, but committing a mistake deliberately amounts to great sin. Though man is fully aware of what is good and what is

bad, he is not able to practice good and give up evil. This is why he is unable to progress in the field of spirituality.

Since ancient times, Veda Purusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna

has been associated with a profound spiritual significance. Yajna means sacrifice. In this yajna, you have to sacrifice your bad thoughts, wicked feelings, and evil tendencies and cultivate noble qualities. Before the commencement of the yajna, fire is produced by keeping one piece of wood over the other and churning vigorously. The piece of wood which is below can be compared to the mother and the above to the father. The resultant fire, the son, burns the parents themselves. You have to understand the mystery and inner significance of such concepts of the Vedas.

First deserve, then desire

Students!

Many of you are feeling bad, thinking that Swami is angry with you and is not talking to you. I do not have even a trace of anger or dislike toward the students or the elders. I consider students as My very life. In such a case, how can I be angry with them? But I do not wish to talk to anybody because I do not want My words to be devalued. I feel it is better not to speak than to speak and lose the value of My words.

There is no point in feeling bad that Swami is not talking to you. Make efforts to attain the deservedness, so that Swami would talk to you. I have taught you on innumerable occasions, but have you made any sincere attempt to practice even one of My teachings? When you do not give up evil tendencies like hatred, jealousy, and pomposity, how do you expect Swami to talk to you? Hatred is the greatest enemy of man. Ostentation gives rise to ego, which will in turn ruin humanness.

Love is the common property of one and all. You can attain happiness and peace only when you develop love. But, today, love is on the decline and

hatred is on the rise. We find hatred college and inmates of the same ashram. Slander is the worst of sins What is an ashram? It is a place where there is no shrama (hardship). But, you are making this ashram into a place of burden! You have no right to stay in the ashram if you do not obey Swami's command and understand His love and Divinity.

No benefit accrues to you if you merely stay here without putting Swami's teachings into practice. It is better that I do not speak to you if you do not practise what I say. In fact, overseas devotees have better understanding of Swami's love. They go into ecstasy if Swami talks to them even once. On the other hand, you do not understand the value of love and grace showered on you day in and day out. You merely waste your time by indulging in mean actions like slander and backbiting.

Slander is the worst of sins. Do not criticise or abuse others. The Upanishads declare that man is highly valuable. But he is losing his value, respect, and honour by his wrong acts. Man alone is to be blamed for this.

Here is an example. You are all worshipping Me. But, the Atma in Me is the same as the Atma in you. So, your worshipping Me amounts to the Atma worshipping itself. If an individual indulges in criticism, he does so because he considers himself separate from others, not understanding the oneness of the Atma.

The Atma does not criticise itself. If you want to be near and dear to Swami, develop the principle of love. All the mantras you chant and the worship you do will go waste if you give scope to evil qualities like hatred, jealousy, pomp, and show.

Wisdom of Gargi

Embodiments of Love! Love everybody just as you love Swami, because Swami is present in one and all. There is the same divinity present in all beings. Easwara sarva bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings). One who realises this truth can achieve anything in life.

Once, a great yajna (sacrifice) was performed by king Janaka. Great scholars, both men and women like Yajnavalkya, Gargi and Narada, were present on this occasion. The king told the assembly to ask any question they wanted. Gargi enquired if she, being a woman, was permitted to ask questions. Janaka was wisdom incarnate. He said, "Advaita darshanam jnanam (knowledge of non-duality is true wisdom). There is no difference between man and woman in the domain of true wisdom. Hence anyone is free to ask." Then Gargi addressed Yajnavalkya, "You are preparing to leave with cows given to you by the king. You may do so after answering my questions. My first question is: what is the basis of all the objects in this universe?" All the scholars present were astonished that a woman could dare to put such a bold question to Yajnavalkya. "Akasa (sky) is the basis for all that exists," he replied.

She then asked, "What is that which is above the sky, pervades the earth, and extends below the earth?" "The substance that pervades all these is akasa only," replied Yajnavalkya.

In this manner, the assembly of great scholars went on discussing the ultimate source of akasa. It did not merely mean what was above our head. Gargi explained the uniqueness of the sound principle by defining akasa as Sabda Brahman. It was also explained that for everything in this universe akasa was the basis. And Surya (the sun) was the basis for akasa. The source of the sun was prakriti (nature). In this way, Gargi participated in this discussion. All were amazed at the discrimination and wisdom of Gargi.

Worldly relationships are temporary

People generally think that Narada loves quarrel.

He got up and asked Gargi, "Respected lady, what is your life's ambition?"

"My only desire is to attain Divinity," she replied.

"It is impossible," replied Narada.

"Why?" asked Gargi.

Narada replied, "Moksha (liberation) and the attainment of Divinity are not ordained for unmarried women." Gargi said, "The only difference is in the body and the mind, and not in the Atma" Narada said, "The moment you are married, you will attain moksha" Gargi said, "That is impossible, for I have surrendered myself entirely to God already. Such being the case, do I have no possibility of attaining moksha?" As this dispute was going on, Janaka intervened and said, "Mother, you can get married. What are you going to lose?" She thought for a while and considered the contents of all the Upanishads and Sastras. She then said, "All right then, I shall have a one-day marriage." Even Narada was perplexed as to what this one-day marriage meant. Gargi said, "A marriage is a marriage, be it for a day or a hundred years. So, I shall have a one-day marriage; who is ready to accept this?" One of the sages, named Sringi, agreed. Tadeva Lagnam, Sudinam Tadeva, Tarabalam Chandrabalam Tadeva, Vidyabalam Daivabalam Tadeva - as the mantra was being chanted, and the sage tied the marital knot, Gargi immediately broke it and promptly attained liberation. Thus, Gargi attained her goal without transgressing her vows or any of the Sastric injunctions.

Janaka said, "Gargi, your entire life is devoted to the fulfillment of the Divine Will. Then, how can moksha elude you? You are destined for moksha. You are indeed a great scholar. Today, I shall get myself crowned by your hands." Gargi explained the dharma of the householder in the court of Janaka and said that such worldly relationships were temporary and not permanent.

Get rid of ego; cultivate humility

Countless such illustrious women were born in this sacred land of Bharat. It is unfortunate that people born in this sacred land are going to such a low state. Ego and attachment are the cause for this state of affairs. Whatever I say is for your good and not for My sake. Many of you do not realise this. Arrogance of one's own level of knowledge is the main cause for this state of ignorance.

Educated people should have humility. Education confers humility, humility

confers deservedness, deserving one obtains wealth, and when wealth is used to practice dharma, one attains true happiness. You can thus attain the goal of your life here and hereafter through true education.

Students! First get rid of your ego. Cultivate humility. Respect your elders. Speak sweet words. When you practice these virtues, Swami will always be with you and will always guide you. You do not know, but many marvelous things are going to happen in the near future. You will be delighted to see, hear, and experience these divine events. Do not miss this sacred opportunity that is before you. If you lose it, you will never get it again. Once you obtain it, you will never lose it. Keep these sacred thoughts in your heart, respect your parents, please your elders, and make your life meaningful. This is My blessing to you all. With this I blessing, I bring My discourse to a close.

God is all-pervading, and yet, we have some scientists who assert, "We have searched all outer space, we have looked for Him on the moon; no, He is nowhere to be found. He does not exist." They do not know what to seek and where; still, they have the impudence to assert that it is not found. Is God an occupant of an identifiable body or form? Has He a habitation and dwelling that is traditionally His? God is all this and more; He is in all this and beyond. He is the inner motivator of the very scientist who "denies" Him!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

23. Cultivate Discipline and Love

Date: 15 October 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

If money is lost, one need not be worried about it, for one can earn it again.
If a friend is lost, one can have another. If wife is lost, one can marry again.
If one loses one's piece of land, one can purchase another.

All these can be regained,

But if body is lost, one cannot get it back.

[Sanskrit sloka]

In Latin language, human body is associated with the terms 'sacredness' and 'purity'. The Upanishads proclaim that human life is highly respectable. Man is put to grief because he misuses his body, not knowing its value and sacredness. You can understand the significance of the human body in your daily life only when you enquire into the mystery of God's creation. Human body inhales the life supporting oxygen and exhales the poisonous carbon dioxide. It partakes of delicious fruit (phala) and excretes the foul smelling fecal matter (mala). Likewise, man should accept that which is sacred and give up all that is unsacred. Due to the impact of Kali Age, he is accepting bad and giving up good. Unable to realize his innate divinity, man is taking to paths that are contradictory to the principles of sathya and dharma (truth and right action).

Time is the most important factor in human life

All flowers that blossom may not get transformed into fruits. All fruits may not become ripe. Once a fruit is ripe, it falls down immediately. Similar is the case with human life too, but man fails to understand the temporal nature of the human body. He feels proud of his education and achievements and gets deluded by the material comforts, which confer only mean and momentary

pleasures. He puts his most valuable body to misuse in pursuit of worldly pleasures.

Time is the most important factor in human life. Days, months, and years are respectively like second hand, minute hand, and hour hand of a clock. All the three hands are constantly on the move. No one knows when the appointed hour arrives.

The whole world is permeated with magnetic energy. Green pasture attracts the cow. Flower attracts the honeybee. Mother attracts the child. You are unable to understand the magnitude of this attraction power and are taking it for granted. There is power of attraction between human beings, birds, animals, and even insects. The world cannot exist without magnetic power.

For a long period of time, scientists were under the mistaken notion that magnetic power is the same as atomic power. Only of late have they recognised the difference between the two. This magnetic power is present in the human body from top to toe.

There are innumerable unseen powers present in man. They are known as transcendental powers (atheeta shakti). Scientists know that energy, which is infinite and unfathomable, can be neither created nor destroyed. Since time immemorial, man has been investigating the nature of this energy. They have come to the conclusion that the whole world is based on psychotronic power, which is also termed bioplasmic power. This is present in every cell and every vein of the human body. Human mind cannot comprehend the nature of this power.

This power is also called ajnatha Sshakti, that which is not known. All these powers are not visible to the naked eye. It was this power that enabled mother Sita to lift the mighty Siva Dhanush (bow of Siva) with her little finger. It was then that king Janaka decided to give his daughter in marriage to one who was equally powerful. Sage Viswamitra, who had understood the intimate relationship that exists between Divinity and transcendental power, took Lord Rama to Mithilapura and solemnised the marriage.

Whatever appears as matter also becomes energy

Very often, scientists refer to the two terms - matter and energy - but truly only energy exists. Whatever appears as matter also becomes energy in due course of time. None can describe the glory and grandeur of this transcendental power. "Yatho vacho nivarthanthe aprapya manasa saha (this energy is beyond the comprehension of the mind and description by words)." This transcends the powers of body, mind, and intellect. Who has created this power? Under whose control does this power lie? In whose hands does this power exist? Who can manifest these powers and prove their existence? Manifestation of these powers can bring about a divine transformation in the hearts of men. Swami wants that such changes should take place from now onward. It is impossible to say when, where, and how this power will manifest itself. Merely listening to the glory of this power may not evoke interest in you. You will understand only when you experience it. This is the super-human divine power. Very soon you are going to witness it.

I do not trouble anyone and none can trouble Me

You may have read the news item in a newspaper this morning that Swami is not speaking because of students. It is sheer nuisance. It was specifically mentioned, very incorrectly, that Bangalore students are responsible for Swami desisting from speaking. By publishing such a wrong news item, the image of Bangalore students has been tarnished.

No student has ever troubled Swami in any way. In fact they have been pining for Swami incessantly. The relation between me and students is heart to heart, and prompted by selfless love. Such wrong information even flashed in the internet, so much so that Goldstein, from America, being greatly agitated, contacted Prasanthi Nilayam to find out the Truth. He was very much relieved to know the truth. Do not believe in such false propaganda. I do not trouble anyone and none can trouble Me.

All our students are good. Such good students should not be put to disrepute.

Unknowingly, they may commit a few mistakes, but no one has ever troubled Swami. No one should come between the noble heart of Swami and the sacred minds of the students. Some of the elders sitting in the verandah are indulging in gossip. It is finding its way into the internet. Anyone found talking in the verandah should be sent out immediately, whosoever it may be.

All those who give misleading information about what Swami tells them in the interview room should also be thrown out. I will never call such people for interview again.

Only those who observe silence are good people. Silence fosters purity. Therefore observe silence at all times. It is a waste of time if you carry tales about others. What have you come here for? Vain gossip causes harm to many. So refrain from indulging in it.

Do not become a slave to technology

Ignorance is on the rise with the progress of science. Truly speaking, science has not matured. Man has become senseless. All the trials and tribulations faced in this world are due to the so-called development in science and technology. It is not technology but it is 'tricknology'. Do not become a slave to such technology. Uphold truth and righteousness. Cultivate love and experience divinity.

Students! Do not harbor any undesirable thoughts. Do not get perturbed by such misinformation campaigns. Swami is always with you. He has been showering His love and grace on you. You too have immense love for Swami. Attain Swami through love. You cannot attain Swami through any other path but love.

Swami has nothing to do with internet. Not only now, even in the future also you should not indulge in such wrong activities. This 'disease' has its roots in cities and is spreading like wild fire into villages, polluting the village environment. Villages are the epitome of peace and love. Do not spoil the village atmosphere by imitating the city culture. Bliss will prevail in the world

only when you develop peace and love. Do not give scope for ill feelings and worthless talk. You can even reprimand the elders who indulge in mean talk. Tell them to behave in a manner that befits their status as elders in the society. They should prove themselves as elders in conduct and not by age. Self-respect leads to self-satisfaction, which will in turn leads to self-realisation. It is a shame that people who come here for self-realisation indulge in something contrary.

Our relationship is only heart-to-heart and love-to-love, nothing else. Swami is love personified. Swami gives importance to love and nothing else. Do not give any value to mean and meaningless talk. Past is past. From now onward, receive the divine love and divine energy emanating from Me and experience the bliss derived therefrom.

24. Human Values and Service

Date: 16 October 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

O Man, why do you go hither and thither in search of God, when He is present in your hridaya itself? Serve all and be a recipient of His love. There is no greater sadhana than this, No greater bliss than this.

[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love! Human life is the most sacred in the entire creation of God. Daivam manusha rupena (God incarnates in the form of human being). Humanness is pure, unsullied, and beyond attributes. Such a sacred human life is being polluted with evil desires and thus birth itself is polluted. Janthoonam narajanma durlabham (human birth is the rarest and the noblest). It was God who created everything in the universe, right from the microcosm to macrocosm. In that case, why is it that He has attached utmost importance to human birth alone? Only man has the capacity to accomplish things that no other living being can.

Why has God created man? One should delve into the inner significance of this. Man's life will find fulfillment only when he understands the purpose of human birth. Human body is given to serve God, not to meet selfish needs. Sareera madhyam khalu dharma sadhanam (the purpose of human body is to practice dharma). God has gifted human body to serve fellow men, but man has forgotten his primary duty of service to others.

In childhood, man is immersed in playing and frolicking, In youth, he succumbs to temptations of cupid.

In middle age, he spends all his time in amassing wealth. In old age, instead

of contemplating on God,
He leads a life of discontentment. Unable to give up his bad habits, Not
having the strength and interest To follow the path of devotion,
He gets caught up in the quagmire of action and reaction and ultimately
meets his doom.

[Telugu Poem]

This is not the way one should fritter away human life, which God has gifted with lots of love and hope. Under all circumstances, one should be ready to utilize the slightest opportunity that comes his way to serve others. Human life should be suffused with idealism, but today's man is leading the life of a beast. He does not spare a thought even for a moment to enquire what the purpose of life is.

O man, think for a while whether
You have really attained happiness, Forgetting God and struggling
incessantly From dawn to dusk to eke out a livelihood.

[Telugu Poem]

For whose sake are you living? Understand this and you will know the purpose of life. Why does God incarnate? He incarnates to lead man on the right path.

Materialisation of 100-year-old gold coin

In 1899, hundred years ago, 110 carat gold was in existence. It was extremely pure and effulgent. Gradually it has lost its value and effulgence on account of its association with different metals like silver, copper, and brass. Likewise, man at the time of birth is essentially pure and sacred, but as he grows up, he loses his human values due to his excessive desires and association with kith

and kin. Such is the sacredness of human birth that even Gods would salute him.

Today, human values have become extinct. Man should continue to be as pure as he was at the time of birth. (At this juncture Swami materialised a gold coin) It was minted in the year 1899. Exactly 100 years have passed since then. Just as gold has lost its purity over a period of time, man too has lost his human values. Excessive desires are responsible for the decline in human values.

Having been born as a human being, you should foster human values. This morning, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh met Swami. He too was of the opinion that the country is facing hardships due to the absence of human values. Therefore, he vowed that he would propagate the Sathya Sai Human Values in society. Each and everyone, be it a student, a devotee, or a spiritual aspirant, should practice human values and lead an ideal life.

The Bhagavad Gita reveals that the universe, which can be compared to a gigantic tree, has its origin in the seed of divinity. Different nations are like different branches of a tree. All the living creatures are like fruits borne by the tree. In every species and every creature, there is the seed of divinity. In this context, Lord Krishna said, Beejam mam sarva bhutanam (I am the seed in all the living beings). Nations may vary names and forms may be different, but the life principle remains the same.

Lord Krishna declared: "Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathanah (all are the sparks of My Divinity)." But man is not prepared to believe this truth. Today man believes reports of events occurring in distant lands like America and Japan, though he does not see them, but he does not believe in the Vedic declaration that God comes down in human form. This is predominantly due to the fact that he is not treading along the path of truth. God will be pleased only when man finds fulfillment in life by practicing human values.

You reap what you sow

None can escape the consequences of their actions. O man, do not build castles in the air. It is not possible to sow a particular type of seed and reap a different fruit. You reap what you sow. At the time of birth you are born with an invisible garland, made up of the consequences of your actions, be it good or bad.

It is the duty of each and every individual to participate in social service activities, be it in the village or city. The epic Ramayana has stressed the need for service at the individual, family, and society levels. Do not be satisfied by merely serving your parents. Your life will be sanctified only when you serve society also. When you obey the divine command and serve Him, not only your life but also those of your parents and relations will be redeemed. Before your birth, where is the child-parent relationship; before marriage, where is the question of wife and husband relationship? All the worldly relations are like passing clouds, only God is with you always. You will be wasting your life, if you do not dedicate yourselves to the service of mankind. Body is gifted to serve the creator and the creation. Service to man is service to God. Render service to society with the feeling that God is present in one and all.

Your education will be in vain if it is not utilized for the service of the society. O man, why do you feel proud of your education, which is but a mere waste if you do not worship God and serve society? Worldly education cannot confer divine grace unless it is dedicated for the welfare of society. The education you have received from society must be dedicated to the service of society.

Offer service and receive the love of God

True service has twin benefits: it makes you blissful and gives happiness to others. What is the use of education if it does not confer joy on others and bliss on you?

Service is the life breath of the Sathya Sai Organization. Remember the truth that you are born to serve society. Make no distinction whatsoever in rendering service. Serve your parents, brothers, friends, and even beggars

alike. Divine grace will flow in abundance only when you serve with the spirit of humility and equality.

Service is the easiest path to attain divine grace. Offer service and receive the love of God. Love and service are like two wings by which man can soar to higher levels of consciousness. If you have the spirit of love and service, divine grace will follow you like a shadow wherever you may be, be it in the forest or in the sky, village or city, river or mountain cliff.

God has created man in His own image so that his conduct should be in consonance with His command. You should not cause harm to anyone, for God exists in all. Always speak with a smile on your lips. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.

Be proud that you are born in this sacred land

Embodiments of Love!

Understand the pristine purity of Bharat (India). The Himalayan mountains form the boundary in the northern part. Hima is that which is pure; achala is that which is steady. So, Himachala stands for purity and steadiness. The three rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswathi symbolise the paths of work, worship, and wisdom, respectively. The sacred scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads make the hearts of Bharatiyas (Indians) blossom forth with their teachings. Bha means light and effulgence. So Bharat is the country that radiates light to the rest of the world.

No country is more sacred than Bharat. Words are inadequate to describe the glory of Bharat and the fortune of those who are born in this sacred land. Having been born as Bharatiyas, there can be no greater misfortune than to lament that you are poor, weak, and helpless. You need not feel sorry if you have not acquired education or money. Be proud that you are born in this sacred land. To be called a Bharatiya is in itself a great qualification. The country is your mother; the culture, your father. You will become orphans if you forsake your motherland and its culture. He is a living corpse who does

not have love for his motherland and its culture. Rama declared, Janani janma bhoomishcha swargadapi gareeyasi (there is no heaven greater than one's own mother and motherland).

Students!

What is the use of acquiring various degrees like BA and MBA if you lead the life of a black sheep? You are Bharatiyas; that is your greatest qualification. Live up to it. Who is a 'Hindu'? H stands for Humility, I for Individuality, N for Nationality, D for Divinity and U for Unity. He is a true Hindu who is endowed with these five sacred qualities. It is rather surprising to Me that people, having been born in this sacred land, crave to go abroad in search of greener pastures. One should serve one's own motherland.

Do no forget the sacred Indian culture

Once there was a Vedic scholar who was hesitant to send his son abroad, fearing that he might forsake Indian culture and take to Western culture. On the insistence of his son, he reluctantly agreed to send him abroad only on the condition that he would not give up the study of the Vedas. He extracted a promise from his son that he would continue the study of the Vedas and would contemplate on God always. But the son failed to keep up his word. Once he reached abroad, he forgot all the Vedas he studied and got absorbed in western culture. He would always lie to his father whenever called, saying that he was thinking of God and studying the Vedas. Four years passed, but he was in no mood to return home. On several occasions, the father asked him to come back, but the son did not pay heed. The father, as a last resort, sent a telegram that his mother was seriously ill. Immediately, the son rushed home and was received at the airport by his father, who took him to the temple of the Goddess en route home, to offer their obeisance. The father told the son to offer salutations to the Goddess, but the son did not know what it meant as he had forgotten Indian culture altogether. As they entered the temple, the son greeted the Goddess, "Hello madam, how are you?" The father became furious with his son and asked him to get out.

This is how people change their lifestyle once they go abroad, forgetting the sacred Bharatiya culture.

For the past 60 years, the overseas devotees have been requesting Swami to come to their respective countries. On many occasions, they brought special planes. Even now they have chalked out a program for Swami to make a world tour. But I have no such desires. That which is not present in Bharat is not present anywhere else.

What is there to see in a foreign land! Instead, try to have the vision of your own Self. Stop questioning others, "who are you?" Ask yourself, "who am I?" You will certainly get the right answer.

Today many students are going abroad to amass riches. Even some of the parents are encouraging their children to go abroad. I do not say that you should not go abroad. If you want to see foreign lands, you can always do so. But wherever you are, uphold your culture. You should crave divine love, not money.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Students Participate in service activities and give joy to your fellowmen. This is the essence of Indian culture. Keeping this sacred culture in view, serve your motherland. Do not give scope for mean desires. If you lead the sacred life of a true Bharatiya, you can redeem not only your life but also the lives of your kith and kin. Fill your heart with pure feelings and try to experience the ultimate bliss, Brahmananda. Tomorrow I shall teach you more about Brahmananda.

25. Let life be fruitful and meaningful

Date: 17 October 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

Brahmanandam Paramasukhadam Kevalam Jnanarnurthim
Dvandvatheetham Gaganasadrusam Tathwamasyadhi Lakshyam
Ekam Nithyam Vimalam Achalam Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam
Bhavatheetham Trigunarahitham Sadgurum

Embodiments of Love!

Man should cultivate noble qualities in order to understand the secrets and the inner meanings of the Vedas. The terms used in the Vedas transcend the barriers of time and space.

Consider the word *Brahmanandam*. It means eternal bliss. Such a word cannot be understood by comparison with the joy derived from materialistic pleasures (*lokananda*). Brahma is derived from the root word *brihat*, meaning vastness. Brahmanandam is that which is immutable. It is the true and infinite bliss. It can also be termed as *Advaitananda*, meaning the bliss that results from the experience of oneness. It can also be described as *Nirgunananda* and *Nirakarananda* (bliss that transcends form and attributes).

Paramasukhadam means supreme happiness. It has nothing to do with the worldly happiness and sensual pleasures. It is identical with the experience of the eternal bliss.

Kevalam means that which transcends the limitations of time, space, and circumstances.

Jnanamurthim means one of wisdom. Here, jnana refers to experience of

oneness. It transcends body, mind, and intellect.

Advaita darshanam jnanam
(experience of non-duality is true wisdom)

How can man comprehend this incomparable wisdom? The Vedas contain many such words suffused with sacred inner meaning. Only Divinity, which is attributeless, ancient, eternal, ever new, pure, and unsullied, can explain the inner meanings of the Vedic principles.

Dvandvatheetham refers to that which transcends all dualities such as happiness and sorrow, good and bad, merit and sin, etc.

Trigunarahitham refers to that which transcends the three attributes: *sathwa* (serenity, purity), *rajas* (passion), and *thamas* (dullness, lethargy). Attributes are associated with form. So, the formless One has no attributes.

The Vedas contain four Mahavakyas: Prajnanam Brahma (knowledge is Brahman), Ayamatma Brahma (This Atma is Brahman), Tath Thwam Asi (That Thou Art) and Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman). The attributeless principle transcends even these four declarations.

Ekam nithyam refers to that which is eternal and without a second. The Vedas proclaim

Ekam eva adviteeyam Brahma
(Divinity is one without a second)

Om ithyekaksharam Brahma

(the single syllable Om is Brahman)

Vimalam achalam refers to that which is pure and steady. In this universe, the celestial bodies such as the sun, the moon, and the planets are constantly on the move. Modern students are aware of this - the cinema reel moves rapidly at the rate of 16 films per second, but the rate at which mind moves cannot be estimated. Such a wavering mind cannot comprehend Divinity, which is steady, changeless, and attributeless, is the embodiment of supreme bliss and happiness. That is the reason the ancient sages and seers used to pray, "Salutations to the One who is the embodiment of supreme happiness." The happiness related to the body and mind is no happiness at all. Inward (*nivritti*) happiness is true happiness.

Only Divinity can confer the eternal bliss

It is extremely difficult to understand the divine principle. Faith is very essential to experience divinity.

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 Divinity.
Where there is Divinity, there is bliss.
So, only Divinity can confer the eternal bliss.

Worldly happiness is momentary. In this context, Adi Sankara said,

Ma kuru dhana jana yauvana garyam,
harathi nimeshath kalah sarvam
(do not be proud of youth, money, and progeny.)

They are but momentary).

Worldly happiness is delusive and is related to the five elements and five senses. It corresponds to the outward (*pravritti*) path.

Human body is made up of five sheaths: *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya*, and *anandamaya koshas*. This body is annamaya kosha (food sheath). It is the pranamaya kosha (life sheath) that makes the body move. Beyond the pranamaya kosha, there exists manomaya kosha (mind sheath).

Man is able to investigate only these three sheaths; he is not able to comprehend vijnanamaya (wisdom sheath) and anandamaya koshas (bliss sheath), the reason being that man is bound by the senses.

The senses cannot understand ultimate Truth

It is said,

buddhi grahyam atheendriyam
the senses cannot understand the ultimate Truth.

However intelligent one may be, one cannot understand the Truth unless one treads along the inward path. The same body exists in all three states: waking, dream, and deep sleep, but what you see in one state cannot be seen in the other, because they correspond to the outward path. You have to give up the outward path and take to inward path to understand the Truth.

How Swami drove away the diseases

When this body was seven years old, dreadful and contagious diseases like cholera and plague were rampant in this tiny hamlet of Puttaparthi. Fear-

stricken, the parents would not allow their children to go out of the house. But the children, out of their love for Me, would come to Me without even telling their parents. All those children were of the age group of six to eight.

One day, nearly 12 boys gathered around Me and said in a anxious tone "Raju, we came to know that cholera and plague are rampant in our village. It seems they are dangerous and fatal. What would be our fate?"

I told them, "The body has to perish one day or the other, whatever may be the precautions you take. So, do not be afraid of death. Contemplate on God and take care that the diseases do not afflict you."

The boys asked Me as which form of God they should contemplate on. They were all very innocent. In those days this was a very small village with a population of 106. They had no idea as to which form of God they should worship.

I told them to light a lamp, place it in the bazar at 6 o' clock in the evening, and do bhajans. They did not know what bhajans to sing. Then I composed a few bhajans for them.

I told them, "We need not search for God outside. He is within us. Let us go around the village chanting the name of Ranga, donning ochre robes and anklets, playing the cymbals in our hands, and getting rid of the evil qualities of anger and desire."

In those days, after 5 o'clock in the evening, no one dared to go beyond the Sathyamma temple, because they considered it to be far off from the village and believed that the area beyond the temple limits was haunted.

I infused confidence in them, saying there are no ghosts or devils and advised them to drive away the diseases of cholera and plague by chanting the name of God. We wore anklets and walked up to the riverbed of Chithravathi playing the cymbals and singing bhajans. It was the divine name that eradicated diseases of cholera and plague for good within a short span of

three days.

The parents brought the children to Me and expressed their gratitude for having saved them from the epidemic. They said, "Raju, we are indebted to You for having instilled courage and confidence in our children. We don't want them to attend school, instead they will come to You. Kindly impart the education necessary for their welfare."

Everyday at 6 o' clock in the evening, they would assemble at My residence, after having their dinner, for tuition. They used to address Me as "tuition master". Their parents wanted to offer 3 paise per month as guru dakshina, which I flatly refused. The children used to come to Me every evening to learn numeric tables and alphabets. Taking this as a pretext, I used to impart value-oriented education also. I used to advice them to keep away from bad company and not to indulge in criticism and slander. Cultivate good habits and good qualities. Respect your parents and obey their commands. Since then, there was marked improvement in their behavior and outlook.

Swami's skills in composing bhajans

On moonlit nights, we used to go to the Chithravathi River at 6 o'clock in the evening and return only at 11 in the night. Few elders also would accompany us. They used to pass time by playing games like *kabaddi*, but the children were not interested in joining them. In spite of My repeated entreaties, they would not participate in any of these pastimes. They were more interested in bhajans and being around Me. They would request Me to lead bhajans. Thus we used to spend our time in Chithravathi singing bhajans.

The children used to plead with Me to compose new bhajans and tunes. They used to extol My composing capabilities. I used to ask them to express their desires, if any, but not praise Me.

One day a pharmacist by name Kotte Subbanna came to Puttaparthi from Kamalapuram. He had heard a great deal about My composing capabilities and had come to request Me to write a song that would serve as an

advertisement for his new medicine. He came to Subbamma and enquired about Me.

She told him, "I know Raju very well. He is the only good boy in the entire village. He is one of good character, behavior and conduct. Not merely that, He imparts good teachings to others."

One day, Subbamma invited Kotte Subbanna for lunch. During the lunch, he expressed doubts regarding My composing skills. He said it was difficult for him to believe that a tiny tot like Me could write good poetry that would sell his new medicine in the market. Consequently, I sent him away saying, better that he goes to some person whose composing skills he had faith in.

I had immense love for the children. Keshanna, Ranganna, Subbanna, and Ramanna were among the children whom I used to take to the riverbed every evening. Words are inadequate to describe their innocence, purity and love for Me. A seven year-old boy used to request Me to lie down for a while keeping My head on his lap saying, I looked very tired and needed some rest. Seeing this other children also wanted to have the privilege of keeping My head on their laps.

Then they thought of a plan so that all would get an equal chance. It was decided that each boy would take turns to keep My head on his lap for a count of one to fifty. They missed no opportunity to serve Me and I used to satisfy all of them.

Swami writes a poem for advertising medicine

One day, Kotte Subbanna came to Me again and said, "Raju, all these children are ready to obey your command. They all sing well and have sweet voice. Please write a few songs to advertise my new medicine and ask these children to go around the village singing them. I am prepared to pay remuneration for this."

I told him, "I do not like this business of give and take. These children also do

not approve of this. Anyway tell Me exactly what your medicine is. I will compose a song accordingly."

He explained that the name of the medicine was Bala Bhaskara and that it could cure many types of ailments. I composed a beautiful song in Telugu on the efficacy of the medicine:

O children, come here, a new medicine,
Bala Bhaskara, has arrived in the market.
It is a wonderful remedy for various ailments like Stomach ache, indigestion,
malnutrition,
and swelling of legs and hands.
It is available in the shop of Kotte Subbanna.
It is a very good tonic
prepared by Pandit Sri Gopalacharya.

Kotte Subbanna was very much pleased with the poem and got it written in big sheets of paper for advertisement. As his luck would have it, I was taken to Kamalapuram for studying 5th and 6th classes. Kotte Subbanna made maximum use of My stay in Kamalapuram for the advertisement of his medicines.

Anjenya stops Swami's pradakshina of the temple

Right from early days I have been a source of inspiration for the young children. I would exhort them to desist from hurting others and discharge their duties sincerely. During the month of Magha, I used to take the children to the temple of Anjaneya at 4 o'clock in the morning. Some of the children were so young that they would not get up at that early hour. So, I would carry them to the nearby pond, give them a bath, and take them to the temple. I would sit at the temple, while the children would do pradakshina

(circumambulation).

One day they insisted that I too should join them in circumambulating the temple. I finally yielded to their pressure and started circumambulating the temple.

Believe it or not, Anjaneya himself came and stopped Me from going round the temple saying, "O Lord! It is I who should circumambulate you. You should not do this."

But the children mistook Anjaneya for an ordinary monkey. I told them that Anjaneya himself came and would not allow Me to circumambulate the temple.

After this incident, there was a great transformation in the hearts of the children. They went around the village telling people what they witnessed at the Anjaneya temple. This news reached Karnam Subbamma also.

Next day, she invited Me to her house saying, "Raju, today I have prepared dosas, you should come and partake of them." In those days food items like idli and dosas were considered to be rich man's food. I told Subbamma that it is not My nature to eat alone leaving so many other children. Then Subbamma prepared dosas for all the children.

The need for sathwic food

The villagers had lot of reverence for Me. It is because of Sri Sathya Sai Baba that the people of Puttaparthi started thinking of God for the first time in their lives. It gradually spread to the other villages, too. I used to exhort the villagers to refrain from partaking of non-vegetarian food, consuming liquor, and smoking. I used to stress on the need for sathwic food.

During the festival of Ekadasi, it was the practice to hold bullock cart races on the riverbed of Chithravathi. They used to whip the bullocks to make them run faster. I would tell the children to insist upon their fathers to stop

whipping the bullocks. Not only now, even in those days I taught the principle of nonviolence.

Cockfights were quite common in villages those days. They used to tie small knives to the legs of cocks and make them fight with each other till one of them died. In the process, the other cock would get injured badly. I told them that one should have competition in doing good deeds, not in such cruel acts.

One who always does good will never be put to disrepute

One day the father of this body, Pedda Venkama Raju, chided Me for interfering in the affairs of the village. He said that the elders knew better and I should not cross My limits. I told him that I could not tolerate killing or ill-treating animals.

Since he could not convince Me, he directed the mother of this body to advise Me. At the time of serving food, she would tell Me, "Sathya, you should not do things that would displease your father. If you do not listen to him, you will earn a bad name in the village." I argued with her saying I was doing only good and was not bothered about what others said. I emphasized that one who always does good will never be put to disrepute. Kondama Raju, the grandfather of this physical body, also supported My argument. He called the villagers and told them that what I was doing was good for the village. He too advised them to refrain from violence and gambling. He cautioned them that lack of unity would lead to unrest in the village. Because of this kind of teachings, some people developed hatred toward Me.

I had to go to Bukkapatnam by 7 a.m. to attend the school. Teachers were very affectionate toward Me. Every teacher would first ask as he entered the classroom, "Has Raju come?" Do you realize what I was like in those days? Ours was a poor family. Like children of these days, I did not have dozens of sets of dresses. I just had one pair of shirt and shorts. As soon as I returned from school I would take off My clothes,

wash them and put them up to dry and wear a towel round My waist. This way

I would make-do with one pair of dress for a whole year.

Peace is My nature; love is My very nature

When questions were put to Me at school, I would always answer well. Most other students were not good at answering questions. My fellow classmates were quite grown up - in fact, some of them were almost 25 years of age and most of them would be wearing dhotis. I was the youngest in the class.

One day, when I answered a question well, Mahboob Khan asked Me to slap the other dull students. I would have to climb on to the desk to reach their cheeks. I used to touch them gently on their cheeks.

The teacher then chided Me, "Have I asked you to apply turmeric on their faces? I will show how!" Saying this, he gave a few hard slaps.

As I was returning to Puttaparthi, some of the students threw Me down on the sands of the river and dragged me along by my legs. They tore off My shirt and threw Me into the slush. All through this torture I remained calm.

Peace is My nature.

Love is My very nature.

Peace is the form of Swami.

Bliss is My resolve.

After reaching the Hanuman temple I washed My clothes and put them on again. Students may well imagine My state then. If there is a tear in My shirt, there was not even a safety pin available to hold the cloth together. Nor had I any money to buy it. I had no desire to request anyone also. I do not ask for anything from anybody. This resolve I have been upholding from that day to this day.

I went to Sathyamma temple and took out a thorn from a cactus and used it as a pin to mend the tear on my shirt. If one remains steadfast in his true resolve, anything can be achieved. Once, Subbamma told Me, "Raju, you are becoming weak. Eat well and grow strong." My friends would bring everything prepared in their house for Me. But I used to tell them, "See, in your houses meat or fish is cooked and eaten. Please don't bring anything from such houses." This way, I brought down non-vegetarianism in Puttaparthi. In the same manner I had prevented cruelty to animals in the form of cockfights and cart races and also prevented the gambling habit.

We protect truth and truth protects us

Once, some people inimical to Me set fire to the room I was sleeping in. Some 10 children of the age of 6-9 years were sleeping outside in the verandah. The miscreants had locked My room from outside and set fire to the roof. The children were shouting loudly, "Raju! Raju!" I peeped out through the small window smilingly and said, "Don't be afraid.

Dharma eva hato hanti, dharmo rakshati rakshitah
(Righteousness, when destroyed, destroys; righteousness when protected, protects).

We protect truth and truth protects us. Have firm faith in this precept.

The children closed their eyes and chanted "Raju! Raju!" as if it were a mantra. Since the roof was made of hay, there was a big conflagration. Suddenly there was a cloudburst, and the fire was totally put out. The downpour was just over that small hut and nowhere else.

The joy of the children was indescribable. "Raju, Raju... What a great miracle?" They were shouting, "We cannot live without you." I called them in and gave them some guavas and bananas. They asked Me, wherefrom I got

these fruits. I told then, "Why do you bother? Eat what is given." Whether it is a mansion or a wayside shelter what does it matter, it is enough if you get sleep. Likewise, it is enough if your stomach is full.

Subbamma's love for Swami

Subbamma came to know of the episode next day. Subbamma was a great soul. Swami was her very life. She set afoot a detailed search to find the culprits. They were caught. She ordered that they should be banished from the village. The entire property of the village belonged to her. She was very wealthy. All lands belonged to her. So she ordered them to get out of her lands.

Then I caught hold of her hands. I told her, "Please don't harm them because of Me. Knowingly or unknowingly, they have committed a mistake. Please forgive them. Please don't drive them away."

When she told them this, all those children came to Swami and carried Him over their shoulders. Subbanna, Ramanna, etc. were very proud people. They carried Me on their shoulders saying, "You must have been some great person in your earlier birth. Otherwise you cannot have such nobleness in you. Because of you, gradually this village is going to attain great fame"

Subbamma said, "Don't mistake Him for a small boy. His power is like a lightning strike, how can you understand His true nature?" From that day, she did not allow Me to go out of her house. I stayed in her house and went to school from there itself. She was a great lady. She was sixty years old then. She was always looking for Me, asking, "Is Raju there? Is Raju there?" She would sleep only after seeing Me safe. She was trying to protect Me from the wicked people in the village.

Attempt on Swami's life by poisoning food

One day, a brahmin lady came. She requested Subbamma to send Raju to her house for taking snacks in her house. Subbamma was not very happy at the

proposition. She was suspicious and thought that there was some evil intention behind the invitation. She refused and told Me, "Raju don't go anywhere without my consent."

"Subbamma! Why do you want to thwart her desire?"

She replied, "There is some wicked purpose behind her invitation." But I persisted and said, "I must fulfil her request."

I went there. She had made some vadas. They were poisoned. I ate them. Within five minutes My entire blood stream had turned blue. Subbamma came to know of this and came running looking for Me. When she found Me, I told her, "Don't worry, what they wanted, they have done. I can look after Myself." I asked Subbamma to give Me a tumbler of water with her own hands. As soon as I took that water, the blueness vanished.

Subbamma's anger had reached its limits. She said, "Such women will ruin the reputation of Puttaparthi. There is no room for such people in this village. Only righteous and good natured people should live here."

She called the mothers of Swami's companions and told them, "These children are not yours. They are all mine. They should be with Raju all the time. They should spend every moment of their life with Raju." Till recently they were alive. You all may know Bukkapatnam Sathyanarayana, he was one of them and is still with us here. He was My classmate in the 6th class. All these children would come to Swami. It is hard to describe their unsullied affection, devotion and attachment to Swami. The Kali Yuga has poisoned the minds of children.

Those days, when Swami stretched Himself to sleep, there was competition between them to take His head on their laps. They would say, "Raju, since you slept on my lap, there is no pain or distress in my body and there is some kind of joy filling me." I wonder if the children of today will have the same sentiments.

I ask for nothing; I only give and give

Children's minds are now filled with unrighteous feelings.

Yad bhavam tad bhavati
(as the state of mind, so is the state of person).

Children of those days were very pure and innocent. Swami resolved then to spread these qualities to the villagers for their own good. Mere bhajan or chanting "Rama, Govinda" is not great.

Cultivate good habits. One should develop exemplary qualities and earn a good name. Swami is happy when students acquire the reputation of good character. The children's behavior should be good right from the start. That is why I say,

"Start early, drive slowly and reach safely."

If you develop sacred habits from early age you grow into an exemplary human.

Even today, those who were with Me are there as shining examples in the villages. When Swami is returning from Bangalore, all along the way they offer their salutations, saying "Swami! Swami!" with great joy. Those who have followed Me by car know how these people bring pot-fulls of water and wash the roads. They say, "Swami, you have brought water to us. We have to offer it back to You only."

If I just ask them, "how are you?" they are transported with bliss.

It is for this purpose of transformation that I have not accumulated any money, not a paisa. I have no property worth even a paisa. My entire wealth is My students. I ask for nothing. I only give and give. There is no limit to Swami's giving. The devotees must be made happy by giving something. Swami's sole concern is the welfare of His devotees. No one needs worry about My welfare. My welfare is in My hands. Therefore, if one leads his life without departing from Truth and Righteousness, life will be fruitful and meaningful.

Calming the mental agitation that surges like waves, leveling the swirls and whirls of likes, dislikes, love, hate, sorrow, joy, hope, and despair, santhi (peace) is earned and maintained without disturbance. Santhi is of the nature of the Atman. The Atman is imperishable. It does not die, like the body and mind. It is universal, it is subtle, and its very nature is knowledge. So, santhi also partakes of these characteristics.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

26. Devotion - the supreme yagna

Date: 19 October 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

Like a stream of water that flows down from the hills,
Courage emerges from the heart of a person who trusts in God
O man, how do you expect to attain Divinity without
understanding and experiencing the principle of love,
Which is the very form of God?
[Telugu Poem]

Since time immemorial, in this sacred land of Bharat (India), people experienced bliss in following the Vedic traditions and performing rituals and sacrifices. In the Vedic tradition, four types of worship have been prescribed. They are: Sathyavathi, Angavathi, Anyavathi and Nidhanavathi.

Sathyavathi proclaims that Divinity pervades the entire cosmos, just as sweetness is present in every drop of syrup and butter in every drop of milk. The sages of yore had the vision of Divinity in all the beings and in all the forms. Just as the screen is the basis for the pictures projected on it, Divinity is the fundamental basis for the entire creation but is itself unnoticed. The screen permeates all the pictures projected on it; likewise, Divinity pervades the entire creation.

God is the embodiment of truth

Hence the Sathyavathi mode of worship is based on the omnipresence of Divinity. It demonstrates unity in diversity. It echoes the Vedic dictum: Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanthi (God is one, but scholars refer to Him by many names).

God is the embodiment of truth. That is why the ancient rishis (sages) extolled him as Sathya Swarupa. Trikalabadhyam Sathyam (Truth is changeless in all the three periods of time). Such truth shines forth in everybody as love. When you fill your heart with love, you will become love personified.

Angavathi refers to the worship of the five elements - earth, water, fire, air, and ether - considering them as manifestations of the Divine. The earth bears the burden of mighty mountains, vast oceans, dense forests, villages, towns, and cities. Likewise, the remaining four elements are also responsible for the sustenance of creation. The Bharatiyas (Indians) extol earth as Bhudevi (mother earth), water as Gangadevi (goddess of water), fire as Agnideva (god of fire), and air as Vayudeva (god of wind) and offer their salutations to them.

Anyavathi refers to picturing the many faceted Divinity in various names and forms and worshipping them. For example Siva is described as Pinakapani (wielder of the bow Pinaka) and Rama is described as Kodandapani (wielder of the bow Kondanda).

Nidhanavathi represents the nine paths of devotion, namely sravanam (listening), kirtanam (singing), vishnusmaranam (contemplating on the Lord), padasevanam (service to the Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (to be a servant of the Lord), sneham (friendship), and Atmanivedanam (Self surrender). The ancient sages and seers attained supreme bliss by following these nine paths of devotion.

Only through total love can one please the Divine

Once upon a time in Italy, there lived a person by name Anthony. He used to earn his livelihood by making violins, but being a perfectionist as he was, he used to take one full year to make a violin. His friends chided him saying, "O mad man, how do you expect to eke out your livelihood if you spend a whole year to make one violin?" Anthony replied, "God is the embodiment of perfection. Whatever He does is absolutely perfect. He will be pleased only when we discharge our duty in the most perfect manner. All my work will be a

utter waste, if God is not satisfied." In this context, the Vedas declare:

Poornamadah Poornamidam Poornath Poomamudachyathe Poornasya
Poornamadaya Poornameva Vasishyathe The perfect whole is the basis. All that is here is the perfect whole. The whole emanates from the whole. When the whole is separated from the whole the perfect wholeness remains perfect as wholeness.

Only through total love can one please Divinity. Perfection arises out of love. There is nothing greater than love. No benefit accrues from chanting various names of the Lord without the spring of love in the heart. It is enough even if one name is chanted wholeheartedly and with a feeling of love. All your work must be totally dedicated to God. It should be done with total love and pure heart. This is the essence of Sathyavathi mode of worship.

God values quality, not quantity

Anthony's violins were very famous and highly valuable. The reason is that he used to make them with sacred feelings and total devotion. He never felt that he was wasting his time. He always had the feeling that he was sanctifying his time by doing his work perfectly and thus pleasing God.

You should follow the ideal of Anthony. It is quality that God values, not quantity. You may perform narayana seva (feeding the poor) on a large scale, but without purity of heart, you cannot please God. God will be pleased even with a morsel of food offered with sacred feelings. All that you do with purity of heart will find fulfillment. Do your work properly and perfectly, no matter even if more time is spent in the process. But do not be in haste and do a halfhearted work.

Since ancient times various types of yagnas (sacrifices) have been performed in this sacred land of Bharat. Yagno vai Vishnuhu (yagna is the very form of Vishnu). Some people are under the mistaken notion that they can please God by offering highly valuable items. What one has to offer God is the pure heart. Yad bhavam tad bhavati (as the feeling, so is the result). If you are

aspiring for good results, offer only good feelings to God. There should be perfect harmony in your thought, word, and deed. Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam (he is a noble soul whose thought, word, and deed are in perfect harmony). Adveshta sarva bhootanam (Do not hate anybody).

On November 24, 1926, Aurobindo broke his prolonged silence only to declare that God had incarnated the previous day. After making this significant statement, he continued with his vow of silence. Divinity can be recognized only by the pure hearted.

God is the Veda Purusha

Once, during the performance of a yagna (sacrifice), an individual criticized the Vedic priests saying that they were wasting the valuable ghee by pouring it into the sacrificial fire. A Vedic scholar by name Amnaya Vachaspathi gave a fitting reply thus, "You do not call it a waste if a farmer sows four bags of paddy in his field because after a few months he will reap 40 bags of rice. Similar is the case with yagna too. The sacred smoke arising from the sacrificial fire, fully charged with the divine name and the sacred Vedic mantras, purifies the pollution in the atmosphere. A program that is broadcast by the Delhi Radio Station can be heard throughout the country. The presence of electric waves in the atmosphere is responsible for this. Likewise, the Vedic mantras chanted by the priests will spread all over." The purpose of the Veda Purusha Sapthaha Yagna is to attain truth. God is the Veda Purusha. This yagna is performed for seven days. Seven is an auspicious number, for it corresponds to the number of rishis (saptha rishis), oceans (saptha samudras), colors (saptha varnas) and sounds (saptha swaras).

Valmiki, before he became a great sage, was known as Ratnakara. He was a hunter and used to rob the wayfarers of their belongings. One day, he came across the saptha rishis, who took pity on him and wanted to light the lamp of wisdom in him. They urged him to give up his wicked actions. Ratnakara said he could not do so, since it was the only way to feed his wife and children. Then the saptha rishis asked him to find out from his wife and children

whether they were prepared to share the sin he committed for their sake. Ratnakara went home and asked his wife and children, "Are you prepared to share my sin just as you share my booty every day?" They replied in the negative. His wife said that he was responsible for the merit or sin he committed.

This incident opened his eyes. He went back to the saptha rishis, fell at their feet, and prayed for guidance. They told him to contemplate on Lord Rama and chant His incessantly. Ratnakara did accordingly, and consequently, his face shone with the divine effulgence of Lord Rama. Your thoughts play a vital role in shaping your personality.

God's grace will certainly alleviate your suffering

Embodiments of Love! One who thinks of God constantly will never be put to hardships. You may argue that you continue to suffer though you think of God all the time. How can you say that thinking of God has not helped you at all? It certainly would have mitigated your suffering without your knowledge. God's grace will certainly alleviate your suffering. By chanting of the divine name, even mountains of sin will vanish like mist into thin air. Sarvada Sarvakaleshu Sarvathra Harichinthanam, you should think of God at all places, at all times, and under all circumstances with pure love and total faith. Your prayers will be answered only when there is sincerity in you.

When I returned to Puttaparthi from Uravakonda, two persons, Subbaiah Shetty and Kodanda Shetty, came from Anantapur. One of them was finding it difficult to get an alliance for his daughter. He said, "Sri Sathya Sai Baba, I will believe that you are God only if I can find a suitable alliance for my daughter soon. I will build chitikelamedu ('snapping mansion') for You if my daughter gets married within this month." Everyone was curious to know as to what that would be.

His daughter got married within the same month. He came to the Old Mandir (temple) with a plate containing a coconut and some flowers. He said, "Swami, you fulfilled my desire. Now I have to keep up my word. Please

permit me to build a chitikelameda for you." Many others were watching with curiosity. Even Subbamma came there thinking that he was going to give a big mansion for Swami. I very well knew what he was up to. He gave Arati and asked, "Swami, will you permit me to build chitikelameda now?" In order to amuse the onlookers, "I said OK, go ahead." He started snapping his fingers around Me, saying, "This is the first wall, this is the second wall, this is the roof," so on and so forth. In the end he said, "this is God," fell at My feet, and broke the coconut. Likewise, some people resort to mean strategies and try to cheat even God! They certainly have to face the consequences of their actions.

The creation of God is most sacred and wonderful

God neither favors nor hates anybody. Whatever one experiences is the result of one's own actions. In this context, one devotee prayed to God thus, "O God, you appeared as Yama to Kamsa, who had developed hatred toward You. On the other hand, you appeared as Lord Narayana to Prahlada, who had immense faith in You, whereas you appeared as God of Death to Hiranyakasipu, who opposed you. To Vibhishana, who believed in you, you appeared as Rama. But to Ravana, who defied you, you became Yama." So, Yama and Rama are one and the same. Depending on the feelings, one saw Him as Rama, etc. Purandaradasa once said, "Who planted the tree on the mountain top and watered it? Who gave the red beak to the green parrot? Who gave the wonderful colors to the feathers of the peacock and to the flowers of the entire world? Everything is God's creation." You may make a bunch of plastic grapes and plastic lotuses, but will any honeybee go near them? No. But they swarm around the natural lotus created by God and suck nectar from it. The creation of God is most sacred and wonderful. None can comprehend the mystery of God. Divine Will can accomplish anything and everything.

Time is the cause for birth and death

Each Vedic mantra chanted during the yagna (sacrifice) has a deep inner meaning associated with it. Each mantra is dedicated to a particular deity.

Any letter with the address properly mentioned on it can reach the neighboring street or a far away place. The mantras are like the addresses of the deities. When they are chanted with proper intonations, they will yield the desired results.

Time is God. That is why God is extolled as Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kalatheethaya Namah... Time is the cause for birth and death. None can conquer time except those who acquire divine grace. Here is a small example. Sage Mrukandu had a son by name Markandeya, who was given only 16 years of life span, but he was unaware of this. One night he found his parents full of sorrow. On enquiry, they revealed that his end had approached, and that was the cause of their sorrow. Hearing this, he went to the temple of Easwara, hugged the Siva Linga, and started chanting Om Namah Sivaya wholeheartedly.

At the appointed hour, Yama (God of Death) cast his noose around the neck of young Markandeya. Since Markandeya was hugging the Linga, the noose fell around the Linga also. Easwara manifested there and remonstrated Yama, "How dare you cast the noose around Me?" He burnt Yama to ashes. Pleased with the devotion of Markandeya, he blessed him with the boon of immortality.

In fact, it was Easwara who had stipulated 16 years of life span for Markandeya. But on account of Markandeya's intense devotion and total surrender Easwara, had to change His Will. There is none greater than a true devotee in this world.

God's heart can be melted only through love

Once, Lord Vishnu asked Narada which among the five elements was the greatest. Narada replied earth is the greatest.

Vishnu remarked, "Three-fourth of the earth is enveloped with water. In such a case, which among the two is greater?" Narada agreed that water was great.

Vishnu said, "But the sage Agastya drank up the ocean in a single gulp. So, is Agastya greater or water?" Narada replied, "You are right my Lord, Agastya is greater than water." Vishnu asked again, "But this Agastya is a tiny star in the sky (akasa). Now is this star greater or the sky?" Narada replied, "It is the sky that is greater." The Lord agreed and said, "Your understanding is correct. The sky indeed is greater. In His incarnation as Vamana, the Lord asked for three steps from king Bali. And in the course of taking the gift of three steps, Vamana assumed the form of Thrivikrama and covered the entire earth in one step, and the space from the earth to the sky in second, and there was no room for the third step. King Bali had to offer his head for the third step. So, now, is God great or the sky?" Narada replied, "Swami, when the mere foot of the Lord covers the entire sky, how much greater His full form would be? God indeed is greater." "God, who envelops the entire cosmos, dwells in the heart of His bhakta (devotee). So now, is the heart of the devotee greater or God?" asked Vishnu. Narada replied, "Indeed, the devotee is greater than God." God is Bhakta Paradheena, He is the servant of devotees. There is none superior to a devotee in this world. God's heart can be melted only through love. So, develop total love. This is not the worldly love that exists between parents and children, husband and wife, friends, and relatives. Worldly love is tainted by selfishness, but divine love is absolutely selfless. Your life will be sanctified only when you attain divine love.

Take refuge in the Lord's Feet

Hurry up, hurry up, listen to the clarion call of Sai filled with nectarine love, Beckoning you to come near Him and exhorting you to attain Divinity. No need to undertake yoga or any spiritual sadhana. Hurry up, hurry up, hearken to the loving word of Sai.

God is asking you to come near, but you are drifting away from Him. You might have seen in Tirupati - one hand of Lord Venkateswara is raised in

Abhaya Hastha (blessing pose) and the other points to His feet. What does it mean? Take refuge in the Lord's Feet and you shall be protected. Surrender to Him; He will make you fearless. Others pervert the meaning and say, "Hey! You want to go up or fall into the pit (adhogathi)." Laying the foundation for the Music University As you are all aware, this morning Swami laid the foundation stone for the Music University. Not only music, lyrics, and dance, even the traditional folk arts like Hari Kathas (musical exposition of the epics and the Puranas) and village dramas will be taught here. Apart from Carnatic and Hindustani music, all types of music in the world will blossom here. This University will be inaugurated next October. Whatever we undertake will be completed in a few months. You need not wait years for its completion.

This University will be built spending crores of rupees, and it will be a synthesis of ancient and modern art forms. Many renowned artistes will come here. A musicologist of worldwide reputation, Indira Chakravarthi, will be the Vice Chancellor of this university. She has the experience of working in various music colleges all over the world. At present she is living in the city of Banaras. She will come here.

You all know that Ravi Shankar's elder brother (Late) Uday Shankar was a great dancer. His wife wants to donate all his instruments and equipment to our Institute of fine arts. Some of the equipment in this lot is not to be found anywhere else in the world.

The plans for the buildings are prepared. This building complex is going to be in the shape of several musical instruments such as the mrudangam, the tanpura, a conch in the middle, and a sitar. The mere sight of the building from outside would convey to the onlooker that it is a center of musical excellence. Similar marvels are going to happen in Prasanthi Nilayam.

Just think. Puttaparthi, a mere hamlet of a population of 106 people, has already grown to the size of a city housing several lakhs of people. Not only that, just wait and see, in a very short while, Puttaparthi is going to be a landmark on the map of the world.

As our C. Srinivas has said, the architectural features of our Hospital have found the pride of place in the American manual of architectural features for medical institutions. Let alone America, Puttaparthi is going to be a name to be reckoned with in every major developed country in the world such as Japan, Germany, Italy, and France. Everywhere world maps are going to mark Puttaparthi as an important location. The students of Puttaparthi should realize their good fortune. Then only their life will acquire its real meaning and significance.

Students! Your holidays are commencing from tomorrow. You can go home to your parents and spend your time in a proper way and come back after acquiring your parents' approbation.

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

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

27. Youth should transform the world

Date: 18 November 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Inauguration Sri Sathya Sai Second World Youth Conference

One who practices and propagates ideals such as goodness, morality, and truth

Is a youth in the strict sense of the term. In fact, only such people are your best friends and My best friends too.

[Poem in Telugu]

Embodiments of Love! Goodness means good behaviour, good conduct, good discipline, and good character. Truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence are verily the five life principles (pancha pranas) of man.

Human life is a journey from 'I' to 'We'. This journey is subtle and the goal is very near, but man takes many births to reach the destination. Why should he take such a long time, undergoing hardships, to attain the goal, which is so near?

Modern youth are making every effort to know all that is happening in the world but are not making any effort to understand the fundamental truth of human life. No benefit accrues from acquiring such information, which does not lead you to the goal of life. There are thousands of intellectuals, scholars, and eminent educationists in the world today. But all the worldly knowledge and skills will be a mere waste if one does not know oneself. The primary duty of man is to understand who he really is.

In this world, if money is lost,
one need not be worried about it, for one can earn it again.
If a friend is lost, one can have another.

If wife is lost, one may get married again.
If one loses one's piece of land, one can purchase another.
All these can be acquired again.
But the body once lost is lost forever.
[Sanskrit sloka]

Faith in God is very essential for man

Man has achieved everything in life but has lost human values, which amounts to losing his five life principles. As a result, he has become a living corpse. Faith in God is very essential for man. You may question who God is and where God is. Truth is God. Truth is one and the same for everyone, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, language, nationality and ideology.

Sathyannasti paro dharma (there is no greater dharma than adherence to truth). This fundamental Truth is God. Likewise, Love is God. So, live in love. True love is related to the heart,

not to the body. Divine Love is "heart to heart, not body to body". Body is like a water bubble, mind is like a mad monkey. Don't follow the body, don't follow the mind. Follow the conscience. Only then can you experience the Truth.

Service will lean you to devotion

Your men and women! Your life is a long journey, and your desires are the luggage. "Less luggage, more comfort makes travel a pleasure." So, reduce your desires.

Human birth is gifted to serve others, not just to eat, drink, sleep, and make merry. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Man's foremost duty is to serve his fellowmen and make them happy. Your life will be

redeemed only when you involve yourself in the service of society. The highest sadhana (spiritual practise) is to transform love into service. Service will lead you to devotion.

The Kerala boy who spoke earlier mentioned various diseases that affect the body. There are many instances in history wherein even mighty kings had to leave their mortal coil in spite of having access to the best medical facilities and the best doctors. Doctors by themselves cannot cure diseases. Divine grace is essential. There is no point in safeguarding your body if you do not uphold morality. For this, lead a life of truth and love. Modern youth do have love, but their love is artificial. It is limited up to saying "hello, hello," and is in fact hollow within. So, their life has become artificial like a drama.

Man can rise to the level of the Divine only through the path of service. When man is not able to understand humanness, how can he understand Divinity? First, know thyself. Human life is noble, since it is essentially divine. In fact, man and God are not two different entities; they are one and the same. "Ekam sath viprah babudha vadanti (truth is one, but scholars refer to it by many names)." Your life will be redeemed once you understand this truth.

The divine power latent in man is not found in any other being. Since man is unable to understand his own divine nature, he is undertaking various spiritual practices such as penance, meditation, and yoga. Spiritual practices bereft of love are a mere waste of time. Love is most important in life. Whatever you may say with love, it is bound to be true.

Any work you undertake with love is dharma. So, in the first instance, develop love. Lust, greed, hatred, jealousy, anger, and pride are animal qualities. These qualities are the result of the impurities in the food man partakes of. These are of man's own making. Man is forgetting his divine nature due to the effect of these evil qualities.

The words seva and prema possess infinite power

Man should make proper use of his mathi (intellect), gathi (destination), stithi

(situation), and sampathi (wealth). Wealth here does not mean worldly treasures. It refers to the power of the senses. This power should be utilised for service of society.

Neither by penance nor by undertaking
pilgrimages nor by going through sacred texts
nor by Japa can one cross the ocean of Samsara.
Only through service of the noble can one redeem oneself.
[Sanskrit verse]

The words seva and prema may be very small, consisting of only two syllables, but they possess infinite power.

Embodiments of Love! Enquire and understand who you really are. Know yourself and you will know all. Since many of you are newcomers, you have to understand simple things to begin with. When you say, "This is my handkerchief," it means the handkerchief is different from you. Similarly, when you say, "This is my body, my mind, and my intellect," it means you are different from all these. Then the question naturally arises, "Who are you?" Enquire into this. Body, mind and intellect are mere instruments. Identifying yourself with these instruments is absurd.

You are the master. Master the mind and be a mastermind. Never be a slave to your body, mind, and senses. In fact, they should be under your control; you should not be controlled by them.

One of the speakers quoted Swami, "My life is My message." She also referred to the statement, "Your life is My message." You should understand the meaning of these statements clearly. Saying that your life is Swami's message and indulging in wicked activities and unrighteous deeds is treacherous. That constitutes "your" message, not My message. You can

declare that your life is Swami's message only when you take to the path of truth and righteousness, install peace and love in your heart, and uphold nonviolence.

No one has the right to judge others

All that you see outside is a reflection of the inner being. Good and bad do not exist outside; they are mere reflections of what is within you. No one has the right to judge others. Give up all that is bad in you and you will find goodness all around. As the colour of the glasses you put on, so is the colour of the world you visualise. The defect lies in your vision, not in the creation.

Heart is the dwelling place of God. So, only noble feelings should emerge out of it. If there are any evil qualities like lust, greed, and anger in it, then it ceases to be a human heart. It is verily the heart of an animal. If your conduct is devoid of humanness, then you are not a human being. Act in a manner that befits your human birth. When you are angry, remind yourself, "I am not a dog, I am man." When your mind wavers, tell yourself repeatedly, "I am not a monkey, I am man." Patiently think about your real nature.

Never act in haste. Haste makes waste. Waste makes worry. So, do not be in a hurry. Take time and think calmly. All these evil qualities can be eliminated by developing good thoughts and feelings. The remedy for all your mental ailments lies within you.

Undertake Service with Love

Only young men and women are capable of eradicating the evils prevailing in society. If we have virtuous youth, all ills of society can be removed. Today, the whole world is embroiled in wicked thoughts, wicked company, and evil acts. Excessive desires are the main cause for the suffering of man. Keep a check on your desires.

As a student, discharge your duties diligently. Study well and obtain good marks. Respect your parents and serve them. Keep in mind the welfare of the

society and nation at large. Earn a good name in society.

Do not feel proud of your education. Your education is a mere waste if it is not utilised for the welfare of society. The education you have received from society must be dedicated to it by way of service. The essence of education does not lie in merely acquiring degrees, securing good jobs, and amassing wealth. Service is the hallmark of the educated one. Morality is most essential for human life. No doubt money is essential, but it should be under certain limits. Excessive money makes many wrongs. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows.

Students! Young men and women! First and foremost, make efforts to understand your true nature. The difference between God and man is very subtle. As long as you do not understand the Truth, you remain a human being. Once you recognise it, you are God.

Service is the best way to understand your innate divinity. Service should be for self-satisfaction, not for name and fame. Experience the bliss that you derive from selfless service. Share it with others. Before serving others, serve yourself by making your mind broad and pure. Get rid of the narrow feeling of 'I' and 'mine' and extend your love to one and all. Love is the binding force that brings together the entire world as one family. I wish that you develop love and live like brothers and sisters.

This body has been engaged in service right from birth. You should also spend your life in serving others. This is My message. I practice whatever I preach. I love all and serve all and exhort you to do the same. You are not able to understand My love as your feelings are narrow. That is your mistake, not Mine. Today, conflicts are on the rise as there is no proper understanding and adjustment among people. Adjustment will be possible only when there is proper understanding.

Develop love and uphold truth

Embodiments of Love! Only love has been constantly with you right from

birth. It is love that remains with you all the time, not your relatives or friends. This love is God. Enjoy the bliss of love and share it with others. Absence of love is the root cause for all the unrest in the world.

Develop love and uphold truth. Truth does not mean describing what you have seen, heard or done, as it is. Truth is that which is changeless in all the three periods of time. The Vedas call this permanent truth Rutham.

Just as you change your dress, you have to change your body one day or the other. That is why it is said, "Death is the dress of life." Therefore, you should have no fear of death. Life is not permanent. It is like a passing cloud. As long as there is life in the body, use it for the service of others. Engage yourself in service till your last breath. Service to man is service to God. Have control over your senses, because loss of sense control engenders demonic qualities in man. Service without sense control is an exercise in futility.

Cultivate noble thoughts

All of you have gathered here without being extended any invitation. It is your love for Bhagavan and Bhagavan's love for you that has brought you here. If there is love in your heart, you will never be put to any hardship whatsoever. Your love should be extended to one and all; it should not be limited to your family and friends alone.

Today, we do not have ideal parents. There are no ideal teachers either. We do not have ideal friends and relatives too. How can then we find fault with the youth? First of all, the parents should be good. The teachers should also do their job of teaching in right earnest. Good company is very important. Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are. As is your company, so you become. How can one be good if one is in the company of bad people always?

Embodiments of Love! You are all virtuous and noble. Make every effort to enhance this goodness. Make the best use of your stay here. Run away from bad company and bad feelings. Cultivate noble thoughts and noble qualities. Develop the Atmic relationship with all, since all are your brothers and sisters.

Lord Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita, Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathana (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). The sun is one but it has many reflections. All that you find in this world is the reflection, reaction, and resound. Do not get carried away by them. Aspire to attain the reality. In order to experience the reality, give up body attachment and try to understand the divinity within.

Help ever, hurt never

Divinity is latent in everyone, but you are not making any effort to realise it because you are deeply engrossed in worldly matters. You are the embodiment of pure, unsullied, true, and eternal Atma. Experience this reality. Discharge your duties keeping this truth in view. Help ever, Hurt never. This is the essence of the Vedas and sacred texts such as the Bible, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Quran. All these holy texts speak of the same fundamental truth.

It is a mistake to entertain differences based on religion. There is only one religion, the religion of love. There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one language, the language of the heart. Travel from 'I' to 'We' through the path of service. I will tell you how to go about doing it in due course of time.

There are millions of people in this world, but only you, the fortunate few, have got the golden opportunity of coming here. Make the best use of this opportunity and share this joy with everybody. Serve the whole world. Understand the truth that you are born to serve society. It is not government service. It is the service of mankind.

Do not lead a selfish life amassing wealth. Do not be satisfied by filling your own belly; understand that there are millions in the world, who are hungry and suffering. Your life will be sanctified only when you help the poor, the sick, and the down-trodden. That is true spirituality. Spirituality is a way of life. It is not something separate from life. That should be your way of life. In order to acquire a worldly degree, you need to study various subjects. But in

spirituality there is only one subject and that is love. Undertake service activities in a spirit of love.

Being young, you may have a few doubts. I will clarify all of them. Do not give scope for hatred, jealousy, and ostentation. Be a humble devotee and render humble service. That is the true human quality.

Santhi (peace) is full of spiritual feeling and wisdom that is the natural accompaniment of bliss. Genuine santhi is won only by control of the senses. Then, it can be call prasanthi. The experience of that stage is as a stream of peace.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

28. Importance of mother's grace

Date: 19 November 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ladies Day

More fragrant than the sweet-smelling flowers like the Jasmine and the Champak,
Softer than cheese and butter,
More beautiful than the eye of the peacock, More pleasant than the moonlight
Is the love of the mother.
[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love! This world, with its movable and immovable objects, is nothing but the Cosmic Dance of Siva (Siva Thandava). This blissful Siva Thandava is full of awe and wonder and is beyond human comprehension. The dualities of night and day, pleasure and pain, birth and death are endless. Just as birth and death are natural, so also is the existence of dharma and adharma (righteousness and unrighteousness). When dharma is on the rise, adharma is on the decline, and vice versa. Men and women are responsible for the rise or decline of dharma and adharma. Man, unable to realise the divinity within, is under the delusion that divinity is different from him.

Principle of Siva-Shakti

Sumathi could even stop the sun from rising to save the life of her husband. Savitri could bring her dead husband back to life. Wherefrom did they derive their strength? It was the power of their devotion and chastity. When man worships Divinity with devotion and earnestness, the divine qualities - sathyam, sivam, sundaram (truth, goodness, beauty) manifest in him. This resplendently shining divine power is latent in man. When Kamsa tried to kill his own sister Devaki, her husband Vasudeva came to her rescue. It was

possible because of his innate divine powers. You need not make any special efforts to acquire divine powers. They are immanent in you. They will manifest only when you contemplate on God, forgetting yourself.

Man, forgetting his own divine nature, thinks that God is separate from him and undertakes various spiritual practices to attain Him. People adore Him by different names such as Rama, Krishna, Jesus, and Allah. But there is only one fundamental power, which is the very form of Siva-Shakti. This principle of Siva-Shakti is all-pervasive. This world has a very significant name, Bhavan-Sankara. Bhavani means sraddha (steadfast devotion) and sankara means viswas (faith). It is to say that the world is based on the twin principles of sraddha and viswas. Bhavani and Sankara are inseparable, interdependent, and all-pervasive. So, the whole world is the form of ardhanareswara (androgynous). It is on this basis that the terms Srimati and Sri are used to address women and men, respectively. Srimati denotes Bhavani and Sri symbolises Sankara.

Whatever may be the name and form you worship, you need to have steadfast devotion and faith. Without these two, you cannot achieve anything in life. Sraddhavan labhate jnanam (only the one with steadfast devotion attains wisdom). It is only through faith that one can realise the divinity within. Divinity in man is the combination of Bhavani and Sankara.

God is the witness to all that you do

The whole world is a combination of ichcha shakti (will power), kriya shakti (power of action), and jnana shakti (power of wisdom). Ichcha shakti is related to the mind, kriya shakti to the body, and jnana shakti to the Atma. That is why it is said that you are not one person, but three: the one you think you are (physical body), the one others think you are (mental body), and the one you really are (principle of the Atma). You are essentially divine, but you are unable to understand this. The Vedas declare: Sarvata pani padam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvata srutimalloke sarvamavritya thishthati (with His hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, God permeates the entire universe). God is the witness to all that you do. You may

hoodwink anybody, but not God because He is always in you and with you.

Without the grace of Bhavani-Sankara, all your efforts will be futile. Names and forms are not important because they are subject to change. Body is like a water bubble, mind is like a mad monkey. You cannot rely on them. But there is something within, which is true and eternal. That is divinity. In order to manifest this latent divinity, you need to develop devotion, which in turn strengthens your faith. Tree becomes bigger and stronger as the roots go deeper. Likewise, faith becomes stronger as the devotion increases. No name and no form can ever help you if viswas (faith) and sraddha (steadfast devotion) are lacking in you.

There is infinite divine power latent in everybody. If you can manifest it, you can even stop the sun from rising, as Sumathi did, and you can even bring the dead back to life, as Savitri could do. When you manifest divine power, you become God.

God will give you whatever you deserve

The Atma is all-pervasive. In order to experience the Atma, you need to have steadfast devotion and faith. Today people pray, Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (may all the people of the world be happy)! It is possible only when sraddha and viswas are fostered.

Joys and sorrows are like passing clouds. They come and go. It is only the morality that comes and grows. So, develop morality. Do not aspire for wealth, position, and power. God will give you whatever you deserve. Develop love for God. That is the highest sadhana (spiritual practice).

Today, people undertake various spiritual practices to attain God. But all these confer only mental satisfaction. Sage Narada propagated the nine paths of devotion: sravanam (listening), kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on God), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (servitude), sneham (friendship), and Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). These practices cannot confer

everlasting joy. Have unflinching faith that the universe is the very form of God (Viswam Vishnuswarupam). Vishnu is the cause and the Viswam is the effect. These two are inseparable.

The Vedas declare: Acharam Chamevacha (though immobile, He is apparently mobile). Here is an illustration. In the dream state, you may visit various places and experience happiness or sorrow, but in reality your body remains steady on the bed - immobile.

So, all that you see and experience in this world is but a dream. Only the Atma is true and eternal. The Atma is sthiram (permanent) and the world is charam (changing). Human life is the union of sthiram and charam.

Janthunam narajanma durlabham (human birth is the rarest among all beings). All beings are not fortunate to get human birth. All human beings do not experience Divinity. Some people undertake spiritual practices like idol worship to attain Divinity. Gradually one should turn one's vision inward and experience the oneness of the Atma.

Experience the endless bliss of the Atma

It is not all that important how much you love God; what is more important is how much God loves you. God is the embodiment of Sat Chit Ananda. Sat means that which is eternal. Chit is total awareness. When water and sugar are mixed with each other, you get syrup. Likewise, the combination of Sat and Chit results in Ananda (bliss) The Ananda that you experience out of worldly pleasures is momentary.

You will attain true and everlasting bliss, only when you turn your vision inward and experience the Atma. It has no form, but is full of bliss.

Embodiments of Love! You should experience the endless bliss of the Atma.

At the time of birth, man does not have
Any garland of precious jewels around his neck,
But definitely he has a heavy garland -
A garland made up of the consequences of Past deeds, be they good or bad.
[Telugu Poem]

Adore the mother as God

The Vedas declare: Mathru Devo bhava, pithru Devo bhava (revere the mother and father as God). Once Ashok Singhal, General Secretary of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, came to Me with the plea, "Kindly let us know the birthplace of Rama so that we can construct a temple there." I replied, "The true birthplace of Rama is the womb of Kausalya." Mother's womb is the birthplace of one and all, be it a commoner or the Avatar Himself. Therefore, adore the mother as God. Uphold her name and respect her.

Today is 19 November. It is celebrated as Ladies Day to remind you of the importance of the mother. You should conduct yourself according to the wishes of your mother. Do not disobey her. Chaitanya, the great devotee of Lord Krishna, married Lakshmi on the insistence of his mother, though he was not in favour of marriage. But as fate would have it, Lakshmi passed away soon after the marriage.

His mother, Sachidevi, felt very sad for having got him married against his wishes. Chaitanya told her, "This is what happens when one goes against the dictates of one's conscience." So, if you feel what you are doing is correct, then try to convince your mother, but never hurt her feelings.

You may be under the mistaken notion that women are weak in body and mind. But, in fact, they are stronger than men.

In the epic Mahabharata, there is a story of a queen, Pramila, who wanted to

marry Arjuna. But Arjuna was reluctant to marry her. Pramila sent her commander-in-chief Malayavathi to capture Arjuna. Malayavathi waged a fierce battle against Arjuna, ultimately captured him, and brought him to the presence of Pramila. She requested him to marry her, but Arjuna refused to marry even if it were to cost his life. Pramila was a great devotee of Lord Krishna, and so was Arjuna. Both of them prayed fervently.

Krishna, being the director of the cosmic drama, had his own master plan. He appeared there, called Pramila and Arjuna to his side, brought their hands together, chanted the mantras, and solemnised their marriage.

God can do anything and everything

God can do anything and everything. He can transform earth into sky and sky into earth. But man lacks devotion and faith in God. He has faith in worldly matters, not in spirituality. There is nothing superior to bhakti (devotion). In the word bhakti, the letter bha stands for lustre and luminosity, and kti denotes that which attracts. From bhakti, you get shakti (power) for the body, mind, and spirit. Through this bhakti and shakti, you get immersed in rakti (attachment) toward God and develop virakti (detachment) from the world. Then God confers on you bhukti (food) and also mukti (liberation). Thus, man has to travel from bhakti to mukti.

As I told you yesterday, human life is a journey from 'I' to 'We'. In order to go to Tirupati, Varanasi, Gaya, and Prayag, you may have to take great pains and travel long distances. But the journey from 'I' to 'We' is very short in the sense that you have to detach yourself from the body and develop attachment towards the Self. For this, mother's grace is very essential.

God comes whenever the need arises

When Abhimanyu was in the womb of his mother Subhadra, Arjuna used to tell her many stories. One day, Arjuna was explaining to her the intricacies and nuances involved in entering Padmavyuha (a military formation in the shape of a lotus). Before he could explain to her how to come out of the

Padmavyuha, Lord Krishna, the supreme director of the cosmic drama, entered the scene. God comes whenever the need arises and plays His role appropriately.

Krishna asked Arjuna, "What a mistake you are committing! It is not Subhadra, but it is the child in her womb who has been listening to you all the while. Where is the necessity for you to teach the child about Padmavyuha?" He took Arjuna away with him.

Later on, in the Kurukshetra war, Abhimanyu lost his life in Padmavyuha, since he did not know how to come out of it. Why did Krishna do this? It is because Abhimanyu had to attain Veera Swarga (heaven of the heroes). In fact, when the Kauravas challenged Abhimanyu to enter Padmavyuha, he came to his mother Subhadra and sought her permission and blessings. Subhadra tried her best to dissuade him from going to the battlefield. She said, "My dear son, it is not an ordinary task to enter Padmavyuha and come out of it. Moreover, your wife is in the family way, and your uncle Krishna and father Arjuna are not here. So, give up the idea of going to the battlefield." But Abhimanyu did not pay heed to her advice. He said "Mother, I am a kshatriya (warrior) by birth. There is no greater insult for a kshatriya than to shy away from the challenge posed by the enemies. In fact, you should encourage me and enthuse me to fight and annihilate the enemies. It is not proper on your part to discourage me from going to the war." Abhimanyu knew what he was doing was correct, but he did not understand his mother's love. He lost his life because he went to the battlefield against the wishes of his mother.

Divine Grace and human effort

There is nothing greater than mother's love. Mother's words are always sweet. At times she may use harsh words, but they are meant only to correct you, not to hurt you. There may be a wicked son, but there can never be a wicked mother in this world. Ladies Day is celebrated only to make you understand the value of mother's love and her concern for you. Among the mother, the father, the teacher and God, the mother is given the topmost

priority.

Modern youth do not care for the mother. They think they are highly educated and that the mother does not know anything. It is a great mistake to think so. Never look down upon the mother. Even the mother should not compel her children to accede to her wishes. Through love and sincerity she should put the children on the proper path. She should aspire that her children be good, they need not be great.

Rama was good, whereas Ravana was great. Rama put into practice whatever he had studied and thus earned a good name. But Ravana was immersed in ignorance, because he did not practice all that he had studied. As a result, he did not earn a good name. Man needs to have fear of sin and love for God to earn a good name. Since man lacks fear of sin and love for God, humanness is on the decline. This is the cause of restlessness in the world today.

Embodiments of Love! God is Ganalola and Ganapriya (one who is attracted by singing). Poems and prayers do not attract God as much as songs sung with devotion do. All of you have listened to the melodious singing of M.S. Subbulakshmi. She has earned the title Gana Kokila. I have also seen her play the role of Meera, when she was very young.

Many artistes have earned name and fame in dance. Uday Shankar was such a great dancer that one could hardly see his two feet on the ground while he danced. His wife, daughter-in-law, and other disciples have come here and will be staging a dance programme tomorrow.

These fine arts cannot be mastered by practice alone; Divine grace is also very essential. Negative and positive both are essential for the current to flow. Likewise, human effort and Divine grace should come together before success is achieved.

Never give scope for anger and ego

Students! Young men and women! God responds according to your feelings.

So, do not entertain negative thoughts. Only a peacock comes out of peahen's egg, even if it were to be hatched by a hen. A diamond does not lose its value or brilliance even if it falls into dung. Likewise, good people will always earn a good name wherever they are. Ego, hatred, and anger are the worst enemies of man. You may show a little anger to somebody in order to put him on the right path, but never hate anybody. Never give scope for anger and ego.

I am showing you by My example all that I preach. Some people feel that Swami does not talk to them because Swami hates them or is angry with them. It is nothing but their imagination and guilty conscience. I do not hate anyone. In order to put you on the right path, sometimes I may pretend to be angry with you. But in reality, I have no anger or hatred toward anybody.

Some people do grama seva (service in the villages) with the expectation that I should fulfil their desires. Is that enough to please Me? Give up all desires and cleanse your heart. Then I will grant you all that you require without your asking for it. How can you expect positive results without giving up negative thoughts? Fill your heart with positive thoughts. Fill it with love. Then all your thoughts, words, and deeds will be suffused with love.

All are the children of viswa matha

Embodiments of Love! Never forget the love of your mother, and under all circumstances make her happy. I am pleased with you only when you make your mother happy. As Uma Bharati pointed out, make efforts to understand the oneness of all. If you think that you are separate from others, then there will be scope for hatred. Realise that you and I are one. Bodies may be different, but you are bound by the same love principle.

Just as your mother loves you, you should love everybody. All are the children of Viswa Matha (universal mother). All are brothers and sisters. You should not have any differences whatsoever. The sun is one and the same for all the worlds. Just as the sun is reflected in a water tank, in a river, in an ocean, likewise the same Divinity is reflected in the hearts of one and all.

Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti (truth is one, but scholars refer to it by different names). It is not correct to say that you like only Rama or Krishna or Siva or Sai Baba. There is only one God, and He is omnipresent. Do not hate other religions. A Hindu should become a better Hindu, a Christian a better Christian, and a Muslim a better Muslim. The one without love can be called neither Muslim nor Hindu nor Christian nor Sikh. In fact, he is verily a demon on this earth. Only those without love give scope to differences based on religion. You will find the unity of all religions only when you fill your heart with love.

The culture of Bharat (India) has given utmost importance to the mother. One refers to one's country as motherland, not fatherland. Lord Rama declared: "Janani janma bhoomishcha swargadapi gareeyasi (mother and the motherland are greater than even heaven)." Country is the mother and the culture is the father. Never forget your country and its culture.

Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has been propagating the message of peace and love with the prayer, Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May all the people of the world be happy)! You have to uphold this sacred culture.

You may worship God in any name and form you like, but understand the truth that God is One and One only.

29. Seek God within

Date: 21 November 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Second World Youth Conference

There is no teacher greater than the Conscience.
There is no preceptor greater than time.
The world verily is the greatest text.
God is the only true friend.
[Telugu Poem]

Young men and women, future citizens of the world!

The future of the world, good or bad, depends on your conduct. The country will be safe, secure, peaceful, and prosperous only when your conduct is good. What the world needs today is not affluence and material comforts but men and women of noble character. The country is bound to disintegrate if the behavior of the young men and women is not on the right lines.

A true human being is one who adheres to *sathya* (truth), *dharma* (righteousness) and *thyaga* (sacrifice). Truth is *neethi* (morality), righteousness is *reethi* (procedure), and sacrifice is *khyathi* (fame). All these three constitute manava jathi (human race). Human race has originated from Truth.

The entire creation has originated from Truth and ultimately merges in Truth.
There is no place where truth does not exist. Recognize this pure and unsullied truth.
[Telugu Poem]

To uphold morality, adhere to truth

It is based on this that the ancient sages and seers said:

Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath sathyamapriyam
(Speak truth, speak pleasingly, do not speak truth that is unpalatable).

Sathyam bruyath refers to moral value. Manava jathi (human race) cannot survive without neethi (morality).

Today the whole world is engulfed in troubles and turmoil on account of injustice, falsehood, and unrighteousness. Only young men and women are capable of restoring the declining human values. Only when man upholds morality can there be equality, fraternity, and freedom in society.

To uphold morality, one should adhere to truth. That is why it is said, *sathyam bruyath*. This is the primary duty of man. The second one, *priyam bruyath* (speak pleasingly) refers to dharmic value. It is based on this that the Bhagavad Gita says,

Anudvegakaram vakyam sathyam priya hitham cha yath
(Speak truth in a pleasing and wholesome manner. Your speech should not excite others impulses and emotions).

The third one, *na bruyath sathyamapriyam* (do not speak truth that is unpalatable) refers to spiritual value. One has to adhere to these principles to progress on the spiritual path.

Embodiments of Love!

The *Himachala* (the Himalayan mountains) forms the boundary for India on the northern part. What is the inner meaning of Himachala? Hima means ice, which stands for purity and peace. Achala means that which is steady. So, himachala signifies purity, peace, and steadiness. The perennial rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswathi symbolise the continuous blood circulation in the human body.

Be proud to be a Bharatiya

The great epics of this land, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavata, bring out the quintessence of human nature. One can be called a Bharatiya (Indian) in the true sense of the term only when one puts into practice the ideals that Bharat stands for.

In the word Bharat, bha refers to *bhava* (feeling), ra refers to *raga* (tune), and ta connotes *tala* (rhythm). Bharatiyas are those who worship God, harmonising the three: bhava, raga, and tala. Bha also stands for effulgence. So, Bharatiyas are those who are in pursuit of divine effulgence.

Take pride in the fact that you are a Bharatiya. There is no greater qualification than this. Bharat is the country that propagates spiritual knowledge to the rest of the world and wishes the welfare of the entire world

Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (may the whole world be happy)!

You are all one, irrespective of the countries you belong to. Bulbs may vary, but the current is the same. Likewise, countries, bodies, and feelings may vary, but the principle of Atma is one and the same in all. Therefore, give up

all differences based on caste, religion, and nationality and spread the message of unity.

Nations are many, but earth is one.

Jewels are many, but gold is one.

Stars are many, but sky is one.

Cows are many, but milk is one.

Bodies are many, but breath is one.

You can experience bliss only when you render service keeping in mind the unity of all beings.

You are born in love, brought up in love, and merge in love. The five elements (*pancha bhutas*) are the embodiment of selflessness. The sun sustains the creation by giving light and life. Trees accept poisonous carbon dioxide and give back life-supporting oxygen. Mother earth teaches a lesson in patience and sacrifice. All these elements help mankind without any expectation of reward. There is no greater example of selfless love than nature. It is a shame that man, having been born and brought up in nature, does not imbibe the ideals demonstrated by nature and leads a life of selfishness and selfinterest. Youth should resolve to eliminate selfishness and selfinterest with no traces whatsoever.

One who is not a sevaka cannot become a nayaka

Jesus declared, "All are one my dear son, be alike to everyone." All are born of the same mother earth, breathe in the same air and drink the same water. In such a case, why should there be differences at all? Eschew all differences and live in unity. Recognize the unity in diversity and act accordingly.

You may go to villages, serve the needy and undertake various rural development programs. By doing so, you are not doing any great service. In

fact, all this is your duty. You are born to serve. So, spend your life in serving others. Do not crave power and position.

One who is not a *sevaka* (humble worker) cannot become a *nayaka* (leader). In fact, a true sevaka alone is a true nayaka. People are under the mistaken notion that *japa*, *tapa* and *dhyana* (soft repetition of the name, penance, meditation) constitute spiritual practice. They do meditation without knowing what it is! They feel that they are meditating on God not knowing who God really is! They chant Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Allah, and Zoroaster as Gods and meditate on them not realizing the fact that all are embodiments of God. They mistake concentration for meditation. Concentration is associated with the senses, whereas meditation is beyond senses.

Meditation should not be confined to a particular time and place. It is a way of life. **Whatever is done with the spirit of love is meditation.** Sitting in meditation for hours together without expressing love for fellow beings is no meditation at all. True spiritual practice lies in joining hands with rest of the community and working for the progress of society as a whole.

Heart bereft of love is like a barren land

Love is God, live in love.

Heart bereft of love is like a barren land. All activities should be suffused with love. Just as it is impossible for a newborn babe to attend degree classes, so also it is not possible to attain the supreme state of love instantly. One has to gradually progress by undertaking spiritual practices. It is imperative to undertake these practices - *pravritti* - until one turns one's vision inward - *nivritti*. Perform all activities with a spiritual outlook.

There is no greater spiritual practice than adhering to the principles of truth and love. Truth and love are synonyms for God. Without these two, there is no

point in undertaking spiritual practices.

Young men and women!

Consider love and sacrifice as your very life breath. Control your senses. Sense control is essential for the success of any spiritual practice. Humanity can rise to Divinity through sense control.

Anger is the quality of a dog. Monkey is known for its wavering nature. When you are angry, remind yourself, "I am not a dog, I am a man." Similarly, when your mind wavers, tell yourself repeatedly, "I am not a monkey, I am a man." *Sathya, dharma, santhi, prema*, and *ahimsa* are the true human values. These values are the five life principles of man - *prana, apana, vyana, udana*, and *samana*. Losing any one of these values amounts to losing life itself. Each value cannot exist without the other. Today man has become a living corpse since he has lost all these values. Develop faith in these values, uphold them, and experience the bliss derived therefrom.

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 God,
Where there is God, there is bliss.

Today, every man aspires to be blissful. For that, faith is essential. Bliss cannot be attained easily. Bliss is Brahman, which is steady, pure, eternal, and beyond dualities. Man cannot attain this supreme bliss without giving up the evil qualities. Heart is the altar of God. Do not pollute it with evil thoughts and feelings.

Do not lead a life of selfishness

Self effort is very essential to achieve success in any human endeavor. Even small activities like picking up a flower or plucking a fruit from a tree requires the cooperation and effort of various limbs of the body - eyes, hands, legs, etc. Sareera madhyam khalu dharma sadhanam, body is gifted to undertake righteous actions and set an ideal to society, not for sleeping, eating, drinking, and making merry. God has gifted man with all the powers, but man is unable to realize his innate potential.

Whenever you take up any activity, keep in mind the welfare of others too. Do not lead a life of selfishness. Think in terms of collective benefit, not individual benefit alone.

Often, spiritual practices like japa and dhyana are done with a selfish motive. Instead, it is better to chant the Lord's name and serve society. This will confer benefit on the individual and society at large. This constitutes real sadhana. Whomsoever you serve, serve with a feeling that you are serving God.

The sight of a dead body, a sick person, an old decrepit person, was enough for Buddha to get transformed and attain *Nirvana* (liberation) because his heart was filled with compassion. Though you come across innumerable dead bodies, old persons, and sick individuals, it is a pity there is no transformation in you whatsoever. Unfortunately, your heart has become as hard as a stone indifferent to the sufferings of others. To attain Nirvana, identify yourself with others and make efforts to alleviate their suffering.

As the Vice Chancellor mentioned in his speech: "Bend the body, mend the senses, end the mind." Mind will be nonexistent when the senses are controlled. Mind can be annihilated when noble thoughts are entertained. Today the world is in disarray because the thoughts of man are going astray.

Bend the body, mend the senses, end the mind

O man, enquire, what great happiness You have acquired by forgetting God and
Spending all your education and energy Limitlessly in eking out a livelihood
Right from dawn to dusk. [Telugu Poem]

Whatever you do is God's work. For example, the process of inhaling and exhaling is in itself a spiritual practice. The process of inhaling is associated with the sound So (that); and exhaling, with the sound Ham (I). Soham means 'I am that' (God). So symbolizes Divinity, and aham signifies *ahamkara* (ego). So, Soham drives home the lesson that you should take in only phala, that which is good, and eject mala, that which is filthy.

This process of inhaling and exhaling repeats itself 21,600 times a day. It means your inner voice is reminding you 21,600 times a day that you are God. Unfortunately, you are not receptive to this message. It is to understand this reality God has gifted you with this body. Do not limit God to your shrine. God is your life breath.

Establish direct contact with God

Just as hands, eyes, ears, nose, etc. are limbs of the body, likewise, human beings are limbs of society. Society is a limb of nature, and nature is a limb of God. Therefore, you can infer that there is an intimate relationship between individual and God.

When inanimate objects like telephones are connected, should there not be a connection between human being and God? The former relationship is

artificial in nature, whereas the latter is heart to heart.

There are two types of telephone calls: one, which can be answered by anybody (number call), and the other, which needs to be answered by a specific person (Particular person PP call) for whom the call is intended. Similarly, your contacts should be directly with God, like the personal call, and not with all and sundry like the number call. If you have the sincere feeling that you want God, then God Himself will come and talk to you. You cannot expect God to respond when you make a "number call". Number call corresponds to negative thoughts. So, give up negative thoughts and develop positive feelings.

Body, mind, senses, and intellect are all negative in nature. Only the conscience is positive. Just as the mike is useless without the current, so also are the body, mind, senses, and intellect without the conscience.

The conscience that exists in everyone is one and the same, just as the current that flows through different bulbs is the same. All are one, be alike to everyone. So, do not hate, harm, or criticize anybody. He is a noble one who conducts himself without hurting others and himself not being troubled in the process. True spiritual sadhana (spiritual exercise) lies in considering every work as God's work, not in doing japa or dhyana.

You may hoodwink anyone, but not God

God is all-pervasive. It is based on this that the Veda declares,

Sarvatah Pani Padam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Srutimalloke
Sarvamavritya Thishtathi
(with His hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything,
God permeates the entire universe).

You may hoodwink anyone, but not God. He is always watching you. He is the eternal witness. He is present in you, just as the power of vision resides in your eye. Not even a blade of grass can move without His Will.

It is foolishness to get carried away by the sense of doership. So, do not feel proud of your achievements. Develop the sacred feeling that God is the doer and the enjoyer too.

Consider everything as God's Will. Whatever happens to you, be it profit or loss, pain or pleasure, have the resolute faith that it is good for you. When a person suffering from malaria consults a doctor, he will be given the bitter quinine medicine. Unless he takes the bitter medicine, he cannot be cured of the fever. Likewise, have the firm conviction that difficulties and suffering are the ways and means by which God purifies you. There is a reason behind whatever God does. Without understanding the principle of cause and effect, people blame God for their suffering. Understand the truth that you yourself are responsible for the pain or pleasure that befalls you.

Do not feel sad if someone were to criticize you, because criticizing others amounts to criticizing oneself, since the same Atma exists in all. Identify yourself with the Atma, not the body, which is like a water bubble. If someone were to beat you, do not retaliate. The same principle of Atma exists in both. God is the one who beats and also the one who gets beaten. The entire creation is a mono-action play of God. So, do not hate anybody. Love all.

All that I say is for your own good and to make you aware of Divinity. All My teachings and actions carry a profound inner meaning. Our college students have white dress as their uniform. What is its inner significance? White color symbolizes purity. Similarly, when you see someone in ochre robes, it reminds you of renunciation. This is to convey the message that you should be pure and free from all attachments. Only then you can attain the Divine.

Desires are the luggage in the journey of life

As youngsters, you have too many desires, which cause physical as well as

mental strain. Desires are the luggage in the journey of life.

"Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure."

Your destination is the abode of supreme peace, i.e. liberation. Why do you trouble yourself with 'heavy luggage,' when you are going to the abode of supreme peace?

Be satisfied with the minimum requirement of food, clothing and shelter.

Bhikshanam deharakshartham vasathram sheetha nivaranam
(food is meant to sustain your body and clothing to protect you from cold).

The modern youth are fascinated by fashion dresses and cloth themselves gaudily. Youngsters, especially women, should not indulge in dressing fads. The dress you wear should be good and sober. Do not imitate the cinema culture. Imitation is animal nature and creation is Divine.

True yoga lies in unifying your love with the Divine

Control of desires leads to sense control, which in turn leads to Divinity. Sage Patanjali said,

"Yogaha chitta vritti nirodaha,"
controlling the vagaries of the mind is yoga and allowing the senses to have their own way is roga (disease).

Today's man has become a *rogi* (diseased one) because of lack of sense control. One should become a yogi, not a rogi.

Yoga is attained not by *bhoga* (worldly pleasures), but by *thyaga* (sacrifice). Once you attain yoga, you will never be afflicted with roga. Yoga does not mean leading the life of a recluse in a forest. Some people mistake physical exercises like sitting cross-legged, standing on one leg etc., for yoga. True yoga lies in unifying your love with the Divine.

God does not want anything from you. He never insists on your doing meditation or yoga. He only wants you to fill your hearts with principles of love and sacrifice. If you obey His commands with sincerity and devotion, He will take care of all your needs without your asking. The lives of Sabari and the bird Jatayu bear ample testimony to this truth.

O mind, do not ask for anything.

Ask, and it shall be delayed.

Do not ask, and it shall be granted soon.

Did He not shower His grace on Sabari, who never asked?

Did He not perform the last rites of Jatayu and grant him liberation, without his asking?

So you do not need to ask God for anything. If you have purity of heart, He will Himself take care of you, just like a mother who attends to the needs of the child without its asking. Be like a child, and the Divine Mother will take care of you. That is total surrender. Leave everything to the Will of the Mother. Do not ask for petty things lest you should lose Her proximity. The one who asks for food will be directed to the kitchen, but the mother will feed the child herself who cannot ask. Only those with ego and those immersed in worldly life ask. But the one, who surrenders himself to the Will of the Divine Mother like a child, will lead a peaceful life.

Whatever you do, do it as an offering to God

You would have observed a dancer making rapid movements with her hands and legs while dancing but attention is always focused on the rhythm. Likewise, your mind should always be fixed on God while discharging your duties.

You might have heard the story of Rani Jhansi Lakshmi Bai. She had a small child. When she was left with no other choice but to go to the battlefield, she tied the child to her back, took a sword, and waged a fierce battle with her enemies, riding on horseback. But all the while, what was uppermost in her mind was the well being of her child. Similarly, you must necessarily discharge your worldly duties, but at the same time your mind should always be focused on God. This is the meaning of the maxim,

"Hands in the society, head in the forest."

You do not need to undertake any specific spiritual sadhana. Whatever you do, do it as an offering to God.

Do not waste food, money, time, and energy

In order to have sacred thoughts, give up vices like consumption of non-vegetarian food, smoking, and drinking intoxicants. Do not waste food, money, time, and energy. Eat as much as you can, but do not waste, because millions are suffering for want of food.

You all know what a miserable condition that the people of Orissa are in after a severe cyclone devastated the state! In some places, people are scrambling even for a morsel of food. You may not know the value of food, but they know it very well. So do not waste food. Food is God.

Similarly, do not waste money. Some students waste a lot of money eating in hotels, in playing cards and gambling. Misuse of money is evil. Do your work yourself Do not depend on others. Whenever you find time, wash your clothes yourself. Why do you give your clothes to a washer man when you can wash them yourself? You have no right to waste your father's money.

Time is God. That is why God is extolled as *Kalaya Namaha, Kala Kalaya Namaha, Kala Darpa Damanaya Namaha, Kalatheethaya Namaha*, etc. Time wasted is life wasted. Do not waste time in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. Instead taste Divinity by chanting His name.

Do not waste energy! Energy is God. Today, students are wasting a lot of energy through unsacred vision, bad thoughts, bad hearing, and excessive talk. Our body can be compared to a radio. When the radio is turned on continuously, the cells get discharged quickly. Likewise, if you indulge in excessive talk, you will be losing a lot of energy. That is why the ancient sages and seers used to observe silence. So, conserve energy by observing silence at least one day in a week. I often tell the students, talk less and work more. Only then the latent energy develops. This was the sole aim of sages and seers in undertaking various spiritual practices. Once the latent energy develops, your memory power as well as the power of concentration will increase.

Some students are not able to perform well in examinations because they are not able to concentrate even for a moment. They are constantly engaged in listening to radio news, cricket commentary, etc. with the textbook in their hand! With such distractions, how can they concentrate and retain their memory?

In olden days education was imparted to students in the gurukulas. Students had to rely entirely on their memory power and concentration to acquire knowledge, since there were no papers, pens, pencils, etc. to jot down what the teachers would teach. Their learning consisted of merely listening to the teachers, yet they could acquire high education. Though the modern students have access to papers, pens, etc., they fail to excel in studies because they

lack concentration and memory power.

You are not a computer; you are a composer

Young men and women!

You become divine once you safeguard your physical, mental, and spiritual powers. Let your body be engaged in good actions, mind entertain noble thoughts, and intellect merge in the Divine. Body, mind, and intellect are merely instruments. Understand the principle that makes instruments function.

The modern system of education has become computeroriented. There is craze for computers everywhere. You are not a computer. You are a composer. After all, what does the computer do? It does whatever you program it to do. It cannot function on its own accord. God-gifted brain is the real computer. Make proper use of it. Unfortunately, modern man depends excessively on the machine to the exclusion of the God-gifted brain. The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that people depend on calculators even for simple arithmetic calculations.

You should be self-reliant. Receive help from God only, none else. His work is only to help others. Emulate Him.

Help ever, hurt never.

Sage Vyasa said,

Paropakarah punyaya papaya parapeedanam
(helping others is merit, harming others is sin).

This is the essence of all sacred texts.

Do not give scope for misunderstandings and quarrels amongst yourselves. Unity is the greatest strength. Therefore, work in unison.

"Where there is unity, there is purity.
Where there is purity, there is Divinity."

If you have purity of heart, God will certainly fulfil your wishes. For example, if you are in need of a pen, pray to God earnestly. Pen will definitely appear in your pocket. There is nothing that you cannot accomplish with purity of heart. It is impossible to understand God. When you are unable to know your true Self, how can you know God? The other day, Uma Bharati mentioned that people come here to know God. It is a misconception. You do not need to come here to know God. First try to know yourself. None can ever comprehend Me.

Ashram education inculcates all noble values in man

Character is of paramount importance for the spiritual growth of an individual. Sage Kanva established a gurukula in order to impart teachings to the inmates of the ashram. Sakuntala was one such inmate, who grew up under the loving care of sage Kanva. One day, king Dushyantha happened to visit Kanva's ashram. There he met Sakuntala and married her. Bharata was born to the couple. Having been born and brought up in a palace, King Dushyantha was inclined toward worldly pleasures. On the other hand, his son Bharata, who was born and brought up in Kanva Ashram, was a repository of moral, spiritual, and ethical values. Ashram education inculcates all noble values in man.

Bharata became a paragon of all virtues because he received ideal education

right from his childhood. On the other hand, Dushyantha had worldly and material wealth. He was a mighty emperor. What was the use of all that he possessed when he lacked character? This clearly demonstrates the difference between urban education and ashram education. Urban education is associated with *shrama* (hardship), whereas ashram education is without any shrama (*a-shrama*).

Your character depends on environment around you

There is nothing wrong in enrolling as students of colleges in towns, provided one keeps in mind the purpose of education. One should not develop unnecessary contacts and get distracted from the designated path. Your character depends on the environment around you. In olden times, people felt:

If wealth is lost, nothing is lost,
If health is lost, something is lost,
If character is lost, everything is lost

On the contrary, modern youth feels that if wealth is lost, everything is lost and if character is lost, nothing is lost.

I think I am troubling you by talking too much. I can speak to you for any length of time, but I never indulge in unnecessary talk. Remember that you are the future torchbearers of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations. The elders of the organization today may be aged and have their own constraints. Youth have to take the initiative to lead the organization from the front. Each state organization should have its own youth leader to take up major responsibilities. Ensure that you keep yourself distant from politics. Work for the welfare and progress of society. That is the greatest sadhana.

There is only one Guru, and He is God

Let your behavior be exemplary wherever you are. As long as you are in Prasanthi Nilayam, you lead a disciplined life. Continue to do the same even after you leave the place. Be always immersed in the Divine, not in deep wine. Only those who are immersed in the Divine are dear to Me and are My dear friends.

If you want to be dear friends of Swami, conduct yourself in the divine manner. In such a case, you do not need to come here; I will come to you wherever you are. I will come there, wherever you stay. I am with you, in you, around you and behind you. I am not separate from you. I and you are one.

Vahe Guru means there is only one guru and He is God. He is the goal. Do not go hither and thither from one guru to another. Under all circumstances, hold on to God steadfastly.

Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu Guru Devo Maheswarah

God is your true Guru. You can call Him by any name.

In the word Guru, gu stands for *Gunatheetha* (attributeless) and ru for *Ruparahita* (formless). So Guru is formless and beyond attributes. So, God is your true Guru.

Having come here spending lot of money and energy, put into practice whatever you have learnt here. Once you return to your places, share the experiences and joy with your fellow youth. Only then will the purpose of attending the conference be served. Serve your fellow beings and sanctify your lives.

Neither by penance nor by pilgrimages
Nor by going through sacred texts
Can one cross the ocean of Samsara.
Only through service can one redeem oneself.
[Sanskrit sloka]

Serve, without any expectation of reward. That is nishkama yoga. No benefit accrues to you if you expect reward for the service rendered in various villages. Do not boast that you have served in many villages. Work silently; definitely, God will shower His grace on you. I am very happy that you bore many inconveniences here with love and patience after having traveled long distances. You might not have had the food of your choice here. Never mind, what is important is good head, which will lead to God. You should eat to live, not live to eat.

Embodiments of love!

Hoping that you will lead a happy and ideal life, I bless you all and bring My Discourse to a close.

There may be gold, silver, copper, iron filings, diamonds, rubies, silks, and other things of value spread out on a flat surface. But a magnet pays no attention to all the riches; it selects only the iron filings. It is the same with devotees. God does not select on the basis of wealth. He looks to the purity of the heart.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30. True education liberates

Date: 22 November 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 18

One may master all forms of knowledge, One may vanquish one's adversaries in debate,
One may fight with valor and courage in the battlefield, One may be an emperor reigning over vast kingdoms,
One may offer cows and gold as acts of charity, One may count the countless stars in the sky,
One may tell the names of innumerable living creatures on the earth, One may be an expert in eight forms of yoga,
One may reach even the moon;
But can anyone control the body, mind, and senses? Turn the vision inward
And achieve the supreme state of equanimity of the mind.

[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love - students, boys, and girls! You can call yourself a student only when you know the significance of education. Education does not mean mere acquisition of bookish knowledge. Many are experts in bookish knowledge. Many have become educational wizards and scholars. What is the service these intellectuals are doing to the world? Having been born and brought up in society, having acquired their knowledge from society, what have they done for society? What is the use of their scholarship and education if they do not show their gratitude to society?

Education is for serving society

Sri Aurobindo once told the students of Calcutta University, "Students! Why do you acquire this knowledge? Is your learning only for your selfish ends? You have acquired all these skills expense of society. If you do not repay your

debt to your community by using your talent for society, it is better you burn your books." Today, science has achieved great advancement. Many scientific and technological disciplines are taught to students. Is this knowledge imparted by society for the benefit of society or for the name and fame of the students? Having become great intellectuals, is there any genuine transformation in them?

Churchill once said, "Man has conquered all, but he has not conquered himself." Scientific education of today teaches one everything about the external world, leaving out the knowledge of the Self. The entire effort of man is now concentrated on knowing everything about the external world. All this is mere material and physical knowledge. The learned man today knows all about the external world but nothing about his own reality.

True relationship is that which you establish with your inner self. Everyone asks the question, "Who are you?" But nobody seems to be interested in putting the question to himself,

"Who am I?" The answer to the first question is related to the physical aspect of your personality, while the second relates to the spiritual aspect. Human excellence will blossom only when the relationship and balance between the physical and the spiritual aspects is intimately established. Physical knowledge is negative, while spiritual knowledge is positive. Humanness blossoms when the positive is blended with the negative. The purpose of education is to produce this happy blend of the physical and spiritual knowledge and help human excellence to blossom. Thus, the aim of education is total development of man.

Man should be transformed to become compassionate. Of what use is education that does not melt the heart of the student to the plight of others? Modern secular education is making man hard-hearted. Just as you try hard to sharpen your intellect, you should broaden your heart also. If this fact is not realized, of what use is your intelligence and learning? With proper education, both the mind and heart should be transformed.

Ancient education system

In this sacred land of Bharat, great sages have been making many changes and modifications in the education system since ancient times. Before the coming of foreigners, there were very few educational institutions in this country. Each of them specialized in one branch of knowledge or the other and helped the students to achieve excellence in that branch.

Kasi (Benaras) University specialized in the study of grammar. Alankara Sastra (rhetoric) was the specialty in Kashmir University. Ujjaini University specialized in mathematics. Similarly, there was a small town known as Navadvipa where nyaya (logic) was the specialty. Amaravati, the capital of the kingdom of Bharata (brother of Rama), specialized, apart from other sciences, in ayurveda (medicine). Ayurveda was a specialty in the Takshashila (Taxila) University also. One of the most famous universities of ancient India was Nalanda, which specialized in grammar, nyaya, medicine, and yoga sastra. Valabhi, Mithila, and Vikramasila were other well-known universities of ancient India.

In all these universities, apart from the specific disciplines, general ethics and proper moral conduct in life were essential part of the curriculum.

Learning professional skills is essential

Sathya (truth) and dharma (righteousness) were the guiding principles for all students. Besides, vocational training for various trades like carpentry, pottery, blacksmithy, etc. was given so that the pupils may be trained for life and may become capable of earning their livelihood in a righteous way.

What is the point in learning subjects that are not useful in daily life? Learning professional skills is therefore essential. Fine arts like music, dance, and drama were also taught in these universities. Amaravati University included in its curriculum all these subjects and their branches. Careful investigation indicates that there were only nine or ten such universities in those days.

Today, there are hundreds of universities. But what is the knowledge that is being imparted in all these institutions? What service do they render to society? What evidence is there that they serve the interests of society? With the growth of modern scientific and technological studies, the true aim of education, i.e. knowledge of the Self, has declined.

Vidya is termed Education. What is the root meaning of Education? The word is derived from the Latin root educare. What does it mean? It means to bring out what is inside. What has to be brought out?

Two types of knowledge

Every form of knowledge and capacity is latent in man. He is endowed with all types of potentialities - physical, mental, spiritual, and ethical. The true aim of education is to make explicit the innate powers of man. These are of two types. One relates to the knowledge of external things, and the organ that manifests this power is the head (brain). The organ that enables one to bring out the inner knowledge is the heart. The former relates to physical existence while the latter to higher learning or living in its true sense. Life will become ideal only when both these types of knowledge are made to manifest in harmony.

The knowledge emanating from the head, viz. reading, writing, etc., helps you to earn a living. All this is mere bookish knowledge. From pusthaka (books), it enters the masthaka (head). It is only superficial knowledge, that which has gone into books from someone's head and back into another's head from the books (from masthaka to pusthaka and pusthaka to masthaka).

Apart from this bookish knowledge, one must have general knowledge. Besides, one must attain knowledge of discrimination, which helps one to discriminate between good and bad and right and wrong. But above all, one should attain practical knowledge, which comes only after getting the knowledge of discrimination.

Due to his obsession with external knowledge, man today is immersed in self-

interest and forgets his responsibilities to society. When you engage yourselves in the welfare of society, your welfare is automatically ensured.

There are hundreds of thousand wealthy and learned persons in the world. But they are all engaged in selfish activities. Do you find anyone who has put the interests of society above self-interest? In fact, they confer prestigious awards and honors on those persons who are engaged in selfish pursuits and seek their own advancement. It is apparent that they do not know the real meaning of education.

Persons with numerous degrees are thought to be highly educated. Such proliferation of degrees is mere quantitative attainment. But what we need is quality. One teaspoonful of cow's milk is better than barrels of donkey's milk.

In ancient times, each student was himself a scholar

That is why in olden days, each university specialized in one area of knowledge and imparted the knowledge of the highest quality to its students. The university in Kasi (Benaras) specialized in grammar in all its manifold aspects so that the acquired knowledge could become useful and practical in day-to-day life. The Amarakosa - probably first of existing lexicons in Sanskrit - was a subject of study and even through this study of grammar the teachers of those days were preparing their students for Amaratva (immortality). In these universities, each student was himself a great scholar.

Who were the teachers? Often, the resident preceptor was himself the faculty and indeed the Vice Chancellor. The whole process of education was carried out independently, without any interference or control by any government or other agency. Saraswathi, the goddess of learning, was honored and given complete freedom. The students received her boundless grace to attain high standards of excellence.

Generally, the teachers did not take any salaries for teaching, nor did the students pay any fees. There was no fixed timetable for the teaching; the preceptor taught as and when he was so inclined, as the spirit moved him. He

might wake up a student at night and impart knowledge. Irrespective of his own convenience, he would clarify the doubts of his students.

And where were all these instructions carried on? The classes were held in natural environment on the banks of holy rivers, under shady trees, or in temple verandahs in a pure and sacred atmosphere.

Wavering mind is the cause for short memory

Today's education requires huge edifices. An enormous number and variety of equipments and implements are necessary, and huge effort, physical and monetary, is required for these. There were no such requirements of equipments or grand buildings those days. Even in the famous universities like Ujjaini and Takshashila, there were no large buildings or edifices like those of today.

There is no comparison between the teachers and students of those days and those of present times. Today, there are textbooks galore and numerous 'notes' thereon, but there are few that study. In the days of yore, there was no paper or ink. Teaching was carried out by oral communication from the teacher. The students were so receptive that they absorbed all instructions and retained them in their memory. Words emanating from the heart of the preceptor were imprinted on the hearts of the students.

Students today cannot remember what they have studied just an hour earlier. Why are the students of today so short of memory? The students today have a wavering mind, which is the cause of their short memory and poor retentive power.

Education in those days included the techniques of controlling the mind. Only when the mind is under control is it possible to absorb and retain the subject of study. That is why it is said, Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo (the mind is responsible for both the bondage and liberation of man).

Education should develop sacred qualities

This eternal truth has been forgotten today. The practice of compassion and love is absent in daily life. Without these eternal values, of what use is your education? It is therefore necessary to include these ancient values in our modern education system.

There is no harm in acquiring modern education and skills, but the blossoming of your heart is the fundamental education. A noble heart and a broad mind are your basic requirements; do not stray into narrow-mindedness. You should expand your love. If you narrow it down to yourself, then it will become contraction love. Instead you should have expansion love. This is the principle taught by our ancient culture. Forgetting this valuable ancient tradition of Bharat, you are engaged in acquiring physical and material education.

What are going to achieve? You have to manifest all those ancient values in your life. These values are not something that can be acquired from outside; they are all in you. Your effort should be to make them manifest.

Modern scientists have dug deep into the earth and made explicit several potent capacities that are resident inside the earth. By such indiscriminate acts, they are disturbing the balance of the earth and exposing the world to great danger. This imbalance has grown to such an extent that it can threaten the very existence of the world.

Today we almost worship science and technology. What is this science and technology that you are so proud about? All this knowledge is already within you. Proper enquiry and discrimination will reveal all these truths to you.

Any student of elementary chemistry will say that water is formed by combining two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen. You even know how to synthesize them. But are you making enough effort to see that water is evenly distributed to all the members of the society?

The welfare of society should be constantly in your view. If all your knowledge and skill is employed for purely selfish purposes, what is the use?

Ignorance is very close to knowledge

In Mumbai, some people are spending crores of rupees to convert sea water into potable water. Crores are being wasted in such futile efforts. By such methods, you may get a glass of drinking water at a cost of about five thousand rupees. This country is served by sacred rivers like the Ganga and the Yamuna. What is needed is to pump up and distribute this water to the people who require it. This will require only a fraction of the cost of converting seawater into potable water. This kind of effort at technology is like buying peanuts for a quarter of a rupee and paying half a rupee to carry it to your house. Such learning is not knowledge. It is sheer ignorance.

Ignorance is very close to knowledge, just as darkness is under a source of light. You imagine that technical knowledge has made rapid strides. You also believe that science has made great progress. But the fact is that side by side with the growth of physical knowledge, ignorance has also grown enormously. You are totally unmindful of this ignorance, and are continually spending four times the money and effort for fulfilling each one of your needs. This is the reason for Bharat's visible poverty.

Along with intellectual acumen, you must have the right virtues. Good behavior, good intellect, commitment to truth, devotion, discipline, sense of duty - these are the six aims of education. Who is teaching all these today?

We find that students are heroes in bookish knowledge and zeroes in practice. This is not true education. You have to become heroes in practice as well. You are writing a large number of good books and giving discourses to spread the message of love and service. It is not enough if these are propagated; you should put into practice what you learn. Only then will you be blissful.

Education must lead to experiencing bliss

Embodiments of Love - Students, boys and girls!

Modern education does not fulfil the aim of life. You gather graduate and postgraduate degrees, but these are mere burdens on your minds. What comfort do you derive from these degrees? Nothing whatsoever! Penniless, illiterate persons go to sleep without a care in the world. But educated persons with many degrees to their credit, acquired at great cost, wander about hunting for a job, almost facing starvation.

Education is not solely for the purpose of earning a living. It must lead you to experience bliss. Of what use are the job and the wealth if there is no happiness? Man is in constant search for wealth. Just as the earth revolves round the sun, man is going round money. Even a beggar can get money. Is that sort of income worth acquiring?

Virtue is the wealth that you should go after. In the absence of virtue, wealth merely makes you bloat with pride and ostentation, destroys your humanness, and eclipses your human values. Studying to get a degree, getting a job, running a family - all these are worldly activities, emanating from the head.

What should a learned person bring out? He should manifest the qualities of compassion, love, forbearance, peace, kindness, etc., which come from the heart. But, today, there is no compassion, there is only fashion. It is very important to have compassion. You should respect and love all your fellowmen and serve your parents. Parents undergo many privations and difficulties to give you the facilities for acquiring good education.

Respect your parents

You know how difficult it is to get good education these days. It is only in our university that you have the privilege of free education. Anywhere outside, it costs ten to twenty thousand rupees to put a child in the First Standard. For graduate courses, you know what the monthly expense is. Who bears this cost? Is it not your parents? Out of love for you, with your welfare, progress,

and future prosperity in mind, they undergo many difficulties, wearing themselves out day after day so that you may achieve academic success. You are just not mindful of all this.

Today, you are a student. Tomorrow, you may be a parent. Unless you respect your parents today, your children will not respect you tomorrow. If you respect your friends and fellow students, they will also respect you.

What will happen to you
when you become a decrepit old man, when your body becomes weak,
legs stagger and vision fails, and
You are no better than a leather puppet and are an object of ridicule for the
world?
[Telugu Poem]

It is imperative that you imbibe divine qualities. You should grow up as an intelligent, sensible, and compassionate person with human qualities. Otherwise, you cannot achieve the purpose of human life. Instead, if you join evil company and take to all sorts of vices, you will dissipate all your acquired good education in worthless ways. Seek good company. Tyaja durjana samsargam, bhaja sadhu samagamam, kuru punyam ahoratram (abandon bad company, seek the company of good people, perform good actions day and night). This is the proper way. By evil association you also become evil. That is why it is said, "Tell me your company and I shall tell you what you are." Make friends after proper enquiry. You must love all. Do not hate anybody. But you must keep in your heart good people only. Similarly, mere bookish learning is fruitless unless it is put to practical use.

Craftsmen like carpenters, potters, and blacksmiths were able to lead successful life in olden days. Today there is no connection between institutional education and practical vocation. Take the simple matter of

washing clothes. Why can't you wash your own clothes? Such savings can be put to more sacred purposes like helping a needy person. Money should not be wasted.

Tread the path of purity, humility, divinity and set an example to the world. When people extol you as a student of Sathya Sai Institutions by your exemplary conduct, how much good reputation is earned not only by you but also by your Alma Mater! Be sure to uphold your own dignity and respect. Only then can your parent institution have a good reputation. Otherwise, it will become a case of empty pocket, bare face, and shaven head! (A Telugu saying signifying total ruin.) Keep your parents and family happy Never mind whether your stomach is full or empty, but keep your parents and family happy. Speak gently and properly with them. That is why I say, "You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly." Nowadays, it is difficult to make out whether a student is talking to his own parents or strangers, because his manner of talking to parents is so reprehensible. If the father is not highly educated and approaches his son with an enquiry, "My boy, what are you doing?" mostly he is shrugged off with "Go away, don't bother me." Instead of this, if you speak sweetly with humility, "Father, I am trying for a job," how pleased he will be! If you can't please your own parents, how on earth will you please society?

What was the nature of convocation in olden days? After completing their studies, the pupils made appropriate offerings to the preceptor and prayed for his parting advice. Then, the preceptor used to advise them, "My children, now you are ready to go back to your families. Support your parents, get married and lead a righteous life." What is the state of affairs today? When children get back home from the educational institutions, they do not treat their parents properly. But the parents still take care of their children, putting up with all their misbehavior. Modern students do not have even an iota of our culture. What a sacred tradition it is! Loka samasta sukhino bhavantu (May the entire world enjoy bliss) is the prayer that our culture enjoins us to utter each day.

Understand the significance of ancient culture

There was an old man who followed his rituals strictly and performed his prayers (Sandhya Vandanam) in the prescribed manner early in the morning and at sunset. He had a grandson who used to sit in the verandah doing his day's homework, dipping his pen in the inkbottle every time he wrote a few lines. As he was busy with his study, his grandfather came out and sat on a little stool and started chanting the mantras, "Kesavaya Namah, Madhavaya Namah, Govindaya Namah," etc. Taking water from a little vessel, he sipped half a spoonful at a time with each mantra as per the ritual.

The modern lad stopped his study and started watching his grandfather. He started thinking, what a foolish thing his grandfather was doing! If he wanted to drink water why did he not drink it all in one gulp straight from the vessel? He stopped his work and asked his grandfather, "Grandfather, why are you drinking water sip by sip? Why don't you drink it in one gulp from the vessel if you are thirsty?" The old man was an intelligent person and knew the modern mind. He said, "My boy, you do your work in your way, I shall do mine in my way." But modern lads have the habit of arguing with elders. So, the boy questioned his grandfather again.

When pestered further by his grandson, the old man shot back, "You simpleton, you dip your pen in the ink bottle every time you write a few words; why don't you just pour the bottle of ink over the paper and be done with it?" Then the boy realized his mistake of arguing with his grandfather.

The grandfather continued, "Dear boy, you have to dip the pen in ink to write every word. Only then will it be neat. When I chant a mantra and take water, it reaches the particular deity whose name is chanted. When you write a letter and write address correctly on the cover, it will reach the right person. Similarly, the mantras are addressed to the respective deities. If you don't understand, you should keep quiet." Instruction was given in an informal and interesting way in those days. Today's students neither know their own job nor understand the work of others. This kind of general knowledge has to be acquired by direct experience, not from any institutional study. Hence, try seriously to understand the significance of your ancient culture.

Never forget your cultural values

What are present-day scientists and technologists are doing? Have they any idea? They assert that all that is on the earth is for the use and exploitation by man. Indiscriminate mining of all kinds of minerals and ores is carried on for so-called benefit of mankind. The earth is spherical. Systematic removal of material from one side causes imbalance as the other side becomes heavy. It is divine dispensation that maintains balance. This balance should not be disturbed. The loss of balance is the cause of earthquakes and other natural disasters.

Man is not only causing imbalance on the earth, he is polluting the oceans with industrial and urban waste. Water pollution has reached a stage where people are forced to drink polluted water.

Science helps you to develop and sharpen your intellect. There are many scientists; many of you are also students of science. You must know that knowledge that comes from within is at the top level. At the second level is skill; at the third is balance; and at the fourth is insight. Swami tells you to convert your knowledge into skill, not to kill it. When knowledge is killed, imbalance ensues. Why is there such loss of balance in the world today? This is because you have killed your God-given knowledge instead of turning it into skill.

Past, present, and future

Students!

Past is past. Forget the past. Do not worry over the future, since it is uncertain. Live in the present. The present is not just ordinary present, it is omnipresent. The future is the consequence of the present. The present is the consequence of the past. The tree of the past gives the seed of the present, which grows into the tree of the future.

Between the tree of the past and the tree of the future, the present is the seed, which is of utmost significance. It gets sustenance from neethi (morality). Without neethi, manava jathi (the human race) is bound to be ruined, and even its existence is impossible. Manava jathi (human race) is a balanced blend of truth, morality, and sacrifice. But we are failing to recognize the sacredness of human nature. Amongst all beings, birth as a human being is the rarest (Jantunam narajanma durlabham). Loss of this humanness in man is the cause of chaotic conditions in the world.

I said the other day, "Sathyam bruyat, priyam bruyat, na bruyat sathyamapriyam (speak the truth, speak sweetly, do not speak unpalatable truth)." This mode of living is true sacrifice. Who can assert that he is treading strictly this path?

Some people make fun of the Brahmins when they chant mantras. Each mantra is potent, and all our ancient traditions are meaningful. A small example. There is a wedding going on. These days you have elaborately decorated pandals or shamianas. Those days they had no such elaborate external decoration. Just four posts were put up, covered over for shade with green leaves and branches, and the people used to sit under the shade to carry out the rituals.

Even now, on holy days, we hang mango leaves on our doors and gates. It is not merely a sign of auspiciousness; it provides healthy environment too. The sudden influx of a large number of guests causes an increase in carbon dioxide. The green leaves help in reducing the carbon dioxide level and increase the oxygen in the place. Some people may ask why we should have green leaves; will plastic leaves not be better? Can the plastic leaves and flowers absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen?

Atma Tattwa was the basis of ancient education system

Dear Students! You should try to understand the inner significance of your cultural heritage. Swami never says you should not have modern education. Why would Swami make such an inhibition? All that is said is that along with

this worldly study, pursue also an enquiry into the principle of your Self (Atma Tattwa). This was the basis of the ancient education system.

You know, Krishna and Kuchela were taught in the forest. The friendship developed during that study was long lasting. Today there is no true friendship. If you have money in your pocket, there will be many who will be hailing you, "hello, hello." If there is no money, then "hello" becomes "hollow", and all friends desert you. Is this friendship?

True friendship is like a single life embodied in two bodies.

Your effort should be to acquire friendship like this. While making friends, do not hate anybody. Do not harm anybody. Bhagavan wants that you should all acquire education of this kind, with broad-mindedness and purity, and become a model for humanity. This is My benediction for you.

Television is the disease of modern times

Dear Students! As long as you are here, you are safe and secure. When you get back to your homes, you are assailed by various distractions like television, video, cinema, etc. All these pollute your hearts.

The programs on the television are very attractive, but you must realize that they are shown to you not for your gain but for the gain of sponsors and advertisers. Watch only such programs that are related to education, or those dedicated to moral values. TV has, in fact, become a disease of modern times. So, it is not TV but TB (tuberculosis). If there are no moral thoughts in you, what will happen when such programs are watched?

If you have leisure, take a walk. Don't sit in front of a TV set. You become so addicted that when someone intervenes, you lose your temper. Even the sound from the kitchen disturbs you, where your mother is busy making dinner for you. Why don't you get up to help her and make her happy? This is the main principle of our culture: Help ever, Hurt never.

Acquire big degrees, achieve fame. No harm. Go abroad, earn money and reputation; nothing wrong in that. But never forget your own culture. Don't criticize the cultures of others. Wherever you are, make your life an ideal for others. Speak pleasantly. Do good deeds. Then you will be a good person.

Goodness versus greatness

Do not strive to acquire the status of a great man. Always strive to become a good man. Great men may do many evil deeds, but the acts of a good man stand out as ideals for others always. Ravana was a great man. Rama is the example par excellence of a good man. Both had mastered the same studies: but how different were their natures! Ravana, though endowed with extraordinary learning, was himself destroyed and was the cause of the destruction of his entire clan, because of one bad quality of desire. Hiranyakasipu, the master of all the five elements, was ruined by his evil quality of anger. Duryodhana was ruined by greed. He refused to give even five villages to the Pandavas.

All these persons not only destroyed themselves, they were the cause of the utter destruction of their entire clans. Even one evil trait is enough to cause ruin. Then imagine how much worse a fate one will be faced with if one has all six evil qualities of lust, anger, greed, pride, envy, and hatred!

When you see an evil person, you will become aware of your own bad qualities. When you see a good man, your own goodness will come to your mind. Thus, your good or bad qualities have intimate common relationship with others. All men are bound together by their innate common qualities. It is necessary to unify all humanity. When such unity is achieved, then the divinity immanent in human beings will manifest.

Do not make friends indiscriminately. Always enquire into the good and evil in your fellowmen and then choose your company. While helping, you need not discriminate. Help anybody in need. Earn a good name for your institution by your reputation as a good person. That alone will make Bhagavan happy.

Keep God in your heart and serve society

There are no fees for the various facilities in the Sathya Sai institutions. You have complete peace in the absence of all fees. In other places, there are fees of many kinds. Paying out fees here, fees there, fees for this and fees for that, where is the room for peace? You only go to pieces.

Lead a peaceful life. Be good. Be a model for society. This is the gift of Bhagavan to all of you today. Do not forget God. God is your very life. Keep God in your heart and serve the society. You are bound to succeed in all your endeavors. Bhagavan wishes all of you to lead lives full of bliss.

Today, Dr. Goldstein is the Chief Guest. Since he is a familiar figure here, do not take him for granted. He is no ordinary person. He does not lack wealth. Nor is he short of academic distinctions. He is quite well known. He is the Chairman of the American Medical Council. Very few here have all the qualities that he has.

It is not for any of the material things like wealth, fame or health that he comes here. It is for the sake of the bliss he experiences here that he comes so frequently. When Bhagavan asked him, Goldstein replied that he found bliss here in Prasanthi Nilayam that was not there in America. You know he is a rich man. If he wanted his son to be married in grand style, he could have done it in America. His son was to be married to the daughter of a well-known film star who is also a rich person. But Goldstein does not bother about grandness and greatness, he is concerned only with goodness. The film star brought her daughter and Goldstein his son, and the marriage was performed in that little interview room of Bhagavan. The couple is happily living together.

His second son insisted that Swami perform his marriage,

too. For many years, Bhagavan delayed the decision. Finally, Swami asked Dr. Goldstein to bring his son here. Swami found a suitable bride for him from an ideal and well-to-do family. The marriage was again performed here.

In olden days, girls used to cry a lot while leaving their parents' homes after the marriage. Unlike modern girls, this girl also cried for Swami while departing from here, I told her not to cry and to come again with a child.

Both the sons of Goldstein are very good. Their goodness is in fact a consequence of their association with the Sai Organization. Their wives are also very good.

Goldstein does everything according to the commands of Bhagavan. He is in charge of the Sai Organizations of several countries, including that of America. He is a good, devoted, and disciplined worker. As a loyal member of the Sai Organization, he has the three sacred qualities: duty, discipline, and devotion.

Emulate him and follow these three qualities and become ideal models in your lives. Earn a good name. Make your parents happy; do not neglect them under any circumstances. If you disobey your parents, remember you may face the same fate when you become parents. Be good, see good, and do good. This is the way to God.

31. Complete surrender confers Bliss

Date: 23 November 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 74

Embodiments of Love!

The Vedas, the very source of all spiritual principles, have been enlightening the whole world from ancient days from this holy land of Bharat (India). They are the very forms of God. Divinity pervades everything, living and non-living. Anoraneeyan Mahatomaheeyan - from the microcosm to the macrocosm, the entire universe is pervaded by Divinity. This viswa (cosmos) is the form of Divinity. From dawn to dusk, you experience this form of the Divine, and yet you fail to realise this fact.

All that your eyes see are forms of the Divine. All the sounds you hear are similarly pervaded by Divinity. Even the thoughts in your mind are forms of the Divine. The bliss that emanates from the heart is also divine. When everything that is seen, heard, experienced, and enjoyed is divine, how foolish it is to search for God elsewhere!

You are seeing God in the form of the world every moment. Since you lack divine feelings, you see God as the world instead of seeing the world as God. Once you understand that Viswam Vishnu Swarupam (the universe is the form of Vishnu), you will certainly be able to see the world as God. Yad bhavam tad bhavathi (as the feelings, so is the result).

Do not limit God to a particular name and form

Divinity pervades the entire cosmos. Do not have the feeling that God is present at one place and not at another. He is everywhere. Wherever you search for Him, you will find Him there. But you should give up worldly feelings and fill your vision with divine feelings. Only then can you understand and experience the Vedic dictum,

"Sarvam Vishnumayam jagat
(the whole world is pervaded by God)."

Do not limit God to a particular name and form. He exists in all beings and in all forms as Atmic Principle. In fact, it is the power of the Divine that makes you see, hear, talk, experience, and enjoy. In that case, you may ask whether difficulties, worries, and misfortunes are also divine! Yes indeed! They too are forms of the Divine. Here is a small example.

Lord Narayana protected Prahlada, who constantly chanted His name and contemplated on Him. But he became the Lord of Death for Hiranyakasipu, who had no God consciousness and led a worldly life. So, both God and Yama (Lord of Death) are one and the same. He acts according to the feelings of the individual.

Even the most evil of men have some good in them. This goodness is the aspect of Divinity in them. The Upanishads say, E

aswara sarva bhuthanam (God is the indweller of all beings),
Isavasyam idam jagat (God pervades the whole world).

Do not be misled by various terms like Atma, Brahman, Easwara, Vishnu, etc. These are all different names of one and the same Divinity.

The term Bhagavan stands for Divinity. What is the inner meaning of this word? The syllable bha stands for effulgence, ga stands for one who gives, and van means one who is capable. So, Bhagavan means the one who is capable of spreading light and effulgence to the world.

This Divinity is latent in you. The principle of Atma is one and the same in all, be it a yogi (renunciant), a bhogi (pleasure seeker), a jogi (itinerant

renunciant), or a vairagi (dispassionate one). It is present in theists and also in atheists. Forgetting this all-pervasive Divinity, you undertake various spiritual practices, limiting Divinity to a particular name of your individual preference. Spiritual practices should confer the awareness that Divinity is all-pervasive. Just as fire is needed till the rice is cooked, so also spiritual practices are needed till you realise the innate Divinity.

Contemplate always on Divine Name

Even if you sow seeds, you cannot expect the crop if there is no rain. Even when there is rain, you cannot expect the crop if you do not sow seeds. Likewise, both human effort and divine grace are needed to achieve success in any endeavour.

Though butter is present in milk, one cannot see it unless one makes it into curd and churns it. Likewise, though Divinity is all-pervasive, one cannot experience it unless one makes appropriate efforts. Human effort can be compared to the process of churning. Once the butter is separated from the curd by churning, it will not get mixed with it again. If you partake of the churned butter, your entire being experiences it. Likewise, you will become one with Divinity once you experience it.

Before partaking of food, you offer it to God by chanting the following sloka (verse) from the Bhagavad Gita:

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir Brahmagnou Brahmana Hutham Brahmaiva
Thena Ganthavyam Brahmakarma Samadhina.

Where is Brahman? He is very much present in you. That is why you get the reply immediately from within:

Aham Vaishvanaro Bhuthva Praninam Dehamasritha
Pranapana Samayukta Pachamyannam Chathurvidham.

God is present in you in the form of Vaishvanara. He digests the food that you partake of and distributes the essence to all parts of the body. God, who is present within, is called Vaishvanara, and the all-pervasive Divinity is known as Vishnu.

God is not separate from you; He is in you

Devotees attribute different names and forms to God on the basis of their feelings. But God is one. Worship Him with the feeling that He is not separate from you. He is in you. He is the embodiment of love. He will manifest from within only when you develop pure and selfless love.

Spiritual practices done without the principle of love are useless. Some people sit for hours together in meditation but are unable to experience Divinity because their mind is unsteady. Instead of wasting time in this manner, it is better to do some useful work. God is the embodiment of time. So, do not waste time.

"Sarvada Sarvakaleshu Sarvathra Harichinthanam
(think of God at all places, at all times, under all circumstances.)"

Pure and selfless love is the only way to attain Divinity. Fulfillment of worldly desires will confer only temporary happiness. So, put a check on your desires. Your goal is permanent and eternal bliss. It is within you and can be attained only through love.

Every cell in your body contains the details of your whole being. In fact, every cell in your body holds your whole form. There are billions of cells in your body. While your form is immanent in each cell and in each limb in the microcosm, your body is your own macrocosmic form. In the same manner,

each one of you is the cosmic divine form (Viswa Virat Swarupa). You must make efforts to fully appreciate this reality.

The name leads you to the form

You go to a village to see your friend, but you do not know his address. How can you expect to meet him unless you know his correct address? Here is another example: Many people have gathered here now. You want to meet a particular boy. You say that he is wearing a bush coat and pants and has got a good hairstyle. But this information is not sufficient to trace the boy, because there may be many boys in this crowd who fit this description. Instead if you announce his name, say Ramakrishna, from the stage, immediately he will get up from the crowd. It is the name that leads you to the form.

That is why the ancient sages and seers started Namachinthana (continuous contemplation on the Divine Name) to have the vision of God. They undertook various spiritual practices with total devotion and earnestness. Do not dismiss this effort as meaningless.

The other day, I spoke about Bhavani Sankara. Bhavani symbolises sraddha (steadfast devotion), and sankara stands for viswas (faith). You can achieve anything in life if you have steadfast devotion and faith. Since this world is the very form of Bhavani-Sankara, it is called ardhhanareeswara swarupa (androgynous). It is on this basis that we use Srimati to address women and Sri to address men. The ancient sages and seers said,

"Sraddhavan labhate jnanam (only the devout can attain wisdom.)"

You should consider *viswasa* (faith) as your *swasa* (life breath).

God has many names and forms. Sambhartha and Bhartha are two of these

names of God. Sambhartha is one who creates everything taking nature (prakriti) as the means, and Bhartha is one who sustains and protects the creation. Telugu-speaking people use this word Bhartha for husband, but actually Bhartha means master, sustainer and protector.

Body is gifted to make proper use of time

People waste their time and do not make any effort to know Divinity. Out of twenty-four hours in a day, you should allot six hours for personal work, six hours for social service, six hours for sleeping, and the remaining six hours for spiritual practices like japa, dhyana, and yoga. Some people say they do not have time to think of God, but they waste hours together in mundane matters. Life becomes meaningless if you do not think of God.

The body is gifted to make proper use of time. Body will be sanctified only when it is used for sacred activities. You should understand the relationship between *kaya* (body), *kala* (time), and *karthavya* (responsibility). Do not waste even a single moment.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to contemplate on the Divine Mother day in and day out. Before going to bed, he would feel sad thinking that another day had passed without the vision of the Divine Mother. He used to think, "Perhaps my heart hasn't become ripe to deserve divine grace. What is the use of eating an unripe fruit? I shall ripen my heart and offer it to the Mother." That is the true spiritual practice in its subtle essence.

No one can question the powers of God

There is no constraint of time, place, distance, or complexity to the actions of God. No creature can impose limitations or constraints on God. God is utterly selfless. All His actions are sacred, whether they seem pleasant or unpleasant to you. Students are sometimes confused. They feel that if Swami is God, will He do this or that? How can you decide what God should do? No one has the authority to question the powers of God. He alone decides whether to reward, punish, protect, or destroy anything.

Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya Glanir Bhavati Bharata,
Abhyutthanamadharmasya Tadatmanam Srujamyaham.

God incarnates from age to age, whenever righteousness is on the decline. Sathya (truth) has to be upheld and asathya (untruth) is to be destroyed. Dharma is to be protected, and adharma is to be destroyed.

How do we expound the unity principle (advaita)? There are three forms of this principle of oneness: unity of substance, unity of matter, and unity of action. This piece of cloth is a single entity. There is yarn in it. The yarn is made of cotton. When the yarn is woven, you get a piece of cloth. If you shred the cloth, the yarn and cotton fall apart. When such a combination of matter in different forms is made, a simple object is produced. This is one kind of unity - material unity.

While the names and forms are different, the elements (pancha bhutas) of all bodies are the same. All are suffused with the same five sensory perceptions (sabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa, and gandha) and the same five life principles (prana, apana, vyana, udana, and samana). No matter where you are, your body is composed of the five elements only. There is no sixth element anywhere.

This body is a heap of filth, full of diseases, continually changing.
How can it cross the ocean of samsara?
Oh mind! For certain, this body is transient.
Keep your mind firmly on the Feet of the Lord
and surrender to Him.
[Telugu Poem]

When the five elements disintegrate, the body loses its identity. Once the life goes out, the body is fit only for burial or cremation, as the elements fall apart into their original form. Therefore, before the body perishes, make all effort to experience the Divinity within. It is only through body that one can experience Divinity. So, body has to be properly taken care of.

The body is karmakshetra (field of activities) and the heart is dharmakshetra (field of righteousness). When Divinity is enshrined in the heart, it forms Brahmakshetra (field of Brahman). So, to understand the pure Brahmakshetra, it is necessary for you to purify your dharmakshetra, that is, your heart.

Karmakshetra and dharmakshetra are in the same body. That is why the Bhagavad Gita begins, "Dharmakshetre Kurukshetre...." All thoughts arising in the mind also pertain to karmakshetra (kurukshetra). Thus, karma and dharma are performed in the same field of the body, which comprises dharmakshetra and karmakshetra. Divinity intervenes and separates dharmakshetra from karmakshetra (kurukshetra). A man of discernment is able to make this discrimination between dharma and karma.

In this world, there is nothing easier than attaining God. You face hardships and feel dejected because you do not understand this truth. Last night, you would have seen the drama staged by the students, wherein a businessman weeps for not being able to get a business license from the government authority. Instead of shedding tears for such mundane things, why don't you pine for the vision of God?

Sacrifice leads to Ananda

Once, Vivekananda asked Ramakrishna Paramahansa whether he had seen God. Ramakrishna Paramahansa emphatically replied, "Yes, I have seen God. I have seen Him just as I am seeing you and you are seeing me." "Then why I don't see Him?" asked Vivekananda.

Ramakrishna gave an appropriate answer, "You weep for your family, you

suffer for your business and wealth, but do you ever weep or yearn for a vision of God? Do that and you will certainly see God! All the time I am pining only for the vision of God. Therefore, God is visible to me at all times in every human being." The purpose of our birth should be achieved by the sacrifice of everything. Therefore, the Vedas say,

Na karmana, na prajaya, dhanena thyagenaikena amrutatwamanu (sacrifice alone ensures immortality).

In the process of breathing, we inhale and exhale. If we do not exhale, the lungs will not be able to function properly. We eat food. If we do not excrete, our stomach becomes upset. Similarly, in our circulatory system, blood is traversing an enormous distance each day. If it is blocked a little at any location in this journey, a clot develops. The flow of blood works for the removal of all kinds of toxic wastes produced in the body and helps in the ejection of the same. Without the evacuation of unhealthy substances from the body, good health is not possible.

Thus, in sacrifice also there is satisfaction. In fact, there is ananda (bliss) in sacrifice. The practical man of today questions the usefulness of sacrifice. Man is so selfish that he refuses to give even a handful of food to a starving beggar. How much joy is experienced when one is able to satisfy the hunger of a hungry person! Would you not feel joy when some starving people are fed? In human society, narrow-minded selfishness is rampant.

Even human life has little value in today's society

Once, in Mumbai, Indulal Shah, Dr. Keki, and Swami were going from Dharmakshetra to the city. As a beggar approached, Indulal Shah gave him a two-rupee note. The beggar threw back the note, saying that it would not fetch even a loaf of bread. This is the state of our society today. Money has lost its value. Why money alone, even human life has very little value in

today's society. People struggle hard to amass wealth, comfort, and happiness, even risking their own life. When somebody dies in an accident or calamity, the government gives a few thousand rupees as compensation for the life lost. Is human life worth a few rupees only? Has it become that cheap? No, human life is worth a lot more. When the body is dead, the life principle is not altogether lost.

People look for short cuts in everything, even in spirituality. But, surprisingly, spirituality does have a short cut. There is no need to wander here and there. God is residing in your heart. Turn your vision inward. You can see God instantly.

This is the easiest path. Have full faith that Divinity resides in you.

If you keep reminding yourself constantly that you are a part of Divinity, you are bound to become Divine yourself. On the other hand, if you harbour the feeling that you are something apart from the Divine, you shall remain far from Divinity always. There is no need for you to give up your vocation. Keep doing your function in society, but always remember that you are essentially Divine.

God Himself intervenes when His devotees are in distress in the performance of their functions in society. You all know the story of Gora Kumbhar and Kabir. When they were confronted with impossible tasks, God helped them in person; He completed their task of making pots or weaving cloth.

God is capable of taking any form that He Wills. Hence, He is known as the Virat Swarupa. The Purusha Sukta (in the Rig Veda) says, Sahasra Seerasha Purusha, Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad ... while describing the Virat Swarupa. The Virat Purusha has innumerable limbs.

Cultivate your faith and make it firm

Become worthy of His love. You can achieve everything. This is possible only through nishkama prema (selfless love). By cultivating such selfless love, you

become Divine yourself. And this Divinity is nondual. Hence, it is said, "Advaita darshanam jnanam (perception of non-dual Divinity is true wisdom)." Cultivate your faith and make it firm. There should be no ups and downs in this faith. If you allow such vacillations, you are likely to lose whatever faith you have. A firm faith results in your attaining Brahmananda (divine bliss). The happiness experienced with the body is human (dehananda). The joy felt in the mind is chitthananda (mental pleasure). Chitthananda is much greater than the bodily happiness (dehananda). When the mind is transcended, the joy experienced is Chidananda, which is immeasurably greater than the joy of the mind. You are needlessly losing your opportunity of attaining this level of bliss. Step by step, you have to rise through these levels of happiness until you attain Brahmananda. In this way, you merge your personal bliss into the universal bliss of Brahmananda, which is eternal.

Surrender you heart to God

One has to experience this bliss, which is none other than Satchidananda. Sath is being, which is eternal. Chit is total knowledge, i.e. omniscience. When these two are united, total joy, i.e. Satchidananda, is realised. Since sath, chit, and ananda are present in each individual, it is said that God is present in everyone in the form of Satchidananda. Therefore, you need not perform any sadhana, and if you are following some such practice, there is no need for you to abandon it. But in any event, surrender your heart to God. This is called saranagati (surrender).

Once, Lakshmana told Rama that all his wealth, family, possessions, and his very body was for the service of Rama. Rama said, "I do not need all this. What use have I for all these? Just purify your thoughts, words, and deeds and your heart. With that, you will experience heaven itself." Happiness is heaven itself. Happiness is obtained by the control of the senses. So, you can attain heaven by controlling your senses. Many people say that they experience the very heaven in Prasanthi Nilayam. How long will this happiness last? This will vanish the moment you leave this place. True heaven is inside you. This again is described as immortality.

What is meant by immortality? The body is mortal, but the life principle is imperishable. If you have to attain this level of immortality, extend total love to God. This should be unconditional love. There should be no conditions to love.

It is like going to a goldsmith with a piece of gold and asking him to make some jewelry of the design of your liking. Your business is only to leave the gold with him with the condition that the weight and design should be to your specification. You have no business interfering in the manner in which he converts your lump of gold into the piece of jewel you want. If you start stipulating that he should not burn it in fire, or beat it with a hammer, how can you get the ornament that you ordered?

In the same way, if you surrender your heart to God with conditions and reservations, how can you attain the bliss that you seek? Once complete surrender is effected, God will grant you the bliss you deserve. What He does with it in the meanwhile is His business. Love full of conditions will only result in very sad state of your body and mind.

Therefore, pray to God with unconditional surrender. When all that you possess - your body, your mind, your intellect - are His gifts, where is the need for your laying conditions?

Divinity is within your reach

Be fearless. Lead your life without fear disturbing it. Do not be guided by the opinions and advice of others around you into actions not in line with your conscience. There are a few who piously place the mark of vibhuti on their forehead while at home but wipe it off the moment they step out. Some are even ashamed to say that they are coming to Prasanthi Nilayam and tell their friends that they are going to Anantapur. Why should you worry about their opinion? Is it something wrong to come here? There are so many wrong things that people do without any fear, then why are you afraid of saying that you are going to see God? One should never be afraid of expressing one's faith in God. Be courageous and bold. These days, people are afraid of

performing their cultural and spiritual practices as also good deeds.

Be fearless and seek the company of good people

Give up fear and live in bliss. Involvement in worldly life engenders a sense of fear in you, and you forget your spiritual way of living. The bliss that is experienced when you are with God is beyond words; it is unimaginable. Words and thoughts return in utter futility, unable to describe this experience. It is this type of divinely bliss in which you should lead your life. That is how a human being should live.

Having been born as a human being, do not waste your life living like an animal. Eating, drinking, procreation, sleep, etc. are common to men and animals.

What distinguishes man from other living beings? Man is the only living being endowed with wisdom. A man without wisdom is no better than an animal. From living at a human level, one should aspire to reach the divine level. Of the several levels of living, the lowest level is the demonic, then the animal, higher than this is human, and ultimately the divine. When such a divine life is within your reach and sight, why should you fear? Be fearless and seek the company of good people; bad company can lead you astray.

Three main principles are expounded in spirituality. These are:

- 1. Don't put all your faith in your body, for you do not know what will happen at any moment of time.**
- 2. Don't put your faith in the world.**
- 3. Never abandon your faith in God.**

Once you are fully aware of these three principles, you can achieve anything.

Swami's message for you today is that Swami is you and you are Swami. In fact Swami is not separate from you.

Who invited you here? You have all come here out of love for Swami. Out of this love alone, so many thousands have assembled here. Here is Bhagavan, ready to be taken away by you. Carry Him away with you as you like.

Those who love Bhagavan wholeheartedly, to them He belongs wholly. All that Bhagavan asks of you is your wholehearted, unconditional love. Recognise this truth and lead your life filled with love. Take this as Swami's gift to you. Do not hate anybody. Hating anybody is no different from hating God Himself. Surrender your whole being to God. Experience unalloyed divine bliss.

Never forget God

Students! Pursue your study diligently. Obtain good position in your examination. Get good jobs in your appropriate chosen fields and serve your motherland. Swami has no desire to stop anybody from working in any profession or getting married or going abroad for study or work. Go wherever you please. Do whatever job that is your lot, but never forget God. Anything you do with God in your heart is pleasing to Me. Forgetting God is no different from forgetting yourself.

One who is wandering in search of God is a fool. Is there anyone in the world who will go about searching for himself? If you go to somebody and ask, where am I, you will be promptly put in a mental asylum. Since you are Divinity itself and Divinity is your own self, where is the need for any search? Search for God is an expression invented by fake scholars. There is no need for such an expression. You can search for the things of the world, but do not go in search of God, for He is everywhere. If you have this faith, you cannot help seeing Him and for certain you will enjoy bliss. Strengthen your faith.

Man himself is God; all matter, even in the moon, is suffused with the divine Presence. To search for God with the instruments in the laboratory is like trying to cure pain in the stomach by pouring drops into the eye! There is a technique and a special instrument for that purpose, which the past masters in that science have developed and spoken about.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

32. Divine love is true religion

Date: 25 December 1999 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

At the time of birth all human beings are pure and unspoiled.
It is only the environment and company that pollutes the human mind.
Follow the dictates of your conscience.
Love and equality are the birthrights of man.
[Telugu Poem]

At the time of birth, the human heart is pure, selfless and steady. But with the passage of time, man loses his purity on account of his association with various individuals.

The environment and company are mainly responsible for the good or bad in man. A piece of paper does not have any smell of its own. But if the same paper is used to pack pakodas or dry fish or jasmine flowers, it produces the smell associated with them. That is why it is said, "Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are." As your company, so you become. So, you should always join good company. You can attain exalted position only when he joins good company. Man is good by birth, but ruins himself because of bad company. Today man is not making any enquiry as to what is good and what is bad. Such an enquiry is very essential before making friendship with others. Adi Sankara declares:

Sathsangathve Nissangathvam, Nissangathve Nirmohathvam, Nirmohathve Nischala Tathvam Nischalatathve Jeevanmukti By good company, attain detachment.

By detachment, get rid of delusion.

By freedom from delusion, attain equanimity. By equanimity, attain liberation.

Bad company is the root cause of man's downfall

Satsang (good company) helps you to attain sense control. Sath is that which is permanent and eternal. In this world, everything is transitory. Only Divinity is permanent. Your feelings will become noble and pure only when you associate yourself with Divinity. First and foremost recognise the fact that bad company is the root cause for man's downfall.

Man wants to accomplish many things in life but is inhibited by the sense of fear lurking in his mind. It is only association with God that will make man fearless. Every flower that blossoms will not grow into a fruit. Every fruit that the tree bears will not become ripe. But every ripened fruit is bound to fall down from the tree. The same thing can be said of human life. Man develops desires and indulges in undesirable practices which will ultimately lead to his downfall.

Man has invented various wonderful gadgets, which can even take him to the moon, but the most wonderful and mysterious of all machines is the human body itself, which is God's creation. God has created this machine not merely for eating, drinking, and making merry. All these are common to animals also. This being the case, what is so unique about human birth?

Deho Devalaya Prokto, Jeevo Deva Sanathana

Body is the temple and the Indweller is God.

You may own a car, but it will be of use to you only if you know driving. Otherwise, it may expose yourself to great danger. Likewise, you should know how to make proper use of your body. Today, man is deceived by attachment. He is unable to realize the sacredness of human body. He is indulging in worldly pleasures just as birds and animals do. Human body is gifted to experience divine love, not to indulge in mean acts. Truth, righteousness, peace, and love are divine qualities. Birds and beasts have only love, but not

the remaining three. Only one having all four qualities is a true human being. Man should make proper use of the body. Only then will his life find fulfillment.

Perform activities without expecting reward

Embodiments of Love! Of all the gifts of God, Time and Love are the most precious. Man has to make proper use of time in order to experience Divine love. But today, man is wasting three-fourths of his time in mundane pursuits, whether he is brahmachari (student), grihastha (householder) vanaprastha (recluse), or sanyasi (renunciant). Then how can he expect to have noble thoughts? He is unable to undertake any sacred activity because his mind is clouded with ego.

The Bhagavad Gita declares, "Karmanyevadhikarasthe ma phaleshu kadachana (man has a right over action, but not on the result.)" So perform all your activities without expecting any reward. Do not waste your time worrying over the fruits of your actions. This is what is meant by saying, "duty is God." Divinity will manifest once you perform your duty with sincerity.

Serve with the feeling that you are serving God

It is a mistake to consider yourself a devotee if you undertake service activities expecting something in return. You have to render service with the feeling that God is present in all. Realize the truth, "Isavasyam, idam jagat (God pervades the entire universe)." You may say that you have done rural service or served flood victims. But these cannot be termed service in its true sense if you have the feeling that you served others. Serve with the feeling that you are serving God, for God is omnipresent.

Consider, for example, the sacred epic Bhagavatam, which speaks of the intense love and devotion of gopikas (cowherd maids) for Krishna. Bhagavatam chadivithe bagavatam in Telugu means, "If we study Bhagavatam, we shall become good." That is to say, Bhagavatam confers goodness on all. It contains the essence of all Vedas. The five letters bha, ga,

va, ta, and mu, stand for bhakti (devotion), jnana (wisdom), vairagya (renunciation), thapas (penance), and mukti (liberation) respectively.

Be one with the Lord, like gopikas

This sacred epic, Bhagavatam, describes at length the gopikas (cowherd maids) yearning for Krishna when He left Gokul for Mathura, where He was actively involved in running the kingdom. The gopikas were unable to bear the pangs of separation from their dear Lord and were anxiously waiting His return. The entire Gokul bore the look of a barren land. There was no dearth of food and comforts in Gokul; yet, the gopikas did not enjoy any of them because they thought life was not worth living without Krishna, whom they considered as their very life breath. They lost their health and happiness because they were unable to bear the pangs of separation.

Krishna, being aware of the gopikas plight, summoned His friend Uddhava and asked him to proceed to Gokul to console the Gopikas and pass on His message to them. Uddhava was a great philosopher and a jnani (one of wisdom). He knew that Krishna was omnipresent. As per Krishna's command, He went to Gokul and conveyed Krishna's message to the gopikas and gopalas. He told them that they should not limit Krishna to a small physical frame thinking that He was present only in Mathura. He tried to explain to the gopikas that Krishna is God Himself and that He is omnipresent. He advised them that since Krishna was present everywhere, there was no need for them to feel sorry that He was away.

Since the gopikas had totally surrendered themselves to Krishna, they would not look at or talk to a stranger. So, they took a bhramara (bee) as an intermediary and talked to Uddhava through the bee. Having been used to worship Krishna's beautiful form, they could not readily think of Krishna as a formless entity. Making fun of Uddhava's preachings, they asked, "Do you practice what you preach?"

You are enjoying the proximity to our Lord Krishna but are telling us to experience His attributeless and formless aspect. We don't want your

preaching or philosophy. We are not interested in your formless, attributeless God. Bring our dear Krishna to us." They said, "Krishna has stolen our hearts. We have only one mind, and that has gone with Him to Mathura, we do not have another mind to listen to what you are preaching." One-pointed devotion of gopikas The declaration of the gopikas that they had only one mind made Uddhava recognize their one-pointed devotion. He realised that the pure, unsullied, and eternal divine principle can be attained only through fixing the mind on God.

The gopikas lamented their separation from Krishna, "We want to see nothing but Krishna's beautiful form, hear nothing, but the melodious music of His flute, and experience nothing but His Divine Love. We have cried for Krishna so much that our eyes are swollen and there is not a drop of tear left in them. How can the ship of your message sail in the barren lands of our hearts! So, take your ship and go back to the place you came from. We are not interested in the formless aspect of Divinity. We want to see the enchanting form of our Lord." Hearing the words of the gopikas, Uddhava realised that all his jnana (wisdom) was worthless. He considered himself to be totally ignorant since he had underestimated the love and devotion of the gopikas for Krishna.

He stopped preaching and tried to hand over a piece of paper to the gopikas, saying that it contained Krishna's message for them. He wanted them to read it. They refused to accept the letter, saying that they could not read it as they had no knowledge of akshara (alphabet). But their minds were merged in the Akshara Swarupa (immortal form) of Lord Krishna. Uddhava was a bit angry with the gopikas, thinking that they had no respect for even Krishna's message.

Then one of the gopikas started explaining, "There is no point in accepting Krishna's letter since we, being illiterate, cannot read it. There may be one or two amongst us who can read. But we are afraid that our tears may drop on the letter and wash out the words written on it. There is another reason. Our whole body is heated up on account of separation from Krishna. So, it is possible that the letter may get burnt to ashes if our hands were to touch it. You are unable to understand our plight." They sent a message to Krishna,

addressing the bee,

O bee, why don't you go back and tell Krishna That He should look at us at least once?

Can you not tell Krishna to illumine

Our dark hearts with His resplendent form? Our life has become like a dried tree.

Please tell Krishna that

He should look at us at least once.

Can you not tell Krishna to illumine

Our dark hearts with His resplendent form? Our life has become like a dried tree. Please tell Krishna to put some life into it.

[Telugu song]

Radhika prayed,

O Krishna, we are anyway going to die Because of separation from you. Please allow us to be with you

At least in Your next incarnation.

If you take the form of a tree,

Allow us to be creepers that twine around You. If you stand like Meru mountain,

Let us be like a stream flowing from it.

If you become the mighty ocean,

Let us become the rivers ready to merge in it .

[Telugu Poem]

Thus, the gopikas always craved the Divine proximity. That is the sign of true

devotion. Truth philosophy consists of establishing a relationship between the individual and God. The gopikas never gave scope for narrow individual feelings. They aspired for the intimate relationship with God.

The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Have the firm conviction that God is present in everybody. There is no place where God does not exist. But you cannot see God as long as there is the sense of 'I' (ego) in you. The gopikas had absolutely no sense of ego. Their 'I' had merged with Krishna. As long as there is ego in you, you will find only multiplicity. Once you realize that you and I are one, you will find unity everywhere, which is true and eternal.

Dedication of the 'Messengers of Sathya Sai'

The old student association of Anantapur Campus, the Messengers of Sathya Sai, is celebrating its anniversary today. They are serving society and spreading Swami's message in accordance with the sacred name of their association. You have listened to the report of their activities. Truly speaking, they have done much more than what was mentioned in the report. In fact, I instructed them to make the report as brief as possible. Though their report is brief, they are doing yeoman service to society. Not only here, but also in various other countries like Japan, Canada, America, and Germany. They are undertaking service activities, upholding the ideals of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. They are spending their earnings in service activities. When questioned by their parents, they reply, "Swami has given us free education and free medical care. We owe our wealth and health to Swami. So, all our earnings should be directed for the service of society. We are not misusing even a naya paisa." Thus they are bringing about transformation even in their parents.

Never underestimate the capacity of women

You all know that there is a lady doctor, an eye specialist, by name Vansa in our General Hospital. She is a widow. Her daughter studied in our college and now she is living in Australia with her husband. She has brought about a

transformation in her husband and, as a result, he is also actively involved in various service activities. Both the husband and wife spend their earnings in service of the society. They do not have children.

Dr. Vansa prayed to Me that her daughter be blessed with a child. Her daughter said that Swami is everything for her and she does not want to get entangled in bondage by having children. She said that she considers all children as her own. She prayed that she should have the freedom to render service activities to her satisfaction.

There are many women who have such noble desires, but among men, we hardly find anybody having such broad feelings.

Since ancient times, many noble women have taken birth in this sacred land of Bharat (India), women who have set an ideal to the world with their exemplary character and devotion. You might have heard of Savitri, who brought her dead husband back to life; Chandramati, who extinguished the wild fire in a trice, demonstrating the power of truth; Sita, who came out of blazing fire unscathed; and Damayanti, who burnt a wicked hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity. All these noble women have brought name and fame to this sacred land of Bharat. Not only Bharat, the whole world will progress because of women of character and nobility. So never underestimate the capacity of women.

Women symbolise bhakti and men stand for jnana

The 75th Birthday of this body is approaching. The Messengers of Sathya Sai have chalked out elaborate plans for the 75th Birthday and have already started executing them. They have purchased 1000 bags of rice for free distribution of food for 10 days to the devotees during the 75th Birthday celebrations.

There are nearly 3000 members in their Organization. Their faith is unwavering, and their devotion for Swami is becoming stronger and stronger day by day. They are preparing to distribute 75,000 saris. They want all the

saris to be of the same design, so they have already placed an order in this regard. Such devotion and sincerity are present more among women than men.

In fact, women symbolise bhakti (devotion) and men stand for jnana (wisdom). The one with devotion has the right to enter even the inner chambers of the divine palace, whereas the one with wisdom has access only to the audience hall of God. You may be aware that kings of yore would convene meetings in their royal audience hall, where only men would assemble. Men had no entry into the antahpura (inner chambers of the palace). Only women who symbolize devotion have the access to the antahpura of God.

What is the antahpura of God? What is antahpura? Antaratma (Indwelling Spirit) is the antahpura. It is only devotion, not wisdom, that has entry to antahpura.

Most of the men who have assembled here today are here only because of the inspiration of their women. Women are responsible for men treading along the path of devotion. In My opinion, the Messengers of Sathya Sai should take the lead in spreading the divine message throughout the country. Mainly by the effort of women will the country progress. Not only Bharat, the whole world should progress. The ancient culture of our country should be revived.

The heart of Uddhava, who was considered one of wisdom, transformed on seeing the love and devotion of the gopikas for Krishna. He approached Krishna with a prayer that he may be blessed with at least a fraction of their devotion. The gopikas said they had only one mind, and that was centered on Krishna. But men have many minds! The statement of the gopikas is in itself the highest philosophy.

True Christmas spirit in Prasanthi Nilayam

If you look at the world with material view, you see variety. If you look at it

with an understanding of Divinity, all of it will appear to be the form of God. Yad bhavam tad bhavati (as your feelings, so you become). Allah, Jesus, Zoroaster - all these are names for the same Divinity.

Today (Christmas) is mainly celebrated by Christians, but do not make the mistake that it is only for Christians. It is a holy and happy occasion to be celebrated by the entire mankind. Get rid of religious and philosophical differences and enlarge your matha (religion) and mathi (mind). There is only one God, and He is the indweller of your heart. If you realise this truth, the entire humanity becomes a single race. There is only one religion in the universe and that is divine love (prema).

The one without this principle of love in his heart is neither a Hindu nor a Christian nor a Muslim nor a Sikh. He is no better than a demon. Complete unity of all religions can be seen only in Prasanthi Nilayam. Imagine what a phenomenon it is that Christians from 64 countries in this world have assembled here to celebrate Christmas.

This principle of unity is the sign of true devotion. Swami reiterates that it is not a celebration for Christians only but is a holy occasion for the entire humanity. It is the desire of Swami that such differences be completely eradicated.

There are several tasks in front of the Messengers of Sathya Sai. Mere distribution of food and medicines and conducting bal vikas programs is not enough. Of course, all these are necessary, but along with these activities, spiritual teachings are also essential. If the spiritual element of life is lost, life is a waste. Therefore, all of you ensure that your spiritual life is in the forefront of all your activities. These words are addressed not only to the ladies of the Messengers of Sathya Sai. Young men should take up similar activities.

Women can transform the world

Women generally have less freedom than men. If only women had been given

the level of freedom that is allowed for men, the shape of society on the face of the earth would have been changed. They work under many constraints put by their husbands, fathers, and children. In spite of severe pressures from all sides, they are advancing.

On the other hand men have hardly any such constraints. It is surprising why people with such freedom do not enter into a spiritual quest or social service. What is the use of your education if you do not use it for the service of society? You might as well throw your books in the fire.

Accumulate guna, not dhana

It is more important to achieve virtues (guna) than to accumulate wealth (dhana). Wealth is accumulated by so many persons. What have they taken away with them when they leave this world? Nothing. Of course, one has to earn wealth. But, accumulation of wealth should be within limits. All your faculties should be at the disposal of society. Only then your country will also advance.

You know very well the kind of unrest that is prevalent all over the world today. Fear and terror haunt you wherever you turn. It is the duty of the youth of this generation to set right this situation. First of all, serve your parents. Then, look after your family. Serve your community. Then, you should undertake the task of serving your country. But do not be hankering after the results for your efforts. The appropriate reward for all your actions will be granted to you by God. Service to the country itself becomes worship of God.

Swami is pleased with the services that you have performed so far. But, it is the desire of Swami that you should all perform much more. You know how a mother blesses you. It is necessary for you to act in such a way as to get your parents' blessings and approval. Tomorrow you may also become mothers. Serve your parents today so that in turn your children may serve you in times of your need. As you sow so you reap.

The only worthwhile thing in this world is divine love. This is the noblest

acquisition, which leads to bliss and immortality. Once you obtain this divine love all else in the world is yours for the asking. For this you first immerse yourself in social work.

The vain desire to obtain higher and higher educational qualifications should be moderated. You may earn as much wealth as you can, but use it for the welfare of society. Contemplate on God with your whole mind and heart. Only then will you attain a meaningful goal of your life.

Be pure in words and deeds and keep impure thoughts away. I am in every one of you, so I become aware of the slightest wave of thoughts. When the clothes become dirty, you have to give them a wash. When your mind is soiled, you have to be born again for the cleansing operations.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*