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1. Live In Atmic Consciousness

Date: 14 January 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi

The sun appeared serenely peaceful. The day started to get shorter. And the chill wind blew fiercely. The fields were ripe with golden crop. The farmers rejoiced in singing. The buds of flowers blossomed on the banks of rivers like garlands. The sweet festival of Sankranti has arrived filling our homes with the newly harvested grain. (Telugu Poem) When people give up hatred and violence, inculcate the feelings of love, and acquire the wisdom to realise the unity of mankind, the earth will then become verily the heaven. (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love! Boys and Girls!

During the last four days, Prasanthi Nilayam looked like a unique world. Students of Prasanthi Nilayam, Anantapur and Brindavan campuses, and also of Higher Secondary School and Primary School, worked hard with dedication and devotion and displayed all-round skills. Not merely the students but also the teachers, young and old alike, rendered all possible help to the students in their preparation. Truly speaking, such principles of love, unity, devotion, and dedication cannot be found in any other institution in the world. The world will be rid of all problems if such institutions are present everywhere.

Students - boys and girls - displayed wonderful items of skill and beauty. In addition to academics, students have demonstrated their talents in diverse fields. Awareness is life. Our students excelled not only in sports and games but also in performing on the band and nadaswaram , giving joy to all. The lion dance group consisted of boys from higher secondary school as well as from postgraduate courses like MBA, M.Tech, and M.Sc. They performed with great enthusiasm and perfection and made everybody happy. Girls from Anantapur Campus have undergone training under experts and have learnt

nadaswaram , particularly for performing on Swami's Birthday and Convocation functions. This morning also you might have listened to their performance. They participated in sports, music, and cultural events not for their own satisfaction but with the sole intention of pleasing Swami. They went through many difficulties and inconveniences with strong determination and achieved success.

You have just listened to the speech of a student, who hails from Darjeeling. He is a member of the lion dance group. During one of the rehearsal sessions, he went up to a height of 12 ft. to perform a daring feat. Swami had told him not to go to such a height, but in his enthusiasm to please Swami, he ignored Swami's words. He lost his balance and fell down. There was a swelling on his neck. Then I told him to take rest for a few days. He said, "Swami I have come all the way from Darjeeling only to dedicate myself at Your Feet. Let anything happen to my body, I will not give up my resolve." He was determined to participate in the dance. I was pleased with his strong faith and determination. I gently touched his neck with My hand and told him that everything would be all right. He was completely cured. I respond to each of you in accordance with the feelings you have toward Me. My sankalpa (will) is based on your feelings. Ultimately, the boy rose to the occasion and performed the feat admirably.

Today, you find many people, young and old, accomplishing stupendous tasks by dint of their strong determination. But so far no one has been able to unravel the mystery of mind and matter. All the activities of man, from dawn to dusk, are related to these two. Even the highly educated do not make any effort to understand this. If you ask them, what is mind, they say, "It does not matter". They argue that there is no point in trying to understand the nature of the mind. If you ask them, what is matter, they say, "Never mind". First and foremost, man should understand the relationship between mind and matter. The one who does not know the nature of the mind can be called a fool. The one who understands the nature of the mind is truly a mahaniya (noble).

What is the form of the mind? Where has it originated? What is its nature? What is the mystery behind it? One should make an enquiry on these lines.

The Atma has three powers associated with it:

(1) the manas (mind) (2) buddhi (intellect) and (3) samskara (culturally inherited mental propensity from past and present lives).

The vastness of the mind is indescribable. It can travel to any distance in a trice. Its power is beyond description and human comprehension. No task can be accomplished without the power of the mind. The mind has no form. It works only with the help of the Atmic power. Therefore, it is the inner Self that operates through the mind and performs all activities in the world. Even ages of effort is inadequate to understand the nature of the mind.

The second is the power of intellect. It is full of illumination. It discriminates between good and evil ,without giving room to selfishness.

The third is the power of samskara . Its results are experienced not only in this birth but also in future births. Samskara is giving up of evil and cultivating goodness in thought, word, and deed. It is not possible for any book to describe in detail the powers of manas , buddhi and samskara . Hence, I have decided to explain to the students about these three.

To begin with, try to understand the relationship between the mind and matter. One cannot exist without the other. Here is a rose. This corresponds to matter. Without the mind, you cannot see this rose flower. The mind is based on the principles of reaction, resound, and reflection. A true human being is one who understands the nature of the mind and its effect. You think that the mind is a bundle of thoughts. Then from where do the thoughts arise? The Self is the basis of thoughts. They arise out of Chaitanya (awareness). Everyone is endowed with vijñana (wisdom). But some foolish people feel proud of their bookish knowledge. Such people cannot be called truly educated. Without the knowledge of the Self, all other forms of knowledge are useless.

Take for instance a person who is highly educated in the physical sense. Ask him a question, "Who are you"? He will not be able to give the correct answer in spite of his high qualification. He might say, "I am Rama Sastri". This is the name given to his body and it does not correspond to his true Self. If you put the same question again, he will say, "I am a scholar". Even this is not the correct answer, because it corresponds to his worldly education and has nothing to do with his true Self. If you ask him the same question again, he will say, "I am an Indian". He fails to understand that neither his name nor his profession nor his nationality correspond to his true Self.

The body and the mind are only instruments. They are under your control. Do not identify yourself with the instruments. You are the master. Master the mind and be a mastermind. When you explain to him in this manner, he will realise the truth and give the correct answer, "All these days I was deluded with body attachment. Now I realise that I am the Atma , which transcends the body; is beyond time and which cannot be comprehended by worldly education."

It is the unseen Atma that makes the body function. People forget the Master (the Atma) and get deluded by their attachment to the body. All that is related to the body, i.e. name, profession, and education, are temporary. Truth is your name. You are the Self, which is eternal. Hence, give up body attachment and live in Atmic consciousness. As long as one is attached to the body, one can never attain the knowledge of the Atma . You may be able to quote from the scriptures, but that corresponds to only bookish knowledge, which cannot lead you to your true Self. You are the Atma , which is the source of all powers. In order to understand the power of the Atma , first of all enquire into the nature of the mind. The effects of the mind cannot be described in words. The mind is responsible for birth, death, action, family, childhood, old age, happiness, sorrow, success, and failure.

The entire life is based on the mind. Once you understand the nature of the mind, you will know the nature of matter. To understand the nature of the mind, you should have control over your senses. How can you control others when you cannot control your own senses? You should have sense control in

order to become a good leader.

The mind is very powerful. Without understanding its power, man feels proud of his limited knowledge. It is utter foolishness. He feels he knows everything. He is diverting his mind on trivial objectives without trying to know the Atma . This is why man is subjected to difficulties and misery. You are responsible for your happiness or misery. You should not blame others for your condition. As you are unable to realise your true Self; you are experiencing the dualities of pleasure and pain. Once you know your true Self, you will not be affected by them. It is a sin to blame others for your suffering. You suffer because of lack of morality in your feelings and improper conduct. Your destiny is based on your character. Character is based on actions. Actions are based on thoughts. Therefore, cultivate morality and sacred thoughts. None can escape the law of action. It is based on the mind.

Embodiments of Love!

You cannot exist without the mind. The mind is with you always. You can be called a human being only when you know the nature of the mind. This is the teaching of the Vedanta . Vedanta is the essence of the Vedas , which teach the Atma-jnana (knowledge of the Self). Atma is like the control room. Once you gain access to the 'control room', all your senses and the mind will be under your control. When the main switch of the house is turned on, the bulbs in all the rooms will glow. The Atma is like the main switch, and the senses are like the bulbs in different rooms.

Take for instance a mansion consisting of various rooms, like bedroom, storeroom, dining room, bathroom, and kitchen. These rooms are of your own making. Each room is separated from the other by a wall. Once the walls are demolished, only one big hall remains. Body attachment is like the wall that separates one from the other and that comes in the way of realising the Self. Once this wall is broken down, you will realise the infinite and immortal Self. Instead of realising the infinite and immortal Self, you are developing attachment to the body over a number of births. Develop detachment at least from this birth. You claim something as 'mine' but it will be yours only so long

as your body exists. After your death, what you earlier claimed as yours will belong to somebody else. Such being the case, why should you develop attachment to worldly possessions? Human life is based on 'I' and 'mine'. 'I' refers to the Atma and 'mine' refers to matter. The mind has originated from the Atma . Matter is the effect of the mind. Once you know the nature of the mind and matter, everything else will be known.

Students!

You have a long life ahead of you. Do not wait till old age to take to the path of spirituality. Start early, drive slowly, and reach safely. Be very cautious in this age, and do not waste your time in trivial pursuits. Time is very precious, and once it is lost, you can never get it back. Make every effort to know what ought to be known while your sensory faculties are strong. If you cannot do it now, you can never do it in your life.

Oh man, do not take pride in your physical beauty, youth, and sensory powers. Very soon, you will become old. Your hair will turn grey, your skin will develop wrinkles, and your vision will be blurred. The children will make fun of you, calling you an old monkey. Your body is nothing but a doll made of skin. Try to understand the mystery behind this puppet show. (Telugu Song)

Who will come to your rescue in the old age? Hence, make proper use of your senses and be self-reliant. Nobody can say for sure what will happen to the body in the next moment. So, do not develop body attachment. But you should take care of it properly so that you do not depend on others. Do your duty sincerely.

You refer to yourself as 'I', which is nothing but the Atma . Let your body be under the control of the Atma and none else. When you ask who Ramaiyya is, somebody will get up and say 'I': if you ask who Anil Kumar is, the person

standing here will say 'I'. In this manner, the principle of 'I' is fundamental and is present in one and all. Just as one lamp lights another, it is from the fundamental 'I' that all other 'I' s have emerged. The same current illumines all bulbs. Each being is like a bulb, and God is like the generator. If someone were to ask you, "Who are you?", you should say with conviction that you are the Atma .

What is mind? It is an aspect of the Self. Just as sugar is the basis for all sweets, the Atma is the basis for the body, mind, and intellect. One should hold on firmly to this fundamental principle.

You belong to mankind. Do not let your mind behave like a monkey. In fact, monkey is better than man in the sense that it participated in the service of Rama. Once, a monkey taught a lesson to a man thus: "Oh mad fellow! You make fun of me, but in fact, I am far better than you. Are you participating in the service of God, just as I did? I obeyed the command of Lord Rama, crossed the ocean, and found the whereabouts of Mother Sita. I stood in front of Lord Rama like a deena (obedient servant) and faced Ravana like a dheera (one of valour). Likewise, you should be humble before the noble and face the wicked with courage."

Today, man is behaving like a mad monkey. He may not have a tail, but he has the traits of a monkey. Give up monkey traits and take to the sacred path, keeping the Atma as your goal. Understand that you are the spark of the Atma and strive to harmonise the mind, the intellect, and the samskara . Samskara is very subtle. You may not understand its implication now. It follows you like a shadow from birth to birth. Samskara refers to the process of refinement. You have the power to refine yourself, but you are not making use of it. You have to refine yourself. This is the sacred teaching of Indian culture.

Indian culture is like pure gold, but such a precious culture is being ignored today. People do not respect their parents and elders. They have forgotten the sacred values of love and humility. They give importance to only worldly education and material possessions. These will be with you so long as you are

alive. When you leave the body what follows you is only samskara (innate tendency) and not samsara (family). But you ignore samskara and get caught up in samsara and suffer from lack of peace.

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and a mean-minded person will not give up his wicked qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom. What is the use of acquiring worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal . (Telugu Poem)

You will attain immortality only when you acquire the knowledge of the Self.

Oh student! You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire many forms of knowledge from various fields. Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring knowledge and earning wealth while forgetting God. (Telugu Poem)

Merely by looking at the world map, can you say that you have toured the length and breadth of the world? Likewise, mere acquisition of bookish knowledge is of no use. Ask yourself, what have you gained by forgetting God and reposing your faith in the world? Nothing whatsoever! You may go abroad and earn crores of rupees, but can you take with you even a naya paisa when you depart from this world? What is the use of merely going round the world? Does the spoon, which is used to serve various items like sambar , chutney, rasam , and payasam (sweet pudding) experience their different tastes? Likewise, man is going to various countries and reading various books without any benefit.

Embodiments of Love! Students!

Develop love and share it with others. Transform this world into a paradise of love. Then there will be no misery at all. Understand the nature of the mind and you will be redeemed. You took part in this Sports Meet, exhibited great talent, and won many prizes. This is also very essential from the worldly point of view. Worldly education is for life here and spiritual education is for the life hereafter. So both are essential. Worldly education is like the left leg and spiritual education is like the right leg. Both the legs are needed for marching. Likewise, both forms of education are needed for progress in life. Left (world) has to be left some day or the other, but right (spirituality) is always right. Most of us use the right hand to do our work. What does it mean? It means that we should do only right things and make everybody happy. Even in the daily life, the left hand is used to clean the dirt and the right hand is used for performing one's duty.

What is the goal of human life? One has to recognise the fundamental truth, i.e. the principle of Atma . It is within you. It is possible to know this only through the intellect, because it has the capacity to discriminate. If you want to partake of an orange, you have to peel off the bitter rind. Even the monkey peels off the skin of a banana before partaking of it. Likewise, the intellect should give up evil and accept the good. What is the use of human birth if man acts in the same manner as a monkey or a buffalo? There is a lesson to be learnt even from buffaloes and cows. They graze in the fields without wasting a minute and masticate leisurely whatever they have eaten. Likewise, whenever you come across anything good, accept it without delay. Later on contemplate on it and assimilate it.

Students!

Even birds and beasts are conducting themselves in accordance with their nature. But man, in spite of his education, has forgotten his true nature and is behaving like a fool. What is the use of securing 100 percent marks in your examinations if you do not know the fundamental principle of life? You may fill your head with bookish knowledge and vomit the same in the examination to get good marks. But how many marks have you secured in the field of spirituality? There is no point in getting first class in worldly education and

getting a zero in spiritual education. No doubt marks are important, but you should also see that you do not get bad remarks.

The boy who spoke earlier narrated his experience. When he fell down during one of the rehearsal sessions, he thought that he had lost his chance, and he felt extremely sad. He prayed to Me to cure him of his pain so that he could participate in the dance. Seeing his determination and faith, I cured him instantly. Such faith and determination are necessary to win Divine grace. Saint Purandaradasa said, "Oh God! When You protect Your devotee, You are Rama; and when You punish the wicked, You are Yama. To Prahlada, You appeared as Narayana and to the demon Hiranyakasipu, You appeared as Yama. You manifest Yourself in the same manner as the devotee thinks of You."

Help ever, Hurt never. The same is stated by Sage Vyasa: Paropakara punyaya, papaya parapeedanam (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). There can be no sinner worse than the one who criticises God. There can be no hell worse than distancing oneself from God. You may argue that there are many in the world who have forgotten God and yet lead a comfortable life. No doubt they are living, but they are living their lives like dogs and foxes. One should strive to live like a devotee to earn Divine grace.

Students!

Uphold the name of the Institute and be ideals to society. This is the gratitude you are expected to show to the Institute for having given you free education. In other institutes, you cannot get a seat without paying donation. But here, education is provided totally free. Money comes and goes but morality comes and grows. So, cultivate morality. Having been the recipients of Swami's love, every drop of your blood should be filled with gratitude.

Here is a small example. The Vice Chancellor made a phone call to Singapore and asked a trainer to come here and train the boys in the lion dance. Accordingly, he arrived and trained the boys. Yesterday, I called the warden

and asked him, "The trainer came here and made us happy. How can we express our gratitude to him?" The warden said he had no idea. I said that we would give him 40,000 rupees towards his traveling expenses. In this manner, I give personal attention to every boy and every trainer.

You may think that Swami is somewhere and does not know what is happening, but Swami is here, there, and everywhere as the principle of the Atma . I give satisfaction to one and all and take upon Myself all the difficulties and losses that may arise out of your actions. But you are unable to understand this.

All the teachers worked hard to make this Sports Meet a grand success. In spite of their advanced age, Radhaswamy and Ramamurthi worked tirelessly and extended their support to the students. They are serving in our Institute even after retirement. All have worked with unity. Where there is unity there is Divinity. Once you have Divinity with you, everything else will follow.

The success of the Sports Meet is the result of collective effort. There is no Institute like that of ours. The unity, harmony, and love that you find here cannot be found anywhere else. Swami is the cause of all this. Swami's love has brought about this unity. I am prepared to spend crores of rupees for the benefit of students. My only aim is to transform them into ideal citizens. Some people act in an ungrateful manner after receiving Swami's love in abundance. That is their fate.

Uphold the name of the Institute wherever you go. That is what I desire from you. I am prepared to give you whatever you ask for. Many people who come here are very happy seeing our Institute.

Girl students from Anantapur Campus also have worked very hard. Truly speaking, those living in Puttaparthi are very fortunate because they are able to have Swami's darshan , sparshan , and sambhashan every day. But the Anantapur students do not enjoy such privilege. It is twelve years since I visited Anantapur, yet they are working with steadfastness and devotion with the conviction that Swami is always with them. Their devotion and sincerity

will certainly yield rich rewards. Very soon, I will visit Anantapur and confer bliss on all of them. There is result for every action, but one has to wait for the appropriate time.

Today, many people are fear-stricken thinking that there is going to be a war between India and Pakistan. No such war will take place. Bharat (india) will be blessed with auspiciousness. Bharat is a sacred land and will be safe always. There may be minor skirmishes here and there. These days there is no unity even in a small family consisting of four members. In such a situation, how can a country with crores of population be free from minor conflicts? But there will be no war. All will stand united as one family.

Pray wholeheartedly for the welfare of humanity: Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May all the people of the world be happy). You can be happy only when the world is happy. There is an intimate and inseparable relationship between you and the world. Chant the Divine Name, pray for the welfare of the world, and participate in service activities.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan , Hari bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi .

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html			

2. Light The Lamp Of Morality In Your Heart

Date: **19 January 2002** / Location: **Bengaluru** / Occasion: **First Anniv, SSS Inst. of Higher Medicine and Health Meet**

(Text of the divine discourse delivered by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the occasion of the First Anniversary of the Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospital and the Sai Health Meet 2002 at the Sri Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospital, Whitefield, Bangalore, 19 January 2002)

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 an act of charity, One may count the countless stars in the sky, One may tell the names of different living creatures on the earth, One maybe an expert in eight forms of yoga, One may reach even the moon, But is there anyone who can control the body, mind and senses? Turn the vision inward And achieve the supreme state of equanimity of the mind (Telugu Poem)

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat (India). Of all the rituals adherence to Truth is the greatest penance. The nectarous feeling in this country is the feeling of love toward one's mother. Character is valued far high than the very life itself. People have forgotten the basic principles of this great culture and are imitating Western culture today. Alas! What has happened this country? The Bharatiyas (Indians) are not aware of the greatness of their own cultural heritage, just as a mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength. (Telugu Poem)

Man is making every effort to attain the state of perfection. It is culture that leads man to this state of perfection. Man has to undertake sacred activities to uphold his purity, culture, and character. Love is the fundamental principle of life. Fill your lives with love. Love is God. Live in Love. Ignoring such sacred principle of love, man is misusing his life by cultivating wicked qualities like hatred, jealousy, pomp and show.

The honor of a nation depends upon the morality of its people. Lack of morality will certainly put a nation to disrepute. The True human race is that which upholds morality. Listen to this truth, O valorous sons of Bharat (India)! (Telugu Poem)

Today, morality has declined among human beings. One without morality cannot be called a human being. Light the lamp of morality in your hearts. Only then can you lead a true human life. Morality alone can confer health and wealth on man. One should not develop undue attachment to the body which is physical and ephemeral. Besides the body, there is mind and spirit in every human being. Man should lead his life with morality as the basis. He should recognize the truth that human life is meant to uphold morality.

The entire world is pervaded by mind and matter. One has to make efforts to know the nature of these two. If you ask the modern man, "What is mind?", he says, "It does not matter." If you ask him again, "What is matter?" He will say, "Never mind."

How can such a person who does not know the nature of the mind and matter understand humanness? Do not be under the mistaken notion that the body, composed of the five elements, alone constitutes a human being. Humanness, in fact, consists of three aspects, namely, manas (mind), buddhi (intellect) and samskara (the process of refinement). These three have their origin in the Atma . On this basis, the Bhagavad Gita declares, "Mamai-

vamsho jeevaloke jeevabhuta sanathana (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being)".

The mind is an aspect of the Atma . Do not consider it as a mere bundle of desires. From the worldly point of view, it may be a bundle of desires, but from the spiritual point of view, the mind is a bundle of Divinity. In order to attain Divinity, first of all man has to cultivate unity. In unity lies the true culture. Unity is the ideal that man should strive to attain. Any mighty task can be accomplished through unity. Man has achieved independence, but he is has yet to attain unity. We find only diversity. Some people think that Swami has established this Super Specialty Hospital to render service to the people of Karnataka. But in fact, I have not constructed it for the people of a particular region. I have done it for the sake of the entire nation.

Man should make efforts to visualize unity in diversity and thereby attain divinity. Unity leads to purity. Where there is purity there is divinity. Only through unity, purity, and divinity, can one experience bliss. You can never attain bliss if you do not give up the feeling of diversity and cultivate the spirit of unity.

It is true that health is wealth. Dharmarthakamamokshanam arogyam moolamuthamam . Health is the fundamental requirement to achieve the four goals of human life, namely, dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth), kama (desire) and moksha (liberation). However, once you attain the state of bliss, you can always enjoy good health.

Man is deluded with the feeling that he can lead a blissful life by acquiring wealth and position of authority. Neither wealth nor position of authority can confer bliss on you. Bliss can be experienced only when you visualize unity in diversity. If you do not understand the principle of unity and attain bliss, all service activities, like construction of hospitals, will be of little consequence. Everyone working in a hospital, be they doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, or technicians, should have the spirit of unity. This hospital demonstrates the ideal of unity. All the staff in this hospital work with the feeling that they belong to one family. Our hospital stands for unity in diversity. It does not

crave money, name, and fame.

In olden days, education, health care, food, and water were provided free of cost. I have determined to provide them all free.

Our hospital is not a business center. Most hospitals have become business center. It is the worst of sins to run a hospital with the sole purpose of earning money. You should understand that you too might fall ill some day. Hence, you should treat the patients with love, without expecting anything in return. You should not aspire for money from them. After I have started this hospital, many doctors have become jealous of Me and have started putting obstacles in the way. Come what may, I will never give up this sacred task. Their jealousy will only motivate Me further to carry on with sacred activities. Their jealousy will ruin them ultimately.

There will be peace and security in the world only when people give up hatred and violence, inculcate the feelings of love, and realize the unity of mankind. (Telugu Poem)

One should never be jealous of others' prosperity. Jealousy is the worst quality.

Asuya (jealousy) and anasuya (one without jealousy) are sisters. Anasuya was blessed with three sons, the divine Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara. Asuya also has three sons, namely, desire, anger, and hatred. Once you give up Asuya , you can win the grace of the divine Trinity. You should participate in good activities and extend your cooperation to those who undertake them.

Once I take up a sacred task, I never go back on it. There are many poor and down-trodden people who are suffering for want of proper medical care. Nobody cares for them in big hospitals, because they cannot afford costly treatments. In some hospitals, they are not even permitted to enter the main

gate. Can there be a greater sin than this? My intention is to provide free medical care to all such poor and forlorn people.

For a happy and healthy life, apart from proper medical attention, pure drinking water is also very essential. My plan of action for the welfare of humanity is stupendous. It is bound about the resources. There is no dearth of resources in our country Bharat (India). But there are very few who have the noble intention of doing good to society. When you undertake a sacred task, even nature will extend all its help. The sacred epic Ramayana stands ample testimony to this. When Rama, the embodiment of dharma, was proceeding to Lanka to rescue His consort Sita, nature extended all its cooperation. He was helped by monkeys and even by a small squirrel.

When you sow a good action today, you reap samskara (the process of refinement) tomorrow. Samskara leads to purity, which in turn confers merit. Man should always be prepared to undertake good activities. He should never postpone them.

On this sacred occasion, I have decided to undertake yet another service project. In Chennai, there is scarcity of drinking water. The rich can afford to get water through tankers and lorries, but what about the poor? They spoil their health by drinking polluted water from ponds and puddles. Hence, whatever may be the difficulty, I have decided to provide drinking water to the people of Chennai. The waters of the rivers Godavari and Krishna are being drained into the sea without being properly utilized. Even in Rayalaseema, people are suffering from water scarcity. The districts of Bellary, Anantapur, Cuddapah, and Kurnool are classified as backward regions. I want to provide pure drinking' water to all these four districts also. This project is bound to be successful. There is no doubt about it.

Man should have unwavering faith. But today man has no faith in himself. Then how can he have faith in God? People have become blind, having lost the eyes of faith. One with faith alone can be called a true human being. Man is misusing such a sacred birth. Janthunam narajanma durlabham (out of all the living beings, the human birth is the rarest).

Help others. Only then can your life find fulfillment. You know why hands are given to you? Is it merely to partake of food? No. They are meant to render service to others. You know why the tongue is given? Is it to indulge in vain gossip? No. It is meant to chant the divine Name. In this manner, all the senses should be properly utilized. This is what Buddha did. He studied various sacred texts, met many noble souls, and listened to their teachings, but he was not satisfied. Ultimately, he realized that spiritual practices are of no avail if one does not make proper use of one's senses.

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

In order to sanctify your senses, you should utilize them in the service of others. *Yad bhavam tad bhavathi* (as you think so you become). If you have bad vision, listen to bad talk, or indulge in bad activities, you will ultimately ruin yourself. If you cannot undertake any service activity, at least speak softly and sweetly. You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. Today, man speaks harsh words, which hurt the feelings of others. He puts his senses to misuse, how can he expect to be happy and healthy? In order to enjoy perfect health, make sacred use of your senses. You may be a pauper or a millionaire. You may have money or not, but God has given each one of you five senses. Make proper use of them and sanctify your lives.

Embodiments of Love!

Each one of you is endowed with *hridaya* (heart). That which is filled with *daya* (compassion) is *hridaya*. But today man has become stone-hearted. Truly speaking, man is not one of wicked qualities. He is one of virtues. It is said that human birth is the rarest, but if man indulges in bestial and demonic traits, how can we say that he is superior to other beings? He should utilize his education, wealth, and energy for the welfare of others. No doubt, money is essential, but one should not crave to amass wealth. One may build a

hospital, spending crores of rupees, but one should not expect manifold returns. One should spend at least fifty per cent of the money earned on charity. Today, doctors do not give free medicine even to a single patient. The cost of medicines have gone up these days.

It is ten years since we constructed the Super Specialty Hospital in Puttaparthi. Believe it or not, so far we have conducted 70,000 operations free of cost. This hospital has completed one year, and here also we have performed thousands of open heart and bypass surgeries. Crores of rupees are being spent every month. Not many are aware of this. Even if I have to spend thousands of crores, I will not give up this sacred task. I want this hospital to grow further and serve the needy.

Our Chief Minister Krishna helped us to a great extent in the construction of this hospital. Besides other things, he gave us the land free of cost. His heart is filled with the spirit of sacrifice. Thyagenaikena amrutatth wamanasu (only through sacrifice can one attain immortality).

The Chief Minister of Maharashtra, who is with us here today, wants a similar hospital to be constructed in Mumbai. He is prepared to give the required land for it. In Mumbai, life is becoming increasingly difficult because of pollution. Health is very essential to achieve any task.

Human life is not meant to amass wealth. When you depart from the world, can you take even a naya paisa (a unit of currency in India) with you? Man cannot take even a fistful of sand when he leaves the world; otherwise, there would have been rationing for sand also. What you ultimately carry with you is only the results of your actions, merit or sin. Hence, do not indulge in sinful deeds. Undertake meritorious activities.

Paropakara punyaya, papaya parapeedanam (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). Help ever, Hurt never. To the extent possible, perform acts of charity and help everybody. Fill your hearts with love. We consider it our duty to treat the patients and alleviate their suffering. Duty is God. Work is worship. I am doing it with love. It is from the source,

and not by force.

I want to make another point clear to you. People, including those who are sitting here, are indulging in wild imagination regarding the incident that occurred the day before yesterday. Actually, there is no truth in it. People may think whatever they want. Newspapers are mainly responsible for this restlessness. They are interested in publicizing only bad news items and not in sharing good news with others. What is the purpose of a newspaper? It has to collect NEWS from the four sides - North, East, West, and South - and disseminate the same. Today, instead of gathering authentic information, newspapers However, there are some good newspapers like The Times of India and The Hindu, which give correct information. Newspapers should present the facts as they are. But they distort the truth and publicize it in a sensational manner only to make money.

Be it good or bad, report the incidents as they happen. Do not spread false news. What happened the day before yesterday was only a fraction of what has been magnified and reported by the print media and the television. Even the television doesn't seem to have any work other than spreading such false news. Now I am seventy-six years old. Till this day, I have not had any contact with people from either the print media or television. I have nothing to do with newspapers.

One can definitely develop friendship with those who report the truth. What is the use of talking to those who publicize untruth? Spreading untruth is a sin. If you speak untruth once, you will have to face its consequences in many births. Such being the case, you can very well imagine the fate of those who indulge in untruth hundreds of times every day. Newspapers should report events exactly as they happened. No one will have any objection to it. It is a sin to spread false news.

Actually, what had happened the day before yesterday was nothing. I went until the last row of the Hall, went near even those who were sitting outside, collected letters from them, and then sat on the dais for forty minutes. Nothing happened. After that, I went inside, had a little food, and visited the

hospital to oversee the arrangements. By the time I returned to Brindavan from there, all sorts of false news had spread all over. I did not see anybody, nor did anyone come near Me. But the newspapers have reported that someone came near Me with a pistol. Is it not a blatant lie? Did any of the journalists see the incident with his own eyes? Why should they write untruth? After all, it was only an air pistol, which is used to shoot down birds. Such a minor incident was exaggerated. It is a great mistake. Let the journalists think what they want. I have nothing to do with newspapers.

My heart is filled with love and love alone. I share My love with one and all. All are Mine and I belong to all. I don't have hatred toward anybody. All love Me and I love all. Love is the intimate relationship that exists between you and Me. The newspapers made a mountain out of molehill and caused anxiety to many. What a sin they committed! There should be a limit to their jealousy. Devotees from various countries, like America, Japan, Germany, and England, sent telegrams to Me expressing their concern.

The President of America has said that the terrorists should be wiped out. Who are the terrorists? Anger and jealousy are the 'terrorists'. These wicked traits are present in every man. Man should make every effort to annihilate them. Only then can the world progress. One should not kill one's fellow human beings; instead, one should destroy the 'terrorists' within and cultivate virtues. This is what I desire from you. The country will attain plenty and prosperity and set an ideal to the rest of the world only when jealousy and anger are completely eradicated.

Embodiments of Love!

Today, we are celebrating the first anniversary of our hospital. I am not interested in such celebrations. I want each one of you to cultivate purity, love, and compassion. There is no human being in the world without love. Love is sacred, infinite, and most wonderful. Having been endowed with such divine love, why do you behave in a manner that is contrary to your true nature? I wish that you lead your lives with love and make this country an ideal one. With this, I bless you all and bring My Discourse to a close.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

3. Sanctify your life by chanting the divine name

Date: 24 February 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Sanctity Your Life By Chanting The Divine Name

If you leave ego, you become dear to all;

If you conquer anger, you become free from
worries;

You become prosperous when you control your
desires;

You attain happiness only when you conquer greed.

(Sanskrit Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

IT is the main duty of man to acquire a cool mind like the moonlight and shining wisdom like sun light. As long as man is egoistic, none will love him, including his own wife and children. He will win the love of all when he gives up his ego. Ego is like a bomb that destroys man. So, in the first instance, man should get rid of ego. So long as there is anger in man, he cannot be free from sorrow. He will be respected by all only when he gives up anger. One with greed can never attain happiness. Man can be happy and make others happy only when he gives up greed. Ego, anger and greed are three evil qualities that turn man into a demon.

Do All Service As An Offering To God

There is One in this world, by knowing whom you would have known all. If

That is not known, there is no point in knowing the rest. That is the knowledge of the Self. Zero gains value only when the number one is associated with it. The more the number of zeros, the more is the value. When one is removed, all zeros lose their value. Love for the Self can be compared to the number one. Man's life gains value only when he has love for the Self. Isavasyam idam sarvam (the entire universe is permeated by God). Who is Easwara? It is the chaithanya (consciousness) that pervades all beings.

Embodiments of Love!

Your lives will be redeemed only when you contemplate on the Divine Name incessantly. All your wealth and comforts will be of little consequence if you do not have love for God. In Bharat, there are millions of people who serve their fellowmen with God's Name on their lips. "Neither by penance nor by pilgrimage nor by study of scriptures nor by japa can one cross the ocean of life. One can achieve it only by serving the pious." (Sanskrit verse) Service is very important. Serve everybody with the conviction that God dwells in all. As you serve others, you have to kill your ego. It cannot be called service if it is done with the feeling that "I am serving others". Sarva karma Bhagavad preethyartham (do all actions to please God). This is the attitude one should have while serving others. There are many who take part in service activities, but how many are able to enjoy the benefits derived therefrom? First of all, you should understand the term service. True service is that which is done with divine feelings, forgetting oneself. Service should be done as an offering to God. Service has value only when it is done with daivabhimana (love for God) and not dehabhimana (attachment to body). Even a small act of service done with the sole intention of pleasing God will acquire great significance.

Cultivate The Spirit Of Oneness

Embodiments of Love!

Enquire, who is serving whom. The one who is serving and the one who is served are one and the same. Ekatma sarvabhutantaratma (the same atma is present in all beings). Ekam Sath viprah bahudha vadanti (Truth is one but scholars refer to it by many names). Ek Prabhu ke anek nam (one God has many names). God is one though you extol Him by various names. Names and forms are not important. Feeling is the basis for devotion. God is bhavapriya (lover of feelings) not bahyapriya (lover of external show), which means God sees the feeling behind your activities. People from Bejawada (Vijayawada) have come here after taking part in Grama Seva (service to villages) chanting the Divine Name for the last 76 days. Thousands of devotees from Shirdi have come here on a pilgrimage. They visited various pilgrimage centres and have come here from Kanyakumari via Bangalore. Karmanubandheeni manushya loke (human society is bound by action). Why is the body given to you? God has given you the body to perform loka seva (service to the world). Do not misuse the body by indulging in evil thoughts and deeds. Undertake noble deeds and sanctify your lives. Man's foremost duty is to serve society with noble feelings. Consider the body as an instrument given by God in order to serve your fellowmen with love.

God is present in every being as the eternal witness. This truth is proclaimed by 'Soham' which is pronounced with each breath, 'So' with each inhalation and 'Ham' with each exhalation. 'So' means That (God) and 'Ham' means I. This process goes on for 21,600 times a day in every human being. In this manner, the inner voice reminds man of his divine nature as many times everyday. But man acts in a foolish manner without paying heed to his inner voice. Who is the doer? Who breathes, who speaks, who listens, who acts? It is the Self within, which is the same in all. Cultivate this spirit of oneness. The one who does and the one who makes you do are one and the same. Understand that you are not serving others, you are serving yourself. The same truth is proclaimed by the Vedas in the four Mahavakyas: Prajnanam Brahma (Brahman is Supreme Consciousness); Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman); Tattwamasi (that thou art), Ayam Atma Brahma (this atma is Brahman). These are the greatest teachings given to mankind by the Vedas. Unfortunately, man today has lost faith in the teachings of the Vedas. Divinity shines in every breath of man. Truly speaking, man is endowed with sujnana

(wisdom) and prajna (awareness). But man, out of his ignorance, is acting contrary to his divine nature. Before partaking of food, you offer it to God with the prayer:

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir
Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam
Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam
Brahma Karma Samadhina.

You say that the food is an offering to Brahman. Then where is Brahman? He is within. So, immediately God replies from within:

Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva
Praninam Dehamasrita
Pranapana Samayukta
Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.

Glorify Human Life By Your Meritorious Deeds

God is present in the form of Vaisvanara in everybody. So, when you help others, you are helping yourself. Similarly, hurting others amounts to hurting your own self. Sarva jeeva namaskaram kesavam pratigachchhati (whomsoever you salute, it reaches God) and Sarva jeeva tiraskaram

kesavam pratigachchhati (whomsoever you denigrate, it reaches God). There is no point in undertaking pilgrimages or chanting the divine name without understanding the oneness of divinity. You may call Him by any name and worship Him in any form, but God is one. Never forget this principle of unity. But, unfortunately, man fragments unity into diversity. Try to visualise unity in diversity. This is the true service that man is supposed to undertake. Man mein ram hath mein kam (install God in your heart and use your hands in the service of society). Then whatever work you do will be transformed into worship.

Today man lacks faith in the path of service. For the past many years, you have been listening to discourses and performing various service activities. But what have you achieved? What have you known? Nothing whatsoever. Therefore, in the first instance, you should cultivate righteous conduct. Develop right vision, right listening and right speech. By practising these, you can develop goodness. Only then can you attain Nirvana (liberation). Do not be under the impression that God is confined only to temples. It is not enough if you merely visit temples and offer your salutations to the idols of God. Offer your salutations to all beings with the conviction that you are saluting the Lord Himself. There is no being without God. God is the Indweller of all beings (sarvabhutantaratma). Man's foremost duty is to understand this truth and act accordingly.

You have been listening to various discourses, going on pilgrimages and reading sacred texts. But what is the use if there is no transformation in you? Man today has become stone-hearted. Heart should be as soft as butter. Mind should be as cool as moonlight and speech should be as sweet as honey. These are the main values that the Sathya Sai Organisation stands for. These are the true ornaments of man. Though man is endowed with sacred qualities and immense powers, he is leading a meaningless life without making use of them in the service of others. Though God has endowed man with a sweet heart and a sacred mind, man is not putting them to proper use. Never utter harsh words; always speak softly and sweetly. Make proper use of the

faculties given to you by God.

Embodiments of Love!

To be born as human being is the greatest blessing. Janthunam narajanma durlabham (out of all the living beings, human birth is the rarest). It is the result of merits accrued over many previous lives. Such a sacred life should not be misused. Speak sweetly and offer your respects to all with a smiling face. You call yourself a devotee. But there is no truth in this statement if you lack these noble qualities. Fill your mind with noble thoughts and perform meritorious deeds. There lies the glory of human life. You should earn the respect of everybody by your behaviour.

Do not consider yourself a mere mortal. Jiva is deva (man is divine). This is the fundamental teaching of Indian philosophy. Easwara sarva bhutanam (God is the Indweller of all beings). Fill your hearts with such noble feelings, put them into practice and sanctify your lives. Remember that you are born as a human being. Live up to your stature as a human being. Spirituality does not mean doing worship, going on pilgrimages or doing bhajans alone. Spirituality lies in destroying the animal tendencies and rising to the level of divinity. So long as there are animal tendencies in man, he cannot rise to the level of divinity. Day by day, animal qualities are increasing in man. You are neither a wild animal to cause fear in others nor a docile domestic animal to be afraid of others. You are born as a human being with noble human qualities. So, recognise your humanness and divinity. But man today is not able to realise this truth and consequently he is wasting his life.

Divinity Can Be Attained Only By Love

Embodiments of Love!

It is most important for you to take note of these teachings, which I am repeating time and again. Never neglect them. The divine power latent in you is limitless. Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan (divinity is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest). Therefore, it is impossible to estimate the nature of divinity. Words are inadequate to describe it. Whatever description you give is only for your own satisfaction. It is a great mistake to try to gauge the infinite power of divinity with your limited mind.

However, the microcosm and the macrocosm differ only in quantity, not in quality. Here is a small example. The ocean water is saline. Go to an ocean and get a potful of water. The water in the ocean and the water in the pot differ only in quantity but the taste remains the same. You should always have quality in mind, not quantity. God is interested only in quality. One teaspoon of cow's milk is better than barrels of donkey's milk. Don't get carried away by quantity. Do not run after material objects. Do not be greedy. Greed leads to sorrow. Aspire for quality. It is the quality and not the quantity that gives you happiness.

Embodiments of Love!

Today there are many who are in search of God. Where is God? He is here, there and everywhere. Such being the case, where is the need to search for Him? Prahlada said, "Never doubt that God is here and not there. Wherever you search for Him, He is there." (Telugu Poem) He was a small boy. His teachers Chanda and Amarka tried to change his mind and even subjected him to punishment; but Prahlada was undeterred in his resolve. His mind was always focused on Lord Narayana. He was constantly repeating His Name. One day his father Hiranyakasipu summoned him and said, "My dear one, it seems you have studied many subjects; let me have the pleasure of listening to some of them." Prahlada replied, "Father! The teachers have taught me many things, I have understood the four objectives of life: Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire) and Moksha (liberation). I have studied many things; in fact, I have understood the very essence of

education." (Telugu Poem) When his father asked him as to what the essence of education was, Prahlada chanted the Divine Name, Om Namō Narayanaya. Hiranyakasipu became furious. He could not tolerate Prahlada repeating Lord Narayana's name. He punished him and sent him away. Hiranyakasipu hated God, whereas Prahlada had intense love for God. Only through love can manavatwa (humanness) be transformed into Daivatwa (divinity).

Embodiments of Love!

Never have hatred and jealousy. Kill your ego. Only then will love blossom in you. Through love alone can you attain divinity. That is why the Gopikas sang, "Oh Krishna, play your sweet flute and sow the seeds of love in the desert of loveless hearts. Let the rain of love fall on earth and make the rivers of love flow." (Telugu song) How nectarous is the song of the Divine! Only those who are filled with divine feelings can experience its taste.

Do Namasmarana And Redeem Your Life

Embodiments of Love!

It may not be possible for you to undertake rigorous spiritual practices like meditation, penance, yoga, etc. It is enough if you chant the Divine Name. Do not undertake practices which you do not understand. Take to the simplest path, i.e., namasmarana. In Krita Yuga, meditation was prescribed as the means to liberation. In Treta Yuga, it was yajna. In Dwapara Yuga, people performed archana (worship), and in this Kali Age, namasmarana is the prescribed path to liberation. "In this Kali Age, chanting of the Lord's Name alone can grant you liberation. There is no greater path than this." (Sanskrit sloka) So, sing His glory and cross this ocean of worldly life. Namasmarana is the basis of all spiritual practices.

Embodiments Of Love, Students, Pilgrims And Sevaks!

There are nine paths of devotion: sravanam (listening), kirtanam (singing), vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (servitude), sneham (friendship), atma-nivedanam (self-surrender). Paths may be different but the goal is one and the same. Follow any path and reach the goal. With the passage of time, you should move closer to the goal. Do not go away from it. Never act against the divine command. Do not submit to selfishness and self-interest. Selfishness takes you away from spirituality. Give up selfishness and dedicate your lives for the divine cause. When you proceed along the divine path, you will be charged with divine energy.

Today thousands of people from Shirdi have come here after visiting many Punya Kshetras (pilgrimage centres). They have been chanting the Divine Name all along. It is the power of namasmarana that has brought them to Prasanthi Nilayam. Kshetras (fields) may be different but the kshetrajna (knower of the field) is one. The Lord says in the Gita, Kshetrajnam chapimam viddhi... (recognise Me as the knower of the field also). There can be no kshetra without kshetrajna. You may visit any number of punya kshetras but in the first instance, you have to purify your hridaya kshetra (field of the heart). Never utter harsh words. Do not criticise others. Give up para chintana (thinking about others) and cultivate paramatma chintana (thinking about God). This is the true sadhana.

Serve the needy to the extent possible. The service you render should be meaningful and purposeful. Here is a small example. Many of our former students are undertaking various service activities in the neighbouring villages, e.g., Brahmanapalli, Beedupalli, Enumulapalli, etc. How should one serve? One should do it in the true spirit of service. When you go to a village for service, you should involve the villagers also in the service activities and motivate them to undertake such sacred work everyday in their village. It is not possible for you to go to the villages everyday. You may go to a village

once in a month or two. Therefore, when you involve the villagers in the service activities, they will learn to serve themselves. You should teach them the importance of cleanliness. Usually, villagers live in unhygienic conditions which cause various diseases. So, you should teach them to keep their village clean. The water that we drink and the air that we breathe should be free from pollution. Only then can we lead a happy and healthy life.

Cultivate samyak drishti (right vision), samyak vak (right speech), samyak sravanam (right listening), samyak bhavam (right thinking) and samyak karma (right action). This will make your life perfect. Then you become deserving of divine grace. Only then can you attain sayujyam (liberation). Salokyam (perception of the divine) is the first step, sameepyam (proximity to the divine) is the second, sarupyam (identity with the divine) is the third and sayujyam (merger with the divine) is the fourth. Just as rivers ultimately merge with the ocean, man should become one with God. Nadinam sagaro gathi (the ocean is the goal of the rivers). What is the goal of human life? Is it to enjoy worldly pleasures? No. You may have all the comforts you like, but ultimately you should strive to become one with the divine. The very purpose of life is to have the vision of God, experience Him and ultimately merge with Him. But today man is doing just the opposite. He has forgotten God and is wasting his life in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. Human life is highly sacred, noble and divine. It should not be wasted in such unworthy pursuits.

Students! Pilgrims!

Do not be carried away by worldly pleasures. Take to the sacred path and sanctify your time by chanting the divine name. There is no need to allocate a specific time or place for namasmarana. You can do it wherever you are and whatever you are doing. One needs to pay tax for water, electricity, etc., but there is no tax for namasmarana. Nobody can stop you from doing it. It is very simple, yet most effective. But man does not realise the value of namasmarana as it is so easy to practise. He thinks that God can be attained

only through severe austerities. This is a misconception. Without troubling yourself or causing trouble to others, you can chant the divine name.

Cultivate love for God. That is true devotion. Without love, there is no devotion. Love is the basis of all spiritual practices like japa, thapa, yoga, dhyana, etc. Bereft of love, any spiritual practice is a futile exercise. For the life here and hereafter, love is most important. Love is the basic requirement for all, whether one is an artha (one in distress), an artharthi (seeker of wealth), jijnasu (seeker of knowledge) or a jnani (one of wisdom). Love is the foundation for a theist as well as an atheist. Develop such sacred love. Do not criticise or ridicule anybody. Give happiness to all by sharing your love with them. This is the true spiritual practice. Follow this simple path, experience ananda and sanctify your lives.

4. Idols Are Pointers To Divinity

Date: 12 March 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

God is the basis of the universe. Truth is the essence of God. The virtue of noble souls is truth. Such noble souls are verily Divine. (Sanskrit Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

Our ancients enquired into the nature of divinity through many paths, but they were not successful in recognising the reality. Hence, they started worshipping Nature (prakriti). Thereafter, the Indians (Bharatiyas) took to idol-worship (murthi aradhana).

Every creature that takes birth in this universe has a form (murthi). Idols are inert in nature and do not possess the qualities of compassion, love, forbearance, etc. It is for this reason that some people are against idol worship. This is ignorance. You use your forefinger to point a specific object, say, a flower or a tumbler. Similarly, idols are like pointers to Divinity. Once you recognise Divinity, you don't need the pointers, say, idols. Such being the case, is it not foolish to object to idol worship?

Are you not worshipping the pictures of your parents and grandparents? Do these pictures have life in them? No. Nor do they have the qualities of compassion, love, sacrifice, etc. Then what is the point in worshipping them? It is through these pictures that we are reminded of their virtues and ideals they stood for.

Take for instance a hundred rupee note with dimensions of 6 inches x 4 inches. There is neither life nor virtues of love, compassion, etc., in this currency note. Yet, people love it and would like to possess it. Is there anybody in the world who dislikes money? Irrespective of the country or

religion, everyone loves money. There are innumerable instances where people gave up their lives for the sake of money. The currency note is valuable because it bears the government's seal. Similarly, we respect the national flag for the value it stands for, though it is merely a piece of cloth, which is inert. If idol worship is considered foolish, then the same should apply to love for money and respect for the flag, which are also lifeless. Man's beliefs are based on his likes and dislikes.

Isavasyam Idam Jagat (the entire world is permeated by God).

Every being is an embodiment of Eswara. It is also said,

Eswara Sarva Bhutanam (God is the Indweller of all beings).

He is present in all beings in the form of Consciousness. Eswara is the master of six forms of wealth - dharma (righteousness), aiswarya (wealth), yashas (fame), sakti (power), jnana (wisdom) and vairagya (detachment). Eswara has another name, San(m)kara. 'Sam' refers to chidanandam (eternal bliss) and Atmanandam (bliss of the Self). 'Kara' means one who bestows. Therefore, Sankara is one who confers eternal bliss.

Every word has a deep inner meaning. Take for instance the name Sathya Sai. Sathya stands for Rig Veda. 'Sa', 'A' and 'Ya' in Sai stand for Sama Veda, Atharvana Veda, and Yajur Veda, respectively. Therefore, Sathya Sai is the very personification of the four Vedas. What is the meaning of the term linga ? It is the symbol of divinity, since it has neither beginning nor end. Divinity is immanent in the heart (hridaya) of every person. Hridaya means that which is suffused with compassion. So, Divinity is the embodiment of compassion.

Today, people are unable to understand the principle of Divinity. Though the

modes of worship vary, they all are directed toward different forms of the same God. You may call Him Rama, Krishna, Easwara, etc. All are one. They refer to the same God. Each person worships a particular form according to his or her likes. Some people worship Rama because they are attracted by Rama's Name and Form. It is said, Ramayate Iti Rama (Rama is one who captivates the hearts of one and all).

Today is Sivarathri, meaning auspicious night. Siva symbolises the breathing process 'Soham', which takes place in every person. This is referred to as Hamsa Gayatri. '(A) Ham' refers to 'I' and 'So' means 'That' (God). This message of 'I am God' is conveyed through this breathing process - 21,600 times a day. Such teachings have been propagated and practised since ancient times.

It is the finger that points to a flower. Likewise, idols point to the divinity. So, idol worship cannot be considered foolish. Never disregard idols because they are inert. Even in inert objects, there is Chaitanya (consciousness).

Anoraneeyan Mahato Maheeyan (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest).

This Consciousness is present in the smallest to the biggest. From your point of view, an object may appear to be inert, but from the Vedic point of view, everything is Chaitanya. It is foolish to overlook the existence of Chaitanya. One may question: if Chaitanya is all-pervasive, why is it not visible to the naked eye? You are all well aware of the fact that there is butter in every drop of milk. Can you deny its existence merely because it is not visible to the naked eye? The process of obtaining butter involves curdling the milk and then churning it.

People are unable to perceive this Chaitanya principle because of two defects:

- (1) They overlook their innumerable mistakes; and
- (2) They magnify the minutest mistake of others.

One can attain divinity only when one stops hiding their mistakes and highlighting the faults of others. It is a great sin to search for others' faults. Instead, look for your own. Consider your smallest defect as a great blunder and try to rectify the same. Ignore the faults in others however big they may be. Do not criticise others; instead criticise and question yourself - Is this the way I should behave, having been born as a human being? True spiritual practice lies in finding out one's own mistakes and correcting them. It involves giving up of evil tendencies and developing noble traits. That is 'sa ' 'dhana' (spiritual practice). 'Sa' symbolises divinity, which is the embodiment of all forms of wealth (dhana). Today, the people who seek the faults of others are on the rise. This is the cause for restlessness in society. All those who aspire to be peaceful should eradicate all their defects. Only then can you realize Sivata (Divinity).

Man is falling a prey to anger. Who is affected by this anger? It is not others but he himself. It is said,

Anger is one's own enemy, peace is the protective shield, compassion is the true relation, happiness is verily the heaven, and misery is the hell. (Telugu Poem)

Therefore, make efforts to control your anger. Do not consider yourself to be superior to others.

Where is God? He is present in every human being and in every living creature. That is why it is said,

Eswara Sarva Bhutanam (God is the Indweller of all beings).

Daivam Manusha Rupena (God takes the form of man).

When you consider all as divine, you will never indulge in criticism. God judges a person by their feelings not by their actions.

God is Bhavapriya, not Bahyapriya. So, make efforts to turn your vision inward.

Pashyati Iti Pashuhu (One who goes purely by external vision is an animal).

A true human being is one who looks inward. The moment an animal spots a green patch of land, it immediately rushes to that spot without weighing the pros and cons. It is the duty of people to use their power of discrimination and act accordingly. People should always be conscious of their duties. Otherwise, they have to pay a heavy price. Whenever there is a delay in the arrival of a bus or a flight, the passengers start criticising all those responsible for the delay. This is because of the fact that duties were not carried out diligently. Likewise, man becomes an object of criticism if he does not discharge his duties properly.

Man cannot be called a human being unless he practises human values - sathya, dharma, santhi, prema and ahimsa. These are like the five life-breaths of man. The absence of these life-breaths amounts to living death. Each one is responsible for his own downfall. Man kills himself by not practising these human values.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is your greatest asset. Develop love and always speak the Truth. Truth sounds bitter, whereas people are easily pleased by falsehood. People do not relish milk, which is brought to their doorstep, whereas they are prepared to traverse miles together to consume a bottle of liquor. Falsehood has become the order of the day. Falsehood may please others but not your conscience. Strive to satisfy your conscience before satisfying others. Under all circumstances follow the path of Truth. In case the utterance of Truth is likely to lead to some danger, remain silent.

A hermit was deeply engrossed in the contemplation of God. He had vowed to speak "Truth always". Lord Eswara wanted to subject him to a test. He assumed the form of a hunter and started chasing a deer, which, out of fear, hid in a bush close to the hermitage. This was noticed by the hermit. On being questioned by the hunter about the whereabouts of the deer, the hermit was in a dilemma. He could not feign ignorance and say that he had not seen the deer, since that would amount to uttering a lie. At the same time, he could not reveal the whereabouts of the deer, lest the hunter should kill it. In that case he would be a party to the crime. He prayed to Lord Easwara fervently to show him a way out. A brilliant idea flashed in his mind, by God's Grace. God is always with you, in you, around you, above you guiding, and guarding you. Why fear when He is near? The hermit replied, "O hunter, that which sees cannot speak; that which speaks cannot see."

By such a tactful answer, the hermit not only upheld his adherence to Truth but also protected the life of the deer. Then Lord Eswara manifested in His true form and declared, "Such yukti (tact), which safeguards your interests as well as those of others, is true yoga."

Therefore it is said, Truth is the life of the tongue. Righteousness is the life of hands. Non-violence is the life of the heart. Sivarathri is celebrated to teach man the significance of these values.

Siva also stands for humility. A person with humility is one of sivam (auspiciousness). On the other hand, a person with ego is verily a savam (corpse).

By constant prayer, man can overcome any difficult situation. You should develop noble thoughts and help the needy. Do not harm anyone. The harm that you inflict on others will boomerang on you. Criticism and accusation are worldly traits and negative in nature. Develop positive tendencies. What is the use of all your education if you cannot give up your evil tendencies?

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and a mean-minded person will not give up his wicked qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom. What is the use of acquiring worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal. (Telugu Poem)

Paropakara punyaya, papaya parapeedanam (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them).

Help ever, Hurt Never.

This is the essence of the eighteen Puranas. Never mind if you have to suffer, but do not put others to suffering. God will take care of you.

Your behaviour should be befitting human birth. Neeti (morality) and nijayati (integrity) are the life principles of manava jathi (human race). Develop morality and lead an honest life. Only then can you attain Easwaratwa.

The main teaching of the "Culture of Bharat (India)" is to realise unity in diversity. But today, man fragments unity into diversity because of his narrow-mindedness

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

Never give scope to the feelings of I and mine. First know yourself. Question yourself, "Who am I?" Once you know who you truly are, you will realise the oneness of all. Once you realise that you are the embodiment of Atma, you will know that all others are also embodiment of the Atma. However, in your daily life, it is difficult to recognise this equality based on profession.

What is adhyatmikam (spirituality)? Weeding out animal qualities and rising to the level of Divine constitutes true spirituality. Adhyatmikam refers to adhi (eternal) and Atma. Therefore, true adhyatmikam is that which relates to the eternal Atma. Recognising the fact that I and you are one is true adhyatmikam.

When Dharmaraja offered Krishna the agratambulam (prime offering), the wicked Sisupala felt that Krishna did not deserve it. He abused Krishna endlessly and said:

Do You think that You deserve this honour because You stole the saris of gopikas (cowherd maids) when they were having a bath, or do You think that You deserve this because You played pranks with the gopikas. Stop this self-aggrandisement and shut up! (Telugu Song)

Krishna smilingly replied, "Yes, you are right, you speak truly".

Dharmaraja felt deeply hurt and fell at Krishna's Feet and said, "O Lord! How is it that you continue to smile in the face of such harsh criticism? You may be smiling, but I am shedding tears of sorrow."

Krishna replied, "Dharmaraja, praise or blame relate to the body, not to the Atma. Why should one feel depressed when criticised and elated when praised? In fact, we criticise our own body because it gives scope to various

diseases and makes us suffer. Hence understand that whoever criticises your body is in fact doing you a favour." Dharmaraja was immensely satisfied with Krishna's reply and said "Because there is a shortage of such teachers people are afflicted by ignorance".

What about Duryodhana? He was no ignoramus. But in spite of knowing all (about right and wrong), he fell into the path of ignorance. He also asked Dharmaraja to keep his mouth shut.

What is silence? One should never speak ill of others.

Mounath kalaham nasthi (strife does not arise out of silence).

Salute those who offend you. Don't return offence with offence. If you act in the same manner as your opponent, how can you become greater? While saying that the other is acting wrongly, will you be right if you act in the same manner? Never act in this manner. Let those who commit offence continue their offensive behaviour. You should never react. Wish for the welfare of everyone.

Our daily prayer is,

Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May all people of the world be happy!)

When all are happy, you are included. We pray for the welfare, wealth, and health of all. Never wish for the misfortune of any other person. There is no room for hatred in this world. All are friends. If you persist in this manner, wishing well for everyone, praying for their prosperity, you become an ideal for the whole world. You are born in this world for this ideal only. There is a purpose behind the creation of every individual. That is why God created you.

And for this you have been gifted with the capacity to love. Act according to your conscience. Consecrate to God every action of yours.

O Lord! That heart which You have gifted me, all its actions are being offered back by me. What else is there for me to worship Your feet with? Please accept this with my humble salutations. (Telugu Poem) The one valuable gift that You have bestowed on me is love. It is my duty to share this love with all my fellow beings. That is the sign of my understanding Your gift.

One who is filled with anger, hatred, and envy will be shunned by all those who are near to him, including his wife and children. Hence, you should avoid these evil tendencies. Once you understand the principle of love, all these evil tendencies leave you by themselves.

Humanness is Divinity in essence. When a child is born, he is naturally pure, but as he grows, he starts accumulating these evil tendencies more and more. The evil tendencies are of your own making. They will ultimately destroy your humanness itself. Don't ruin your human nature. How sacred, how noble, how humble and how valuable is humanness! Such a noble humanness is wilfully ruined by you. Never harm others for the sake of your selfish and greedy desires. Be happy at the happiness of others. Then only will you realise humanness. Being born a man, don't turn mean. Cruelty is the nature of animals. By hurting others, you lose your humanness and become a beast. When you threaten others, you become a wild beast. If you are scared by somebody, you become an animal of prey. You are neither a hunting beast nor an animal of prey. You are a human being. Never hurt anybody; cultivate an attitude of happiness in yourself. Then you will be doubly happy.

The Lord is constantly saying, Thathastu, Thathastu! (So be it !). As you wish, so will it happen. If your intentions are evil, evil will result. If you are always filled with good intention, they are equally blessed by God. The consequences

of all your actions will result in reactions - maybe not immediately, but definitely sooner or later. Therefore, you should live without hurting others or being harmed by others, and thus lead a blissful life. Put your learning to good use. Give respect and take respect. This is true humanness. Love and be loved in return. Your education is meant to cultivate such virtues.

Students study some limited subject or the other. Of what value is such specialisation? All such academic undertakings are essentially negative. There is a saying in Telugu that a washerman is better than a scholar. When the washerman collects clothes from your house, you make a detailed record of the number and type of clothes, if nowhere else, at least by a few marks on the wall. But the washerman does not need any such devices, carries all the information in his head, and will return your clothes to you duly washed and pressed. What study has he made? This is not the only type of studies one should undertake. You should study positive things. Your education should benefit the society at large. Only when you help others do you become pure.

Our ancients worshipped Nature. It is Nature that gives us food, raiment, and shelter. Not merely that, it also gives us precious metals like gold and silver. So, what is wrong with worshipping Nature? All the modes of worship that our ancients practised were highly sacred. Bhumatha (Mother Earth), gomatha (cow), Vedamatha (the Vedas), and the dehamatha (physical mother) are to be revered.

Since people have stopped worshipping God, we find chaos all over the world. People are plunged in sorrow because they have lost faith in the Self. What is the use of life without self-confidence? Worship of God alone can safeguard the nation. The country will be blessed with plenty and prosperity and people will lead a happy life once they start thinking of God. We repeat the Santhi Mantra thrice in our daily prayers. What does this mean? We should attain peace at three levels, i.e. physical, mental, and spiritual. There is no peace in the external world; we find only pieces. Peace is, in fact, within you. Make efforts to manifest your inner peace.

Embodiments of Love!

Spend the whole night in chanting the holy Name and spread this spiritual energy to the world at large.

Who is Eswara? He is all-pervasive. Just as the wind blows freely everywhere, so also do we find the principle of Eswara pervasive. Share your love with all and propagate the Divine Name to the entire world.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi .

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

5. Realise The Magnetic Power Within

Date: 13 March 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

With the crescent moon dancing, the matted locks waving,
the cool waters of the Ganga flowing between,
with the eye in the middle of the forehead shining,
the purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a black berry,
wearing serpent-bracelets and a snake skin belt,
the entire body smeared with Vibhuti,
with the forehead adorned with kumkum dot,
lips ruddied by the juice of the betel,
Gold embellished diamond ear rings dangling,
with whole swarthy body glowing,
the Lord of Kailasa appeared in person.

(Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

The entire earth is permeated by magnetic power. All the living beings and objects that are present on this earth also have this magnetic power. The rivers that flow, the wind that blows, the flowers that blossom - everything is endowed with magnetic power. The rivers flow on earth because of magnetic power. The magnetic power is all-pervasive.

People with (devotion and faith (bhakti and prapatti) visit temples, which have the magnetic power. The flowers and fruits that people offer with devotion in temples also have this magnetic power. As thousands of devotees gather here, our temple (mandir) is suffused with magnetic power. The all-pervasive magnetic power shines with added brilliance in this mandir. This magnetic power is ever on the rise, since there is a continuous flow of devotees.

Even an iron nail turns into a magnet because of its association with the magnet. In a similar manner, people who visit the mandir are filled with magnetic power. It is only from the magnetic power of the devotees that the mandir gets charged with mighty powers. Every individual is filled with magnetic power from head to toe. But people do not realise their innate potential and visit temples for blessings and grace. One does not acquire any special powers from temples. What one gets is only the reflection of one's own magnetic power. People visit various pilgrimage centres like Tirupati, Haridwar, and Rishikesh. The power that is present in pilgrimage centres is due only to the power of devotion and faith that pilgrims carry in their hearts.

God is the embodiment of all forms of opulence and so also is man. Wealth (sampada), authority/control (aiswarya), fame (yashas), power (shakti), spiritual wisdom (jnana) and bliss (ananda) - all these are the gifts of God. They are latent in every person, but people are losing them, because they are unable to put them to proper use. Divinity shines resplendently in people when they make proper use of these six forms of wealth (shadaiswaryas). There is divine effulgence on the face of every person.

As Venkataraman mentioned, every man is a combination of materialisation, vibration, and radiation. The human body, with all its limbs and muscles, is known as 'materialisation'. The life-force (prana shakti) is known as vibration. These two are coordinated by the Atmic power known as radiation. All the divine powers are latent in people. But people are not directing their attention on them. People identify themselves with the body, but in reality they are not the body. Otherwise, why would they say, 'this is my body'? When you say, 'this is my body', you are different from it. People are deluded by thinking that they are the body. They are losing their divine effulgence because of this mistaken identity.

The vibration symbolises the breathing process. Sometimes, people say, 'my breathing is not proper'. It shows that you are different from it. Pashyannapicha Na Pashyati Moodho (he is a fool who sees with his eyes yet does not recognise the reality). People are immersed in ignorance, since they identify themselves with something from which they are totally different.

Radiation is divine, and that is everyone's true nature. This is the magnetic power that is latent in every person. It is the same divine power that is present in temples, which attracts all. Magnetism is the nature of all temples.

There is gold in every person. Iron and various other metals are also present in them. The Vedas declare, Raso Vai Saha (God pervades the body in the form of essence).

What is the significance of Lingodbhava? God is known as Hiranyagarbha (one having a golden womb). The golden essence (rasa) present in His womb undergoes a vigorous churning process and assumes the shape of a Linga. Linga means a symbol or a sign. [Showing the golden Linga that He created in the beginning of His Discourse, Bhagavan said] As you can see, it has no distinctive features like eyes, face, etc. It has neither feet nor head. It can be placed in any manner. It symbolises the formless Divinity.

Leeyathe Gamyathe Ithi Lingaha. It is the basis of everything. The golden essence (rasa), after assuming the shape of a Linga, emerges out. You need fire in order to melt gold. Similarly, the fire within melts the gold and moulds it into the shape of a Linga. Hence, the difficulty at the time of its emergence. It has to assume the form of a Linga and come out.

You feel Swami is put to a lot of suffering (badha) at the time of Lingodbhava. It is not really a badha (suffering) but a bodha (teaching) for you. Is it not natural for a mother to undergo labour pains while giving birth to a child? Will any mother curse her child just because she is put to a lot of suffering? She always prays for the well-being of the child. In the same manner, Swami does not feel any pain at the time of the emergence of Linga. I don't consider it a badha. I am happy that I am imparting a significant bodha to so many of you. God has absolutely no suffering, no worries, and no difficulties whatsoever. But you feel that Swami is undergoing a great pain and suffering.

In order to facilitate the formation of these Lingas, My body has turned into a magnet. It is for this reason that I was finding it difficult to walk for the last three days, since My feet were getting stuck to the ground because of

magnetic pull. Likewise, whatever objects I touched were getting stuck to My hands. It was not a trouble for Me. It is but natural, because My whole body became magnetic. Such power of attraction cannot be experienced by all. It is only in Divinity that you find such highly powerful magnetic force. These things cannot be revealed to all. Every person has such a divine magnet in them. But there are certain limitations. Divinity has no limitations whatsoever. Though Divinity transcends all limits, you try to impose certain limitations on it.

Magnetic power is present everywhere. The air, the water, the food, sound, everything is suffused with magnetic power. On deep enquiry, you will know that magnetic power has no limitations Daivadheenam Jagatsarvam (the whole universe is under the control of God). Sathyadheenamtu Daivatam (Truth is the essence of God). Everything is contained in the principle of Truth. When you uphold Truth, all the divine powers will manifest in you. Tatsathyam Utthamadheenam (Truth is controlled by the virtue of noble souls). Who is a noble soul? One who is of peace, love, and compassion.

Utthamo Paradevata (such noble souls are verily the supreme divine).

People go on pilgrimages in search of God, since they are ignorant of their latent divine power. One who recognises the latent divine power need not undertake any such spiritual practice. A Russian lady by name Brigitte was full of magnetic power. Whenever she walked on the road, iron filings would get attracted to her. She was not allowed to enter any shop because the items there would get attracted to her. It is not enough if one has magnetic power, one should be able to keep it under one's control. She had no control over her magnetic power. She could not even have her food. Consequently, she died after a few days. Though she had the divine magnetic power, she died a premature death because she did not have the capacity to control it.

Someone who drives a car should also have the ability to control it. If one has

no control over the vehicle one is driving, one is sure to meet with accident. The body can be compared to a magnetic car. The eyes are the headlights, the mouth is the horn, the mind is the steering wheel, and the stomach is the petrol tank. The four objectives of human life - dharma, wealth (artha), desire (kama), and liberation (moksha) - are like the four tyres. You should fill these tyres with the air of faith. The pressure of air filled in the front tyres should be different from that is filled in the rear tyres. The petrol (food) that is filled in the tank (stomach) should be pure and sacred. When the petrol is impure, there could be a blockage. Hence, sathwic food is recommended. Drinking water should also be pure and unpolluted. Only then will the 'car' be in good condition and will take us to the destination. One's life will be redeemed only when one understands the principle of one's body.

To be born is a worry, to be on the earth is a worry; world is a cause of worry and death too; entire childhood is a worry, and so is the old age; life is a worry, failure is a worry; all actions and difficulties cause worry; even happiness too is a mysterious worry. (Telugu Poem)

Happiness or worry is based on your feelings. If you consider the body to be a cause of worry, it will be so. On the other hand, if you consider it as sacred, it will be a source of happiness for you. In fact, there is nothing bad in God's creation. Everything is sacred and full of magnetic power. Body is like a temple with magnetic power. So, whatever actions you undertake should be sacred. When you do unrighteous activities, you have to face the consequences. Spiritual practices like repetition of the name (japa) and meditation (dhyana) confer only mental satisfaction. They cannot reveal the magnetic power.

There are nine paths of devotion. They are:

Listening (sravanam), singing (kirtanam), contemplating on Vishnu

(Vishnusmaranam), serving His Lotus Feet (padasevanam), salutation (vandanam), worship (archanam), servitude (dasyam), friendship (sneham), Self-surrender (Atmanivedanam).

Atmanivedanam comes only after sneham. Hence, you should try to cultivate the friendship of God. Without sneham, you cannot reach the state of Atmanivedanam. Until you reach Atmanivedanam, you cannot understand the all-pervasive principle of divine magnetic power. Whatever activity you do, magnetic power is the basis.

Temples are nothing but centres of magnetic power (ayaskantha mandiras). Whatever power you experience in a temple is due only to the presence of magnetic power. You feel there is a great power in Tirupati. It is not the power of Venkateswara Swami, the presiding deity. It is the power of devotees' faith and surrender. Hence, there is tremendous magnetic power.

Ramayathi Ithi Ramah (that which attracts is the principle of Rama). God has the power of attraction. Take any temple for instance. Only the magnetic power is present there. That is the power of Divinity. It can be experienced only in temples and nowhere else. What is the reason? The deities installed in temples, the water used for Abhishekam, the flowers and the yellow rice used for worship - everything is full of magnetic power. That is why people are attracted to temples.

Our body is also like a temple with magnetic power. Hence, it has to be utilised for sacred purposes. When you give room to evil traits like anger, jealousy, and hatred, much of your magnetic power is wasted. The sense of smell, touch, taste, etc., are but the effects of magnetic power. A programme that is being broadcast in Delhi or Madras Radio station can be heard here simultaneously. What is responsible for this? The magnetic power carries the sound waves. No scientist or engineer can understand this.

Can a scientist explain the process of digestion and blood circulation in the

body? No. In every being, the heart beats for a particular number of times. Which scientist can explain this? All this is ordained by God. Doctors feel proud of their achievements. But in fact, nobody can achieve anything without Divine Will. They know how a heart beats, but they do not know why it does so and who makes it function. It is not because of human effort but by the Divine Will that the body functions. But people are not able to understand this because of their ego and sense of doership.

No doubt, human effort is required, but nothing can be achieved without Divine grace. Here is an example. God has created paddy. But you cannot eat it as it is. You have to remove the husk, boil the rice, and prepare the food. This process of refinement is known as samskara. It lies in human effort. But creation is in the hands of God. Everybody should have firm faith in God. The ignorants do not believe in the existence of God. Even such people agree that there must be some transcendental power behind this creation. That very power is God, without whom man cannot exist.

As I have said earlier, a person is the combination of materialisation, vibration, and radiation. With the help of radiation (Atma) and vibration (life-force), a one is able to carry out life using materialisation (body) as the instrument. Body is the basis for performing action. It symbolises karma yoga.

Vibration helps one to think, and radiation is responsible for the functioning of vibration and materialisation. This is referred to in the Vedas as Prajnanam Brahma (Brahman is Supreme Consciousness). This is not just awareness, but Constant Integrated Awareness. It exists everywhere, all the time, totally. It has no distinction of day and night. It transcends the three states of waking (jagrat), dream (swapna) and deep sleep (sushupti). It is one and the same in all three periods of time. Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti (Truth is one, but scholars refer to it by many names). This is the divine magnetic power. It can assume any form like Rama, Krishna, and Easwara, depending on the feelings of devotees. All such names and forms are your imaginations, but in reality, God has no name and no form. Take for instance, water. It has no specific shape, but it assumes the shape of the vessel into which it is poured. Likewise, air is formless, but it assumes the form of a balloon or a football

when they are filled with air. The names and forms are of your own making and are bound to disappear one day or the other. Hence, hold on to the fundamental principle of Divinity.

Embodiments of Love!

You may forget anything, but not God. Forgetting God amounts to forgetting yourself.

In ancient times, people lived for 110 and 120 years, because they led their lives constantly thinking of God. They never suffered from any diseases. They used to eat simple food. They had no knowledge of vitamins and proteins. They never took tablets like Vitamin A, Vitamin B, Vitamin C, etc. They would get the required vitamins and proteins because they offered their food to God.

You can achieve anything in life if you strengthen your faith in God. In fact, you will become God yourself. You are not different from God. Understand this truth and attain the state of oneness. [Showing the golden Linga to the devotees Swami said], "As you all can see, this Linga is rather big. There is a meaning behind this. This is five tulas in weight. In every human being, there is the golden essence of five tulas known as Hiranyagarbha. You may be aware that there are some medicines with gold content. Gold represents energy in man and is the cause of his radiance. The gold content within each body is of this size only. It is this golden essence that makes the eyes see, and the ears hear.

There are thousands of taste buds in our tongue and lakhs of light rays in the eyes. The eyes, the tongue, and other sense organs derive their strength from the magnetic power present within. The golden essence pervades the entire body as a shield of protection. There is a thin layer of white skin just beneath the normal skin, which acts as a protective sheath for the blood. There will be bleeding only when the white skin is cut. God has kept the white skin below the normal skin for the sake of protection.

Whatever God does is for the welfare of all. This is the meaning of the prayer, Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu (May all the beings of the world be happy)! The Bhagavata says,

The stories of the Lord are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds. They are like sickles that cut the clinging creepers of worldly bondage. (Telugu Poem)

The cowherd maids (gopikas) had unwavering faith in Lord Krishna and thus could redeem their lives. Faith is the magnetic power that attracts Divinity. Though the mothers-in-law abused and the husbands were angry with them, the gopikas never rebutted. They were neither angry nor afraid. The sweet form of Krishna was imprinted on their hearts just like a picture printed on paper. Can the picture and paper be separated from each other? No. Likewise, Krishna was firmly installed in the hearts of gopikas. Such firm faith and devotion is the result of merits accrued over many births.

In order to attain God, one should have love and compassion. The taste of love is beyond description. It is highly sacred and makes one forget oneself in ecstasy. Sage Narada described love thus:

Yallabdhwa Puman Ichcharamo Bhavathi Trupto Bhavathi Matto Bhavathi Atmaramo Bhavathi (having attained That, man gets total satisfaction, fulfilment, ecstasy, and bliss.)

When you chant the Divine Name with love, you forget yourself. One attains fulfilment only when one becomes the recipient of Divine love. In order to attain Divine love, develop love in you more and more. When you have the magnetic power of love in you, whatever you study will get imprinted on your heart. If you do not have the magnetic power, you can never succeed in your

endeavours, however hard you may try. You may study day and night, but without any result. Whenever you try to study, you will be overpowered by Nidra Devi (the goddess of sleep). Kumbhakarna will put you to sleep. On the other hand, when you develop the magnetic power in you, you will never feel sleepy while studying; Kumbhakarna will dare not look at you.

Students today waste a lot of time. They try to study only at the time of examinations. "O man! Do not feel proud of your education. If you do not offer your salutations to God and think of Him with devotion, all your education becomes useless."

Think of God at least once in a day. Do not pay heed to what others say. Someone may come to you and say, there is no God. Then immediately, you should ask, "Whose God? My God or your God? Your God may not exist for you, but who are you to deny the existence of my God?" With such firm conviction, you should argue with them.

But unfortunately today, people have become blind, having lost the eyes of faith. Develop faith and sanctify your lives. Faith alone can protect you at all times and under all circumstances. Do not give room for bad or ill feelings. Do not harm others. Do not criticise others . If you make others suffer, you will suffer much more. Not only you, even your family will have to face the consequences. Never forget this truth. God will confer well-being on you and your family only when you aspire for the welfare of others. Develop noble feelings, think of God, and make proper use of your time.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, Prema Mudhita Manase Kaho.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

6. Celebrate Ugadi by purifying your heart

Date: 13 April 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Ugadi

Embodiments of Love!

People have been celebrating Ugadi (dawn of the New Year) for the past many ages and generations. The Bharatiyas (Indians) have been conferring peace and security on all the nations with their strength of spirituality. Since time immemorial to this day, the motto of Bharatiyas has been Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May all the people of the world be happy)! But the present day condition is just the opposite. Man has progressed in the worldly sense, but morally he has regressed. He is not able to give up his narrow-mindedness and criticism of others. If one enquires into the reason for this, one will realise that one's selfishness and self-interest are the cause for this. Man does not love objects or individuals for their sake, he does so for his self-interest. He does not love his country and work for its welfare. All his thoughts, words, and deeds are motivated by selfishness. He would have celebrated Ugadi in its true spirit only when he gives up such narrow-mindedness.

On this day, people get up early, have a sacred bath, put on new clothes, and partake of sweets and various delicious items. They are interested only in external cleanliness and are not concerned about purifying their hearts, which are tainted with evil thoughts and feelings. It is rather easy to have external cleanliness and to wear new clothes, but that is not the purpose of celebrating festivals. True celebration of Ugadi lies in giving up evil qualities and purifying one's own heart. The human heart in its pristine state is highly sacred and human birth is difficult to attain. Janthunam narajanma durlabham (out of all the living beings, the human birth is the rarest). Having attained such a precious life, man is not making efforts to live a true human being. Today, he has become a bundle of desires. He is beset with desires and craves for their fulfilment day in and day out. He is under the mistaken notion that fulfilment of desires will confer happiness on him. He should realise that only annihilation of desires will lead to ultimate bliss. True happiness is the

state of desirelessness.

Embodiments of Love!

Ages have gone by, and the world has undergone change, but there is no transformation in the human heart. The field of education has made rapid strides. People think that education leads to transformation, but it has only added to the confusion. Instead of bringing about transformation of the heart, modern education has given rise to perversion. Man is not learning what he is supposed to. He is wasting his human life by cultivating bestial qualities and indulging in demonic deeds. This is contrary to our ancient culture.

The culture of Bharat (India) lays great emphasis on the underlying unity in diversity. It wants us to understand this principle of unity and work for our own redemption. But, today, on the one hand, there is a rise in the number of the so-called educated and intellectuals who fragment unity into diversity. On the other hand, the number of noble souls who visualise unity in diversity is on the decline. It is unfortunate that Bharatiyas themselves have not understood how sacred and noble their culture is! The Bharatiyas' way of life is concerned with the welfare of everyone. They find fulfilment in giving happiness to others. Man today lacks such broad-mindedness. He is not able to realise and experience his innate noble qualities.

Time is highly sacred and precious. Each one has to introspect whether he is making proper use of time. Time once lost is lost forever. The future is not in your hands. So, man should make proper use of the present. This is the teaching of the Bharatiya (Indian) culture. Time is God. Hence, the Vedas extol Him as

Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah , Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah, Kalateetaya Namah, Kalaswarupaya Namah, Kalaniyamitaya Namah (Salutations to the embodiment of time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, and to the one who ordains time).

Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad (God has thousands of heads, eyes and feet). In Vedic times, the population was in thousands and our ancients considered that all heads, all eyes, and all feet belonged to the Purusha (the Cosmic Being). They sanctified their lives with such noble feelings and exemplary behaviour.

The ancient sages and seers stressed the need for unity and cooperation among human beings. They said, "Let us move together, let us grow together, let us grow in intelligence together, and let us live in harmony with each other without giving room for conflicts." But such spirit of unity is lacking in modern society. These days there is no unity even among the members of the same family. Unity is the essence of human life. Only through practice of unity can one attain the goal of human life. Such divine principle of unity is forgotten today.

Oh the sacred souls of Bharat!

So far, no one has been able to understand fully the value of Indian culture. Bharatiyas (Indians) are endowed with unlimited potentialities. But they are unaware of their mighty strength.

Man aspires for happiness. In order to attain everlasting bliss, he studies sacred texts, listens to the discourses of noble souls, undertakes pilgrimages, and performs various spiritual practices like penance, meditation, etc. But none of these confer bliss on him.

There are five sheaths in every human being, namely, annamaya kosha (food sheath), pranamaya kosha (life sheath), manomaya kosha (mental sheath), vijnanamaya kosha (wisdom sheath) and anandamaya kosha (bliss sheath). Though man has a bliss sheath in him, he is unable to experience it. There is no trace of bliss in him. The happiness that man derives out of worldly comforts is limited. It is utter foolishness to think that worldly properties, possessions, comforts, and conveniences bestow unlimited joy. None of these

can give true happiness.

True happiness has no limits. How can it be attained? It cannot be attained from outside. It originates from our heart. The heart is the dwelling place of God. To experience true happiness, man should develop firm faith. Where there is faith, there is love. Only when man has love in him can he practise righteousness. Righteousness leads to truth, which in turn leads to God. God alone can confer bliss on us. God is the basis of bliss. Truth is the basis of God. Righteousness is the basis of truth. Love is the basis of righteousness. Faith is the basis of love. But man today has no faith in himself.

One without viswasa (faith) can be compared to one without swasa (breath). It means that one without faith is equal to a living corpse. The ancient sages and seers stressed on the need to have faith. But today, people have become blind, having lost the eyes of faith. What are the two eyes of man? One is the sastra (scriptures) and the other is dharma (righteousness). But today even the brahmins who are supposed to study the scriptures are neglecting them.

Oh brahmins! Lead your lives in accordance with the teachings of the Vedas and scriptures. Oh kshatriyas (warriors)! Be prepared to lay down your lives to safeguard the interests of your country. Oh arya vasyas (businessmen)! Sanctify your wealth and other possessions by using them for charitable purposes. Oh sudras (workers)! Take care of agriculture and lead your lives in a happy manner.

Instead of discharging one's duty, man is wasting his life in mean pursuits. Consequently, he is unable to enjoy even a fraction of peace and happiness.

Gratitude is the most fundamental virtue of man. People while performing Suryanamaskaras (prostrations to the Sun), extol the Sun god in various ways. One of them is Kritagnagnaya namah (salutations to the one who punishes the ungrateful). The effulgence of the Sun god is present in our eyes

in a subtle form. Chandrama manaso jataha chaksho suryo ajayata (the moon was born out of the mind and the sun out of the eyes of the Supreme Being). It is said that the Sun god withdraws his effulgence from the eyes of the ungrateful.

One without a sense of gratitude can be called a blind person. Whoever one may be, one should always remain grateful to one's benefactor. One should show gratitude even without caring for one's own life. God is helping man in ever so many ways, but man does not show gratitude to Him. All the time, he is engaged in selfish pursuits. How can such a foolish person be called a human being?

What is adhyatmika (spirituality)? It is not just contemplating on the Adhi Atma (the primordial Spirit). Spirituality lies in destroying the bestial nature and rising to the level of Divine. But instead of ascending to Divinity, man is degenerating to animality. He has forgotten the principle of spirituality. He is celebrating festivals by merely partaking of sweets and is wasting his time in pomposity. One should ponder over the inner significance of each festival and celebrate it in a meaningful manner. One should have the total faith that one is not just a human being, because there is God within. Only then will the animal nature in one be subdued. Since man has forgotten his human nature, he has become bestial. You may belong to any country, religion, race, caste, and sex, but you should firmly hold on to humanness. Do not waste your time keeping selfish goals in mind.

Once, Lord Narayana wanted Narada to search for a true devotee, one who spends his time in a sacred way. Narada asked the Lord for the qualifications of a true devotee. The Lord said, "A true human being is one whose heart is pure. Whoever chants the Divine Name with a pure heart is a true devotee. He may involve himself in worldly activities, but he should not be attached to them. His mind should be constantly focused on God. He is a fool who does not think of God."

Narada said, "Swami, I chant Your Name wholeheartedly at all times and under all circumstances. There is not a single moment when I don't remember

You. Can there be a greater devotee than me?" Narada became egoistic with the feeling that he was the greatest devotee.

Lord Narayana replied, "Narada, there are many devotees like you. You find them in every house and in every place. But this is not true devotion. Just as the food partaken gets digested in the stomach and its essence is supplied to all limbs of the body, likewise, when you fill your heart with the divine Name, its effect should spread to your eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, etc. When the sacred effect of the divine Name spreads to your eyes, you will develop sacred vision. Likewise, you will utter sacred words and hear sacred things. Your hands will undertake sacred deeds and your feet will take you to sacred places. Thus, a true devotee will sanctify each of his limbs with sacred activity."

Lord Narayana wanted Narada to search for such a devotee. Narada went round the world, but his ego prevented him from accepting anybody as a devotee greater than himself. As he was returning, he found a tribesman in a forest. He was sitting under a tree, chanting the divine Name. He was carrying a big sword in his hand. Narada out of curiosity asked him, "May I know who you are?"

He replied, "Sir, I am a hunter and an ardent devotee of the Lord."

Narada asked, "If you are a devotee, then why should you carry a sword in your hand? Whom are you going to kill?"

The hunter replied, "Sir, I want to kill four persons. The first of them is Draupadi."

Narada was startled to hear this. "Don't you know that Draupadi was constantly chanting the Name of Lord Krishna? Pleased with her devotion and surrender, Krishna came to her rescue and protected her honour when the Kauravas tried to disrobe her in the royal court. Why do you want to kill such a great devotee?"

The hunter said, "No doubt, she was a devotee. But she called out to Krishna

while He was having His food. Immediately, my Lord left His food and rushed to her rescue. Since she was responsible for my Lord not having food on that day, I want to kill her."

"Who is the second person whom you intend to kill", queried Narada.

The hunter said, "My Lord could not have proper food and rest because of Prahlada, who chanted His Name continuously and time and again sought His help. When he was being trampled by elephants, he prayed to the Lord for succour. In order to protect him, the Lord had to take upon himself the pain of being trampled by elephants. Since he was the cause for my Lord's suffering, I want to kill him. The third person is Mira. She was all the time chanting the Name of Giridhari. As a result, all the blows that were inflicted on her by the mother-in-law had to be borne by the Lord Himself. So, she should be killed."

Narada asked, "Then who is fourth one?" "There is a person called Narada, who carries a Tanpura and keeps chanting the Name of Narayana. His is only a swartha bhakti (devotion intended for selfish gains) and not parartha prema bhakti (devotion-filled, with pure love for God). So, he also should be killed."

Narada was afraid and did not want to prolong the conversation. He realised that it was his ego that was responsible for this predicament. He immediately went to Lord Narayana and gave a detailed account of his encounter with the hunter, and said, "Swami, according to him, even those who chant your Name continuously are wicked."

Lord Narayana said, "Narada, you are mistaken. This incident only reflects the intense love the hunter has for Me. He is a true devotee, who considers God's happiness as his own. He always aspires to give happiness to the Lord and does not want to cause any inconvenience to Him, either physically or mentally. Only the one who gives happiness to the Lord is a true devotee."

This incident was an eye-opener for Narada. He said, "Swami, now I realise that you enacted this play only to crush my ego."

The culture of Bharat (India) teaches many such sacred stories in order to spread the message of the Lord to mankind.

One should never cause inconvenience to God in the name of devotion. If you cause displeasure to God, it will reflect on you. God's happiness is your happiness, and vice versa. You should understand the unity of both. "I and God are one." Develop such spirit of oneness. Today, most devotees are selfish. They have only swartha bhakti (devotion intended for selfish gains). They are concerned about their own happiness and not that of God's. God is the embodiment of love. Such divine love is present in all. You should see to it that your love is always pure and share it with everyone. This is what God expects from you.

Since ancient times, the Bharatiyas shared their sacred culture with rest of the world. They never considered God as a separate entity. They believed in the Vedic statement: Sahasra seersha Purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad (God has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet). It does not mean that there is someone with thousands of heads. It means only that all heads are His. God is present in everyone. He resides in every heart. So, do not confine God to a mandir, a masjid or a church. Where man is, there God is. Daivam manusha rupena (God takes the form of man). Since you do not realise this, you indulge in criticism of others. Whom are you criticising? Whom do you adore? Ask yourself. God is present in all. So, when you criticise others, it amounts to criticising yourself. When you love others, you love yourself. So, never criticise anybody.

Sarva jeeva namaskaram kesavam pratigachchhati (whomever you salute, it reaches God) and Sarva Jjeva tiraskaram kesavam pratigachchhati (whomever you criticise, it reaches God).

Embodiments of Love!

Today is Ugadi, the beginning of the New Year. Since ancient times, man has celebrated many Ugadis, but he has yet to give up bad qualities. True Ugadi is the day when man gives up bad qualities, fills his heart with love, and takes to the path of sacrifice. Do not limit the celebration of Ugadi to merely putting on new clothes and partaking of delicious items. Today you may wear a new shirt, but how long will it remain new? Tomorrow it becomes old. Nobody reads the same newspaper everyday. Today's newspaper becomes a waste paper tomorrow. Our life is like a newspaper. Once you have finished reading a newspaper, you do not like to read it again and again. You have been given this birth, which is like a newspaper, and have gone through varied experiences of pleasure and pain. Enough is enough. Don't ask for one more newspaper, i.e. another birth. You should pray, "Oh God! You have given me this 'newspaper' and I have gone through the experiences of this life. I don't want to have another birth."

Adi Sankara said,

Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam Punarapi janani jatare sayanam Iha samsare bahu dustare Kripaya pare pahi murare Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death, time and again experiencing the pain of lying in the mother's womb. It is very difficult to cross this ocean of Samsara. Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.

Sankara was a great scholar and was well-versed in all forms of knowledge. Yet, he propagated the path of devotion. Once, while he was going to the river Ganges with his disciple, he noticed a person sitting under a tree, trying to learn the concepts of Panini's grammar by rote. He was repeating "Dukrun karane". Sankara, who was very young at that time, took pity on him. He went near him and said,

Bhaja govindam, bhaja govindam Govindam bhaja mooda mathe

Samprapthe sannihithe kale Nahi nahi rakshati dukrun karane Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda; the rules of Panini grammar will not come to your rescue when the end approaches.

Sankara authored many Vedantic texts, but ultimately he also took to the path of devotion. Namasmarana (chanting of God's Name) is the easiest path to liberation. This was his teaching. Even today, there are many people who are doing namasmarana but are not experiencing its essence. What is the use of being born again and again? Many things are taking place in this world. Man is performing various tasks and undergoing many experiences. But what is the use of all this? He is unable to enjoy the everlasting bliss. Neither by wealth nor by action nor by study of texts nor by darshan, sparshan, and sambhashan (vision, touch, and conversation) of noble souls can man attain the eternal bliss. He can visualise the manifestation of God and experience bliss only when he purifies his heart.

Love all. Have faith that God is present in all. Make everybody happy. Only then can you attain happiness. It is impossible for you to attain happiness without making others happy.

On this day of Ugadi, take a firm resolve to purify your heart. The past is past. It cannot be retrieved. When you are walking on the road, you should look at the path ahead of you. What is the point in looking behind? Likewise, there is no point in brooding over the past. The future is not certain. What is the guarantee that you will be alive until tomorrow? So, don't worry about your future. Live in the present. It is not an ordinary present. It is omnipresent, meaning the results of past as well as the future are contained in it. So, when you make proper use of the present, you can be rest assured that your future is safe and secure.

Embodiments of Love!

Today is Ugadi, the New Year Day of Andhrites. Tomorrow happens to be the

Tamil New Year Day and also "Vishu", the New Year Day for Keralites. Thus, there are any number of festivals in a year. You should celebrate them by understanding and experiencing their true significance. Right from this moment, embark on a new life - give up bad thoughts and bad qualities and purify your heart. Only then will your life be blissful. There is no point in reading sacred texts or visiting noble souls unless you purify your heart in the first instance. Let your thoughts, words, and deeds be sacred. This is the true purpose of celebrating Ugadi.

Tomorrow is the New Year Day for Tamilians. Hence, many of them have come from Madras (Chennai) and other places of Tamil Nadu. Madras is not new; for a long time it has been an important centre for the Bharatiyas. Later on, due to political considerations, different states were formed.

But I do not have any differences. All are one, be alike to everyone. This is My ideal.

At present, the people of Madras are suffering due to scarcity of drinking water. The rich can afford to buy water and quench their thirst. But what about the poor? They are drinking impure water and spoiling their health. Hence, I have decided to provide them pure drinking water so that they can lead happy and healthy lives and develop it further for the generations to come. In this connection, Chakravarthy (the Secretary of the Central Trust), Srinivasan from Madras (President, All India Sri Sathya Sai Organisations), and Indulal Shah from Bombay (Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai World Council) have approached the World Bank authorities and explained to them about the selfless service activities that we have undertaken. They told the World Bank authorities that all our activities are purely service-oriented and that we do not expect anything in return. They just repeated like parrots whatever Swami had told them to convey.

The World Bank people were very much impressed. They said that they had never heard about or seen such stupendous service activities undertaken by a charitable organisation anywhere else in the world. They were happy that Sri Sathya Sai Baba was providing drinking water to a distant place like

Madras. They have agreed to bear the expenditure involved in this project. On this sacred day of Ugadi before I came out to give Darshan, we received a telephone call at about 7 a.m. conveying this message.

If the feelings are sacred, the result is bound to be sacred. They told us, "You don't need to be concerned about the funds, and you don't need to come to us again. We are prepared to give any number of crores to meet the expenditure." With broad-mindedness, they have come forward to extend their help.

When you undertake any task with a sacred heart, you will certainly meet with success. I am the living proof for this. There is no trace of selfishness in whatever task I undertake. Whatever I do is for the benefit of humanity.

Many are not making efforts to understand this. Some people think that it is done with some expectation. But I do not expect anything from anybody, nor do I get any benefit out of this. I derive only one benefit, i.e. I feel happy when everybody is happy.

Since you claim to be Sai devotees, you should strictly adhere to the Sai path and make everyone happy. When you follow in My footsteps, you will certainly achieve sacred results and attain good reputation. Being Sai devotees, you should give up selfishness and dedicate your lives for the welfare of society. Fill your lives with love. Stop criticising others. Offer your respects to even those who hate you. Hatred is a mean quality. It will ruin you. Hence, do not give room for hatred. Cultivate love. Help the poor and needy to the extent possible. Help ever, Hurt never.

Sage Vyasa has given the essence of eighteen Puranas in two sentences, Paropakara punyaya, papaya parapeedanam (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). When you help others, you will receive help tenfold. If you harm others, you will be put to harm ten times more. Keep this in mind. On this sacred day, fill your hearts with love and undertake sacred activities.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema mudhita manase kaho".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

7. Redeem your life by namasmarana

Date: 14 April 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Tamil New Year, Baisakhi, Vishu

If money is lost, one need not worry 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 Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

Time is infinite, and you are undergoing varied experiences. These experiences are momentary. At times, you may lose money, but you don't need to be worried about it for you can earn it again. You come across many friends, but none of them is permanent. You lose some and gain some. At some stage in life, people get married and enter grihasthashrama (householdership). But neither the husband nor the wife is permanent. If the wife passes away, the man can marry again to carry on with his life. Similarly, if you lose your piece of land, you can buy another. But once the body is lost, it is lost for ever. So, while you are alive in this body, you should experience happiness at worldly and spiritual levels.

Man acquires wealth and property, experiences pleasure and pain through this body. What is the cause for all this? Dhaneshana, dhareshana, and putreshana (desire for wealth, wife and progeny). This ishanatraya (triple desire) is responsible for man's happiness and misery.

In the past, kings acquired wealth, and property. They could not retain them for ever. Wealth is not permanent. Wealth can never redeem man. Wealth can never confer permanent happiness. Spiritual wealth is the true wealth. Man is not able to enjoy true happiness due to his greed for money. Yet man craves for money. No doubt, money is necessary, but it should be under

certain limits.

The second is dhareshana. One may have wife and children, wealth and property, and enjoy family life for some time. But such happiness is not true and eternal. It is foolish to think that one can remain happy for ever in family life.

The third is putreshana. Man wants to have a son, thinking that he would bestow happiness on him. There is nothing wrong in aspiring to have a son, but that happiness will also be temporary. King Dhritarashtra had many sons, but did he enjoy happiness through his sons? No. In fact, he had to undergo a lot of suffering and was put to disrepute because of his sons.

King Dhritarashtra had a number of sons, but ultimately what was his fate? Sage Suka was not married and had no sons, but did he suffer on account of this?(Telugu Poem)

It is a mistake to think that the one with sons will enjoy happiness and the one without a son will suffer. It is but an illusion to think that wealth, wife, and children will give happiness. In fact, dhaneshana, dhareshana ,and putreshana are binding man and subjecting him to suffering. What is the use of having many sons who are wicked? It is enough if you have at least one son who is noble and ideal.

Take the Ramayana, for instance. According to the Telugu calendar, this is the month of Chaitra. This is the month that witnessed the advent of Lord Rama. He was born on the Chaitra Suddha Navami day. This month of Chaitra is most wonderful. The same can be said of the stories of the Lord.

The stories of the Lord are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds. They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage.

(Telugu Poem)

Among the three wives of Dasaratha, not much has been said about the second wife, Sumitra, anywhere in history. Kausalya attained a good reputation because of her son Rama. Her name figures first in the Suprabhatam, which begins with the words, "Kausalya supraja Rama (Oh! The noble son of mother Kausalya)". Kaikeyi wanted her son Bharata to be the crown prince, but Sumitra had absolutely no desire whatsoever. Sumitra was the epitome of all virtues. She was mitha bhashi and hitha bhashi (one who talks less and in a pleasing manner). Her behaviour was in consonance with her name Su-mitra (good friend). She had two sons, Lakshmana and Satrughna, and there was no way that either of them could become the crown prince. Yet, Sumitra was not worried. She demonstrated the ideal of service to the rest of the world. "When Lord Rama becomes king, my first son Lakshmana should dedicate himself to His service." This was her desire. Likewise, she wanted her second son Satrughna to be in service of Bharata. The servant is always by the side of the master. That is why Lakshmana followed Lord Rama and Satrughna was always in the company of Bharata. She understood the sacredness of service and exhorted her sons to follow the same path. When you carefully go through the sacred story of Lord Rama, you will be able to understand and appreciate the noble and ideal feelings of mother Sumitra.

When Lord Rama was leaving for the forest, mother Kausalya was inconsolable. It was only Sumitra who did not shed a tear. She tried to pacify Kausalya and instil courage in her saying, "Dear sister, my son Lakshmana will accompany Rama to the forest to look after His needs. He will make sure that Rama is put to no inconvenience under any circumstances. Just as an eyelid protects the eye, Lakshmana will constantly engage himself in Rama's service. You don't need to be worried about Rama's safety and security." She willingly sent her son to the forest along with Rama.

Will any mother act in such a courageous and selfless manner? As per the

boons granted by Dasaratha to Kaikeyi, only Rama was supposed to go in exile. It was not obligatory for Lakshmana to accompany Him. Sumitra could have argued in this manner and prevented Lakshmana from going to the forest. But Sumitra did not raise any objection whatsoever. "Lakshmana is born only to serve Lord Rama. He is an instrument in Rama's hands. So, Rama is taking His instrument with Him. Who am I to send Lakshmana with Him and who is Lakshmana to decide about his going with Rama? Rama has every right to take Lakshmana with Him." This was her feeling. She blessed her son Lakshmana and said, "My dear, take proper care of Sita and Rama."

When Bharata was proceeding to his uncle's kingdom of Kekaya, Satrughna had no information whether to stay back or follow. Yet, Satrughna got ready to accompany Bharata, since he knew it was his duty to serve him. In the history of Bharat (India), there are many noble mothers like Sumitra, who encouraged their sons to take to the path of service.

For Sita, Rama was her life. She could not bear separation from Him even for a minute. So, she begged to be allowed to accompany Rama to the forest.

As in the case of Sumitra, the name of Urmila, Lakshmana's wife, does not find a place of prominence in the Ramayana. Both Sumitra and Urmila were highly sacred. They lead a life of sacrifice. She was a very good painter. She used to spend most of her time in painting. She was not aware that Sita, Rama, and Lakshmana were going on exile. At that time, she was painting a beautiful picture with the paint pot by her side. Lakshmana went to her and called her by her name in a raised voice. She was afraid and at once stood up; in the process the paint accidentally spilled over the picture she was painting. She felt sad that the picture was spoiled.

Lakshmana asked her as to what she was painting.

Urmila replied, "I am painting the picture of Sita Rama's coronation as it is going to take place. I want to send this picture to my father Janaka. The whole world will enjoy seeing this beautiful picture."

Lakshmana was dejected and told her about the events that took place. He said, "The coronation of Sita Rama is canceled because of Kaikeyi, and the picture you are painting is spoiled because of me." He told that he was accompanying Rama to the forest.

Will any lady keep quiet when she comes to know that her husband is going to the forest for 14 years? She would ask many questions - "Why should you follow him? You are under no obligation to go to forest. Only Rama is ordered to go. So, you need not go with him." Any ordinary lady would have argued in this manner. But Urmila did not raise any objection. In fact, she was very happy that her husband got an opportunity to serve Sita and Rama. She said, "You are very lucky to have got this great opportunity. Please follow them without wasting a minute."

Lakshmana told her, "You will not be able to see Sita and Rama for the next 14 years. So, go to Sita's residence at once and take her blessings." But Urmila did not move from there. On the other hand, she pushed him to go with Sita and Rama, saying, "I don't want to come in the way of your going with Sita and Rama. Please don't waste even a minute. Go with them at once and be in their service."

Before going, she wanted Lakshmana to give her a promise. She said, "You are going to live in the forest without me for fourteen years. It is possible that you would think of me and mention my name at some time or other. So, I want you to promise that you will not think of me or mention my name at any point of time. Contemplate constantly on the divine Names of Sita and Rama and serve them with all sincerity and devotion. If I accompany you to the forest, you may not be able to devote your entire time to their service. I will stay back so as not to become an impediment in your way."

Hearing Urmila's words, Lakshmana was surprised and elated. "Can one find such a noble and devoted wife anywhere else," he exclaimed to himself. He took leave of her and left the place immediately.

In this land of Bharat (India), there are many noble mothers like Sumitra and

virtuous wives like Urmila. Since ancient times, Bharat has attained great reputation because of such noble women. In the northern side of Bharat, we have the Himalayan mountains as the boundary. This land is sanctified by the perennial rivers of Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati. These three symbolise the triad of bhakti, jnana and vairagya (devotion, wisdom, and renunciation). Not merely this, the great epics of this land, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, and the Mahabharata shine as beacons illuminating the path of man. They teach how man should mould his life into an ideal one. This land is the birthplace of sacred scriptures like the Bhagavadgita, which gave the message of unity to mankind. This land has given birth to noble souls like Buddha, who propagated the message of non-violence. He taught ahimsa paramo dharmaha (nonviolence is the highest dharma). The syllable 'bha' stands for light, radiance, and effulgence. So, Bharatiyas (Indians) are those who aspire for light and divine effulgence. Hence, you should live up to your reputation as Bharatiyas by making your lives sacred and attain divinity. When you make an enquiry into the sacred history of Bharat, you will know that since ancient times this country has propagated the sacred message of divinity and conferred peace and security on the other nations.

Many incidents that speak of the nobility of Sumitra and Urmila are not mentioned in the epic Ramayana. When Lakshmana fainted in the battlefield, in order to revive him, Hanuman had to bring the Sanjivani herbs from a mountain. Since he was unable to locate the required herbs, he lifted the entire mountain and was on his way back to the battlefield. He had to fly over the Nandigrama en route. Bharata mistook him for a demon and shot an arrow at him. Hanuman fell down along with the mountain. He offered his salutations to Bharata and explained to him the situation in the battlefield and the purpose of his carrying the Sanjivani mountain. Bharata was happy to note that Lakshmana would be revived. Immediately, he sent word for his mothers and all his subjects.

Urmila also came. Everyone except Sumitra felt sad that Lakshmana had fainted in the battlefield. But Urmila was not perturbed. She bent her head and listened to Hanuman's narration. On hearing all this, mother Kausalya broke down. Then Sumitra consoled her saying, "Sister, why do you worry? No

danger can ever befall Rama. Lakshmana will take good care of him. Both my sons are born to render service to Rama. In case Lakshmana dies in the battlefield, I will send my other son Satrughna to help Rama in the battle."

Will any mother be prepared for such a sacrifice? Bharata said to Urmila, "Mother, you may be grief-stricken that your husband Lakshmana has fainted in the battlefield." In those days people used to address women as mother.

Urmila replied, "I am not at all worried about this, for my husband is with Lord Rama Himself. In fact, every cell of his body is filled with the divine Name of Rama. Hence, I am sure that nothing untoward can happen to him."

Then Hanuman told her, "Mother, none can say for sure that your husband will be revived. It is a very difficult situation. Rama loves Lakshmana most dearly. He considers him as His very life. Hence, Rama is grief-stricken."

Hearing this Urmila laughed and said, "Hanuman, no one in this world can understand the Divinity of Rama and the nature of my husband. Rama is verily the Paramatma (highest Atma). There is no question of his worrying at all. All this is His Divine play. Even my husband Lakshmana has no worries at all. Perhaps he might have been hurt a little by the arrows shot at him by Ravana and his sons. Since every cell of his body is filled with the divine Name of Rama, there is absolutely no danger to his life. In fact, he has not fainted; he is enjoying a good and peaceful sleep."

None can understand the bond of sacred love that existed between Rama and Lakshmana. When Lakshmana fainted in the battlefield, Rama lamented, saying, "If I were to search in the world, I may get another wife like Sita, but not a brother like Lakshmana".

In the Ramayana, not much has been said about the greatness of Lakshmana and Satrughna. Since this world is physical in nature, people give importance only to physical aspects. They talk only about Sita and Rama but do not bother to note the sacrifices made by Lakshmana, Satrughna and their wives.

Urmila told Hanuman to proceed without further delay, since Rama and others would be waiting for his return. She said, "I am the daughter of the King Janaka, the daughter-in-law of the King Dasaratha, and the wife of Lakshmana. Since these three are men of truth and righteousness, no danger can ever befall on my husband." Her resolve was such that she remained in the same place where she was when her husband Lakshmana left for the forest. She had told Lakshmana that she would remain in the same place till his return from the forest. She spent all her time in painting. Even Sumitra was worried a bit, but Urmila was unperturbed. Urmila's nature was pure, unsullied, and totally selfless. But to this day, Bharatiyas have not known the nobility of Sumitra and Urmila. Mother Sumitra had no ambition that her sons should occupy positions of authority. She wanted them to follow the path of service.

It is not enough if you think of Rama and Sita. You should also remember the great ideals demonstrated by Lakshmana and Urmila. The four brothers - Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna - are like the four Vedas. Once, Sage Vasishta said that the four Vedas assumed the forms of these four brothers and played in the house of King Dasaratha.

What you have to realise or understand today is that the Lord can never be put to any danger. He enacts a divine drama in order to set an ideal to the world. Only those whose hearts are pure can understand His ways. Only Urmila could understand the sacred heart of Lakshmana. Only mother Sumitra knew the greatness of her sons Lakshmana and Satrughna. It is but natural that the mother understands the nature of her sons. This sacred land of Bharat has given to the world the most precious gems in the form of ideal mothers and ideal wives. Many more wonderful and mysterious events took place, but they are not revealed in the Ramayana.

Today you are celebrating the commencement of the New Year. But, in fact you should treat every second as the beginning of a New Year. Many people are worried as to what changes the New Year will bring in the social, political, and economic fields. But no changes will take place. Any change, if it were to take place, will not wait for the arrival of the New Year. In fact, many changes

are taking place from moment to moment. You may wonder as to what are the big changes that would take place in this New Year. Whatever happened in the previous year would take place this year also. One need not be concerned about these things. You should be concerned that there is no transformation in your heart ,although years are rolling by. You have to get rid of evil tendencies in your thoughts, words, and deeds. You should celebrate the arrival of New Year with noble and divine feelings. You should experience bliss by visualising the non-apparent Atmic Principle in this apparent world.

Embodiments of Love!

No individual or wealth can confer eternal bliss on you. Bliss originates from your heart. So, turn your vision inward. Antarbahischa tatsarvam vyapya narayana sthita (The all-pervasive God is present within and without). When you develop inner vision, you will automatically experience the eternal bliss. Man is ananda pipasi (one who aspires to attain bliss). He need not go in search of bliss. It is in him and with him. Happiness is not related to the body.

This body is a storehouse of dirt, and prone to diseases; it cannot cross the ocean of samsara. O mind, do not be under the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet. (Telugu Poem)

How can such a body give you eternal happiness? Only the Lotus Feet of the Lord can grant you true happiness. There is no devotion and sense of surrender among Bharatiyas (Indians) today. People are deluded by the worldly, physical, and ephemeral things. Are they able to derive any happiness out of these? Nothing whatsoever. It is all a mere puppet show.

All that you witness in this world is nothing but a puppet show. One is a king and one is a pauper. Is this not all what you witness? Can anybody deny

this? This is the trend that prevails in the world.

The darkness of ignorance is the root cause for the delusion. How can you understand the sathwic (pious) principle when you are immersed in thamoguna (ignorance)?

Embodiments of Love!

To be born in Bharat (India) is in itself your good fortune. To live here is a greater fortune. You should take pride in the fact that you are the children of Bharat. If someone were to ask you your qualification, you should proudly say, you are a Bharatiya (Indian). This is in itself a great qualification. There is a sacred inner meaning in this word Bharatiya. But you are not making efforts to understand this.

Oh! the children of Bharat! Lead your lives in an exemplary manner and radiate peace and happiness to the rest of the world. Since ancient times, many Bharatiyas made their lives ideal to the rest of the world, experienced happiness, and shared it with others. Why are you forgetting such ideals?

Embodiments of Love!

You should never forget the sacred history of Bharat. Don't brush it aside saying it is rather old. It is not easy to understand the subtle principles contained in our history. You might have gone through the Ramayana many times, but have you understood the nobility of Sumitra and sacredness of Urmila? No. Urmila was Janaka's own daughter, and Sita was found when he was ploughing the field. So, Sita can be called his foster daughter, whereas Urmila was his own daughter. So, he had decided to give Sita and Urmila in marriage to Rama and Lakshmana, respectively.

Sita was the embodiment of shakti (energy). What type of shakti was it? Sita, being the daughter of mother earth, was full of magnetic power. Rama, being

Divine, was the very personification of magnetic power. Hence, Sita was married to Rama.

Urmila was wedded to Lakshmana. Who was Lakshmana? He was Adhishesha himself, who bears the weight of mother earth. Urmila was one of noble qualities. She was such a great painter that she could draw anything in no time. Today, people remember the names of Kaikeyi and Manthara but not the name of Urmila, who demonstrated sacred ideals. She remained in the same room where she was when he left for the forest, for fourteen long years, until he returned. She never had any worldly desires. I may reveal certain things, but not all can understand them.

Sita wore a yellow colour Sari for coronation. She spent all fourteen years in the forest wearing the same Sari. The same with Urmila. She wore the same Sari till Lakshmana returned. Being the daughters of King Janaka, they had no body attachment. That is why they were known as Vaidehis (those without body attachment). King Janaka was known as Videha, one without body attachment.

When you enquire deeply, you will know that there are many hidden secrets in the Ramayana. But the Bharatiyas themselves are not making any effort to understand them. Once, a person, after listening to many discourses on the Ramayana, was asked to tell the name of Rama's consort. He replied, "Mrs. Rama", since he did not remember her name. Such is the sorry state of affairs. Bharatiyas are leading a life of ignorance. They are ignoring our ancient culture and are being carried away by modernism.

We have only one friend, and He is God. There is only one sacred text, and that is the ancient history of India. You have to study this sacred text; don't spoil your mind by reading meaningless novels. He who has purified his heart alone can inculcate sacred feelings.

Embodiments of Love!

From this New Year Day onward, contemplate on the sacred ideals

demonstrated by the men and women of the Ramayana and follow in their footsteps. You should attain happiness and share it with others. Uphold the good reputation of Bharat. Develop the feeling of nationality. Never forget your motherland. If someone were to ask you as to who you are, you need not say, I am Ramayya, Krishnayya, etc. You should proudly proclaim that you are a Bharatiya. Ramayya and Krishnayya are pettinna perlu (names given to the body), whereas Bharatiya is your puttina peru (the name you acquired by birth).

Who is a Bharatiya? 'Bha-rathi'. Bha means effulgence, light, and divinity. Hence, Bharatiya is one who has intense love for God.

Bharat is the centre of peace and security. That which is not present in Bharat is not present anywhere else in the world. No other country has attained such a noble reputation as Bharat. The glory of this country has to be upheld.

Follow the teachings of the Ramayana and make your lives sacred. This sacred epic has a great message to convey. Many histories could not stand the test of time, but the Ramayana, though thousands of years have passed, continues to remain ever fresh in the minds of people. The name Rama was given by Sage Vasishta. When you utter the word 'Ram', you first open the mouth with the sound 'Ra'. All your wicked qualities go out when your mouth is open. When you utter 'M' by closing the mouth, the entry is barred against wicked qualities that have gone out. This is the inner meaning of chanting the Name of Rama.

On this New Year Day, you have learnt many new things. Sanctify your lives by putting into practice whatever you have learnt.

Bhagavan sang the Bhajan, "Hari bhajan bina" and continued His Discourse.

Embodiments of Love!

Yesterday happened to be the Telugu New Year Day, Ugadi. Today, we are celebrating Tamil New Year Day and also the Malayalam New Year Day, Vishu.

The names are different but the inner significance is one and the same. Celebration of a festival does not merely mean getting up early in the morning, having a sacred bath, wearing new clothes, partaking of sweet dishes, etc. When you understand their inner significance, you will have celebrated the festivals in their true sense.

That is the place which has the Chitravathi river as the boundary meandering in a captivating manner. That is the place around which there are beautiful mango groves symbolising auspiciousness. Standing on guard on four sides, the deities Parvati and Parameswara protect the place. Nearby is a lake built by Chikkavadiyar and a town that speaks of the glory of Bukkarayalu. There stands Puttapuram (Puttaparthi) in its divine majesty, spreading its grandeur and glory all over the world. (Telugu Poem)

What is the meaning of the name Puttaparthi? Parthi means effulgence. So, Puttaparthi is the place of effulgence. It is the beacon light. Earlier it was called Puttavardhini. Putta means anthill. There used to be anthills and snakes all around. The Ramayana also emerged out of anthills in the sense that its composer Sage Valmiki was born in an anthill. He was completely covered by anthills, and snakes were moving in and out of them. In your heart, which can be compared to a anthill, there are many snakes of wicked qualities. When you do namasmarana (singing of the divine Name), all the 'snakes' will come out. Namasmarana is like vadaswaram, which attracts snakes and brings them out of anthills. This nadaswaram is your jeevanaswaram and pranaswaram (life and breath). One has to repeat God's Name in order to get rid of evil qualities.

Today, many do not attach any importance to namasmarana. It is a great mistake.

In this age of Kali, only chanting of the divine Name can redeem your lives.

There is no other refuge. (Sanskrit Sloka)

Singing the glory of the Lord is highly sacred. Today, the country is facing a lot of problems because people are not doing namasmarana. Let each and every street reverberate with His Divine glory. Let each and every cell of your body be filled with His Divine Name. Nothing else can give you the bliss, courage, and strength that you derive from namasmarana.

Let anybody make fun of you; don't bother about it. People may say, "He is an I.A.S. officer. Why is he also doing namasmarana?" Whoever has a heart has the right to do namasmarana. The heart is the same in everyone. What is wrong if an I.A.S. officer does namasmarana? Be he young or old, rich or poor, everyone has to do namasmarana. Only fools make fun of people doing namasmarana. If someone were to ask you, "What, you too have become a devotee! Are you also doing namasmarana!" You should say, "Yes, I am a devotee of the Lord. I am not such a 'big' person as not to repeat God's Name. Not only me, you, your father, your grandfather, and your great grandfather will have to repeat God's Name. What is the use of being born as a human being if you don't think of God?"

The other man may say that he does not believe in God. Tell him, "If you don't have faith, that is your fate. But I have faith and I will do namasmarana. God may not exist for you, but He exists for me. Who are you to deny the existence of God for me? What right do you have to question my faith?"

When you do namasmarana with such courage and conviction, you are bound to meet with success in all your endeavours. Don't be afraid of anyone. Sing the glory of God wholeheartedly without any inhibition. Only then you can experience the divine bliss. Begin this sacred namasmarana right from this moment, on this New Year Day. You don't need musical instruments for this. It is enough if it originates from the core of your heart. Take care that your mind is not polluted with evil thoughts. Your mind is like a Veena. Any evil thought will produce apaswaras (discordant notes). So, fill your mind with noble

thoughts and sing His glory. Only then will you become the recipient of Divine grace and energy.

Once the gopikas (cowherd maids) prayed to Krishna thus:

Oh Krishna, please sing for us with all the sweetness and melody. Talk to us and fill our hearts with joy. Take the essence of the Vedas, transform it into Divine melody, fill it in your divine flute and let it flow out in the form of a melodious song. Oh Krishna, please sing for us!"

Listening to the sweet song of Krishna, they forgot themselves in ecstasy. They forgot all the troubles they had undergone. Such is the sweetness of divine music.

Today, Keralites are celebrating Vishu and Tamilians are celebrating their New Year day. On this auspicious occasion, I bless you all to enjoy peace, happiness, and prosperity. May you sanctify your lives by leading ideal lives and giving happiness to all. May you lead a blissful life. You don't need to search for bliss outside. It is within you. From this day onward develop your devotion and sense of surrender. Be fearless and sing the glory of the Lord wherever you are. Only then will you be leading a true human life. Having been born in this sacred land, lead your lives in a befitting manner.

Very soon, all the countries of the world will have to follow Bharat. Bharat should become the leader of the entire world in the field of spirituality. This is what I desire.

Our ancients worshipped nature. It is nature that gives us food, raiment, and shelter. Not merely that, it also gives us precious metals like gold and silver. So, what is wrong in worshipping nature? All the modes of worship that our ancients practised were highly sacred. Bhumatha (Mother Earth), Gomatha (the cow), Vedamatha (the Vedas), and the Dehamatha (the physical mother)

are to be revered.

Since people have stopped worshipping God, we find chaos all over the world. People are plunged in sorrow because they have lost faith in the Self. What is the use of life without self-confidence? Worship of God alone can safeguard the nation. The country will be blessed with plenty and prosperity and people will lead a happy life once they start thinking of God.

We repeat the santhi mantra thrice in our daily prayers. What does this mean? We should attain peace at three levels, i.e. physical, mental, and spiritual. There is no peace in the external world; we find only pieces. Peace is, in fact, within you. Make efforts to manifest your inner peace.

Embodiments of Love!

Spend the whole night in chanting the holy Name and spread this spiritual energy to the world at large. Who is Eswara? He is the All-pervasive. Just as the wind blows freely everywhere, so also do we find the principle of Eswara pervasive. Share your love with all and propagate the Divine Name to the entire world.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan "Hari bhajana bina sukha santhi nahi".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

8. Imprint Rama's name on your heart

Date: 21 April 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Rama Navami

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Rama.

Constant repetition of this nectareous sweet Name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself.

Therefore, one should contemplate on this sweet Name incessantly.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Ayodhya was the capital of the kingdom of Kosala. The name Ayodhya signifies a place where no enemies could enter. It was built by Emperor Manu. The river Sarayu, which originated from the Manasasarovar, flowed nearby. The Manasasarovar is the manifestation of the Will of Brahma.

Such a sacred place was ruled over by Emperor Dasaratha. In spite of having all the wealth and comforts, his life was devoid of happiness because he had no children. Dasaratha had a minister by name Sumantha, who was noble-hearted and highly virtuous. One day, he approached Dasaratha and said, "Oh king! I have a plan that would solve your problems and give happiness to you and the people at large. The country will attain plenty and prosperity if you perform an aswamedha yaga (horse sacrifice). There is another sacred ritual called putrakamesti yaga, by performing which you are sure to beget children." He said that the aswamedha yaga could be performed after the putrakamesti yaga.

Dasaratha was happy with the advice and commanded him to make the necessary arrangements. Sumantha asked Dasaratha to invite Sage Rishyasrunga as the chief priest to preside over the putrakamesti yaga. He

felt that Rishyasrunga was well-versed with this type of ritual.

At that time, Padmapada was ruling over the kingdom of Anga, which was afflicted with famine. King Padmapada was also contemplating seeking Rishyasrunga's help to get over this crisis. One day, King Dasaratha, Sumantha, and Padmapada together went to Rishyasrunga's hermitage.

As per Dasaratha's request, Rishyasrunga came over to Ayodhya and performed the aswamedha and putrakamesti yagas. As the sacred ritual was in progress, there emerged an effulgent being from the flames with a vessel containing Payasam (sweet pudding). He handed over the vessel to Sage Vasishta, who in turn gave it to Dasaratha and told him to distribute it equally between his three wives. Since there were many composers of the Ramayana, like Kamba, Valmiki, Tulasidas, etc., each gave different versions of the proportion in which the payasam was distributed between the queens. But none of them gave the correct version. Dasaratha gave equal share of the payasam to each of his three queens in three different cups. Whether it is then or now, the principle of equality is most essential for man. Dasaratha told his wives to have a sacred bath and seek Sage Rishyasrunga's blessings before partaking of the payasam.

Kausalya was very happy, and so was Kaikeyi, but Sumitra was not elated. At the same time, she didn't want to disobey the command of her husband Dasaratha and Sage Rishyasrunga. After having a holy bath, she went onto the terrace and started drying her hair in the sun. She kept the payasam-cup by her side. As she was drying her hair, she started thinking, "Since Kausalya is the eldest queen, the son born to her will be the legal heir to the throne, or else as per the promise made by Dasaratha to the king of Kekaya, Kaikeyi's son will be crowned as king. My son will not have a right to the throne. Such being the case, what is the point in my begetting a son?" She was dejected, depressed, and lost in such thoughts as she was combing her hair.

Meanwhile, a servant-maid came running to her and informed her that King Dasaratha had asked her to come at once. She plaited her hair and was about to pick up the cup. Just then, an eagle swooped down and took away the cup

in a trice. She was already feeling sad, and this incident increased her agony thousand fold. She was afraid that her husband and Sage Vasishta would be annoyed with her. She shuddered at the thought of being cursed by Sage Rishyasrunga. She ran to Kausalya and Kaikeyi and explained to them her predicament. "Sisters, an eagle took away the cup because of my negligence. No doubt, it was a mistake, but it was not done intentionally."

In those days, even stepsisters used to live in amity like children of the same mother. Kausalya consoled her. Immediately, she brought a similar cup from inside and poured half of her share of payasam into it. Kaikeyi followed suit. Sumitra was happy that her stepsisters were accommodative and considerate toward her. All this happened in a natural way. But some authors have given a different version of this. They described the payasam distribution based on their own mathematical calculations.

The three queens went to the puja (worship) room and partook of their share of payasam. Nine months passed. On an auspicious day, Kausalya gave birth to a son. That was the time when the five elements were in harmony with each other. Kausalya's joy knew no bounds. Before this good news could be conveyed to Sumitra and Kaikeyi, they also developed labour pains. Sumitra gave birth to Lakshmana first and after a few moments Satrugna. Then, Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharata. The four Vedas assumed the forms of Dasaratha's four sons.

On the tenth day, the naming ceremony was performed. Kausalya's son was named Rama, since he attracted and delighted one and all. Just as one sees one's reflection in the mirror, Rama would visualise the Atmic effulgence in everyone. He saw the effulgence in the form of a moon in the heart of everybody. Hence, He was called Ramachandra.

The two sons of Sumitra were restless and cried non-stop right from birth. They neither would drink milk nor go to sleep. Seeing the pathetic condition of her sons, Sumitra was grief-stricken. "As it is, I am crying, thinking of my bad luck. Now, the children born to me are also crying. How unfortunate I am!" Thinking in this manner, she felt miserable. When there was no one

around, she approached Sage Vasishtha and explained to him the sad plight of her sons. She said, "Guruji, I don't expect anything from my sons. It is enough for me if they lead a happy and healthy life. They don't seem to be having any physical ailments. I am unable to understand why they are restless and crying incessantly right from their birth."

Vasishtha closed his eyes and went into meditation to find out the reason for the children's strange behaviour. After some time, he opened his eyes and said, "Mother Sumitra, you are very fortunate. You are endowed with the noble virtue of samadrishti (equality). As your name suggests, you are a good friend of all. You don't need to be worried at all. With permission of Kausalya, put Lakshmana in the same cradle where Rama is. Likewise, seek Kaikeyi's permission and place Satrughna by Bharata's side, in the same cradle. Then, they will stop crying and behave normally."

Kausalya and Kaikeyi readily consented to Sumitra's request. They said, "Sister, bring Lakshmana and Satrughna at once. They are also like our children. Is it not a matter of joy for us to watch the four brothers develop unity and grow together?"

Sumitra did as per Sage Vasishtha's advice. No sooner was Lakshmana placed in the cradle by Rama's side than he stopped crying. The same was the case with Satrughna. He stopped crying as soon as he was placed by Bharata's side. Lakshmana and Satrughna were extremely happy in the company of Rama and Bharata, respectively. They were all smiles and started moving their hands and legs blissfully. Watching her sons enjoying themselves thus, Sumitra felt greatly relieved.

A few days passed. One day Sumitra, finding sage Vasishtha all alone, requested him to explain the strange behaviour of her sons. She wanted to know why Lakshmana and Satrughna were crying incessantly till they were placed by the sides of Rama and Bharata. Sage Vasishtha started explaining, "Oh Sumitra! You are a noble soul. Your heart is pure and unsullied. You are totally selfless. So, it is not difficult for you to understand the reason behind this. Do you remember, when your share of payasam was taken away by an

eagle, Kausalya and Kaikeyi came to your rescue by sharing their payasam with you. As a result, you begot two sons. Lakshmana is born from Kausalya's share of payasam and Satrughna from Kaikeyi's. It means that Lakshmana is an amsa (aspect) of Rama and Satrughna is an amsa of Bharata. So, it is natural that Lakshmana is blissful in Rama's company and Satrughna in Bharata's company." The Bhagavadgita says, Mamaivamsho jeevaloke jeevabhuta sanathanah (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). Lakshmana, being the spark of Rama, was in His Company always. Likewise, Satrughna and Bharata were always together.

Years rolled by, and the four brothers matured into young men. Dasaratha decided to perform their marriages. One day, when he was thinking on these lines, a messenger entered and informed him the arrival of Sage Viswamitra. Everything happens according to time, situation, and circumstances. God creates the necessary circumstances to fulfil His Divine plan. Dasaratha personally went up to the entrance and welcomed the sage, saying, "Swami, it is our great good fortune that you have come today. I am contemplating on performing marriages of my sons. So, I am extremely happy and indeed blessed to have you amidst us today. Please tell me, what can I do for you. I will certainly fulfil your desire."

Viswamitra said that he had come to take Rama with him to protect his yajna (ritual sacrifice) from demons. Dasaratha felt as though an atom bomb had exploded in his heart. "I begot these children as a result of performing several rituals and sacrifices over a number of years. Moreover, Rama has never entered a forest or seen a demon. He has no hatred toward anybody. He is full of love and forbearance. How can I send such a tender-hearted Rama to the forest to fight the demons, who are very cruel?" Such were his feelings. He said to Viswamitra, "Oh venerable sage, my sons are very young. How can I send them to forest?"

Viswamitra said, "Oh king! You promised that you would fulfil my desire. Now, you are going back on your word. Kings belonging to the Ikshvaku clan never failed to keep up their promise so far. If you go against your word, you will bring disrepute to your clan. So, decide whether you want to put your clan to

disrepute or send your sons with me."

Dasaratha thought for a while but was unable to decide. He called Sage Vasishtha and sought his advice. Vasishtha said, "Dasaratha, your sons are not ordinary mortals. They are born to you because of Divine Will. They are born out of fire, which means they are the embodiments of power and wisdom. So, no danger can ever befall on them. So, uphold your promise given to Sage Viswamitra."

Here there is an important point to be noted. Viswamitra had come to take only Rama with him. Rama was prepared to go with him. He did ask Lakshmana to accompany him. Neither Viswamitra nor Dasaratha had asked him to follow Rama. Lakshmana followed Rama of his own accord because he was an amsa (aspect) of Rama. Just as shadow follows an object, Lakshmana accompanied Rama. Seeing this, Viswamitra thought to himself, "Everything happens according to the Divine Will."

Prior to his departure, he said to Dasaratha, "Oh king! There is no power in this world that is not in me. I am endowed with all mighty powers and all types of knowledge. But once I undertake yajna deeksha (vow of yajna) and start performing the ritual, I am not supposed to involve myself in any act of violence. This is the discipline prescribed for the one performing a yajna. Hence, I cannot kill the demons on my own. That is why I am taking Rama with me."

When they reached the banks of the Sarayu river, Viswamitra said, "Rama come here." He called only Rama, and not Lakshmana. Though he was not called, Lakshmana also went and sat by Rama's side. Viswamitra said, "My dear ones, I am taking you to Siddhashrama, where a yajna is going to take place. You have come here to protect the yajna from demons. I don't know how many days you have to stay in the forest. You are used to royal comforts and delicious food. But there is no one to prepare food for you in the ashram. You may have to stay awake day and night, forgoing food and water, in order to protect the yajna. So, I will teach you two mantras: Bala and Atibala. With the power of these mantras, you can remain without food, water, and sleep

for any number of days."

Knowing fully well that Rama was the Divine incarnation and had the power to protect the yajna, why did Viswamitra teach him these mantras? These are only external activities meant for the world. Rama and Lakshmana chanted these mantras and consequently had no hunger, thirst, or sleep during their stay in the Siddhashrama.

When the yajna was in progress, the demon Maricha tried to disrupt the proceedings. Rama killed him with a single arrow, and his body was thrown to a great distance by the impact. Then came a thunderous noise. Rama asked Viswamitra, "Swami, what is this noise? It sounds as though mountains are falling apart."

Viswamitra said, "It has nothing to do with the mountains. It is the voice of the demoness Thataki. She makes everyone tremble with her voice. Be prepared to face her. She is coming." Rama had a doubt whether it was proper for a Kshatriya to kill a woman. Viswamitra said, "Rama, when it comes to protecting a yajna, you don't need to be concerned whether it is a man or a woman who is disrupting it. Your main duty is to ward off all demons.

Since it was the command of the guru, Rama implicitly obeyed him and killed the ogress. But she was not the one to be killed easily. A fierce battle ensued. But we don't need to go into its details. Once Thataki was killed, the surroundings of Siddhashrama became peaceful, and everyone rejoiced. The demigods showered flower petals. The yajna was completed successfully.

In the meantime, a messenger from the city of Mithila arrived and handed over a letter to Viswamitra from King Janaka. It was an invitation to Viswamitra to take part in a yajna that Janaka was going to perform. Viswamitra at once set out for Mithila. Being a sanyasi (renunciant), he had no luggage to carry with him. He asked Rama and Lakshmana to follow him, but Rama was reluctant to do so. He said, "Guruji, my father sent Me to protect your yajna. I am not interested in the yajna that King Janaka is going to perform."

In order to arouse interest and enthusiasm in them, Viswamitra said, "The yajna is not an ordinary one. In the palace of king Janaka, there is Siva dhanus (bow of Siva), which ordinary mortals cannot lift. It is very difficult to even move it an inch. One day it happened that Sita, the daughter of Janaka, lifted the bow. That day, Janaka decided that he would give his daughter Sita in marriage to someone who could lift the bow. This yajna is arranged in this connection."

Viswamitra persuaded Rama and Lakshmana to accompany him to Mithila. The entire city of Mithila had assembled. Kings belonging to various countries had arrived. Ravana was one among them. Ravana was very powerful and had a fearsome personality. He was the first one to come forward to lift the bow. As he was proceeding toward the bow, kings were surprised at his gait and personality. They thought, "If he is able to lift the bow, King Janaka has to give his daughter in marriage to him. The very sight of him is terrifying. How can Janaka give his daughter to him? Anyway, let us see what is going to happen."

Ravana first tried to lift the bow with his left hand. But it did not move. He used all his strength and tried with both his hands. Yet it did not move. In the process, he lost his balance and fell down. He could not bear the insult. One with ego is bound to face humiliation. He cannot receive respect and honour in society. Ego leads to ruin.

Seeing the mighty Ravana falling down in such a manner, all the kings were surprised. They said to themselves, "If Ravana cannot lift it, nobody else can." They were afraid even to come forward to try to lift the bow. At that moment, Viswamitra gave a meaningful look to Rama. Rama understood its implication and got up. He was only fifteen years at that time. As he was walking majestically toward the bow, people were attracted by His divine splendour. It looked as though all powers were following Him like a shadow. People were mesmerised by His divine form and were unmindful of what was going to happen.

Smilingly, Rama went near the bow, adjusted his upper garment and put his

left hand on the bow. And lo! It just stood up. It had to be bent to tie the string. As He was bending it, the bow broke with a deafening sound. The onlookers were stunned at Rama's mighty power. Immediately, Sita was brought by her maids with a garland in her hand.

Viswamitra asked, "Rama, are you ready for the marriage?" Rama said, "Swami, my father sent me to Siddhashram to safeguard your Yajna. I don't have his permission to come here. I will not accept this proposal without his consent."

Viswamitra whispered this into Janaka's ear. He also supported Rama's view, since he was well versed with rajaneeti (code of conduct prescribed for a king). Immediately, he sent his messengers to King Dasaratha to bring him and his family with royal honours. Three days passed by the time King Dasaratha and his family arrived in Mithila, during which Rama and Lakshmana did not move out of their room.

Dasaratha, with his family members, friends, and relatives, arrived in Mithila accompanied by thousands of soldiers and citizens of Ayodhya. The four brothers were extremely happy seeing each other. The holy wedding took place on the fourth day, about which I described in detail many a time. Sita was born of mother Earth and Urmila was Janaka's own daughter. Sita was to wed Rama and Urmila was to marry Lakshmana. Janaka's brother had two daughters Mandavi and Sruthakirti. Their wedding was fixed with Bharata and Satrughna ,respectively. It looked as though each one was made for the other.

During the wedding, Sita had to garland Rama. Since she was short in stature and Rama was ajanubahu (tall personality), she could not do so. Rama was expected to bend His head before Sita so that she could garland Him. However, He would not do so, lest people should say that Rama, one of valour, bowed His head before a woman. Woman in those days would not look into the face of men. Hence, Sita was looking down holding the garland in her hand.

Lakshmana was the incarnation of Adishesha, who carries the mother Earth on his hood. Rama looked at Lakshmana as if to say, "Look, why don't you raise that part of earth where Sita is standing to enable her to garland Me." Then Lakshmana indicated to Rama that it was not possible to raise any particular area. If he tried to raise that part of earth where Sita was standing, simultaneously Rama would be raised and so also others.

The onlookers became anxious and were wondering why Rama was not bending his head to enable Sita garland him. Lakshmana, being one of intelligence, thought of a plan to solve the problem. All of a sudden, he fell at the feet of Rama and would not get up for a long time. Rama bent down to pick up Lakshmana and, seizing the opportunity, Sita garlanded Rama.

Once, Saint Thyagaraja sang a song extolling Rama's mighty power:

But for the power of Rama, could a mere monkey cross the mighty ocean?
Would Lakshmi Devi, the goddess of wealth, become his consort?
Would Lakshmana worship him?
Would the intelligent Bharata offer his salutations to him?
But for the mighty power of Rama, would all this happen?
Indeed, Rama's power is beyond all description.

The wedding took place in a glorious manner and all of them returned to Ayodhya. As the saying goes, "The pleasure is an interval between two pains". On the way to Ayodhya, there was a minor conflict with Parasurama. Rama conquered him and reached Ayodhya.

A few days passed. One day, at three in the morning, Dasaratha had a dream. It was his belief that whatever one dreams in the early hours of the day would come true. He had dreamt that he had become very old and that his hands and legs were trembling. He woke up with a disturbed state of mind, having dreamt many bad things. He felt that he might not live long. Hence, he

decided to coronate Rama immediately. When the king decides to do something, who can stop him? He thought that there was no time to make elaborate arrangements for the coronation. He sent word for Sage Vasishta and obtained his consent. He called Rama and informed him about his decision. Rama treated everybody with equal-mindedness. This was the social dharma He practised. He was of the view that all are equal and there should not be any differences whatsoever. All are one. God is one. Rama's aim was to bring about such unity in diversity.

When Dasaratha told Rama that he was to be made the crown prince the following day, Rama remained silent for some time. Being an obedient son, He did not want to say anything against His father's wish. He thought for awhile and said, "Father, Bharata and Satrugna are not here. Shouldn't we wait for their arrival?"

But Dasaratha was firm in his resolve. He said, "You don't need to be concerned about it. You have to obey my command."

Rama said that He was prepared to follow his command, but only sought a clarification in this regard. He said, "Four of us were born on the same day, under the same star. We were born from the same yajna payasam. Our namakaranam (naming ceremony), aksharabhyasam (initiation into learning), upanayanam (sacred thread ceremony), and marriages were performed simultaneously. Then why only am I chosen to become the crown prince? Let all four of us be crowned simultaneously."

Dasaratha was indeed surprised at Rama's observations. He quickly added that four kings can't rule over one kingdom.

Rama said, "Divide the kingdom into four parts and each of us will rule each part. Let our coronations take place at the same time. Let there not be any differences."

Dasaratha was stunned at Rama's argument. He had no answer to give. He sent him away and consulted Sage Vasishta who later tried to convince Rama

and said, "For the past many generations, our kingdom remained undivided. If it has to be divided now, it may lead to problems in future."

But Rama was not convinced. He said, "I am not asking you to divide the kingdom, but let each of us rule a part of the kingdom." At the same time, Rama felt that Dasaratha was getting old. As the age advances, one's mental faculties will not be sound. Since Dasaratha was not in a position to understand the reality, Rama said "Let Bharata and Satrughna also come." It would take at least fifteen days for them to arrive in Ayodhya. In the meantime, one could think leisurely and arrive at a proper conclusion. This was Rama's plan. The mighty power of Rama and His master plan were highly mysterious and most wonderful. There should be equality in society. This is the main teaching of Bharatiya (Indian) culture. Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May all the people of the world be happy!) Rama upheld the principles of ancient culture. The coronation did not take place at that time.

People go through the Ramayana. They have books on the Ramayana as big as pillows. They learn the slokas (verses) by rote, but what is the use? They don't understand the essence.

Mother Kausalya was highly virtuous. Being the eldest queen, everyone respected her and obeyed her command. Kaikeyi was the youngest queen. Nobody could go against her wish. Dasaratha was a puppet in her hands and would dance to her tune. But Sumitra was not given much importance. The noble qualities of Sumitra and Satrughna cannot be described in words.

Later, it happened that the coronation of Rama did not take place, and Rama had to spend fourteen years in exile. Before going to the forest, Rama went to mother Kausalya to seek her blessings. She wept inconsolably. Not only she but everyone in the antahpura (inner chamber) was in tears. When Lakshmana went to mother Sumitra and sought her blessings, she said, "My dear one, don't think that you are going to the forest. In fact, this Ayodhya is like an aranya (forest) for us without Sita and Rama. The forest where Sita and Rama live is verily Ayodhya for you. Rama is your father and Sita, your mother. Let nothing come in your way of serving them."

Will any mother speak in such a manner? "As per the boon granted to Kaikeyi, only Rama is supposed to go to the forest. Lakshmana, you don't need to go with him." Any mother would have argued in such a manner and stopped him from going. But Sumitra, being a noble mother, didn't think on those lines. She had all the virtues that are expected of an ideal mother.

Then Lakshmana went to his wife, Urmila, to inform her about his decision to go with Rama. Urmila was King Janaka's daughter. She was highly virtuous. Her spirit of sacrifice and generosity is unparalleled. Being unaware of the happenings, she was painting a picture of Rama's coronation. She wanted to send it to her father Janaka. Since she was deeply engrossed in her work and all of a sudden Lakshmana entered and called her in a raised voice, she was startled and at once stood up. As she got up in a hurry, she accidentally spilled paint on the picture she was painting. She felt sad for having spoiled the picture.

Lakshmana said, "Rama's coronation is stalled because of Kaikeyi, and the picture of the coronation that you are painting is spoiled because of your husband, Lakshmana. So, don't worry about it." He informed her that he was accompanying Rama and Sita to the forest to serve them.

Urmila was happy with his decision. She didn't ask him to allow her to accompany him. She said, "Dear husband, my mother-in-law Sumitra gave birth to you and your brother Satrughna to tread the path of service. You are meant to serve Rama and Satrughna is meant to serve Bharata. So, discharge your duties. But at no point of time should you think of me during your fourteen-year stay in the forest. If you think of me even for a moment, you won't be able to serve Sita and Rama wholeheartedly. Think of their well-being always, and serve them diligently. Forget me altogether for the next fourteen years."

Will any wife speak in such a firm and selfless manner? No. Her broad-mindedness and utter selflessness moved Lakshmana to tears. He praised her saying, "Urmila, I never knew that you were so broad-minded. I will always treasure your noble intentions in my heart."

Urmila said, "Don't think of my noble intentions. Think of the nobility of Sita and Rama and obey their command. See to it that they are never put to any inconvenience." You may search in all the worlds, but you cannot find a noble mother like Sumitra and a virtuous wife like Urmila.

During the war between Rama and Ravana, Lakshmana fell unconscious one day. Seeing his dear brother in such condition, Rama was highly depressed. He shed tears, saying, "If I search this whole world, I might be able to find a wife like Sita but not a brother like Lakshmana. How can I live without him?"

The doctors present there said, "Lakshmana could be revived with the help of an herb called Sanjivini, which is available on a particular mountain." Hanuman at once flew to the mountain. Since he could not identify the herb, he uprooted the entire mountain and started his return journey. As he was flying over Nandigrama with the mountain, Bharata mistook him for a demon and shot an arrow at him. Hanuman fell down, along with the mountain. People of Nandigrama and Ayodhya came running and surrounded him.

Hanuman offered his obeisance to everyone. He turned to Bharata and said, "Your brother Lakshmana has fallen unconscious in the battlefield. The doctors there wanted the Sanjivini herb to be brought in order to revive Lakshmana. Since I couldn't locate the exact herb, I am carrying the entire mountain with me."

On coming to know that Lakshmana had fainted and Rama was grief-stricken, everyone assembled there started shedding tears; the ladies in particular were inconsolable. When Hanuman looked around, he found everyone in tears except one lady. She was none other than Sumitra, the mother of Lakshmana. "Rama can never be put to any harm. My son, Lakshmana constantly chants His Name. Every cell of his body is filled with the divine Name of Rama. So, nothing untoward can happen to him also." With such conviction, she was composed.

Bharata took Hanuman to Urmila and introduced him. She never stepped out of her room. She remained in the same room where she was at the time of

Lakshmana's departure to the forest, for fourteen long years, until his return. Such was her determination. She asked Hanuman where he was coming from. Hanuman told her in detail what had happened right from the time Lakshmana fainted in the battlefield. On listening to Hanuman's tale, Urmila laughed and said, "Hanuman, don't you know even this? The very breath of Lakshmana is filled with the divine Name of Rama. How can any danger befall such a person?"

The sense of devotion and surrender of Urmila and Sumitra is not mentioned with prominence anywhere in the Ramayana. In fact, they were the embodiments of righteousness and love. Their ideals shine like beacons in this world. Everyone should become a Su-mitra (good friend) and a Su-putra (ideal son). The country today needs ideal men and women. Though thousands of years have passed, the glory of the Ramayana has not diminished one bit. It has remained ever new and ever fresh in the hearts of people. One who chants Rama's Name and has the vision of His divine Form will not be born again. That is why Sage Valmiki extolled the greatness of Rama's power and His Name.

Bhagavan sang the bhajan, "Rama Kodanda Rama". Then, He continued the discourse.

Embodiments of Love!

There is no amruta (divine ambrosia) greater than Rama's Name. Today, people have forgotten nama chinthana (contemplating the divine Name). They repeat the names of cinemas, but they don't repeat God's Name. That is why the country is facing hardships. The educated, intellectuals and scientists don't think of God at all. Some people deem it below their dignity to apply vibhuti on their foreheads. They have it on their foreheads when they are at home and rub it off the moment they step outside. This has become a fashion! Why should one be afraid of chanting God's Name? Let people talk as they like. You don't need to be afraid. Spread the glory of Rama's Name in every nook and corner of the world. You can chant any Name of your choice - Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Siva, etc.

<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

9. Mother Is Your First God

Date: 06 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

All the names and forms are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being, who is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, Absolute and non-dual. He is the embodiment of Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Goodness, Beauty).

Embodiments of Love!

Yad drishyam thannashyam (all that we see with our physical eyes is bound to perish). Not only man is endowed with physical eyes, but birds and animals also have them. Even worms and insects have eyes. But what is the use of eyes if we cannot see that which is eternal and changeless? These eyes perceive only ephemeral, impermanent, and unreal things.

In the world, we find people spending their whole life in mundane activities, perceiving only ephemeral things. Jnana (wisdom) is true and eternal. Only he who has the eye of wisdom deserves to be ist in this desolate village.

Easwaramma said to Me, "There is no one who can treat even a simple cold, cough, or fever. So many devotees are coming to You. Do not think that all of them are true devotees. Only those who feel the distress of others and try to help them are true devotees. Wealth, scholarship or authority is of little consequence. Sympathising with others in their suffering and trying to alleviate it is the true sign of devotion. One should share the sorrow of others. But this is scarce today. There are people who keep talking at great length about the achievements of their own children, but they have little concern for the suffering of others' children. Thousands of devotees come here, but it has occurred to none to do something to solve the problems that exist here. It is now left to You. So, You must construct a small hospital in this village for the poor children."

I comforted her and said, "Why are you disturbed so much over such a small matter? It will be done. But for everything the time must be ripe. A new-born child cannot become a youth all at once; some time is required. Don't worry so much; in due course of time, Swami will fulfil your desire. Try to comfort those who are suffering and pray for their well-being."

Easwaramma was a little upset ,thinking that Swami was unconcerned and indifferent. But I had this sankalpa (will) all the time. Mother's wish had to be fulfilled, be it small or big. Any task to help others is My responsibility, so I resolved to undertake this task.

Society needs selfless doctors

The very next day, I arranged for the foundation to be laid, and within a month a hospital started functioning. There was a doctor named Brahmam. He was a great devotee. He acted in a manner befitting his name. After him, there came another doctor called B. Sitharamiah. He was a great devotee of Swami. He prayed to Me to give the responsibility of the hospital to him. From that day till his last breath he worked in the hospital. You do not see any such doctors with dedication and commitment these days. From the moment they qualify, the sole concern of modern doctors is how much money they can earn. They are prepared to risk even their life for the sake of money. They neglect their prime duty, which is healing the sick. They don't want to work in villages. They want to stay in cities and enjoy all the comforts of city life. They want to earn more and more money.

What is money? What can it give us? It does not stay with anyone forever. It is transient and impermanent. Money is required, but too much money is harmful. Today, people are ready to go to any length to earn money. As the proverb goes, man today is ready even to eat grass to gain a rupee. So, a greedy man can earn only grass, not grace.

Today we need men of sacrifice in the world. What I want is not your devotion. You must apply your mind to the problems of society and find remedies for them. One should aspire for social welfare. Society today needs

the service of self-sacrificing doctors. Doctors these days have large incomes of thousands of rupees per month. But they don't want to do work worth even a rupee. They want to have money without work. Society today needs servants. Only those who truly serve can become true leaders. When a leader looks upon himself as a servant, he renders true service to society.

Ideal motherhood was exemplified by Mother Easwaramma

Every gift of God provides man the opportunity to go from preyas (worldly joy) to sreya (blessedness, the ultimate good). People are engaged in all kinds of worldly activities. You grow crops, you harvest them, you eat food, you study and acquire various types of worldly knowledge, and so on. If all these mundane activities are performed with a spiritual outlook, then you can enjoy bliss. Performing action with a spiritual outlook is the essence of Atmadharma. If you enquire deeply, you would realise that everything happens not merely because of your personal efforts but by the Will of God. Right from the atom to the cosmos, everything in the universe is driven by God's Will.

Easwaramma breathed her last in this very mandir (temple). Summer classes were going on in the month of May 1972. She used to come and sit in these classes. Swami used to be amused at her presence and asked her what she followed in these classes. She used to say, "I am not interested in these studies. I come here to see how the students of Swami conduct themselves, how they obey His commands, and how they react to Swami's advice and teachings."

Parents take great pains in bringing up their children with the expectation that they may lead a respectable life. Are the children behaving in accordance with the expectations of their parents? They wear new clothes provided to them by their parents, but do they spare any thought for the hardships their parents undergo to procure these clothes?

Embodiments of Love!

You are boys today and men tomorrow. If your children cause you worry, how will you feel? Will you be happy? No, not at all. All that happens to you in the future will be in accordance with your conduct today. Everything is reaction, reflection, and resound. Today's good deeds will blossom into good results in the coming time. If you do bad deeds today, you cannot expect to be rewarded with good results in the future. If you do evil today, you cannot escape its consequences later. You may become a powerful officer or an employer. But the results of your past bad deeds will always keep haunting you. Keeping these facts in mind, make your parents happy, and serve them to your utmost capability. Only then will you find fulfilment in life. Why is man born in this world? Is it merely to roam around and indulge in the pleasures of the world? You should understand that worldly pleasures are not permanent. A true son will see to it that his parents do not shed tears of sorrow.

It is not a matter of great celebration when a son is born in a family. Only when he earns a good name in society should his birth become an occasion for celebration. Many parents in their exuberance of joy at the birth of their son indulge in all sorts of senseless celebrations. Such parents spoil their own children. Mothers should keep a close watch on the conduct of their children. Are they going on the right path? Are they working for the welfare of society? Is society approving their conduct? Are they gaining the respect of society? Mothers should keenly observe all this.

Easwaramma was very conscious of these matters; she was, in fact, an ideal mother. When visitors came to the house, she would send her children out to greet them properly, to ask about their welfare and requirements, and to offer them a seat in a respectful manner. You scarcely find such conduct anywhere today. Children are well educated, and their talents are encouraged, but what for? To earn money? Even a beggar earns money. Money is not the goal of life.

You should greet visitors to your house with respect and love. These days, you cannot find any such courteous behaviour at all. That is why I often say: You cannot always oblige but you can speak always obligingly.

But today's education is making the children veritable demons. There is no humility or friendliness in them. They learn the stuff given in books by rote, go to the examination centre, empty the stuff in their heads onto the answer papers, and return home with empty heads. Is this education? Not at all. True education is that which is imprinted on the heart of the learners. It should remain unchanged over the years. Such sacred feelings are not to be found in today's students. Everyone pretends to be a devotee without any trace of devotion. What is all this acting for?

People learn such false values from cinema, TV, etc., which are ruining them, especially the children. The world today seems to be happy with TV and cinema. But Swami does not approve of them. Are cinema, TV, etc., helping in the redemption of mankind? Everyone should cultivate human qualities and lead the life of a true human being. But few such people are to be found. There are, of course, a few parents who bring up their children with great love and affection and put them on the right path. Only such parents can be called ideal parents. Their children grow up to be ideal and noble.

Ingratitude is the worst sin

Today, people have little sense of gratitude. Even if you get a little help from someone, you should always remember it. It is unfortunate that people even harm those who help them. Such people are the worst sinners. We should help even those who have harmed us. This is the vow of Sai. No matter if some people criticise or ridicule Me or even try to harm Me, I will always look at them with kindness. I have declared: My life is My message.

How many people follow the path shown by Me? If you follow in My footsteps, no harm will ever touch you. Swami is giving free education to lakhs of students. Education in Sai institutions is free up to the Ph.D. level. What is the cost of education these days? Even for admission to primary class, many schools charge 20 to 30 thousand rupees. It is in this environment that Swami is giving free education to all His students. The students should remember this with gratitude. It is harmful for them if they do not recognise it.

These were some of the truths that Easwamma taught. When somebody came to see her, she would tell them, "See how much help Swami is giving to the poor and needy. It is all for their welfare. But some people are not at all realising its value and are not grateful for it. It is not good for them. Everyone should bear this in mind." She spoke in a gentle and sweet manner to all the visitors. She was a source of great solace to women who lost their husbands in young age. She helped them to relieve their suffering.

Be ever grateful even for a small help. Do not be a kritaghna (ungrateful). Ingratitude is utter cruelty. There is a mantra in Suryanamaskara:

Kritagh-nagnaya Namah
(salutations to the sun, who punishes the ungrateful).

What is the significance of this? It emphasises the fact that any help received should be reciprocated to the extent possible. Hurting someone who has helped you will result in losing your eyesight. It is the radiance of the sun that is reflected in man's eyes. All that you see is through the reflection of the sun's radiance. The sun withdraws its radiance from the eyes of people who commit the sin of ingratitude. Some people may brush it aside, saying it is a mere *katha* (story). Truly speaking, it is not a *katha* but a *vyatha* (suffering) that an ungrateful person has to undergo. Therefore, we should always be grateful. We should return help for help to the utmost extent possible.

Do charity with discrimination

Always help the aged and distressed. When this building was being constructed, the Rajmata of Jamnagar prayed to Me to stay in her house. I accepted her prayer and started staying in her house. There was a driver in that house. One day, it was very cold, and the driver was shivering because he had no coat or rug to protect himself from cold. My driver came and told Me. I gave him a rug. As he got the rug given by Me, he started crying loudly,

saying even his parents had not given him so much love. He lived for quite a long time and stayed with the Rajmata. The Rajmata was also a very considerate lady and used to look after the welfare of all her staff.

There are many such needy persons in the world. Whoever it may be, do not make a distinction between your people and others. When you see anyone in distress, help him immediately.

Education that does not inculcate such values of caring and sharing is not fit to be called education.

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true self
and a mean-minded person will not give up his wicked qualities.
Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom.
What is the use of acquiring worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality?
Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.
(Telugu Poem)

What is the use of such an education? What is the outcome of endless arguments? One thinks oneself to be very learned but this arrogance is the source of one's utter downfall.

Students!

It is necessary for you to cultivate humility and obedience. There are a large number of people who are in much poorer circumstances than you. You must strive to ameliorate their condition as much as you can. When you help others, that itself is your reward. The scriptures declare:

Paropakara punyaya, papaya parapeedanam
(you earn merit by helping others and commit sin by hurting them).

Hence, always try to be helpful. Do not commit the sin of hurting others. Set an example before young children. This is an important duty of the students today. I have noticed that students today have a craze for going to foreign countries. When they return, they are dressed in a pompous manner and their behaviour is obnoxious. What is the use of wearing a costly dress if your behaviour is mean?

Many foreigners come here and feel moved to help poor people. But this creates more complications. They are not aware of the conditions here. It is said that if there is somebody distributing money, even the dead will get up and stretch out their hands. So when these foreigners start giving money, poor people run after them. If somebody is hungry, give them food, not money. Similarly, if someone is in need of clothes, give them clothes. Indiscriminate distribution of money does more harm than good. People of this country should not run after money. Lead a respectable life. Maintain the dignity of human life. Honour and respect cannot be bought with money.

Here is a small matter Swami wants to tell. The other day, a devotee came and told that since My cars had become old, he wanted to replace them with new cars. He brought the cars. Three days passed. I did not even look at him. What is the reason? I already have a sufficient number of cars. I have no desire to move about in fancy big cars. I do not accept anything from anyone.

When I was coming here, Srinivas came to Me and said, "That person is feeling miserable. Please accept the cars."

I told him, "Do not interfere. He can take back his cars. In fact, I am ready to give My own car. Rather, I will give you two cars; you and he can take one each."

Develop the spirit of sacrifice and set an example before others. I have been practising this since My childhood. If you follow the path shown by Me, you will become blessed. This path will lead you to liberation. It is liberation that is the goal of life.

What is *moksha* (liberation)? *Moha kshaya* is moksha (giving up of attachment is liberation). You must reduce your attachment (moha). That is moksha.

Love everyone. But do not trust everyone without discrimination. One who puts his trust wholly in others is headed for ruin.

Love all, Serve all.

But put trust in yourself. Develop self-confidence. Give up worldly desires. Develop divine feelings and give up worldly feelings. This is the dharma (righteous path) of humanity.

Students!

You have been studying in Sai institutions. You have studied well and passed examinations. Take to the right path. Develop good qualities. Love all, hate none. Love even those who bear hostility toward you. This is the characteristic of Sai. Many are hostile toward Me. Many ridicule or criticise Me. If they say it aloud, it is lost in air. If they do it internally, it returns to them. None of it will reach Me. Thus, one should attach no importance to praise and abuse. See to it that love principle is installed firmly in you. This is what Mother Easwaramma practised and taught.

Face the vicissitudes of life with confidence. I am never deterred by hardships or obstacles. When there is no defect in you, why should you have fear? Love even those who criticise you. This is the ideal that Swami expects when He

says, "My life is My message." If you lead your life strictly according to My ideal, you will rise to the same level. Therefore, develop good qualities and help those who are in distress.

Good people have a good death

Mother Easwaramma used to go to the house of Gogineni from Brindavan. On the day of her passing away also, she walked all the way to their house and came back. After coming back, she had a cup of coffee. She used to have pan (betel leaf).

In fact, I Myself used to like pan in the early days. She was pounding the areca nut in a mortar and was eating it bit by bit. Suddenly she shouted, "Swami, Swami, Swami".

I called back, saying, "I am coming, I am coming, I am coming." She said, "Come quickly, come quickly."

As I came down, she caught hold of My hands and said, "You are capable of helping all the people of the world to any extent. But children need more help. You have to transform them. You need not make them scholars. Make them good and virtuous."

Saying this, she placed My hands on her eyes and breathed her last. She had *anayasa maranam* (peaceful death). What more can one desire in life than a glorious death? Bodies come and go.

Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam,
punarapi janani jathare sayanam
(man is caught up in the cycle of birth and death;
time and again, he undergoes the agony of staying in his mother's womb).

Birth and death are natural to man. One need not worry over this matter. I called the driver. The body was placed in a van and sent to Prasanthi Nilayam. I sent Ramabrahmam with the body. He was a very good person. He performed all the work assigned to him personally. Ramabrahmam asked Me to go to Prasanthi Nilayam for the final rites. But I firmly told him, "This is a matter relating to the external world and I have no connection with it. I have seen her and blessed her here. So, you may take her body for the final rites to Prasanthi Nilayam."

Ramabrahmam carried out My instructions faithfully. Gokak and Bhagavantam came and said that the classes were canceled. I asked them, why. They said, it was because of the demise of Swami's mother. I said, "What if she is dead? The boys are all alive, so the classes must go on."

Gokak was amazed. He announced that the classes would be held. Every day, I used to go to the classroom at the beginning of the class. The students were anxious whether Swami would come or not. I went to the classroom that day. As I entered, all the children started shedding tears. I asked, "Why are you grieving? Whoever is born is bound to die one day or the other. So there is nothing to grieve about." After that, the classes went on as per schedule. It is because of this self-confidence and courage that I have been able to make everything happen according to My resolve.

The father of this body also had an easy death. I had selected some people for interview at Prasanthi Nilayam when he came there. I asked him why he had come. He replied, "Swami, I have something to tell You."

I told him to wait until I finished the interview. For Me, all are equal. I finished the interview with the devotees and sent them away, after giving them prasadam. I then called him and asked the reason for his coming.

He took out some money from the knot of his Dhoti and told Me, "Swami, this is all the money I have. With this, You should perform my last rites on the 10th day in a proper manner."

I gently chided him, saying why he was talking about his death as if he knew all about it. He went back and bought four bags of rice for this purpose. Rice was very cheap those days. One could get a bagful for Rs. 20 or so. Besides rice, he bought some jaggery (sugar) and other provisions. After reaching home, he played with his grandson for some time. Then he called his wife. Men never used to call their wives by their names those days. 'Hey, hey' was the way they used to address them. He told her, "I have just now seen Swami. I have no worries now." He then asked her to get him some water to drink. As she gave him water, he breathed his last.

It is not through performing penance or going to places of pilgrimage or studying sacred texts that one is able to cross the ocean of worldly life. It is only through service to the good that you attain the ultimate goal of life. (Sanskrit Verse)

Such a sacred end is possible only for people who have earned it in this way.

Embodiments of Love!

All of you who have gathered here have to take a pledge today. Live a good life. Be ready to help others. Love children, respect elders, respect all according to their status in society. If you live according to these principles, there is no better way of life. Imprint these principles firmly on your heart. Act in a manner so as to please your parents. Only then will your life find fulfilment. You are conducting bhajans at various places and at different times. But mere singing of bhajans is not enough. Behaviour and conduct are vital.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajans, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin".

Alternative [Link](#) to Discourse:

<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

10. Service Activities For Unity In Society

Date: 21 July 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: International Seva Conference

If you lack pure mind and good character,
how do you expect Sai, the bestower of peace,
love, happiness and prosperity, to appreciate you?
How do you expect Prema Sai to treat you as His own?
(Telugu Poem)

Human life is one of compassion, time is sacred; the heart is pure; and the mind is nectarous. Having been blessed with such a sacred human birth, what is one supposed to do? What is the foundation on which the mansion of life is to be built? Every one aspires for peace and happiness. How can one lead a peaceful life? It is possible only when one puts human values into practice. Human values need not be acquired from outside; they are latent in every person. If such values are forgotten, how can one progress in life? In the first instance, one should enquire into the purpose of their birth.

Human life is based on *samata* (equality), *samaikyata* (unity), *saubhratrutvam* (fraternity), and *saujanya* (nobility). They constitute the very foundation of the mansion of life. Life will be meaningless if even one of them is absent. Everyone must cultivate and safeguard these four virtues.

First of all, one should recognise the meaning of humanness. Truth fosters *neeti* (morality); Righteousness confers *khyati* (reputation); *thyaga* (sacrifice) is the *jyoti* (light) of life. *Manava jathi* (human race) is the combination of these three: neeti, khyati, and jyoti.

But man today is neglecting the principles of truth, righteousness, and sacrifice. He has to adhere to these principles not for the sake of society but for his own redemption. If you expect to be respected by all, you have to

develop self respect, which is the basis of human life. One who lacks self respect cannot command respect from others. First and foremost, man should respect others and share his love with others wholeheartedly. This is the primary duty of man.

Man is not merely a *vyashti jeevi* (individual), he is a *samashti jeevi* (part and parcel of society). Vyashti relates to jeevudu (individual), and samashti relates to Devudu (God). Man has to travel from the level of individual to the level of society. What is the path prescribed for this? Firstly, man has to recognise the common principle of *jeevana jyoti* (light of life), which is present in all. The principle of samatvam (equality) can be experienced and practised only when man understands the principle of *ekatvam* (unity).

The service activities that we undertake are meant to experience unity in society. It is a great mistake if you think that you are serving others. In fact, you should not consider anybody as "other", for all are the embodiments of divinity. But man is not making efforts to realise this truth. Hence, he is subjected to difficulties. Once man realises that God is all-pervasive, he will be free from suffering. In order to get rid of suffering, man has to practise the principle of unity in society. Once he understands the principle of unity, he can attain the Cosmic principle.

Every individual is endowed with a physical body. Nature is like a mirror. What you see in this mirror is only your reflection and nothing else. Today, man is leading a life of selfishness and self-interest. Selfishness is rampant in society. *Dehabhimanam* (body attachment) is on the rise, and *deshabhimanam* (love for one's motherland) is on the decline. Even spiritual aspirants and noble souls with pure hearts are unable to give up body attachment. As long as there is dehabhimanam, man cannot develop *Daiva-bhimanam* (love for God).

The body, which is made up of five elements, is weak and is bound to disintegrate.

Though hundred years of life-span is prescribed, one cannot take it for granted.

One may leave the mortal coil at any time, be it in childhood, youth or old age.

Death is certain. Hence, before the body perishes, man should make efforts to know his true nature.

(Telugu Poem)

Body is given to you to know your true Self. It is foolish to waste your time and energy in worldly pursuits. If you know your true Self, you would have known everything else.

Embodiments of Love!

All that you see in the external world, from microcosm to macrocosm, is present in you. The mountains, oceans, cities, villages, etc. are present in your heart. All beings are in you. You are the basis of everything. Such being the case, what is it that you want to see in the external world? How foolish it is on your part to get carried away by the reflection outside, ignoring the reality within!

Know the human values in the first instance. The first among them is Truth. It is changeless and beyond time and space. There is nothing like American Truth, Russian Truth, Indian Truth or Pakistani Truth. Truth is one and the same for all countries at all times. You are the embodiment of Truth. Truth is God. So, make efforts to understand this Truth.

Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath sathyamapriyam
(speak the Truth, speak pleasantly, and do not speak unpalatable truth).

Having forgotten such eternal principle of Truth, man is in search of

ephemeral things. Adherence to Truth is neeti, which is nothing but proper conduct.

Sathyannasti paro dharmah

(there is no dharma greater than adherence to Truth).

Sathya and dharma together will confer peace. One who adheres to Truth and righteousness will always remain peaceful. One need not search for peace outside. Where there is Truth, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is nonviolence.

We call the human values as *sathya*, *dharmah*, *santhi*, *prema*, and *ahimsa* (truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence). In fact, love is the fundamental basis for truth and righteousness. Love is God, truth is God, righteousness is God. One bereft of these principles is verily a living corpse. The five human values can be compared to five life principles (*prana*) present in us. If you do not speak truth, you would have lost one life principle. Unrighteous conduct amounts to losing the second life principle. Similarly, other life principles will be lost. Therefore, all your efforts should be directed to safeguarding these life principles, which are divine in nature.

There is divinity in humanity. Understand this.

Today every field of human activity is polluted. Once man purifies his heart, he will find purity everywhere. The world outside is just a reflection of your heart. If you fill your heart with love, you will experience love everywhere. If there is hatred in your heart, the same is reflected outside. Whatever you see, hear, and experience outside is only the reflection, reaction, and resound of your inner being. All the good and bad that you come across in the external world are just your own reflections. So, do not point an accusing finger at others. The whole world depends on man's behaviour. If man is good, so too will the world be. You think that there is profanity all around you. It is a

mistaken notion. In fact, the profanity in you is reflected outside. If your feelings are demonic, you will find the same all around you. If your feelings are divine, you will find divinity everywhere.

Embodiments of Love!

Your heart is full of love. The yearning for God that emanates from your heart is love. Let truth and righteousness be reflected in your word and deed, respectively. The harmony of truth, righteousness, and love will lead to peace. Your breathing process - Soham - is reminding you of your reality 21,600 times a day. Of what use is your education if you are unable to remember the truth that is taught to you so many times day in and day out. You may listen to any number of sermons, you may study any number of sacred texts, you may visit any number of noble souls, but all these will prove futile if you forget the principle of truth that your inner voice teaches.

Buddha renounced all the palatial comforts and took to *sanyasa* (renunciation). He wandered in the forests, listened to the teachings of noble souls, and studied holy texts. But none of these could give him satisfaction. Ultimately, he realised that his heart is the true holy text given by God and that God is his true friend. He discarded all books and stopped visiting noble souls. He turned inward and enquired into the truth. Ignoring the holy text (heart) and forgetting the true friend (God), man is going hither and thither in search of peace.

Firstly, make sacred use of the eyes given by God. Only then will your life be sanctified. He alone is a true human being who has a good mind and whose behaviour is exemplary. All your spiritual pursuits will be of little consequence if your vision is sullied. Your nethra (eye) is the sastra (scripture) given by God. Understand this sastra and conduct yourself accordingly. Once you have control over your vision, you will have control over your speech. Speak only truth; there is nothing greater than truth. Samyak drishti (pure vision) and samyak vak (pure speech) will lead to samyak sravanam (pure hearing) and samyak bhavam (pure feeling). The youth in particular should exercise control over their vision. Manava (human being) becomes Madhava (God) once he

understands the importance of human values and puts them into practice. The youth of today are the future emancipators of the country. So, they should develop steadiness of mind and self-confidence.

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

Without confidence, you can never attain Divinity. Your confidence is your God. So, develop unwavering confidence in the Self. Self-confidence and self-respect will lead to Atmic bliss and the vision of the Self. You are all seated in this magnificent hall with so many pillars supporting it. You are enjoying its beauty. Without a strong foundation this hall would not have come into existence. Likewise, self-confidence is the foundation for the mansion of life. Once you have self-confidence, you can raise the walls of self-satisfaction over which you can lay the roof of self-sacrifice and lead a life of self-realisation. Hence, lay the foundation of self-confidence strong and sturdy.

The culture of Bharat proclaims

sathyam vada dharmam chara
(speak truth, follow righteousness).

Not only Indian culture, the culture of all countries proclaims the same truth. Truth is the basis of every culture. Do not give scope for any differences based on culture. The whole world is like a mansion, and various countries are like different rooms in it. So, do not divide humanity based on nationality. It is because of such division that humanness is on the decline. Sai devotees

should not entertain any such differences. All should stand united. Names, forms, and complexions may be different, but humanity is one race. God is one. All human beings belong to one family.

Cows are many, but milk is one.
Beings are many, but indweller is one.
Castes are many, but humanity is one.
Flowers are many, but worship is one.
Paths are many, but God is one.

Hence, you should give up all the differences based on caste, religion, and nationality and develop the spirit of love. Young men and women should work for the progress of the country. The country will prosper only when the youth develop sound character. Human life is based on character. Today there are many who are heroes in precept and zeroes in practice. Your actions should be in harmony with your words. Develop sacred feelings. Only then can you perform sacred activities. Devotion does not mean merely performing rituals like worship. Any work done with pure and selfless love is devotion.

Embodiments of Love!

Right from this day, let your lives be suffused with love. Let your hands undertake deeds that are beneficial to society at large. Let your thoughts be centred on the principle of love.

You should rise from the level of vyashti (individual) to samashti (society) and ultimately merge in Parameshti (God).

In this physical and ephemeral world, wherever you see there is only restlessness. At times, your physical body may be subjected to diseases. You

should not be unduly perturbed. Body comes and goes.

This body is a storehouse of dirt, and prone to diseases;
it cannot cross the ocean of samsara.
Oh mind! Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent.
Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet.
(Telugu Poem)

One should not be unduly attached to the physical body, but it has to be taken care of properly. Sometimes, you are afflicted with diseases because of negligence on your part. I take on the sufferings of devotees because of My love for them. It disappears in the same way as it appears. Here is a small example. A young boy was suffering a great deal because of mumps (swollen cheek). The doctor said that it would take a minimum of 20 to 25 days to get cured. He was crying bitterly, unable to bear the severe pain. I called him inside and consoled him saying, "When Swami is with you, why do you cry?" I materialised a sweet for him and made him eat. I took his pain upon Myself. For any other person, the pain would have been unbearable.

Srinivasan was very much worried as to how to conduct this conference, when Swami was undergoing so much pain. Since the swelling was between the two jaws, it was not possible to eat or speak. What does it matter if the body is not given food for a few days? Hence, I did not care for it. I told the organisers to go ahead with the conference. He asked, "Swami, how are you going to deliver the inaugural address?" I said, "I feel the pain if I think that this is My body. But this is not My body, it is yours." All your bodies are Mine. Hence, I take your suffering upon Myself. That is My duty. This is not My body, so I do not care for it.

Not only now, at any point of time, I do not care for any suffering. I practise whatever I preach. That is why I say,

My life is My message.

It is not possible for all to understand and realise My Divinity. I do not want to say it in public. I do not indulge in advertisement.

All that is Mine is yours, and vice-versa. I have no desires at all. All My desires are meant to give you happiness. Greatness does not lie in preaching, it lies in practice. **A true acharya (preceptor) is one who practises and then preaches. That is what I am doing.**

Youngsters - Men and Women!

Understand your true nature. Follow the path of truth. Sathyam (truth) is the name of this body. Develop this truth in you. Truth is God, love is God; live in love. When you follow the path of truth and love, you will certainly attain bliss. Some people put the blame on Me, ignoring their own defects. It is a great mistake. There are no defects in Me whatsoever. I am like a pure mirror. There is no scope for even a trace of impurity in Me. You see the reflection of your own feelings in Me. Purify your hearts. Only then can you understand the truth.

Embodiments of Love!

Today we have inaugurated this Conference. Many more programmes are to follow. Hence, I bring My discourse to a close in order to give sufficient time for other programmes. I am prepared to spend any length of time to give you necessary guidelines.

11. Shun Desires And Attain Divine Proximity

Date: **22 July 2002** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **International Seva Conference**

Embodiments of Love!

The one who realises that the same Atma that dwells in him is in all other living beings will experience and enjoy divine proximity always. He may be a renunciant or a householder or a celibate or one who is attached to the world; one who realises the Atmic principle leads his life with the firm conviction that daiva sannidhi (divine proximity) is his pennidhi (greatest wealth).

What is the primary duty of man? He should make efforts to understand the teaching of the Gita,

Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham,
sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya thishthati

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

You should realise the truth that the principle of Atma that is present in all beings is one and the same. Since man is unable to understand his true nature, he is facing all kinds of problems in life. He is deluded by the thinking that he is the body. Consequently, he is forgetting his true Self and is wasting his time and energy.

Today man gives topmost priority to his individual progress. Then he turns his attention toward society. Lastly, he enters the path of spirituality. This is a grave mistake. It is because of this that he is unable to realise the truth and faces hardships.

What is the message of SAI?

"S" stands for Spirituality, "A" for Association, and "I" for Individual.

It means that you must give first priority to spirituality, next to society (association) ,and only lastly to individual interest. But today, man follows the reverse order, i.e. he holds his individual interest above his social responsibilities and gives last priority to spirituality. Consequently, he is distancing himself from God. In this manner, he is wasting his time. Time is precious. In fact, time is God.

In the first instance, man should take to the path of spirituality and then serve society, understanding the principle of unity. Only then will there be progress at the individual level. On the other hand, if you concentrate on the individual level in the first instance, you will never be able to understand the spiritual aspect.

Personages like Hiranyaksha, Hiranyakasipu, and Kamsa were centred on their individual interests, ignoring wholly the spiritual aspect. Physically and intellectually they were mighty. Hiranyakasipu was a great scientist. But what is the use of scientific knowledge that cannot give you everlasting bliss? Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu filled their hearts with negative feelings. They entertained worldly desires, which are ephemeral and negative in nature. The modern scientists have reached the moon, but Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha could even reach the Sun. In spite of their mighty powers and scientific knowledge, they met their doom because of their materialistic attitude. They could not experience divinity.

Likewise, man is also putting his powers and knowledge to misuse. He is not focusing his attention on his real goal. Manava (human being) is endowed with immense power. That is why the Upanishads exhort man thus:

Uthistatha, jagratha, prapya varanibodhata
(arise, awake, stop not till you obtain full understanding).

O Simpleton, wake up from this slumber of ignorance.
Turn your vision towards the effulgence of prajna.
Get rid of the tamasic quality; give up worldly desires.
Understand the ephemeral nature of the world.

Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha had all powers at their command; yet, they could not attain Divine proximity. They investigated the mysteries of creation and could even alter the planetary positions. But they could not understand even a small fraction of the principle of divinity. But Hiranyakasipu's son, young Prahlada, had realised the divine principle.

Once, Hiranyakasipu asked Prahlada what he had learnt from his preceptors. Prahlada replied, "The teachers have taught me many things. I have learnt about the four objectives of life, dharma, artha, kama, and moksha (righteousness, wealth, desire, liberation). In fact, Oh father! I have learnt the very essence of education."

Hiranyakasipu was overjoyed to hear all these. He said, "Oh son! Let me have the pleasure of listening to what you have learnt from your teachers."

Prahlada said, "I have realised the truth that God is all-pervasive. Wherever I look, I find Him there."

Hiranyakasipu became furious on hearing this. He pushed him from his lap and roared, "You said that your teachers have taught you many things. Is this what you have learnt? There are many things to be learnt regarding artha and kama (wealth and desire) which are very important for us. But you have

ignored them and are talking about God. Where is God?"

Prahlada very calmly replied,

Father, never doubt that God is here and is not there.
In fact, He is present wherever you search for Him.
(Telugu Poem)

Hiranyakasipu's ego was pricked. "How dare this young fellow try to teach me a lesson?", he thought to himself. "If God is all-pervasive, can you show Him in this pillar?", he challenged Prahlada.

"Yes, I can", pat came the answer. Such was his faith and devotion. Hiranyakasipu at once hit the pillar with a mace, and lo! God emerged from it!

What is the inner meaning of this incident? Man can have the vision of God only when he breaks the shackles of body attachment. Today, man is immersed in ignorance in spite of his learning.

You can make God appear before you when you have unwavering faith and devotion coupled with a steady and pure heart. Here is an example. You curdle the milk and extract butter out of it, and then heat it to get ghee (clarified butter). If there is water content in the butter, it will emit some foul smell as you heat it. The smell will gradually diminish as you continue to heat it. As long as there is water in the butter, you cannot escape from the foul smell. The water has to completely evaporate.

Butter represents the individual nature. The evil tendencies in you can be compared to foul smell. When you make efforts to melt "butter" completely, the "foul smell" will gradually subside. When man performs sadhana, the foul smell of evil propensities emanate from him during the process. He should continue with his sadhana and overcome those evil tendencies. As he

performs sadhana more and more, all evil tendencies in him will evaporate like water. Ultimately, his sadhana will yield the desired result ,just like pure ghee is obtained on heating butter.

Every man is endowed with body, mind, intellect, and chittha (inner instrument). On being questioned by Hiranyakasipu, Prahlada replied,"Father, I am neither the body, nor the mind, nor the intellect, nor the inner instrument. I am the embodiment of Atma."

One will remain like pure butter if one gets rid of ego, does not develop attachment to the body, and does not get deluded by the vagaries of the mind. If the butter is not free from the water of worldly desires, it will start emitting foul smell. As long as there are worldly desires in the mind, one cannot escape from the foul smell. This was the fate of Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu.

Even today, there are many who do bhajans and give lectures on spiritual matters, but they are unable to get rid of the foul smell of worldly desires. Until and unless they give up the worldly desires, they cannot attain the state of purity. They are accustomed to a materialistic life. They do bhajans, meditation, etc. with a view to fulfil their worldly aspirations. They can be compared to butter mixed up with water. In the spiritual path, one should not give scope to the foul smell of worldly desires. Some people call themselves devotees but are turning wicked because of their desires. Can such people be called devotees? No. No. If they are really devotees, how could they emit bad odour? Their body, mind, intellect, and also their actions are tainted with impurity. Devotees!

Firstly, you should enquire into the reason for the foul smell that is emanating from you. **Your mind should remain steady and unwavering through the vicissitudes of life. You should have strong faith. Only then can you lead a peaceful life.**

Prahlada was subjected to various kinds of punishment, but his faith remained as steady as a rock. His love for God never diminished a bit. He considered

love for God as his very life-breath.

But devotees today stand in stark contrast to Prahlada. Their faith is so shaky that their mind is disturbed by the slightest trouble. They start entertaining doubts and lose their faith altogether. Losing viswasa (faith) amounts to losing swasa (life breath) itself. Come what may, one should continue their sadhana with unflinching faith. This is the sign of true devotion. Devotion does not constitute merely singing of bhajans, performing rituals, and chanting the Divine Name.

You should firmly install divinity in your heart. You should take care that worldly desires find no place in your mind. Burn to ashes all desires completely in the fire of wisdom. Even if a trace of worldliness is left in you, it will multiply manifold and lead you astray. In order to free yourself from bad deeds and bad habits, make sure that you do not have even a shred of desire in you. But due to the impact of Kali Age, even devotees are filling their hearts with desires. Desires can be compared to foul-smelling pigs. One cannot stand the stink of a pig even when it is at a distance. Such being the case, how is it that man is giving room to so many "pigs" in his heart?

Embodiments of Love!

Truly speaking, man is very fortunate, but he is haunted by the misfortune of worldly desires. He is unable to earn the deservedness to get closer to God. He goes through many books and gives lectures, but what is the use? His actions do not match his words. He tries to deceive others with his speeches. In fact, he is deceiving himself. It is enough if he practises at least a fraction of what he preaches. His heart is filled with untruth. His deeds are unrighteous. Hence, he is unable to experience peace. Distance yourself from untruth and unrighteousness. The Vedas exhort man,

Sathyam vada, dharmam chara
(speak the truth, practise righteousness).

Truth is God. If you forget truth, who can protect you?

Embodiments of Love!

You may be performing a number of spiritual practices, but do not feel proud of them. First, purify your heart. Do not give scope for the foul smell of worldly desires. Fill your heart with the fragrance of virtues. Do not pay heed to the words of wicked people whose only job is to poison the minds of others. You do not get much benefit by merely reading books or listening to discourses. First of all, develop sraddha (steadfastness) and bhakthi (devotion) in you.

Sraddhavan labhate jnanam
(with faith, wisdom is won).

Embodiments of Love!

What is the sadhana (spiritual discipline) that you are supposed to undertake? Make your hearts pure. Thiruthonda Alwar once said, "If one lacks purity of heart, one does not even deserve to chant the divine Name of Rama." What is the use of chanting the divine Name with a polluted mind?

Today the world is afflicted with all types of pollution. Man's thoughts, words, and deeds are also polluted. How can such a person develop devotion? Today people are wearing the mask of bhakthi (devotion) and trying to cheat others. Do not deceive others. Help ever, hurt never. This is the essence of the eighteen Puranas . Deceiving others amounts to deceiving yourself.

In the world, the so-called devotees have increased in number. Now I feel the time is ripe to tell you a few important things. The feelings that spring in your

heart must be as pure as the waters of the Ganga (Ganges river) where it springs. Words do not suffice; what is needed is action. There should be unity of thought, word, and deed. He is a wicked person whose thoughts, words, and deeds are at variance. The proper study of mankind is man. Today we find unity of thought, word, and deed only in acts of untruth, unrighteousness, and violence. Man, who is supposed to have noble thoughts and perform meritorious deeds, is doing just the opposite.

Some people are doing business in the name of Sai. They are cheating others, pretending to be devotees of Sai. I do not approve of such behaviour. They are not devotees at all. They are going to different parts of the country and also abroad to make money in the name of Sai. It is a big crime. I do not ask for even a single paisa from others. I never approve of such business. Whoever it may be, if somebody approaches you with such a crass motive, tell him to get out at once. Do not allow business to enter the field of spirituality.

One may do what one likes for the maintenance of one's family, but nobody should do business using Sai's name. But unfortunately, such activity is on the increase. In many villages, we find people misusing the name of Sai for their selfish gains. This is happening even in many other countries like America, England, Japan, Germany, Singapore, and Malaysia. Do not associate yourself with such wicked people. Keep your hearts pure and sacred. Otherwise, you are equal to a living corpse. Such people should not be respected. Better that you perform their obituary rites! You should pray to God with sacred feelings. When you entertain worldly desires, you will be moving away from divinity.

Embodiments of Love!

You are coming here with all devotion and sincerity. Do not get deceived by people who do business in the name of devotion. In many places, we find people indulging in such mean practices. Maintain safe distance from them.

Tyaja durjana samsargam;
bhaja sadhu samagamam;
kuru punyam ahorathram

Run away from bad company,
join good company, and,
perform meritorious deeds day and night.

You may even live in the company of snakes, but you should not tolerate the company of such evil-minded people. We are undertaking so many social welfare activities, but I have never asked anybody even for a paisa. You are all aware of this. I do not involve Myself in money matters. But people today consider money as God. How can such people be called devotees? I told you earlier about this.

I have started a service programme to look after children who do not have parents. One lakh rupees would be deposited in their name, which will take care of their needs. I have not asked anybody for any help in this regard. But today some people are collecting money saying that they would donate the amount to Swami for this purpose. Some others are proclaiming that they have taken up the responsibility of looking after the children. Can there be a worse sin than this? All such people are betrayers of God. Better they beg in the streets than use My name to collect money.

This morning, a few old students came to Me with a request. You all know C. Srinivas from Bangalore. He completed his education in our Institution and served as Warden of our Hostel for some time. He did not want to take up any job outside because he wanted to serve Swami. He always involves himself with such activities that will please Swami. He is looking after our hospital at Bangalore. He said, "Nowhere else are education and medical care of such high standards provided free of cost to all. You have given us free education and taken care of us with so much love and care. We want to express our

gratitude to Swami by serving Him in our own humble way."

He brought a plan with him. He wants to establish schools in villages where there are no schools. He wanted Swami to commence the project today itself. I told him not to hurry. Youngsters today want to do things fast. That is not the right attitude.

Start early, drive slowly, and reach safely.

Hence, I told him to go slow.

But he said, "Swami, many of our old students are here. Is it not our duty to express gratitude to You for all that you have done to us?" He prayed that Swami should make an announcement in this regard.

I agreed. I will never say "no" to good deeds. Those who want to undertake such sacred tasks should take up the responsibility and discharge it diligently. Only then will the old students have sanctified their lives.

In Chennai (Madras) and Hyderabad, there are many of our old students who are eager to serve Swami. But in some circumstances, they have to obey the commands of elders. If the elders pursue the wrong path, the youngsters will also do the same. What to speak of the fate of our Organisations at Chennai and Hyderabad! I told them to select a suitable piece of land and that I would construct the building. But they lack such devotion and sincerity. They only pretend to have devotion and sincerity. Such insincere behaviour is not good for them. Many devotees there are put to inconvenience. The youngsters want to do many things. But what can they do without the support of elders? The elders neither take the initiative nor allow the youngsters to act on their own.

Bhagawan does not require any shrines. Bhagawan is not interested in real

estate. All that Bhagawan wants is for you to serve society with bliss and without selfishness.

If the elders do not want to accept your suggestion, disregard it. That is their fate. You, the youth, make a sincere effort. Help the helpless. Feed the hungry. Do not go about seeking other people's help. If any help is needed, come to Me. Bhagawan shall provide without hesitation.

Do not collect a single paisa as donation. There are those who donate a hundred rupees and make a thousand rupees worth of self-glorification out of it. Bhagawan is not interested in such activities. When Bhagawan is standing by your side like a mountain, why should you seek any assistance from anybody?

Do not subserve anybody. They will merely preach high philosophy, which is vainglorious. It is not only in India that such a situation prevails. All over the world, it is the same. Whether you go to England, Japan, or Germany, it is the same sort of business that is going on. From everywhere, it is the same kind of news of such transactions; Bhagawan receives a lot of such information. I feel all this as nuisance. This is not the kind of information that Bhagawan wants to hear. What Bhagawan desires most is to hear that all are well and are enjoying happiness and bliss. Marketing with Bhagawan's name is highly disgusting and distressful. There can be no commerce in matters of devotion. Even the salty ocean may yield drinkable water, but this kind of devotion is worthless.

It is already late. Bhagawan never solicits donations from anybody, nor He has agents for propagating His Message. I do not have any association whatsoever with these deceitful persons. Bhagawan needs no material wealth. The only need of Bhagawan is genuine love. Give love and take back love. That is the only exchange. With that love, fulfil your life. There is no devotion greater than love. Any little service performed with love is enough. If you give a glass of water to a thirsty person with genuine love, it is more than enough.

Almost 90 percent of the so-called devotees are, in fact, deceitful. Earlier, it was quite different: devotees were few, but they were genuine devotees. Nowadays, there are too many self-seeking cheats masquerading as devotees. First thing in the morning, they adorn their forehead with vibhuti (holy ash), wrap a scarf round their neck, and roam about freely in the guise of devotees. Even the stray dogs scrounging around for something to eat are better than such fake devotees!

Embodiments of Love!

Develop love in you. Bhagawan needs no temples or rest houses. The temple of your heart is more than enough. Bhagawan shall stay happily therein.

The news that I get from those so-called temples is highly distressing to Me. The amount of anguish that I undergo because of these is beyond your imagination.

Do not do bad acts in the name of God. If you are unable to do good, at least keep quiet and stay out. There is no need for you to make all kinds of wild promises. Enjoy the bliss of divinity in silence and love.

Since people from all over the globe are assembled here, I have had to say these harsh words. Do not have any dealings with people who are doing commercial transactions in the name of Sai. Send them packing with a namaskar . If you need anything, ask Me. I have never deceived or let down anybody; nor will I ever do so. Untruth will not be uttered by Me. My wish is that no such undesirable act should be perpetrated on any of the genuine devotees.

Earlier, when I visited Mumbai, I used to find people doing bhajans and nagar sankirtan all over, unmindful of place or time, even including the airport. Today, you can hardly see anyone even chanting the Name in public anywhere. Of course, there are quite a few devotees. But they are shy of engaging in namasmarana (repetition of the divine Name). Earlier on, I have been traveling around various cities like Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, etc.

But these days, I have no inclination to go anywhere. All these places have become overcrowded with such wicked people. It is of foremost importance for us to get rid of them and encourage the godly-minded people.

God never abandons anybody. All are His. God does not make any unfair discrimination. It is only people who have feeling of hatred; God has no hatred in Him. God is pure embodiment of Divine love only. All of you try to acquire such love in your hearts.

Tomorrow, in the valedictory function, I shall tell you more about the dos and don'ts that you have to adopt in your activities. I am not interested in seeing this Hall packed to its capacity.

I want only quality, not quantity. One teaspoonful of cow's milk is better than barrels of donkey's milk.

It is enough if we have a handful of people with noble hearts.

The State Presidents and Trust Conveners should take necessary steps in the right direction, or it is better that they resign. We will ourselves take up the responsibility. The All India President of Sai Organisations should deal firmly with such people. He should relieve them of their responsibilities immediately. I am deeply anguished over the current state of affairs in our Organisation. Though this feeling has been there in Me for quite some time, I have been waiting for a suitable opportunity to express it. Since so many of you from various parts of the world have gathered here today, I felt this is the most opportune time to express My feelings.

Embodiments of Love!

Help ever, hurt never.

Eschew evil tendencies. Being members of Sathya Sai Organisations, you should follow the path of truth, which is eternal. Some people pretend to be humble devotees as long as they are within the portals of Prasanthi Nilayam. Once they go out of its precincts, they get back to their old ways. Such evil traits should be burnt to ashes. Develop godly feelings in you. God is ever ready to fulfil your prayer. Never entertain doubts in this regard. God is always in you, with you, around you, above you, and below you. God will never be away from you. So, develop faith in God.

Embodiments of Love!

I have spoken to you in this manner only out of My immense love for you. Understand what has been conveyed to you and explain to your fellow devotees. Devotion has to be cultivated in a silent and sincere manner. Do not spoil your lives by resorting to untruthful ways. Sathyam bruyath (speak the truth). Truth is God. Hence, lead a truthful life and ultimately merge in truth.

Tomorrow, bring to Me all your doubts and I shall clarify them. First of all, keep away from bad company. I am not asking you to work for My sake. I do not want anything for Myself from you. I do all My work Myself. I do not seek others' help. If only I Will it, the whole world will help Me. So, you help yourself, serve the society and mould your lives into ideal ones.

Here Swami sang the bhajan, "Hari bhajan bina" and continued His discourse.

Embodiments of Love!

For the last four days, many devotees are very much worried that Swami is suffering because of the pain He has taken upon Himself. Understand that Swami has no pain at all, because He has taken it upon Himself out of His love. How can I have pain when I have alleviated the suffering of My devotee? However, there are certain rules and regulations to be observed in this regard. I have taken it from somebody. Hence, I have to put up with this for

as many days as the person would suffer in the normal course. I have no difficulty whatsoever. If I were really suffering due to pain, would it be possible for Me to speak to you at this length? I have no suffering, it has dissolved in My love. All should be happy, blissful, and comfortable. This is what I desire. Do not be worried over this matter. I have no suffering. In fact, I am ready to accept all your sufferings. Be happy always.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

12. Keep Spirituality As The First Goal

Date: **23 July 2002** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Valedictory Address - International Seva Conference**

In spite of acquiring great wealth, peace eludes man;
People forget to recognise humanness;
This is the Truth revealed by Sai.

What man has to aspire for today is not happiness. It is not sorrow, either. In fact, happiness and sorrow are only transitory in nature. Man's duty is to realise divinity in the unity of happiness and sorrow. Even while you feel elated at the prospect of happiness, you will encounter sorrow. Similarly, even while you feel depressed on account of sorrow, happiness beckons you.

Since ancient times, several great rishis (sages) made efforts to rise above the feelings of happiness and sorrow. They recognised the fact that it was only in times of sorrow that the divine nature in a human being manifested. More than happiness, it is sorrow that is helpful to man in several ways. Na sukhath labhathe sukham (happiness does not come out of happiness). It is only from sorrow, that happiness springs. The main source of happiness in man is sorrow. Just as we welcome happiness, we must welcome sorrow also.

Not only in India, but in all countries of the world, children and youth have an important role to play. Money is quantitatively more than the materials it can buy. If there is real wealth, we can achieve anything material. Today man is wasting his life in the pursuit of mere material wealth. First and foremost, the wealth that man has to acquire is the wealth of Love. With the wealth of Love, everything else can be acquired.

Several issues were being discussed in this conference for the last three days

by the delegates comprising youth, the middle-aged, and old people. What is the outcome of these discussions? Whatever the texts studied and sadhanas (spiritual exercises) undertaken by man, everything goes to waste if man does not cultivate the feeling of love in his heart. Today, what man has to recognise and realise is the principle of Love. That is true devotion.

In the world today, parents, children and even wife - everybody is running after material wealth. Scarcely anyone wishes to acquire steady, selfless and divine love. God's love cannot be acquired with wealth; neither with education nor by the various sadhanas (spiritual exercises) one undertakes; it is possible only by offering pure, unconditional, and unselfish love for love's sake; only then can one achieve divinity.

People undergo so many difficulties today, not realising the fundamental nature of this pure love. They are concerned with only the worldly and physical aspect of love. None can attain divinity by any method, except through love. If divinity is attained, everything is attained; if divinity is not attained, everything else is a waste. But, man is not making any effort to realise this truth. Assuming that material wealth is the foremost to be acquired, they are making several kinds of effort to acquire it.

Embodiments of Love!

Strive to acquire Love; try to achieve Love. Love is your real property. Realise this truth. There is no other quality greater and valuable than Love. Even if some such quality exists, it is of no real use for the goal of life. Therefore try to recognise the love manifest in every human being. Only then, will you have realised your own true nature. All the Indian Vedantic texts exhort one to realise one's real nature.

You are not the body. You are not the mind. You are not the intellect. You have to achieve that from which all these have emanated. Suppose you want ghee (clarified butter). What is its source? Milk. From milk comes curd, from curd comes butter, and from butter comes ghee. Therefore, if you go to the source itself, namely milk, you can be happy.

Embodiments of Love!

You are not the body, mind, intellect, senses, or antahkarana ; you are verily the source for all these. Therefore, you should not waste your time in the pursuit of all sorts of material possessions.

Today, the members of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation are undertaking several types of sadhana (spiritual disciplines). But, are they real sadhanas or illusory? No, no; they are not real sadhana. They appear to be real for some time and later on, they are given up. You start doing japa (soft repetition of the Name) as a sadhana and continue it for some time. Later on, you give up sadhana and enter into dhyana (meditation). Even this dhyana is only till you achieve your object of dhyana. When once it is achieved, it loses its purpose. Thus, all the sadhanas you undertake are only temporary.

It should not be our aim and endeavour to achieve temporary result by doing temporary sadhanas. We must try to achieve that which is permanent, true, eternal, pure, and of lasting happiness. "Sarvada sarvakaleshu sarvathra Harichinthanam (We must always, at all times, and at all places spend our time in constant contemplation on God)." This should become the very breath of our life and as natural as we inhale and exhale. This is "Soham Thatthwa". This constant contemplation on the Soham Thatthwa is the real sadhana. Wherefrom does this "Soham" came? It came from the enquiry "Koham" (Who am I?) The result of this enquiry is "Soham". Only when you realise this eternal truth will your sadhana fructify.

Today, we are building the mansion of our life on a water bubble. We do not know at what moment it will burst. Human nature should rest upon the eternal truth, not on a momentary thing like the water bubble. Human life is becoming more and more uncertain today. Adi Sankara described the same point in one of his famous Bhajagovinda slokas thus:

Ma kuru dhana jana yavvana garvam harathi nimeshat kalassarvam Oh!

Man! Do not take pride in wealth, family, friends and youthful vigour; time will destroy everything in a trice.

Nothing is permanent in this world. Therefore, why should we rely on such impermanent things? Only Atma is eternal. This is also referred to as Brahman. Brahman is Divinity. This Brahma Thatthwa is also called Brihat. The Atma Thatthwa that has emanated from this Brihat is the real Aham. This is true and eternal. Therefore, we must make an effort to realise such a true and eternal Aham Thatthwa.

These three terms appear to be different; but, in fact, the inner meaning of all three is one and the same. This pure and unsullied Brahma Thatthwa is constantly with us, whether in the waking state or in the dream state or in the deep sleep state. That Brahman is Divinity in human form. And such a divinity is in you, right now. In fact, you are verily that Brahma Thatthwa and none else. Therefore, it is futile to seek God in some distant place. God is in you, with you, above you, below you, and everywhere. Why should you seek such an omnipresent divinity elsewhere?

Today, man is wasting his precious life in the pursuit of physical, worldly, and artificial desires. Man's life today is full of selfishness and self-interest. These two, together, are destroying the human nature. Some people question, "How can we live in this world without self-interest?" But let Me tell you, this is not the right way of leading a purposeful life. You are deluded to think that you are helping and serving society. No, you are in fact hurting the society by your self-interest.

I told you the other day in My discourse that spirituality should come first, then society, and then individual. The unity of these three is SAI. Human beings must, therefore, keep spirituality as their first goal. It is only when this goal is pursued that society becomes nearer. When you reach the goal of society, then the enquiry should begin "Who am I?" Only when you recognise who you are will you be able to understand society. When you thus

understand society, you will be able to realise the Divinity in the form of society. You first try to understand your own nature.

Embodiments of Love!

You are not able to understand spirituality properly. You require, no doubt, food for the body, in the first instance. But you must ensure that you take food that contributes to your spiritual development. Those who wish to attain divinity should never touch impurity. You should always take pure and sathwic food like vegetables, green leafy vegetables, etc. You should never consume impure items like egg and meat. Also, you keep away completely from intoxicating drinks and drugs. By consuming such items, all your sense organs will be paralysed. Alcohol is not at all conducive to spiritual sadhana (spiritual discipline). In spiritual sadhana, one has to attain ecstatic level by natural process, not by artificial methods like drugs and alcohol.

All that is related to Divinity comes by a natural process. That is what Sage Narada emphasised by declaring "Thriptho bhavathi, maththo bhavathi (become completely fulfilled, ecstatic, etc.)." We must drown in natural Divine intoxication, not artificial intoxication induced by drugs and alcohol. Human nature transforms itself into demonic nature by consuming meat and intoxicating drinks. Certain types of food and medicines contain ingredients causing intoxication. We should keep ourselves away from such things. Even if it is a medicine, we should not take. Under no circumstances should you consume such intoxicating food and medicines.

Embodiments of Love!

You are undertaking a lot of sadhana (spiritual exercises). Several people take milk and curd, assuming that they come under sathwic food. Strictly speaking, they are not totally sathwic . There are some intoxicating ingredients even in those food items. Therefore, we must consume them in limited quantities. All the food we take must conform to certain timings, standards, and limits. When we feel hungry, we should not eat to our fill. We must stop eating while we still feel that we can eat more. If we eat a bellyful,

the thamoguna (sloth and slumber) sets in. We should never give scope to this thamoguna.

You are all doing sadhana. But some mistakes are creeping into this sadhana, knowingly or unknowingly. You sit for dhyana (meditation). You think achieving concentration is meditation. No, concentration is not meditation. In our daily life, we do several things with concentration, but they do not constitute meditation. Some people think steady sitting is sadhana and it is great. This is not correct. It is possible that during meditation, our body moves and mind wavers. But from that wavering mind we should develop an unwavering and steady mind. That is the real dhyana (meditation). We must develop a firm conviction that we are not the impermanent body but the true and eternal Atma Thatthwa. Only when you attain that stage in dhyana does it become the real dhyana.

You should not begin your sadhana with the feeling that God is somewhere in a distant place and that you wish to install Him in the temple of your heart. First and foremost, develop a firm conviction that Divinity lies in you. You must realise your own divine nature. Not only that, you must make others also realise that you are divine. Today, all our sadhanas are like the swords used in a drama on the stage. They are useful only for the purpose of acting, not in real life. We must gradually become free from our illusion. There are several types of dhyana, like, sankalpa dhyana, sthira dhyana, chiththa dhyana, etc.

Embodiments of Love!

Knowingly or unknowingly you are doing sadhana based on what you think to be correct. If you desire to know what dhyana is in the real sense, ask Me. I will explain to you.

In fact, you do not need any sadhana. Do as I say, and you will get the result in a moment. Divinity is that which manifests right in front of you out of His grace. It cannot be obtained with the help of rigorous practices. Everybody is doing sadhana attaching himself to certain forms. In the process, he is trying

to establish the glory of his own form. This is not correct. You should forget your own form and lose your consciousness in divinity. What is the use of doing dhyana, all the while concentrating upon one's own form? When somebody enquires what you are doing, you reply that you are doing dhyana. How do you know that you are doing dhyana when in fact your body consciousness itself is lost in dhyana? That means, you are not doing real dhyana. Dhyana is that in which you forget your own self; you develop purity of conscience and establish the eternity of your Atma Thatthwa. Without achieving this, dhyana is a waste and real cheating.

Embodiments of Love!

Cultivate pure and sacred love. You run after several elders, sadhakas, and gurus and try to be their followers. This is not guruthwa. You concentrate on one feeling of divinity that is already established in your heart. Do not change your mind every now and then. Let it be firmly established as your goal.

Buddha followed the same principle. Earlier, Buddha went in search of divinity everywhere outside. He wandered in several places. But, he could not succeed in his endeavours. Ananda, his cousin saw his plight and enquired why he was wandering here and there. Suddenly, Buddha realised that he was all the while following his manasika thatthwa (mental impulses), which is impermanent and momentary. therefore, he decided not to follow the mind. He, immediately started contemplating on divinity with full heart and attained nirvana (liberation from bondage). It is clear from this example that one should never rely on the mind, which weaves fantasies. Forget the mind, establish divinity firmly in your heart, and finally merge in that divinity. That is the real nirvana .

Embodiments of Love!

What is the nature of human body? It is made up of the five elements. It is unreal, impermanent, and perishable in nature. Keeping this body attachment, if you do dhyana, how can it be fruitful? How can it lead you to your goal? Therefore, you must forget the deha bhranthi (the illusion of body).

Merge in divinity with Atmabhimana (attachment to the Atma). That is the real dhyana. That is the true thyaga (renunciation or detachment). That is your real yoga. That is your real bhoga. That bhoga is Ananda (Bliss).

Always follow the principle, "Sathyam bhruyath, priyam bhruyath, na bhruyath, sathyam apriyam" which means always speak the truth; speak the truth pleasingly; never speak truth which is unpalatable. Only then will you be able to attain nirvana.

Several people aspire for liberation. Liberation cannot be attained by temporary sadhanas. It can be obtained by constant contemplation on divinity, forgetting the mind totally. That is real nirvana. Wherever you see, if the mind only is visible, how can you attain nirvana? Only the one who forgets the mind can attain nirvana .

Embodiments of Love!

I presume you have never undertaken such a great sadhana so far. Do not bother; we will look into it later. First and foremost, begin your contemplation on divinity with pure love. Only then will you gain spiritual strength. Even the Pandavas started their spiritual quest by giving first priority to God, then to 'we', and lastly to 'I'. In spiritual literature, every letter and every word carries subtle meanings. You must try to understand those subtle meanings and act accordingly. That is real sadhana. You need not do sadhana for attaining ephemeral and impermanent things. Try to attain divinity through love. Do all your sadhana with pure love. Only then will they become fruitful.

Embodiments of Love!

Tomorrow is the Guru Purnima day. Any amount of time can be spent in explaining the importance and significance of Guru Purnima. The guru is coming as purnima (full moon) on Guru Purnima day. If you forget guruthwa (the real nature of guru), all your sadhanas will be of no use. Today, we are forgetting guruthwa totally. This is a great mistake. Keep the essential nature of a guru in your heart and do your sadhana to merge in Divinity. Hence,

tomorrow, we will try to know the significance of Guru Purnima, to some extent.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

13. Develop Broad-mindedness To Experience Divinity

Date: 24 July 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

The moon illumines the world at night and the sun during the day.
Righteousness illumines the three worlds,
and a noble son illumines his entire clan.
(Telugu Poem)

During the day, the sun shines resplendently and enables people to see the world. During the night, the moon gives us light. It is dharma that shows the ideal path to all beings in all the three worlds. Similarly, a noble son illumines his entire clan by his exemplary behaviour. All these are related to the ephemeral and transient world.

Kanada was the one who experienced and propagated the truth that God is all-pervasive. Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest). Kanada recognised the existence of God in every atom. He even described God as Anuswarupa (the very form of atom). The world cannot exist without the atom.

Earlier, nothing existed in the universe. In the beginning, the sun, the moon, the stars, the Earth, the sky, etc., did not exist. There was only pitch darkness all around. The combination of atoms resulted in the formation of hard matter of a very high density. As a result, a lot of heat was generated. Then all of a sudden, the hard matter exploded with a big bang into pieces and spread all over. This was the cause of creation. This was also the experience of Kanada.

The sound that emanated when the big bang took place is Pranava. That is Omkara, the primordial sound. This sound of Pranava is all-pervasive. It originated from paramanu (minutest atom). There is nothing other than atom in this creation. "How can one understand and realise this? " This was the enquiry of Kanada. Ultimately, he realised the principle of Pranava. This primordial sound has to be contemplated upon by man for attaining liberation.

The primordial sound, Pranava, is verily the Divinity ,
which is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest.
It is all-pervasive and stands as the eternal witness.
(Telugu Poem)

This truth was propagated by Kanada. It is from this Pranava that the sun, the moon, the Earth, the sky, etc., originated.

The atom is the fundamental basis of the entire creation. Every human being is a combination of atoms. There is no matter without atoms. But modern man is unable to understand the mystery of atoms. He considers the teachings of our ancient rishis (sages) as mere stories and ridicules them. He does not have the ability and capacity to understand the sacredness of ancient Bharatiya (Indian) culture. He is not able to understand the reality that is within him. He installs the statues of ancient rishis and noble souls as a mark of respect for them but fails to understand their teachings and put them into practice. He has to install their sacred forms not outside but in the altar of his heart and follow their teachings.

To which time does Kanada belong? Twenty thousand years ago, people were all praise for Kanada and his teachings. Kanada recognised the principles of hydrogen and oxygen. The scientists observed that hydrogen represents the water principle, while oxygen represents the fire principle. Today, people attach great value to the observations made by scientists, but they fail to

understand and appreciate the great truths taught by our rishis out of their experience.

How can one understand the atomic power? Atom is not visible to the physical eye but it is present everywhere. The water we drink, the food we eat, the words we utter, the sound we hear - everything is permeated by atoms. Though man treads on atoms, eats atoms, and drinks atoms, he is unable to understand their mystery. He thinks that only scientists can investigate into the nature of atoms. Atomic process is highly sacred. By conducting a proper enquiry into this, one can understand Divinity. This was the teaching of Kanada. But today nobody is conducting a proper enquiry to experience the atomic process. People are leading their lives with materialistic outlook.

Once, Emperor Shivaji and his minister were going on an evening stroll. On the way, they came across a Buddhist monk. Immediately, Shivaji removed his crown and prostrated at the monk's feet. The minister did not like this. He thought Emperor Shivaji demeaned his own stature by placing his head at the feet of an ordinary monk. The Emperor at once sensed the feeling of his minister and wanted to teach him a lesson. Shivaji followed the path of righteousness and sacrifice and set an ideal to mankind.

One day, he asked the minister to bring the head of a goat, a sheep, and of a human being. He collected the heads of a goat and a sheep. He went to a burial ground and cut the head of a dead person. He took them to the emperor. Shivaji commanded him to sell them in the market. The heads of the sheep and goat were sold in no time, but nobody came forward to buy the head of a human being. When this was told to the emperor, he said, it may be given free of cost to anybody. The minister took the human head to the market and waited there for a couple of days. In spite of his best efforts, nobody was willing to accept it. When this was conveyed to the Emperor, Shivaji said, "Oh minister, you felt very sad when I placed my head at the feet of a monk. Do you realise that the same would be the fate of our heads too, when we leave our mortal coils. They would have absolutely no value. Hence, we should sanctify our lives by prostrating before noble souls. " Material

wealth and position are momentary. Only truth and right conduct will remain with man and redeem his life.

The body will be respected as long as there is So-ham (life-breath) in it. That is the sound of Pranava. That is the energy contained in an atom. This energy has its origin in Divinity. No one can create it. This truth was propagated by Kanada.

It is very difficult to understand the power of an atom. God is in the form of an atom. The entire world is the manifestation of the atom. The space and sound are the expressions of the atom. Therefore, do not neglect the principle of atom. It has mighty power in it. Scientists have been experimenting on this principle for a long time. It takes twenty-two thousand crores of years for an atom to go back to its source. It is rather strange that man is unable to unravel the mystery behind an atom.

The Earth rotates on its axis and revolves around the sun. Who is responsible for these phenomena? Nobody can explain this. Because the Earth rotates on its axis, we have day and night. Because it revolves around the sun, we are able to get the food required to sustain our body. It is the Divine Will that is responsible for all this. It is the Divine master plan for the benefit of the world.

Nobody has understood the anushakti (power of the atom) in its totality till this day. People think that the atom has no life in it. It is a wrong notion. The life force that holds the entire world together is present in the atom also. Hence, it is said that God is present in microcosm as well as in macrocosm. Man should make an attempt to understand the mystery of creation. He should recognise his responsibilities and conduct himself accordingly. Man has to necessarily understand the principle of the atom. If he understands this, he would have understood everything else, for atom is God. The life principle present in the atom is present all over the universe. Kanada said that proper understanding of the principle of atom will lead to the understanding of Divinity.

When you close your fist, you would have caught hold of many atoms. When

you release it, the atoms will travel in different directions. The sound of Pranava that emerges from the atoms will be as minute as the particles themselves.

Devotees offer their prayers to God. Some people doubt the efficacy of prayer. But in fact, any mighty task can be accomplished through prayer. It makes impossible things possible. Here is a small example. There has been a swelling on My cheek for the past ten days. I never take any medicine. Yesterday I observed that the attention of all those assembled here was focused on My cheek, not on Me! They were worried that the swelling had still not reduced and that Swami was undergoing a lot of pain.

After I delivered the valedictory discourse, I retired to My room. As I was resting, a number of devotees were praying to Me to cure Myself at least by the auspicious day of Guru Purnima. All their prayers reached Me. When I got up in the morning, the swelling reduced and there was absolutely no pain whatsoever. In fact, I had not willed that it should be so. It is the result of the prayers of devotees. Yesterday, many did not even take food. With tears in their eyes, they were praying continuously. My thoughts went to them for a moment. But I never willed that I should be cured. I never do it. Why? As Sanjay Sahni rightly pointed out, "I and you are one. " You are not different from Me. This is not My body, it is yours. So, it is your responsibility to take care of this body. I never think of My body and its well-being. I never make a Sankalpa (Will) that such and such a thing should happen, so far as My body is concerned. There is no selfishness in Me from head to toe. That is why I have got every right to declare that I and you are one.

Every man is endowed with the same atomic power. He has to make every effort to understand this. Since ancient times, man got accustomed to worshipping God in the form of idols. You worship Rama and Krishna in the form of idols. But can you see their physical forms now? No. You worship Easwara. But are you able to see Him? The forms of Rama, Krishna, and Easwara are ever existing. But man is not able to visualise them because of his narrow-mindedness. Expansion of the heart is divine; narrow-mindedness is death. One with narrow-mindedness is verily a living corpse. One should

always be broad-minded. You find divinity installed in the heart of one with expansive feelings.

Saints and sages of yore undertook various types of spiritual practices. Kanada also performed penance. Ultimately, he realised that he had originated from the atom and would merge into it. He gave up body attachment. Today, man is leading a materialistic life and striving for his own selfish ends. As long as there is selfishness in man, he will not be able to understand the divine principle of atom. One may do japa (soft repetition of the Name), dhyana (meditation), and penance, but one's mind should always be steadily fixed on the principle of the atom. Everything is contained in this. Our body, mind, intellect, etc., are nothing but the manifestations of the atom, which is verily divine.

God certainly listens to the prayers of His devotees. Some people hesitate to pray lest their prayers should cause inconvenience to God. They are mistaken, for God can never be put to any inconvenience whatsoever. God has no suffering at all. He considers devotees' happiness as His happiness. However, your happiness results from material things; whereas My happiness is related to the principle of Atma. I am pleased by the smallest of small offering if it is made with Love. Your tiny offering will assume gigantic proportions to Me. On the other hand, you are not satisfied in spite of receiving mighty favours.

What is the significance of Guru Purnima? Guru is one who illumines the path to divinity. Purnima stands for the cool full moon light. Full moon stands for a mind with total illumination. It is spotless and blemishless. Even if there is a trace of blemish in the mind, it will lead to darkness. It cannot give you total bliss.

Embodiments of Love!

Let your mind be filled with the radiance of divine love. Acquiring mere textual knowledge is of no avail. What you have studied is only a fraction of the total knowledge. Yet you feel proud about it. Your worldly education is

insignificant compared to divine wisdom. You cannot attain God with your education, power, and wealth. He is accessible by Love and Love alone. You can experience Him only when you develop Love. Devotion means to Love God wholeheartedly.

Embodiments of Love!

What is it that you are supposed to know on this day of Guru Purnima? You must understand that God is in you, with you, around you, above you, below you. In fact, you are God. Recognise this truth in the first instance. Do not entertain excessive desires and become beggars. Do your duty sincerely. That is the true sadhana (spiritual discipline). When you are in office, do only office work; do not think of your family matters. Likewise, when you are at home, take care of the needs of your wife and children. Do not make your home an office. But today, because of too much work in the office, people take office papers to their homes to complete their work. They are thus facing difficulties because they mix up their office work, household work, business, and spiritual matters.

Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu were great scientists. The modern scientists have traveled only up to the moon, but Hiranyakasipu traveled up to the sun. He even touched the pole star and consequently suffered. One may be a great scientist, but one will be put to suffering if one crosses one's limits. The saints made concerted efforts to experience Divinity. One should develop broad-mindedness in order to experience Divinity.

Man has death, but the mind has no death. Whatever one does during one's lifetime is imprinted on the mind and gets carried over to the next birth. No one can understand the nature of the mind. Some people think that suicide is the only way of putting an end to all their troubles. They think, "It is the mind that is responsible for our suffering. Let us put an end to it. " It is the worst of sins. The mind cannot be killed so easily. One should never entertain such low ideas. One should be prepared to face any difficulties with fortitude and strive hard to sanctify one's life.

Atma is God and God is Atma. Prahlada said, "Never doubt that God is here and not there. He is present wherever you search for Him. "

The Atma is eternal without birth or death.
It has no beginning, middle or end.
It is omnipresent as the witness of every being.
(Telugu Poem)

Hence, man should lead his life with the conviction, "I am God. Only body has death. I have neither birth nor death. " As long as he is alive, his love is dedicated to God and God alone.

One day a rich man came to meet Baba at Shirdi. He had stuffed his pocket with a number of currency notes. Baba decided to test his devotion. He called Shyam, who used to be by His side always, and said, "I need five rupees very urgently. Go and ask Patel. " After sometime, Shyam returned saying that Patel was not at home. Baba asked him to approach another businessman. Shyam again returned with empty hands. Baba sent him to another person. Patel was a witness to all this, but he did not volunteer to give five rupees from his pocket. He had no spirit of sacrifice.

For many people, money is God and politics is God. Will the money or politics follow them after their death? What are they going to achieve? What is the purpose of life? Having attained human birth, don't waste it in trivial pursuits. Take part in activities that are beneficial to society.

Do not misunderstand Me when I say this. Politics is the root cause of pollution of the world. The minds of even small children are polluted by politics. Conflicts and agitations have become the order of the day. There is no unity even between husband and wife. Prior to Independence [in India], people did not suffer this much. In those days, the conflict was between the whites and the coloured, whereas today the non-whites are quarreling

amongst themselves in factions. This is not what is expected of people today. Shun evil qualities and develop noble feelings.

Embodiments of Love!

Fill your lives with Love and end your lives with Love. That is true human life. The Upanishads have accorded great value to human life.

Manava is one who has to be loved and respected. He has to welcome happiness as well as sorrow with equanimity. In China, there is a proverb which says, "Difficulties are our friends; let us welcome them. " The happiness that we get out of difficulties cannot be obtained anywhere else. Na sukhat labhyate sukham (one cannot derive happiness out of happiness).

Many people come to Me saying they are facing lot of difficulties. I feel like laughing at them. I want to know what difficulties and sorrow mean. But they do not come anywhere near Me. I keep telling the devotees that they should not be bogged down by difficulties. I never give any scope for sorrow. This body has entered its 77th year. Till this day, I never experienced sorrow even for a moment. Man aspires for bliss. He is the embodiment of bliss. Bliss is his true property. Such being the case, why should he give scope for sorrow? It is because he has not understood his true nature. Worldly relationship comes and goes. But that which comes and grows is the principle of Love.

Embodiments of Love!

Right from this day, try to reduce your attachment to the world to the extent possible. Be happy and make others happy. Do not hurt anybody. Consider difficulties as passing clouds. You have developed family relationships, and there are bound to be some worries. But do not be perturbed by them. When you look at the vast sky, you find many clouds. Likewise, in the sky of your heart there are clouds of attachment. They just come and go. Do not worry about them. What is the shape of worry? It is a mentally created fear. It is the result of your imagination. Every man is bound to encounter difficulties and losses. We should face them with courage.

Remember what Shivaji taught his minister. This body will be respected as long as there is life in it. Once the life ebbs away, it will not have any value. The same was stated by Duryodhana during his last moments. He said, "I was respected as long as I was alive. Tomorrow, crows and dogs are going to feast on me. "

Whatever has to happen will happen. Lead a respectable life while you are alive. Develop divine feelings in you. Only then will you have led a true human life. Today, man is leading a purely materialistic life. This is also necessary to a certain extent. Remember that there is the transcendental principle even in this secular life.

Embodiments of Love!

From this day of Guru Purnima, make your hearts sacred. Just as you wave away the mosquitoes that bite you, brush aside any difficulties that assail you. Do not be depressed by sorrow or be elated by happiness. Develop equanimity and strive to attain Divinity.

[Here, Bhagawan sang the Bhajan, "Vahe guru vahe guru vahe guru ji bolo " and then continued the discourse.]

There is only one guru. There cannot be two gurus - inner guru and external guru. Guru is one who treads along the path of truth. He is truth himself.

Gurur-Brahma Gurur-Vishnu Gurur Devo Maheswara;
Guru Sakshat Param Brahma Thasmai Sri Gurave Namaha. Guru is Brahma,
Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Maheswara.
Guru is verily the supreme Brahman. So, salutations to the Guru.

You are the embodiment of the divine Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara. Hence, Guru is not separate from you.

You are everything. Let your concentration not waver. Let it be steadily fixed on your goal. Be one a student, a celibate, a householder, or a renunciant, the goal is one and same for all. Contemplate on the principle of So-ham that your inner voice teaches. Say Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahma). There is nothing wrong in this statement. Some people have a mistaken notion that to say so is a sign of egoism. In fact, that is not ego at all. It is your right. To think that you are a mere human being amounts to demeaning yourself. You are the embodiments of God. Develop such faith and become God.

There cannot be any bad qualities in God. So, you should lead a pure, steady and selfless life. See good, speak good, and do good. You should be an ideal to everybody. No benefit accrues from worship if you do not purify your heart.

You are worshiping Swami and have been visiting Swami for a number of years. But is there any transformation in you? You are coming and going without any aim. Such people need not come here at all. Wherever you are, do your sadhana (spiritual exercise). When you come here, you should imbibe divine feelings and become divine. Gradually reduce your attachment to the world. The world will not go with you when you die. You cannot even take away a fistful of dust. You can take only the virtues you have cultivated.

Respect your teachers, elders and parents. Matru Devo bhava, pitru Devo bhava, acharya Devo bhava, atithi Devo bhava (revere your mother, father, preceptor, and guest as God). Consider everyone as God. There is God even in a dog. Have faith that God is all-pervasive. There is no greater sadhana (spiritual discipline) than this. When people develop such faith, the whole nation will be blessed with plenty, prosperity, and all auspiciousness. Fill your heart with divine feelings. This is what you have to learn today.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajans, "Hari bhajana bina " and "Subramanyam subramanyam ... "

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

14. The 'I' (Aham) Is Brahman

Date: 21 August 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

All people aspire for pleasant life, positions of authority and prosperity.

But few aspire for good intellect, wisdom and good character.

What else is to be conveyed to this congregation of noble souls?

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

In this world everyone, right from a pauper to a millionaire, a pamara (simpleton) to a paramahansa (realised soul) uses the word 'I' while referring to themselves. Had the birds and beasts been endowed with the power of speech, they too would have introduced themselves saying 'I'. The term 'I' is of great significance in spiritual literature and is explained in the Upanishads in detail. Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman) is an Upanishadic dictum. From this statement, it is evident that the term 'I' came into existence before the name Brahma. The names of divine incarnations such as Rama and Krishna correspond only to their physical forms and not to their Divinity. Aham (I) is their true and eternal name. In fact, 'I' is the first name of God. People address God by various names for their own satisfaction and happiness. However, Aham is the true name of God.

Mind is responsible for man's delusions. It is possible to grow a tree without any bend. A boulder can be carved into a beautiful statue. But it is very difficult to straighten and steady the mind. All your sadhana (spiritual exercise) is meant to direct the mind to the right path. People undertake various types of spiritual sadhana that confer only temporary satisfaction. It is

only when one understands the principle of Aham that one can experience everlasting happiness. People attribute various names and forms to God as they are unable to understand the principle of Divinity.

Is it possible to build a temple to the One who is all-pervasive?

How can one hold a lamp to the One who is shining with the brilliance of a billion suns?

How can one attribute a form to the One whom even Brahma, the creator, cannot comprehend?

How can one give an appropriate name to the One who is present in all beings?

How can one offer food to the One who has the entire cosmos in His belly?
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

In this physical and ephemeral world, people worship God with various names and forms. But in reality, Aham is the only true and eternal name of God. The four Vedas have declared this truth in the four mahavakyas (profound statements): Prajnanam Brahma (Brahman is Supreme Consciousness); Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman); Tattwamasi (That Thou Art); and Ayam Atma Brahma (This Self is Brahman). The Veda has also declared: Ekoham Bahusyam (the One willed to become many). Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti (The Absolute is one, but the wise call it by different names). Divinity is only one, and that is Aham.

The mind plays many tricks and makes man forget the reality. It is almost impossible for anyone to comprehend the nature of mind. Flies and mosquitoes land on every object, but they never do go near fire. Likewise, the mind gets attracted by material objects and goes everywhere but always shies away from God. The mind should be made pure and selfless and it should always remain focused on God. That is true sadhana (spiritual

discipline). All the spiritual practices are meant to control the mind.

Sravanam (listening), kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (servitude), sneham (friendship), and Atmanivedanam (Self-surrender) are the nine forms of devotion. In each of these nine paths of devotion what is important is that the mind has to be totally surrendered to God. [Bhagawan showing His handkerchief asked,] "What is this?" You say it is a piece of cloth. It is not merely that. It is a bundle of threads. Cotton is made into threads and threads are interwoven to make a cloth. Likewise, you are not one person but three: The one you think you are (physical body), the one others think you are (the mind), the one you really are (the Atma). Your true Self is 'I'. That is Brahma, God. He has no specific name and form. Nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathanam, nicketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala, and swarupinam (attributeless, pure, everlasting, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, liberated and embodiment of sacredness). Whatever names and forms man attributes to God are for his own satisfaction. Therefore, you should make efforts to see God in all forms.

The principle of 'I' is non-dual, eternal, and full of effulgence and of supreme bliss. Everything is contained in this. When someone questions, when did you come, you say, "I came yesterday." Does this 'I' refer to you or your body? It is your body that came yesterday, not you. Since you identify yourself with the body, you think that you came yesterday. When you are walking on the road, suppose accidentally you have slipped and sustained a fracture. Then you say, "My leg is fractured." Just ponder over this statement. When you say, "My leg", it implies that you are different from your leg. It means that you are not the body. You say, it is "my body", "my mind", "my Buddhi", "my leg", etc., then, who are you? When you examine yourself in this manner, you will realise that none of these are your true Self. Your body corresponds to akara (form), whereas your true Self (I) corresponds to ananda (bliss). The principle of 'I' is different from the body. Day in and day out, people make use of this term 'I' without actually understanding its meaning. Be he a pauper or a millionaire, the principle of 'I' is common to all. Isavasyam idam sarvam (the

entire universe is permeated by God). God is present in everybody in the form of 'I'. Where there is 'I', there is God. Have firm faith in this declaration. When you say, Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman), 'I' precedes Brahma. Hence, 'I' is the first name of God.

Bali was a noble king, one of selflessness and an ardent devotee. One who seeks alms is considered small. Hence, even Lord Narayana had to assume the form of a vamana (dwarf) when He went to beg for alms from Bali. The Pakshi Vahana (the one who has Garuda as His vehicle) has Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth on His chest. Yet He became very small and sought bhiksha (alms) from Bali. He sought just three footsteps of land. Being small in stature, his feet were even smaller. Yet He could measure the three worlds with His three steps. Sage Sukracharya, the preceptor of Bali, cautioned him not to yield to Vamana's request. He revealed that He was no ordinary being but Lord Narayana Himself. But Bali did not pay heed to his counsel, saying it was not proper for one to go back on one's promise. Having given his word, he wanted to fulfil it, come what may. He even disobeyed his Guru and offered himself to God. God has infinite potentialities. Nothing is impossible for Him. Vamana occupied the three worlds with his footsteps.

The three worlds are represented by Bhur Bhuvah Suvah. Bhur stands for material world. Bhuvaha represents the realm of thought, i.e., the mind. Suvaha is the principle of the Atma. All three are contained in man.

Kerala is the birthplace of sacrifice and the centre of devotion and surrender. No beggar is turned away empty-handed. Everyone does charity as per his capacity. It is this punya bhumi (land of merit) that gave birth to Bali. There are many in this world who perform bhudana, godana, annadana, vastradana, suvarnadana (giving away land, cows, food, clothes and gold in charity). But emperor Bali performed the supreme sacrifice by offering himself to God. With the passage of time, there might have been a few changes, but, nevertheless, Kerala continues to be the land famous for devotion and surrender. It is the birthplace of Prahlada, the great devotee of the Lord. Even as Bali disobeyed the command of his guru for the sake of God, Prahlada also went against the wishes of his father and surrendered totally to the Lord.

Many such noble souls have taken birth in the sacred land of Kerala.

Modern scientists deny the existence of God out of their ignorance. There is no place where God does not exist. Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Thissthati (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). The same was stated by Prahlada,

Never doubt that God is here and not there.
Wherever you search for Him, He is there.
(Telugu Poem)

Prahlada had unflinching faith. Hiranyakasipu was a great scientist. He could travel up to the sun; he could even reach the stars. When he touched the Polestar, the planet earth began to shake. He was one of such valour and courage. Till this day, no scientist has been able to accomplish what Hiranyakasipu could achieve. But, in spite of his valour and knowledge, Hiranyakasipu could not comprehend Divinity. One can understand Divinity only through love. There is no other path that can take you to God. It is only love that enables you surrender to God.

Embodiments of Love!

'I' and love are one and the same. Man cannot exist without love. Love shines forth as 'I' in everybody. Without the electric current, bulbs cannot glow. Likewise, without 'I', the body cannot function. It is because of 'I' that the eyes see, the ears listen, the tongue speaks, etc. It is not the eyes that see, it is 'I' that sees through the eyes. When you close your eyes, you do not see anything. The light present in the eyes is divinity. In fact, there is no place where divinity does not exist. All names and forms are the manifestations of divinity. Hence, it is said, Sarva Jeeva Namaskarah Kesavam Pratigachchati (whomever you salute, it reaches God) and Sarva Jeeva Tiraskarah Kesavam

Pratigachchati (whomever you denigrate, it also reaches God).

Embodiments of Love!

If you want to be respected by others, you should first respect others. Likewise, love all and all will love you. Love is the principle of 'I'. Keep this as your goal. In any house, there will be a switch in every room for the light to glow. All these switches are controlled by one main switch. Similarly, the eyes, the ears, the tongue, etc., are like various switches which are controlled by the main switch 'I'. Only when this main switch is turned on, will there be life in each of limbs in the body. This 'I' is verily the truth. Truth is God. God is truth. Love is God. Live in love. No other spiritual practice is needed if you understand this truth and put it into practice.

God is the eternal witness of our thoughts, words, and deeds. Each one worships God in the name and form of his choice. In fact, all forms are His. Hence, respect and love everybody. Expansion of love is life. Do not give scope for narrow-mindedness.

Janthunam narajanma durlabham

Out of all the living beings, the human birth is the rarest. Daivam manusha rupena God takes the form of man.

You may not believe in these axioms if you take only the physical form into consideration. Inner reality (I) is important, but not the physical form.

When you go to the market, you find people selling sugar dolls of different moulds like cat, dog, deer, etc. Regardless of the shape, each doll is priced at 2 annas. 'Cat' moulds attract some children and 'deer' moulds fascinate some others. The difference lies only in names and forms, but the sugar content is the same in all of them. You pay 2 annas not for the form but for the sugar content therein. Only children are attracted by names and forms.

Likewise, an ordinary person is deluded by names and forms, whereas a true sadhaka (devotee) keeps in view the fundamental principle. Do not get carried away by names and forms. Know the nature of the Self and develop love for it. This Self is known as Aham or Atma or I. Names and forms are different, but the fundamental principle is one and the same. Man will be transformed into divine once he understands this truth.

Man is all-powerful. In fact, he is God. That is why God is always pictured and portrayed in a human form. Every man is endowed with hridaya (heart). That which is filled with daya or karuna (compassion) is hridaya. When man fills his heart with karuna, peace will reign supreme in the world. There will be no scope for jealousy, hatred, or anger. One who has filled his heart with compassion will always remain in peace. People mistake hridaya for physical heart. Hridaya is nothing but the all-pervasive Atmic principle, i.e. Aham.

Nobody keeps valuables within the reach of a thief. But we are keeping the precious jewellery like compassion, forbearance, love, etc., under the custody of the mind, which can be compared to a thief. When you leave precious jewellery in the hands of a thief, how can you get them back? It is impossible. The precious jewellery of virtues must be kept under the safe custody of hridaya. Never keep them with the thief, i.e. the mind. But that exactly is what man is doing. He acts according to the dictates of his mind. He takes mind as the basis for all his activities. One who follows the mind is verily a thief. Instead, one should follow the intellect. Only then can one understand the principle of Atma. Thiruthonda Alwar said that one should worship God with chitta shuddi (purity of heart). Never follow the dictates of the mind, for it is always unsteady. Every man is endowed with noble qualities and pure thoughts, which are like precious diamonds. But he is keeping them under the care of the mind. Consequently, he is not able to progress on the spiritual path.

Take truth and love as the basis. Truth is only one. It is not constrained by time and space. One can experience peace and bliss only when one considers the changeless and eternal principles of truth and love as the basis of one's life.

The two ministers, (who spoke earlier) prayed to Me to visit Kerala. This time I shall certainly come to Kerala. Not only this. From this year, Kerala has every chance to progress in the field of science and technology. People are under the impression that only Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have progressed in the field of science and technology, but Kerala is going to overtake them. Even the Prime Minister has promised that he would extend all necessary support in this regard. Kerala is bound to attain an exalted position.

The culture of Bharat (India) exhorts, Sathyam vada dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness). Kerala is the land of truth, love, and righteousness. Hence, I will certainly visit Kerala this year. The people of Kerala are tender hearted. They are full of love. In politics, people say something and do the opposite later on. Spirituality emphasises on the unity of thought, word, and deed. Very soon Kerala will develop into an ideal State.

Kerala stands first in many respects. Even the monsoon sets in in the land of Kerala first, before spreading to the other states. Such a land is bound to be dear to God also. One can experience the presence of Divinity in the land of Kerala. Siddhashrama was the place where Emperor Bali, Lord Vamana. and Jamadagni were born. The name Siddhashrama implies that it was the place of fulfilment and success. That is why Viswamitra decided to perform penance there. Siddhashrama attained eternal glory because of his penance. Not merely that, many saints and sages were born there and performed penance. Not many are aware of this. Viswamitra was initially a king. Later on, he renounced everything and performed penance. He was called a Rajarishi. On seeing Vasishtha ,who was called a Brahmarishi, Viswamitra resolved to earn the same appellation.

One could become a Brahmarishi only when one gave up hatred completely. Since Vasishtha had no trace of hatred in him, he could attain the state of Brahmarishi. Viswamitra also became a Brahmarishi, once he got rid of anger and hatred. He was responsible for the holy wedding of Sita and Rama. His desire for bringing together prakriti (nature) and Paramatma (God) was fulfilled. After the wedding, he left for the forest at once.

Embodiments of Love!

Love all. Do not hate anyone. Love even your enemies. If there is any trace of anger or hatred in you, transform them into love. Then you will also become a great rishi.

Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

15. Divine Leelas Reflect The Glory Of Avataras

Date: 31 August 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Krishna. Constant repetition of this sweet Name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself. Therefore, one should contemplate on the Name of Krishna incessantly. (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

SINCE ancient times, the nectarous principle of Krishna has fascinated young and old alike. Right from His advent Krishna made people forget themselves in ecstasy with His divine pranks, enchanting music and inexpressible bliss. Krishna and Balarama, along with other cowherd boys, would take cows for grazing to the banks of the Yamuna and immerse themselves in fun and frolic. One day, the cowherd boys were lost in bliss as they were watching the divine pranks of Krishna. Consequently, they forgot the surroundings and their cows. As they were resting after grazing, all of a sudden, they felt hot wind blowing from all directions. They realised that they were being surrounded by wild fire. The raging conflagration was so intense that they were even unable to open their eyes and see. The cows started running helter-skelter, unable to bear the scorching heat. Nobody could control them. The intensity of heat became more and more every moment. Then the cowherd boys prayed to Krishna to come to their rescue.

"Oh Krishna! You alone can extinguish this fire and save us."

Seeing their plight, Krishna laughed and said,

"Oh cowherd boys! You have been moving with Me, playing with Me and enjoying the bliss. It is rather strange that you are fear-stricken even after

experiencing My divinity. Many times in the past, you were witnesses to My slaying the demons sent by Kamsa. Then why are you afraid when I am with you? When you have the *Kalpavriksha* (wish-fulfilling tree) right in front of you, why do you desire for trivial things? When you have the *Kamadhenu* (wish-fulfilling cow) with you, where is the need to buy a cow? When you have the glittering Meru mountain with you, why do you crave for paltry silver and gold? Likewise, when you have the omnipotent Lord Krishna in you, with you and around you, why do you get panic over such a trivial matter?"

(Telugu Poem)

Krishna told them to close their eyes and contemplate on Him for a while. The cowherds implicitly obeyed His command. They closed their eyes and started chanting His name. The next moment, Krishna commanded them to open their eyes. Lo and behold! The wild fire had totally disappeared and all their cows were grazing as if nothing had happened. Their joy knew no bounds. They wanted to return to their respective homes at once and narrate the wonderful miracle that Krishna had performed. The cowherd boys had experienced many such miracles that proved the divinity of Krishna.

The Mystery Of The Divine

Not only in India, but also in a communist country like Russia, many such mysterious powers of divinity were experienced. A person by name Wolfe Messing was born on September 10, 1899 in Poland. Right from his birth, he radiated divine effulgence. He behaved in a mysterious manner even while he was very young. He would make some movements with his hands and laugh to himself. His parents were mystified as they could not understand his strange behaviour. One year passed in this manner. In his second year, he started talking to himself. He would scratch his head as if he was engrossed in deep thought. He would run here and there, laugh to himself and converse with some unseen beings. All this baffled his parents. They wondered why he was laughing to himself and to whom he was talking. There was an element of anxiety and fear in them.

One day a tall personality wearing a white robe came and stood in front of their house. He called Messing near him and said, "Your parents are planning to put you in a lunatic asylum or in a school for the mentally retarded. You do not need to go anywhere. How can those who are afflicted with worldly madness understand your 'madness' which is of spiritual nature? If only everyone gets such a spiritual madness, the whole nation would prosper. Do not get yourself admitted to schools where only worldly education is taught. The formal or secular knowledge does not appeal to you. Learn spiritual knowledge. I have come here only to tell you this."

Messing asked him, "Grandfather, where do you come from?" He replied, "I will tell you later. I am going back to the place from where I came. Never forget my words. Do not have anything to do with worldly knowledge. Acquire only spiritual knowledge. Now you are very young. Till you attain a certain level of maturity, do not have any association with anybody. Now I am going back." Saying this, he vanished right in front of Messing's eyes. Messing wondered, "Where did he come from? Where has he gone? Will I also go back to the place from where I came?" He started enquiring thus. His parents did not allow him to go anywhere. He was confined to his house only.

It was 9th February 1909. On that day, his desire to go in search of spiritual knowledge erupted again, for he was not satisfied with the secular knowledge that was being taught to him. He remembered the words of the old man who appeared at his doorstep sometime ago. He went inside the house and found 8 coins in an almirah. Keeping them in his pocket, he embarked on a spiritual journey in the wide world. He wandered and wandered not knowing where he was going. He toured the entire world. None questioned him about tickets or the money required to buy them.

Thus he roamed about for 10 years. Then he entered India. He boarded a train that was going from Cuddapah to Anantapur. In between, the train stopped for a while at Kamalapuram where I was studying at that time. In the classroom Ramesh and Suresh were the two boys sitting on my either side on a desk. Ramesh's father was a Sirasthadar (Revenue Official) and their family was very rich. Every day we would go towards the railway station for a walk

discussing some spiritual matters. In those days there were only one or two trains going via Kamalapuram. The three of us sat on a stone bench on the railway platform.

As we were happily talking to each other, Wolfe Messing saw us through the window of the moving train and at once opened the door and jumped out. In the process he lost his balance and fell flat on the platform. Ramesh and Suresh were concerned that he might have fractured his leg. I told them not to worry saying, "He is coming only to see Me. So, nothing has happened." He was not carrying any luggage, not even a small bag. He came straight toward Me and sat in front of Me, at a distance of about ten feet, shedding tears of joy. Ramesh and Suresh watched this scene. In those days, the boys were afraid of the White people that they might take them away and put them in the military service. Therefore, they wanted to take Me away from that place. As Messing was approaching Me, Ramesh ran to his house and requested his father to bring a jeep immediately and take Me away from the sight of a 'White person'. Ramesh's father at once brought a jeep, lifted Me up and put Me in the jeep. When he took Me to his house, Messing also followed the jeep and came up to the house of Ramesh. He sat there for a full day waiting for Me to come out of the house. In the meanwhile, whenever he would spot Me through the window, he would smile at Me, call Me and try to convey something to Me. But nobody was willing to permit him to meet Me. At that time, Seshama Raju (Swami's elder brother) was working as a teacher. A word was sent to him through a peon informing him of the position. Messing waited for three days and left the place and went somewhere by train. Before leaving, he wrote on the door of the house with a chalk piece thus: "The people who live in this house are very fortunate. They are able to keep the Divine child with them and serve Him. I am not that fortunate. Anyway, thanks."

He finally reached his country, Russia. After twenty years, he again visited India. This time he brought a Kirlian camera, which was capable of taking photographs of the aura around human beings. Those who are of sathwic nature will have a resplendent white aura around their body. Those who are rajasic in nature will have a red colour aura and those who are thamasic in

nature will have a black colour aura around them. He came straight to Kamalapuram and started enquiring about the whereabouts of Raju. But, by that time, I was no longer Raju, the high school student. Raju became Sri Sathya Sai Baba. People told him that Sri Sathya Sai Baba would be residing either in Puttaparthi or in Bangalore. Therefore, he left Kamalapuram for Bangalore.

When he arrived at Bangalore, he found a huge congregation. On enquiry, he came to know that they were waiting for Sri Sathya Sai Baba's darshan. He too waited for My darshan. When I was moving amidst the congregation, he saw Me and thought to himself, "Yes, this is the same person whom I saw as a boy many years ago. He has the same aura with divine effulgence surrounding him."

He approached the Principal of the College. At that time Narendra was the Principal. He was a great scholar in Sanskrit and a very good teacher. His father Damodar was a Judge and his father-in-law Sunder Rao was a reputed doctor. Both of them were present. He asked them to take him for Swami's darshan. He told them, "You are not able to see the reality. Swami is verily God. You are seeing only His physical form and getting deluded. You will know the truth when you observe His aura."

He wanted to observe Swami's aura through the camera he had brought with him. In those days, I used to give darshan to the devotees at the end of nagarasan-kirtan. As I stood in the balcony giving darshan, he clicked his camera. He could see that the entire place was permeated with light. When he showed the photograph, one could see great effulgence around My face. My entire body was engulfed in white light which symbolises purity. Nothing else was noticed. Narendra took that photograph and requested him to give the camera also as it was not available in India. He said he was prepared to give the photograph but not the camera as he had a lot of work to do with it. He expressed his desire to have an audience with Swami. In the evening a meeting was arranged in which he was to address the students. I also attended the meeting. He was not looking at the students or the teachers; he was trying to see where I was seated and what I was doing. When he spotted

Me, he started coming towards Me, saying, "My dear, my dear". He kept repeating, "You are My everything. I am Your instrument." So far I have not revealed this to anyone. He stayed there for ten days. I taught him all that had to be taught. I told him that when God descended on earth, he would act like a human being.

Daivam manusha rupena (God takes the form of man).

He said that the same has been said even in their scriptures. He wrote a book and gave it to Gokak. Gokak was a scholar in English but had no knowledge of Russian. However, he kept the book with him.

After a few days, Messing left without informing anybody. One day Narendra received a letter from Russia. Messing wrote in the letter, "You are a teacher working for God. How fortunate you are!" He requested Narendra to keep him informed about the happenings related to Swami. One day Narendra was expressing some doubts and I was clarifying them. Only two of us were in the room. All of a sudden, Messing arrived there. How he came there was a mystery to Narendra. He did not have a ticket with him. He came, had My darshan and disappeared. It was not possible for all to see this. It was not easy to understand either. Divinity is highly mysterious.

In The Dwapara

One day, Krishna and Balarama along with the cowherd boys were playing on the banks of river Yamuna. They were jumping from one branch to the other on trees. Some of them were tired. At that time, sages Vamana and Bharadwaja came to the banks of Yamuna. They asked the cowherd boys to show them a suitable and safe location where the waters were shallow so that they could have a bath. Krishna and Balarama jumped down from the trees. Bharadwaja at once recognised that Krishna was the Paramatma and Balarama represented Jivatma. He folded his hands in reverence and

requested Krishna to show them a suitable location for having a bath. Krishna jumped into the water and showed them a safe place. He told them that he would keep sumptuous food ready for them. The cowherd boys were wondering as to how Krishna would provide food for the sages as He had not brought any food with Him. In those days there were no tiffin carriers. After the sages had completed their bath, Krishna opened a bag which appeared from nowhere. As he opened the bag, the entire place was filled with sweet aroma of rice boiled in milk. He served the food in a plate and requested them to eat. The cowherd boys were as restless as monkeys. They would not keep quiet. They repeatedly asked Krishna, "Where did You get the food from?" Krishna silenced them saying, it was not proper to indulge in excessive talk in the presence of sages. The sages performed the Sandhya worship and started partaking of food. They asked, "Krishna, who prepared this food?" Krishna replied, "My mother Yashoda." They said, they had not eaten anything more delicious and expressed their gratitude to Him.

Brahma, who was observing these mysterious happenings, was wonderstruck at Krishna's mighty powers. He wanted to play a trick with Krishna. One day as the cowherd boys were ecstatically playing with Krishna and Balarama, Brahma made the cows and calves disappear from the scene. He even made the cowherd boys disappear. Krishna knew that it was Brahma's trick. He at once created all the cowherd boys, cows and calves by His Will. These cowherd boys returned to their respective homes with their cows and calves. They were identical in all respects to the cowherd boys whom Brahma had hidden somewhere. Even their parents could not find any difference. Life went on as usual, with the cowherd boys taking their cows and calves for grazing every day in the company of Balarama and Krishna. This continued for one full year. Brahma felt ashamed and accepted defeat. He sought Krishna's pardon and returned all the cowherd boys, cows and calves. As he returned them, the existing ones which Krishna had created earlier, disappeared at once. In this manner, Krishna performed many stupendous feats right from His childhood. On this basis, the Bhagavata says,

The stories of the Lord are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds.

They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage.

(Telugu Poem)

Divine Play Of The Present Avatar

At this juncture, I would like to narrate an incident which happened with this Avatar. I have not revealed this to anyone, so far. After this Prasanthi Mandir was constructed, I used to have My food in the room upstairs. Whenever I ate, the *Griham Ammayi* (mother of this physical body) would be by My side forcing Me to eat more. She would often express her concern that I was losing weight. I would tell her, "Why should I eat more? Do I need to fight with somebody? I don't like to become fat."

One day, somebody invited Me to their house for food. Actually their intention was to poison Me. They were feeling jealous of My growing popularity and prosperity. In those days, I used to relish vadas made of Alasanda grains. Hence, they mixed poison in vadas and offered them to Me. Before going there, I had told Easwamma and Subbamma not to be afraid if any untoward incident was to happen. When I returned from there, My entire body turned blue and My mouth started frothing. I told Easwamma to wave her hand in a circle. She did accordingly, and to her utter amazement, there appeared vibhuti in her hand. She mixed it in water and gave Me. Instantly, I became normal. She wondered, "Swami can create vibhuti with a wave of His hand. But how is it that vibhuti appeared in My hand?" In fact, I had given her that power for that moment.

When I was staying in the Old Mandir, I used to take children to Chitravathi everyday. In those days, there were no students, only the boys of the village would gather around Me. I would tell them to make a small mound of sand, out of which they could get whatever they wanted like pencil, pen, laddu, etc. Since they were small children, they would ask for trivial things.

After one such evening session in Chitravathi, we were returning to the Old Mandir. Kuppam Sushilamma and her sister Kumaramma, the author of the book "Anyatha Saranam Nasthi", who were young at that time, started running towards the Old Mandir to offer arati when Swami reached there. Then I signalled to Subbamma to stop them and herself go there to make arrangements for the arati. Subbamma implicitly obeyed My command. Those two ladies had a feeling that, being housewives, they only had the eligibility to give arati to Swami, not Subbamma, who was a widow. When Subbamma went to the Old Mandir, she found a big serpent. It was for this reason I had sent her. She was always careful. When she saw the snake, she called out "Sai Nageswara, Sai Nageswara, Sai Nageswara".

In the meanwhile, all of us reached there. She did not want to kill it as she remembered the words of Swami that there was God in all beings. She wanted to catch it and leave it somewhere. As she caught the snake, it coiled around her hand. I made fun of her saying, "Subbamma, are you playing with snakes?" She said, "Swami, I know that you sent me ahead in order to save the lives of those two ladies." In this manner, Subbamma witnessed many leelas of Swami. She was very fortunate and highly meritorious. She attended to Me right from the beginning. Not only Me, she attended to the devotees who would come for My darshan by serving them food. All her relatives turned against her but she did not care for them. She wanted only Swami and none else. She used to obey Swami's command implicitly. She had unwavering faith.

One day, I asked her whether she would like to see her deceased husband? I used to crack such jokes now and then. She replied that she had no such desire as she had nothing to do with her deceased husband. She further said that her husband passed away because he was not fortunate enough to serve Swami and that it was her good fortune that she was able to serve Me. But I insisted that if she had any desire to see him, I would grant her desire. I told her to go out and see. There was a drumstick tree. She found her husband Narayana Rao smoking a cigarette sitting under the tree. She saw the scene very clearly. She was happy to see her dead husband again, but she also scolded him saying, "Even after death, you have not given up your bad

habits." She came back at once as she did not want to see him any longer. Narayana Rao had two wives, Subbamma and Kamalamma. Kamalamma is living in the Ashram at present. I told Kamalamma to go and see her deceased husband. She did not want to see his face again. She said, having come to the Lotus Feet of Swami, she had no such desire. However, on My insistence, she went and saw. She found her late husband sipping hot coffee at that time. Both Subbamma and Kamalamma saw their deceased husband exhibiting the same habits he had when he was alive. Even during the Krishna Avatar, Krishna showed to His devotees incidents that had happened much earlier.

Radha's Ultimate Merger

When Krishna lifted the Govardhana mountain, it was a matter of celebration. The unmarried Gopikas performed Varalakshmi Vratam. Even now ladies perform Varalakshmi Vratam. Radha was a great devotee. But those who did not believe in the divinity of Krishna subjected her to a lot of hardships. Even in those days there were atheists. Atheists, theists, theistic-atheists and atheistic-theists are present in every age. The atheists put Radha in a house and locked it from outside. (*Taking this theme, I wrote a drama and got it enacted by children.*) They felt Radha's family reputation was being tarnished because of her going after Krishna. And to stop her from doing so, she was locked up in the room. She started crying and praying.

Krishna heard her prayers, opened the doors and released her. He chided those people saying, "Is this the way you treat a devotee? It is alright if you have no devotion to Me. But it is a great sin to harass a devotee." Krishna took Radha with Him. Radha then prayed to Krishna to play a song on His divine flute.

Sing a song Oh Krishna! with each word dripping with honey and talk to Me to My heart's content.

Take the essence of the Vedas, let it flow through your divine flute and

transform it into a melodious song.
Sing a song Oh Krishna ...
(Telugu Song)

Listening to His melodious music, Radha breathed her last. From that day, Krishna never touched His flute again. Krishna performed several leelas. He was verily God in human form. None could comprehend or describe His divine nature. It was infinite and unfathomable. You do not find anything other than Divine love flowing from Him.

In Devotion Women Always Excelled Men

In Dwapara Yuga, women experienced Krishna's divinity more. In fact, it was they who revealed the story of God through their devotion. Once some Brahmins were performing Gayatri Yajna in a forest. Krishna told the cowherds to bring some food from the Yajnashala as He and His brother Balarama were very hungry. When the cowherds requested the Brahmins for food, they turned them away saying, "Do you think it is a chowdri to feed you as and when you ask? No. Wait till the yajna is completed. If there is anything left out after we eat our food, then we will give you."

When this was conveyed to Krishna, he advised them to approach the women who were preparing the food at the backside of Yajnashala. As per His advice, the cowherd boys went and saw the ladies preparing bobbatlu (a delicious sweet item). They asked those women, "Mothers, our Krishna and Balarama are hungry, can you give them some food?" The women were extremely happy for having got an opportunity to serve Krishna. Immediately, they packed whatever food items they had prepared and took them to Krishna. Some women raised an objection as to how they could serve food to Krishna (who belonged to the cowherd clan) before it was offered to their husbands (Brahmins). But their objection was brushed aside and Krishna and Balarama were fed the items that were prepared. They considered Krishna as God. On knowing this, the husbands chided their wives saying it was a sacrilegious

act. Later when they sat in meditation, realisation dawned on them. They recognised their own fault and told their wives that what they had done was correct. They took a bath again and requested their wives to serve the food blessed by Krishna, as prasadam.

I wish to emphasise in this context that during the lifetime of any Avatar, it is only the women who recognise the divinity first. They are the people who lead their husbands to divinity. It is only because of the devotion of women that men cultivate devotion to some extent at least. But for women, men will not have devotion at all. It is said that a house without a lady is literally a forest. Women are identified with *bhakti* (devotion) and men are identified with *jnana* (wisdom) since time immemorial. Women can enter even the inner precincts of a palace, whereas men are permitted to go only up to the Durbar hall (court room). It means that jnana will lead you up to God. Bhakti, on the other hand, will take you to His heart. That is why such a great value has been attached to Bhakti. In fact, it was gopikas who were responsible for the spread of *bhakti tatthwa* (path of devotion) in the world.

Harer Nama Harer Nama Harer Namaiva Kevalam, Kalau Nastyeva Nastyeva
Nastyeva Gathiranyatha
(chanting of the Divine Name is the only path to liberation in this Age of
Kali).

In those days, even in this village of Puttaparthi, nobody was thinking of God except Karanam Subbamma. Griham Ammayi used to observe big officers coming for My darshan. She would be scared to see anyone in police uniform. She would request Subbamma not to allow any police personnel thinking that they would cause inconvenience to Swami. Subbamma would alleviate her fears saying, "Why they should not come? They too are devotees of Swami. Everybody has to come to Swami. Do not have any such differences. Nobody can harm Swami. You don't worry about it." Hearing Subbamma's words, Easwamma would express her anger: "Since Swami is residing with you,

several police are coming to your house. Please do not allow them."

Once IGP Ranganayakulu came from Madras. He wanted to take Me with him. Griham Ammayi was in a sorrowful state and was crying. She considered Madras to be a far-off place and a foreign country. Hence, she dissuaded Me from going. Her intense love for Swami was responsible for this. She was concerned that Swami might be taken away from Puttaparthi permanently. It was due to her prayer that this mandir was built.

Once Sakkamma came and said, "Swami, due to lack of proper roads and transport, we are finding it difficult to come to this remote village. Neither cars nor bullock-carts can reach this interior village. Every time we have to leave our car near Penukonda to come here. Hence, please come to Bangalore and settle there. We will get a big palatial building built for you." I told her that I did not need huge mansions. All that I needed was only a small room. But she would not listen to Me. Easwamma said, "If a sapling has to grow into a gigantic tree, it has to be manured and watered well without disturbing it. If it is shifted from place to place, it cannot grow. Hence, please remain in Your birthplace Puttaparthi. It will certainly progress." Then I promised her that I would settle in Puttaparthi.

When it comes to devotion and surrender, women are superior to men. They are the repositories of all forms of vijnana, sujnana and prajana. So, never look down upon women. Do not talk derisively about others. Pray for the well-being of all.

Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu
(may all the people of the world be happy!).

The main teaching of Bhagavadgita is that one should work for the welfare of all.

Ekoham bahusyam
(the one willed to become many).

The same divinity is present in all. All forms are His.

Yet Another Leela Of Krishna

Before I conclude, I would like to narrate a small leela performed by Krishna in Dwapara yuga. So long as Kamsa was alive, he used to send demons to fight with Krishna. Kamsa had two wives whose father was a mighty king. Once Kamsa was killed, his father-in-law tried to wage a war against Krishna. The gopikas were worried, "How long are we to suffer these ordeals?", they asked Krishna. He told them not to panic and pacified them saying, "Try to understand My powers and potentialities. Tonight, you sleep in Repalle and tomorrow morning, see for yourself where you will be." When they woke up next morning, they found themselves in Dwaraka. Where was Repalle and where was Dwaraka? A distance of 1000 miles separated them. In this manner, Krishna could change one village into another. God can do anything. He can go anywhere. He can change anything. Do not give room for doubts. One who doubts divinity will certainly be doomed. Develop unwavering faith and follow the Divine command. **True dharma lies in following the Divine command. When you follow God, you will be blessed with all goodness and auspiciousness.**

16. Significance Of Vinayaka Worship

Date: 10 September 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ganesh Chaturthi

Theism is on the decline and atheism is on the rise.
Righteousness and respect for elders are gradually becoming extinct.
Devotion and ancient wisdom have become extinct.
Education has become agitation today.

Today is the sacred festival of Ganesh Chaturthi. **'Ga' symbolises buddhi (intellect), 'Na' stands for vijnana (wisdom). So, Ganapati is the master of buddhi and vijnana .** The universe is sustained by ganas (gods), and Ganapati is their master. In this world, everybody has a master, but Ganapati has none. He is a master by himself. This is the birthday of the Master of Masters. Ganapati is also called Mooshika Vahana (one who has a mouse as his vehicle). You may wonder how a small mooshika (mouse) can carry on its back a hefty personality like Vinayaka. Here, **mooshika does not mean a mere mouse. It symbolises the darkness of ignorance because it is in darkness that the mouse moves about. Hence, Mooshika Vahana is one who subdues ignorance and dispels darkness.** It is only when we understand the inner significance of the Vinayaka principle that we will be able to celebrate Vinayaka Chaturthi properly. One of the main teachings of the Bhagavad Gita is contained in the sloka (verse):

Sarvadarman parityaja mamekam saranam vraja,
Aham tva sarvapapebhyo mokshaishyami ma suchah
Surrender unto Me and perform all your actions as an offering to Me. I will destroy all your sins and confer liberation on you.

As long as man is immersed in body attachment, all types of hardships and misery haunt him. Body attachment is the root cause of sankalpas (thoughts). That is why Krishna exhorted man to give up body attachment. The inner meaning of this statement is that man should experience unity in diversity. Without vyashti (individual), there cannot be samashti (society). Without samashti, there cannot be srishti (creation). So, first of all we have to recognise the role of vyashti. Only then can we understand the principle of samashti, which will in turn lead to the understanding of srishti. One who understands srishti becomes one with parameshti (God) . In fact, the principles of samashti, srishti, and parameshti are very much present in vyashti. Hence, one has to make efforts to understand vyashti in the first instance.

Vyashti symbolises the individual (jeeva) whereas samashti stands for God (Deva). There is not much difference between the individual soul and the Cosmic Spirit. As long as the vyashti identifies himself with the body he leads a very ordinary life. It is only when he identifies himself with samashti can he understand the principle of creation. So, firstly man should make efforts to understand the true meaning of vyashti. This is the message of Vinayaka. The letter 'Ga' (intellect) in the name Ganapati symbolises this aspect. The letter 'Na' stands for vijñana (wisdom). So, Ganapati is one who grants good intellect and confers wisdom.

Today, people perform Vinayaka worship without actually understanding its significance. Vinayaka symbolises the qualities of a true leader in all aspects.

Viyate nayake iti Vinayak
(He is a master unto Himself).

In this world, Vinayaka is worshipped by many. However, Vinayaka does not worship anyone since He has no master above Him. Even Easwara, the father, worships His son Vinayaka, but it does not happen the other way.

Today no one is making an attempt to know the principle of Parameshti, who is the fundamental force behind Vyashti, samashti, and srishti. Parameshti is the master of all. In this world, man undertakes various activities, of which some are good and some are bad. Man's sankalpa (thought) is the root cause of this duality. Good thoughts lead to good actions, and vice versa. Man is an embodiment of sankalpas and vikalpas (resolutions and negations). True spiritual practice lies in controlling these thoughts and their aberrations.

Today man is troubled by worry and anxiety. There is not a moment when he is free from worries.

What are the worries that disturb man? To be born is a worry, to be on earth is a worry; world is a cause of worry and death too; entire childhood is a worry, and so is old age; life is a worry, failure is a worry; all actions and difficulties cause worry; even happiness too is a mysterious worry. (Telugu Poem)

Body attachment is the primary cause of all worries. Man cannot attain happiness without difficulties and worries. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. It is impossible to experience happiness without undergoing difficulties. There is divinity in every human being. The power latent in man is not present elsewhere. However, he is unable to make use of the divine power in him. Every man is endowed with buddhi (intellect) which has immense potentiality. vijnana (wisdom) is far superior to intellect. The principles of buddhi and vijnana have to be properly understood in the first instance.

On this day of Vinayaka Chaturthi, people make kudumulu and undrallu as special dishes and offer them to Vinayaka. They are special and unique in the sense that they are cooked on steam without any oil content. Til seeds, rice flour, and jaggery are mixed, made into balls, cooked in steam, and offered to Vinayaka. You should enquire into the purpose of making such an offering. Til seeds are good for the eyes. Steam-cooked preparations without any oil content are good for your digestive system. One who partakes of such food

will be free from blood pressure and blood sugar and will always enjoy sound health and happiness. Food preparations that are cooked on fire with oil content are harmful to jatharagni (digestive fire). Such food gives rise to various diseases. **One can lead a long, happy and healthy life if one avoids food with oil content.** Vinayaka has a pot-belly, but he has perfect health since he partakes of steam-cooked food without oil content.

Vinayaka is also called Vighneswara (remover of obstacles). No obstacle can come in the way of one who prays to Vinayaka. Worship of Vinayaka confers success in spiritual as well as worldly endeavours. God grants happiness at two levels, Pravritti (outward) and nivritti (inward). Pravritti is related to physical body; nivritti, to intellect. The former undergoes change with the passage of time, whereas the latter remains unchanged. Hence, one should try to reduce body attachment with proper food and habits.

Excessive intake of food results in obesity and, consequently, the heart will be subjected to greater strain to pump blood. Blood travels a distance of 12,000 miles in the body with each heartbeat. With increase in obesity, the circulation of blood and hence the functioning of heart will be impaired. Hence, one should exercise control over one's food habits. In fact that is what Vinayaka does.

People worship Vinayaka by offering garika (a kind of white grass). What is the origin of this worship? Once, Parvati and Parameswara were engaged in a game of dice. Nandi was asked to be the adjudicator. Nandi declared Easwara to be the winner each time. Mother Parvati thought that Nandi was biased in Easwara's favour. She became furious and pronounced a curse on Nandi that he should suffer from indigestion. At once Nandi fell at her feet and prayed, "Mother, I have not cheated you, nor did I show any favouritism toward Easwara. I have been highly impartial in my judgement. It is because of the power of His will that Easwara emerged victorious each time. Easwara's sankalpa is vajra sankalpa (His will is bound to succeed). Hence, I seek your pardon and pray that I may be freed from the curse." Parvati at once took pity on him and said, "Nandi! on the fourth day of the month of Bhadrapada, you worship Vinayaka with garika (white grass). You will be freed from indigestion

when you partake of the grass offered to Vinayaka."

People who maintain pet dogs know this well. When they leave them in the lawns, the dogs search for white grass and eat it. What is the reason for this? The white grass is beneficial to their digestive system. **Hence, we see that the offering made to Vinayaka ensures good health to one and all.** Since times of yore, people believed that Vinayaka conferred His grace on those who worshipped Him on the fourth day of Bhadrapada month.

Today man is not making proper use of his mathi (mind), gathi (effort), stithi (position) and sampatthi (wealth). As a result, he is losing the sacred energy that God has given him. Not merely this. He is subjected to misery and grief because of his evil traits like kama, krodha, and lobha (desire, anger, and greed). He has absolutely no control over his desires. When one desire is fulfilled, he craves for another. Anger is another evil trait that ruins man.

One with anger will not be successful in any endeavours.
That one will commit sins and be ridiculed by one and all.
(Telugu Song) Anger is one's enemy, peace is the protective shield,
compassion is the true relation, happiness is verily the heaven, and misery is
the hell. (Telugu Song)

Hatred is more dangerous than anger. It gives rise to many evil qualities, which come in the way of experiencing Divinity. Man is supposed to live for a hundred years, but his life span is cut short by these evil qualities. When these evil traits are totally subdued, man can enjoy a long and happy life. He will not lose his life even if he were to meet with a serious accident. Man is tormented by the reflection, reaction, and resound of his own evil qualities. Desire, anger, and hatred are not human qualities; they are bestial tendencies. Man becomes a beast if he allows these wicked qualities to overpower him. He should constantly remind himself that he is a human being and not a beast. In this manner, he can keep a check over his bestial

tendencies. Unfortunately, the youth of today are developing excessive desires and, consequently, their future is ruined.

Human life can be compared to a four-storeyed mansion. Brahmacharya , grihastha , vanaprastha , and sanyasa (celibacy, householdership, recluse, and renunciant) are the four stages of human life. Brahmacharya is the foundation; if the foundation is strong, the other three stages will be automatically taken care of. But modern youth are ruining three-fourths of their lives because they don't have a strong foundation of brahmacharya. When elders advise them to pray to God for at least five minutes, they say they have no time, but they have all the time in the world to wallow in bad qualities and bad habits. Students and youth in particular should make every effort to build a strong foundation of brahmacharya.

Merely remaining a bachelor is not brahmacharya; constant contemplation on Brahma is true brahmacharya. Think of God and chant His Name under all circumstances. Lead a life of purity. Dedicate your life to the principle of love. This ensures the safety of the mansion of your life. You see the walls, you see the roof, you see the entire building, but you don't see the foundation. It is hidden underneath. However, the safety of the mansion, which is seen from outside, rests on the unseen foundation. When you build a house, you design the walls and roof in such a manner to make it look attractive. But the foundation that bears the entire building does not require any beautification. Yet, it is the most important part of the building. Today, man is not bothered about the foundation of life. He is more concerned about the external appearance.

The first stage in human life is brahmacharya. 'Charya' means to conduct oneself. You should always think of Brahma. Your conduct should befit the stage of brahmacharya. In olden days, the preceptor was referred to as acharya, meaning one who practises before preaching. One who merely preaches without practising is only a teacher. He may be able to teach a few lessons but he will not be able to render any help in controlling your mind and attaining spiritual progress. Only a true acharya can help you to control your mind.

When we talk of acharyas, two names readily come to our mind. One is Bhishmacharya and the other is Dronacharya. Dronacharya was the guru of the Pandavas, in the sense that he taught them the art of archery. Bhishmacharya was the spiritual teacher of the Pandavas. He was a great jnani (one of wisdom). Jnana does not mean acquisition of textual knowledge.

Advaita darshanam jnanam
(perception of non-duality is supreme wisdom).

A true jnani is one who dedicates his body, mind, and intellect to God. He thinks only of God and nothing else. He performs his activities with the sole purpose of pleasing God.

Sarva karma Bhagavad preethyartham
(do all actions to please God).

You should not crave for personal satisfaction. You should make every effort to please God. This was the only endeavour of Bhishmacharya. He was the son of Mother Ganga. All his life he obeyed the command of his mother, and, ultimately, when his end approached, he wanted to experience the love and grace of his mother. He was wounded by the arrows shot by Arjuna and was lying on the bed of arrows for 58 days. His entire body was pierced with arrows. Before leaving his body, he asked Arjuna to bring his mother Ganga and quench his thirst. Arjuna means one with a pure heart. He had earned many appellations like Phalguna, Partha, Kiriti, Svetavahana, Bhibhatsa, Savyasachi, and Dhanunjaya. On hearing Bhishma's request, Arjuna shot an arrow with all his might into the earth. Immediately, mother Ganga sprang forth like a fountain and quenched the thirst of her son, Bhishma. Thus, he breathed his last peacefully.

Today we find many people bearing the name Arjuna, but their conduct does not match their name.

In the famous pilgrim centre of Srisailam, the divine couple Bhramaramba and Mallikarjuna are the presiding deities. Bhramara means a honeybee and amba means mother. Malli means jasmine flower. Mallikarjuna symbolises a pure and white jasmine flower. Just as a bee sucks honey from a flower, Bhramaramba enjoys the company of Mallikarjuna.

Among the Pandavas, Arjuna was considered to be the greatest because he was pure-hearted. He never caused any harm to the innocent. Never did he use his weapons against anyone without a valid reason.

Before the commencement of war, Arjuna asked Krishna to go to the Kauravas on a peace mission. Krishna asked him, "Whom should I approach?"

Arjuna said, "Oh Krishna, you are the all-knowing One. I don't need to give you any instructions. Please make every effort to avert the war."

Krishna said, "What is the use of talking to the blind king Dhritarashtra? His attachment to his sons made him blind to the reality. He will listen to his sons but not to Me."

However, Krishna went to Kauravas as an emissary. But, as He had predicted, His peace mission failed. War became imminent. He came back and told Arjuna, "All My efforts proved futile. Be prepared for the war."

Arjuna expressed his concern that many innocents would be killed in the war. Krishna said, "Arjuna, those who come to the battlefield will be totally prepared to face any eventuality. Nobody comes to the battlefield merely to watch the show. They are ready to give life or take life. So, there is no question of any innocents getting killed in the war. So, be prepared to fight."

Arjuna wanted to convey this news to brother Dharmaraja. Both of them went to him. Right from the beginning Dharmaraja was against war, but he had no

choice but to accept. The same was conveyed to Nakula and Sahadeva. Though they were young, they were highly noble. They were endowed with greater virtues than even Arjuna and Dharmaraja. Their joy knew no bounds when they saw Krishna. Knowing fully well the wicked nature of the Kauravas, they were prepared for a war. They were not bothered about the outcome of Krishna's peace mission. They were all the time praying for His safe return. Such was their love for Krishna.

Ultimately, Arjuna said, "Krishna, is it possible to get nectar out of poison? What is the use of giving good counsel to the wicked Kauravas? It is like throwing jasmine flowers into the fire. Let us put an end to this talk of peace and get prepared for the war."

When they actually reached the battlefield, seeing the vast Kaurava army, Arjuna became despondent. He was concerned that many innocents would get killed in the battlefield. He was afraid that he would be the cause of grief to many families. He said, "Krishna, I cannot bear the sight of my own kith and kin getting killed in the battlefield. When I think of this, my head is reeling. Let's go back at once without wasting any time."

Krishna pretended to be angry. He said, "Arjuna, it was you who instigated Me and brought Me to the battlefield. How can you behave in such a cowardly manner now? Shame on you!"

At this juncture, He imparted the teaching of Bhagavadgita to Arjuna. It gave Arjuna the necessary strength to fight the battle. However, when he confronted Bhishma, he could not withstand his might. In order to instill courage in Arjuna, Krishna at once jumped from the chariot and said, "Arjuna, I will kill this Bhishma and protect you."

Arjuna said, "Krishna, you took a vow that you will not fight the war. I don't want You to go back on Your word for my sake."

As Krishna was approaching him, Bhishma folded his hands and prayed, "The one who is coming to kill me is the only one to rescue me." Such was the

devotion of Bhishma.

Embodiments of Love!

Our history is replete with sacred inner meanings. But modern youth doesn't pay any attention to our history. They waste their time reading novels and meaningless stories. These kathas (stories) will give only vyathas (sorrow). Divine story alone teaches you the ideal path. His story is history. You should read such a sacred history, understand it, and put it into practice. Sacred epics like the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, and the Mahabharata are repositories of great teachings.

Likewise, the story of Vinayaka also has a great message for mankind. Vinayaka is the embodiment of wisdom. That is why all gods worship him. On this day of Vinayaka Chaturthi, students place their textbooks in front of the Vinayaka idol and offer their prayers. The inner meaning is that they should pray for the divine wisdom to be bestowed on them. It is most essential that the students to worship Vinayaka on this auspicious day. He fulfills the desires of his devotees. He confers only anugraha (grace). He has no agraha (anger). Hence, not only the Bharatiyas (Indians) but even people of other countries, worship Vinayaka.

At 2 o'clock this afternoon, there is going to be a programme presented by our former students who are working for Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. They are doing a lot of good work. A few elders have been looking after the Trust affairs for the last 30 years. All these years, I have been personally supervising the day-to-day affairs of the Trust. Ever since my students have joined the Trust, they have taken up the responsibility and are doing a good job. Be it in the Book Trust, or in the accommodation office or anywhere else in the ashram, our students are rendering yeoman service. They speak gently and sweetly. They do not use harsh words. They follow the dictum: Help ever, Hurt never. These Sathya Sai Central Trust boys will present a programme in the afternoon in which they will talk about various activities of the Trust.

Each one of you must necessarily listen to what they have got to say.

Whatever they are going to say is purely based on their own experience. My boys always speak the truth. They will not utter a lie, even for fun. They will be conveying the message of truth in the afternoon programme. They are young in age, but they are very efficient in their work. They are taking keen interest in the activities undertaken by the Trust. They are propagating Swami's message all over the world. I am extremely happy that these boys have come up well in life. They are highly intelligent. If they are asked a question, they give a suitable and a prompt reply.

Five boys are looking after our Central Trust accounts. Likewise, some boys are working for our Books and Publications. You do not find mismanagement of even a naya paisa. They are very honest. Every paisa is accounted for. They are endowed with noble qualities, good habits and ideal character. See it for yourself in the afternoon. They are actively involved in broadcasting all the programmes that are conducted in Prasanthi Nilayam over the Radio Sai Global Harmony Channel 24 hours a day. Though young boys, they speak in a highly polished language. You are going to listen to them in the afternoon. It is essential that you learn their language. After all, they are your brothers. All are brothers and sisters. I want every one of you to get such an opportunity and come up well in life.

Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Bhajana bina sukha santhi nahin".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

17. Reminiscence of the Divine

Date: 20 October 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Avatar Day

On October 20, 1940, which happened to be a Sunday,

Swami lost the collar pin and with that the veil of maya (illusion) disappeared.

The worldly attachment left Him in the form of the collar pin.

He left home saying that maya could not bind Him any longer.

This happened after a visit to Hampi.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

It happened when I was at Uravakonda. The Corporation Commissioner of Bellary had a dream in which he was directed to go to a particular house in Uravakonda and bring Sathyam to Bellary. At the same time, his wife also had a dream in which she was directed to accompany her husband and bring Sathyam with them. They thought Sathyam would be a great and famous personality. Now, My height is a little above five feet. I was much shorter in those days. I used to wear shorts and a shirt. I was 14 years old at that time. As I came out of the house, the Corporation Commissioner and his wife at once recognised Me to be the same person who had appeared in their dream. They felt extremely happy and prostrated before Me on the road itself. They were unmindful of the fact that I was a small boy. I was on My way to school with a few books in My hand.

The Commissioner and his wife approached Seshama Raju, the elder brother of this body, and requested him, "Please bring Sathya to Bellary today. You may have to apply for leave but does not matter." One cannot say no to a person of the status of the Corporation Commissioner. Hence, Seshama Raju

approached the Head Master of the school Kameswar Rao with a request to grant him leave. He also explained to him the reason for his taking leave. Kameswar Rao was very fond of Me. He said, "You may take Sathya to Bellary or wherever you want. You do not need to seek my permission in this regard." He even gave his car to take Me to Bellary.

The Commissioner and his wife played host to us for three days. They took us to the Virupaksha temple in the nearby Hampi Kshetra. Seshama Raju and his wife told Me to remain outside the temple and keep a watch over their belongings as they went inside to have darshan of the deity. I readily agreed and remained outside. As soon as they entered the temple, to their utter astonishment, they found Me standing inside the sanctum sanctorum where the deity is supposed to be standing.

Seshama Raju could not believe his eyes. He thought, "Why did he come here when I told him specifically to remain outside and take care of our belongings?" He at once came out of the temple only to find Me standing there! He again went inside and found Me there also! Still he was not convinced. He told his wife, "You go outside and keep a watch over Sathya. Do not allow him to go anywhere. Meanwhile, I will go inside and see whether he is still there." She did accordingly. He again saw a smiling Sathya standing in the sanctum sanctorum.

The Corporation Commissioner was also a witness to all this. He recognised My divinity. When they came out of the temple, he caught hold of Seshama Raju's hands and said, "Raju, do not be under the impression that Sathya is your brother. He is not an ordinary person. You are deluded seeing His physical form. There is divine power in Him."

We came back to the Commissioner's house, had our food there and started our return journey to Uravakonda. The Commissioner wanted to give Me a gift. He said that he would get four pairs of shorts and shirts stitched for Me. I firmly told him that I would not accept even one. He did not want to force Me either. Then his wife suggested that a gold collar pin would be an appropriate

gift for Me. In those days, it was a matter of prestige for children to wear a collar pin. Immediately, he bought a gold collar pin and put it on the collar of My shirt. I protested. Under any circumstances, I never accepted anything from others. But Seshama Raju insisted that I accept the gift. He said that my refusal to accept the gift would amount to showing disrespect to the Commissioner. So I obeyed him.

After returning from Hampi, I was going to school wearing the collar pin. The pin dropped on the way and could not be traced. A major change took place in Me. Worldly attachment left Me in the guise of a collar pin. I decided to embark on My mission to alleviate the sufferings of My devotees. I threw away the books and entered the garden of the Excise Commissioner Hanumantha Rao. He was an ardent devotee. Seeing Me, he told his wife to prepare various delicacies. But I did not touch any of those preparations. Seshama Raju came there and forced Me to return home. He then sent a telegram to Puttaparthi asking Pedda Venkatma Raju Garu and Easwaramma Garu to come immediately to Uravagonda. In those days, it used to take one week for the telegram to reach. One of the school boys was also sent as a messenger to Puttaparthi.

When they arrived, Seshama Raju brought them to Me. Easwaramma pleaded with Me, with tears in her eyes, "Sathya, come, let us go back to Your brother's house."

But I did not agree. "If you want Me to come, I will go with you to Puttaparthi. I will go of My own accord and make the villagers happy."

In those days, I used to lead the school prayer at the loving insistence of the headmaster. He would say, "Raju, you may be young, but your prayer melts our hearts." The day after I left the school, another boy, who used to sit close to Me in the class, was asked to lead the prayer. When he went on the dais, he broke down in tears remembering Me. All the students and teachers were in tears, and the prayer meeting was canceled. They wanted to accompany

Me to Puttaparthi. But how was it possible to accommodate so many of them in this village? Then I told Kameswar Rao to somehow convince the boys not to follow Me.

In the classroom, three of us used to share a desk - Myself in the middle, flanked by Ramesh and Suresh on either side. They were not too well in their studies. Whenever teachers asked them questions, they would give the answers prompted by Me. It was the time of our E.S.L.C. public exams. Our register numbers were such that we had to sit separately, quite at a distance from each other. It was not possible for them to copy. They were much worried. I infused courage in them saying, "You don't need to write anything. You just attend the examination and feign to write the examination. I will take care of the rest".

The duration of the examination was two hours. I completed My answer paper in just 10 minutes. I took some more papers from the invigilator and wrote the answers in Ramesh's handwriting. After completing it, I took another set of papers and wrote the answers in Suresh's handwriting. I also wrote their names on the answer sheets. When the final bell rang, all the students got up, and I silently placed all the three papers on the table of the examiner. Nobody raised any objection.

The results were announced on the following day and only we three got first class. The teachers were surprised as to how Ramesh and Suresh also got first class. There was no scope for any doubt. They could not have copied from Me, since we were seated far from each other. Their answer sheets were in their own handwriting. The local people were overjoyed. They carried us on their shoulders and took us in a grand procession.

Those two boys had such intimate relationship with Me. When I left Uravakonda, Ramesh and Suresh could not bear the separation from Me. Ramesh, utterly dejected, fell into a well and died. The second boy went on

repeating "Raju, Raju, Raju!" and ultimately turned mad. He was taken to various mental hospitals, but there was no improvement. Finally, his parents came to Me and prayed, "Raju, he will be cured of his madness if he sees You at least once. Please come and see him." I went to the mental hospital to see him. He was continuously repeating "Raju, Raju, Raju!" Seeing Me, he shed tears, fell at My feet and breathed His last. They had surrendered themselves to Me. They prayed that they should never be separated from Me.

When I came to Puttaparthi, Karanam Subbamma gave one acre of land near Sathyabhama temple where a small house was built. There I used to live. The same Ramesh and Suresh were born again as two puppies and came to Me. The sister of Mysore Maharaja named them Jack and Jill. They were always with Me.

One day the Maharani of Mysore came to have My darshan. She was a great devotee and a highly orthodox woman. She would perform puja with flowers everyday. She would personally pluck the flowers after sanctifying the plants by sprinkling water and milk. Since there were no proper roads to Puttaparthi, she alighted from the car at Karnatakanagepalli and walked the rest of the distance to the old mandir (temple). There used to be a small shed where the Pedda Venkama Raju Kalyana Mandapam stands now. The Maharani decided to rest for the night in the mandir. The driver had his dinner and was returning to Karnatakanagepalli where the car was parked. I told Jack to accompany the driver and show him the way. Jack walked in the front, and the driver followed. Jack slept under the car.

Next morning, the driver started the car not knowing that Jack was sleeping under it. The wheel of the car ran over the back of Jack and its backbone broke. Jack dragged itself across the river, wailing all the while. A washerman named Subbanna used to take care of the old mandir day and night. He was very loyal and considered Swami as his very life. He came running to Me and said, "Swami, Jack might have met with an accident. It is coming wailing in pain. I came out at once. Jack came close to Me, wailing loudly, fell at My feet, and breathed its last. It was buried behind the old mandir and a Brindavanam

was erected. As per My instructions, it was built by the side, not at the centre. I said there should be a place for another samadhi.

Since Jack had passed away, Jill stopped eating food and died after a few days. It was also buried by the side of Jack's samadhi. In this manner, Ramesh and Suresh did penance to be with Me. Even after their death, they took birth as dogs to be with Me.

First the collar pin was lost; then I stopped going to school and parents arrived and brought Me here. Owing to all these changes, I left Uravakonda.

After I came here, many people from Bangalore and Mysore started visiting this place in their cars. Maharani of Mysore, coffee planter Sakamma, Desaraj Arasu, the maternal uncle of Mysore Maharaja were among those who used to come here. One day they prayed, "it is difficult for us to come here often. Hence, please come and settle in Mysore. We shall build a big mansion for You."

I told, "I don't want palatial buildings. I want to be here."

That night, mother Easwamma came to Me with tears in her eyes and said, "Swami, people want to take You here and there for their selfish purposes. If you leave Puttaparthi, I will give up My life. Please promise me that You will remain in Puttaparthi for ever." I gave her My word that I would never leave Puttaparthi. It is for this reason that I have constructed many buildings in the ashram for the comfort and convenience of devotees.

When I made it clear that I would not leave Puttaparthi, Sakamma and the maternal uncle of Mysore Maharaja decided to build a mandir (temple), a little away from the village. They acquired ten acres of land here and started the construction work. An ardent devotee by name Vittal Rao volunteered to

oversee the construction work. He was a forest officer during the British regime. He is the father of Jayamma (Prof. Jayalakshmi Gopinath), who spoke earlier. He supervised the construction work. R.N. Rao from Madras, Neeladri Rao, the son-in-law of Pitapuram Maharaja, the son-in-law of Baroda Maharaja - all of them took active interest in the construction work. Since all of them joined hands, the mandir was constructed in a very short period. Since it was wartime, it was very difficult to procure iron for the construction work. They overcame all such hurdles with sincerity and devotion. They prayed that I should not go there till the construction was over, lest I may be put to inconvenience. Such was their love for Me.

I always fulfil My promise made to the devotees. Whatever I do is for the happiness of the devotees. I don't need anything for Myself. I don't have any desires.

They worked day and night, made payments to the labourers, and saw to it that the construction was completed successfully. Jayamma was very young at that time. Every Sunday, Vittal Rao used to come here in his car to pay wages to labourers. Jayamma would insist that she be allowed to accompany him. Vittal Rao was very fond of his daughter. He used to get food prepared in Bangalore itself and bring his daughter along with him. She has been serving Swami for the last 60 years. She came to Me when this body was 17 years old. Now this body is approaching its 77th Birthday. She would visit Prasanthi Nilayam very frequently and would learn Swami's bhajans (devotional songs) and sing His glory. In this manner, she developed sacred feelings and intense devotion for Swami. One should have prapti (deservedness) to experience divine proximity. One cannot get it for the mere asking. It cannot be denied either. One gets it out of the merits accrued over past lives. Their family has been the recipient of bounteous grace. I was moved by her repeated reference to Venkamma Garu (Swami's elder sister) in her speech.

Venkamma Garu used to cook food for Swami. Jayamma used to be with her always to learn cooking. They had such intimate friendship. Later, Parvatamma Garu (Venkamma Garu's younger sister) also came here. They used to bring food for Swami by turn, one in the morning and the other in the

evening. They were concerned that it was not safe to allow others to prepare food for Swami. They extracted a promise from Me that I would eat the food prepared by them only. They served Me till their very last breath. They were in Manipal Hospital, Bangalore, at the time of their passing away.

Venkamma was taken from here to Bangalore in an unconscious state. She had never opened her eyes. I went to her and called, "Venkamma". She instantly opened her eyes and saw Swami. She offered her namaskar to Me by taking My hands close to her eyes. She shed tears and left her mortal coil.

The same happened in the case of Parvatamma also. She was also unconscious when she was taken to Bangalore. I went to her and called out her name. She immediately opened her eyes, shed tears, and breathed her last. As long as they were alive, they served Swami by bringing food every day, morning and evening. Such intimate relationship with the Lord is the result of merits of past lives. It cannot be acquired by human effort. They never cared for their ill-health and continued to serve Swami with love. Their lives were sanctified.

Even to this day, food is received from their houses. Seshama Raju's son lives here. Easwaramma's son Janakiramaiah also stays here. You all know him. His wife prepares and brings food for Me; likewise, Parvatamma's daughter also brings food for Me. In this manner, they are serving Swami every day. I don't take food at night. Every morning, they bring food for Me. Such is the intimate relationship that Swami has with this family. Some incarnations were due to the prayers of their parents; but, in Swami's case, it is different. I decided that so and so should be the father and so and so should be the mother. This body did not take birth in the ordinary mortal way.

Though Karnam Subbamma was not physically related to this body, emotionally, she was closely attached to Swami. She used to think of Swami day in and day out. She requested Me to stay in her house. She was prepared to vacate the house for My sake. Many relatives argued with her, "Being a Brahmin, how are you allowing a kshatriya (one of the warrior caste) to stay in your house?" She said, "I don't go to anybody's house. None of you need

come to my house. It is enough if I have Swami with me." Such was her devotion and determination. She had only one desire. She prayed, "I should see your beautiful form when I leave my body." I said I would certainly fulfil her desire.

Once I went to Madras acceding to a devotee's prayer. Subbamma was in Bukkapatnam at that time. She was staying with her mother. By the time I returned from Madras, Subbamma had breathed her last. When I came here, people came running to Me and said, "Swami, Your Subbamma passed away last night."

Immediately, I turned the car and went to Bukkapatnam straightaway. Her body was kept in the verandah, covered with a cloth. The entire household was grief-stricken. Once Swami makes a promise, He will certainly fulfil it under any circumstances.

I removed the cloth covering the body. Since she had passed away the previous night, ants were crawling all over her body. I called out, "Subbamma." She opened her eyes. This news spread like wildfire within no time. The people of Bukkapatnam started crowding the place telling each other that Subbamma was brought back to life. Subbamma's mother was hundred years old at that time. I told her to bring a glass of water with a tulasi leaf soaked in it. I put tulasi leaf in Subbamma's mouth and made her drink some water. I said, "Subbamma, I have kept up My promise. Now you may close your eyes peacefully."

She said, "Swami, what more do I need? I am leaving blissfully." Shedding tears of joy, she held My hands and breathed her last. I never go back on My promise, I always keep up My promise under any circumstances. In this manner, the Words are inadequate to describe Subbamma's service. During the Krishna Avatar, mother Yashoda could love and serve Krishna more than mother Devaki.

In those days, Easwamma and Subbamma used to converse with each other through the window in the wall separating their houses. They could not visit each other's house because their husbands were not on talking terms. But Easwamma had a cordial relationship with Subbamma.

The parents of this body were chosen by Me. Pedda Venkama Raju used to help the devotees visiting Swami. He used to run to Bukkapatnam even for a coconut or provisions required by the devotees. One day, he came to the mandir and expressed his desire to talk to Me. I had already called a group for an interview. I took him inside. He said, "Swami, I should not leave behind any debt. I had a small shop. I might have forgotten to return a paisa or two to someone. Hence, I request you to distribute food to the poor on the 12th day after my demise." He took out some money and placed it in My hands, saying, "It is my hard earned money. You may use it for feeding the poor. He also mentioned that he had kept a few bags of rice and jaggery required for that purpose. After this, he went home, slept, and died peacefully.

Easwamma also had such a sacred end. She used to follow Me wherever I went. She came to Brindavan to attend the Summer Course. She felt very happy seeing so many students. She even served water to them during their lunch. She used to say, "It is because of Swami that we are able to witness such a grand event." One day breakfast was served to the students as usual. Easwamma also had her breakfast. Venkamma, who used to look after her needs, was by her side at that time. Easwamma was pounding betel nut in a mortar. I could hear the sound from upstairs. All of a sudden, she cried out, "Swami, Swami, Swami." I said, "I am coming, I am coming." I came down immediately, and she breathed her last. She had absolutely no suffering at all, not even a mild headache. Their lives were sanctified since they were selected by Swami.

Ramesh and Suresh considered Swami as their very life breath. Though they were very young, they had intense love for Swami. Knowing that I did not have money with Me, Ramesh got two pairs of dresses stitched for Me and kept them in My desk with a note, "If you do not accept them, I will give up my life."

I refused them, saying, "Our friendship and love should not be built on the basis of giving and taking. Ours is heart to heart relationship with pure love. We should share only love. There should be no material transaction".

Right from then till this day, I never accepted anything from others. I always conduct Myself in accordance with the principle of Help ever, Hurt never. This has been My motto. I never harmed anyone. I derive great joy in helping others. That is why I tell the devotees to always pray, Loka samasthah sukhino bhavantu (May all the people of the world be happy)! All should be happy, healthy, and blissful.

With such sacred motive, I have been spreading the message of love to the entire world. My students are My biggest property. The students of the primary school, higher secondary school, and the Institute are always with Me. They do not leave Swami and Swami cannot be without them. My life is for the sake of humanity at large. The happiness of people is the happiness of Swami. I have no interest in celebrating My Birthdays. But the devotees would not leave Me. They want to have different celebrations, but I do not want any. I consider your birthday as My Birthday. The day you are happy is truly My Birthday.

Though bodies are different, you should not give room for any differences. All are one, be alike to everyone. The relationship that Swami has with the devotees is not of a worldly nature. It is relationship based on Divine love.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

18. Unity in diversity - the Fundamental Truth

Date: 04 November 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Diwali

Life in the world is impermanent.
So are youth and wealth.
Wife and children are also not permanent.
Only truth and good name are permanent.
(Sanskrit Verse)

In this world everything is bound to change, be it happiness or sorrow; peace or restlessness.

Man is unable to understand his true nature. He identifies himself with the body which is transient. He is not merely a vyashti jeevi (individual), he is a Samashti Jeevi (cosmic being). He does not want to lead a lonely life. The Purusha Sukta declares: Sahasra seersha purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad (God has a thousand heads, eyes, and feet). Man is unable to realise that he is Samashti Swarupa (Cosmic Form). He is under the delusion that he is a vyashti swarupa (an individual) and thereby subjects himself to suffering.

The main principle of the culture of Bharat (India) is to understand and experience unity in diversity. But today, man visualises diversity in unity. He has forgotten the principle of equality and, consequently, becomes restless. Unity in diversity is the fundamental truth that one has to recognise. Since time immemorial, the Bharatiyas (Indians) have been making concerted efforts to understand this truth and experience it.

Nobody has been able to understand the inner meaning of the Vedic teachings. However, a little knowledge can be gained by going through the sacred texts and listening to the teachings of scholars. In ancient times, even the demons used to study the Vedas. However, they could not comprehend

the truth contained in the Vedas and hence led a life of untruth. Demons like Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu were highly learned and well-versed in various disciplines of knowledge. They could reach up to the moon, the sun, and even the stars and could understand their functioning. But they could not comprehend the latent positive principle in their own self, since their mind was filled with negative thoughts. The demon Narakasura also belonged to the same category. He was one of mighty power and knowledge. But they proved futile because of his negative qualities. One may be highly devoted, one may have mastered the Vedas, but, all these will be of little consequence if one does not give up negative qualities.

Saint Thyagaraja was an ardent devotee of the Lord. In one of his compositions, he extolled the Lord thus:

Oh Krishna!

You are beyond all description and human comprehension.

Is it possible to estimate Your glory and splendour?

I have been waiting for Your grace

Oh Lord! Listen to my prayer and redeem me.

You are the one who brought back to life the dead
son of Your Guru, Sandeepani.

You are the one who humbled the serpent Kaliya, freed
Vasudeva and Devaki, and saved Droupadi from humiliation.

You fulfilled Kuchela's desires;

You made ugly-looking Kubja beautiful.

You protected the Pandavas and saved the 16,000 Gopikas.

You are beyond all description and human comprehension.

Krishna, it is not possible for even Brahma to describe Your glory.

I have been praying for Your grace.

(Telugu Song)

Once Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sought his mother's permission to go and pursue his studies. His mother said, "My dear one, there are various types of education in this world, but they are meant only for a living and not for life. Only the adhyatmika vidya (spiritual education) is true education. It is immortal and has no limitations. It is changeless in all the three periods of time. Make efforts to acquire such education." From that day onwards, Chaitanya went about propagating the efficacy of chanting the divine name in each street and in every village. He chanted the name of Lord Krishna at all times and under all circumstances. His message to mankind was simple, yet profound.

There is no charity greater than feeding the hungry,
There are no greater gods than parents,
There is no greater japa (chanting) or thapa (penance) than adherence to truth,
There is no greater dharma than compassion,
There is no greater gain than the company of the good,
There is no enemy greater than anger,
There is no disease like being a debtor,
There is no wealth greater than good reputation,
Bad reputation is death itself,
There is no ornament better than the chanting of God's Name.
(Telugu Poem)

Man should give up enmity and develop amiable relation with his fellow beings. This is the most essential education that he has to acquire. It is a sign of delusion and a demonic trait to develop hatred towards others and lead a life of selfishness. Why does Purusha Suktam declare Sahasra Seersha Purusha? It means that God is not a separate entity. He is Samashti Swarupa (the Cosmic Form). He is present in all beings. When God is so close to him, why does man suffer from delusion and face hardships in life? God is permanently installed on the altar of human heart. He is all-pervasive. Man

can certainly see Him, touch Him, and also speak to Him. But he lacks such determination and yearning for God. Hence, he suffers.

Chaitanya prayed to Lord Narayana thus: "Oh Lord, You are all-pervasive. You are the master of all beings. You control the entire universe. You are the very life principle. I do not aspire to attain Vaikunta or Kailasa or Swarga (heaven) nor do I crave for liberation. Bless me with love so that I can love You."

When Chaitanya prayed in this manner, an ethereal voice said, "Tathastu" (so be it). The worldly education one may be well-versed in and the immense power one may be endowed with are bound to disappear with the passage of time. Love alone is immortal. Hence, one should consider love as one's very life. Chaitanya prayed to Krishna to bless him with such eternal love. Kailasa, Vaikunta, and Swarga are like branch offices of God. Chaitanya was not interested in attaining them. He recognised that hridaya (heart) is the correct address of God. He prayed, "Oh Lord, I know that You are installed on the altar of my heart. Kindly, bless me with such experience."

Lord Krishna, accompanied by Sathyabhama, went to wage a battle with the demon Narakasura. A fierce battle ensued, and the demon died at the hands of Sathyabhama. Being the all-powerful one, Krishna could have killed Narakasura without Sathyabhama's help. Then why did He take her help? Narakasura, being a wicked demon, did not deserve to even die at the hands of Krishna. Since he had subjected thousands of women to untold suffering, Krishna decided that he should be killed by a woman. Narakasura had imprisoned thousands of princesses who were great devotees of the Lord. They were the very embodiments of love and contemplated on Him incessantly. After slaying Narakasura, Krishna granted them freedom. It is in this context that Saint Thyagaraja extolled the Lord saying, "You have protected the sixteen thousand gopikas."

It is always dangerous to be in the company of the wicked. Hence, it is said,

Tyaja durjana samsargam;
Bhaja sadhu samagamam;
Kuru punyam ahorathram

Give up bad company;
Join the company of the noble; and
Perform meritorious deeds day and night.

One should resolve to follow such sacred path and propagate the principle of love to one and all.

What is the inner significance of the slaying of Narakasura? 'Narah' means the immortal Atmic principle. When the qualities of an asura (demon) enter nara (man), he becomes Narakasura. In such a person, you find only bad qualities and evil feelings. He does not join the company of the noble. He does not make efforts to reach God. He makes friendship with only wicked people. Such a mentality is the consequence of evil deeds over a number of births.

Today, man is under the delusion that he is highly educated. In fact, it is not vidya (education), but only avidya (ignorance) that he has acquired. How can one be called educated if one does not have a good conduct and does not join good company?

Ravana had acquired all types of knowledge, like Rama. But unlike Rama, he joined bad company, entertained bad thoughts, and indulged in wicked deeds. Hence, people revere Rama and censure Ravana.

One is revered or ridiculed on the basis of one's conduct. One should not lead a self-centred life. Wherever a good activity is taking place, wherever a prayer meeting is held, take part in them. But there are some people who participate in bhajans and do not join good company. What is the use of such a life? In this context, Sage Purandaradasa said,

In spite of having eyes, people have become blind,
because they are not interested in seeing your auspicious form.
In spite of having ears, people have become deaf,
because they are not interested in listening to Your nectareous words.
Though they are in the company of God,
they aspire to lead a worldly life."
(Telugu Poem)

Man should understand the truth that God is present in all beings and conduct himself accordingly. That is his primary duty. He should not only contemplate on divinity but also sing His glory. There was a grand celebration in the kingdom of Narakasura when he was slain. As long as he was alive, the hearts of people were engulfed in darkness. When he was ultimately killed, there was joyous celebration all around. With his death, the darkness of ignorance and hatred was dispelled. People symbolically celebrated the occasion by lighting lamps. Just as bats find their way into a house engulfed in darkness, likewise, wicked qualities enter the heart filled with darkness of ignorance. Only bats like to live in darkness, not human beings. You should not live like bats, in darkness of ignorance.

Some people appear to be of sathwic (pious, pure) nature externally, but they are full of wicked qualities. You should beware of them.

Sathsangatwe nissangatwam,

Nissangatwe nirmohatwam,
Nirmohatwe nischalatattwam,
Nischalatattwe jivanmukti

Good company leads to detachment,
Detachment makes one free from delusion,
Freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind, and
Steadiness of mind confers liberation.
(Sanskrit sloka)

You should not be in bad company even for a moment. In olden days, people distanced themselves from demons and demonic behaviour. Hiranyakasipu tried his best to stop his son Prahlada from chanting the divine name of Lord Narayana. But Prahlada was always immersed in the contemplation of the Lord. Prahlada was dear to Lord Narayana, whereas his father Hiranyakasipu was dear to demons. He was an emperor. What sort of an emperor was he? He was an emperor of wicked qualities and evil deeds. Follow the ideal set by Prahlada and sanctify your time in the contemplation of the Lord.

In the present day world, demonic activities are on the rise. One cannot stand such sights, nor can one bear to hear about them. Why should you give scope to such ghastly events? Install God in your heart. It is said, Easwara sarva bhutanam (God is the Indweller of all beings). Develop such firm faith. Yad bhavam tad bhavathi (as you think so you become).

Dear Students!

Today is the day on which Naraka, the demon was killed. What does this event signify? It signifies killing the demon in man. 'Nara' means man and 'asura' means demon. This demon is present in every human being. It is not

necessary to acquire great astras and sastras (weapons) to kill this demon. Man is called 'nara' because there is Atma in him. That Atma is the embodiment of love. It is possible to kill the demons only through love. Therefore, realise the Atma Tathwa (Atmic principle) and develop love. This is true bhakti (devotion).

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

We are celebrating such a sacred event of killing the demon Narakasura as a festival by preparing so many delicious dishes and feasting on them. But we are not making any effort to understand the inner meaning of this sacred event. In order to understand the sanctity of this great event, we must join satsanga (good company). You should not lead a life of selfishness. That is the life of a vyashti (individual). That is a wasteful life. Only in samashti (community) life can you realise divinity. You must lead a happy life by identifying yourself with samashti (society). In fact, samashti is the embodiment of divinity. The Vedas have also advocated this community life by proclaiming "Sahasra seersha purusha."

What is the purpose of human life? To eat, drink and roam about? No. No. The birds, beasts, and animals also do that. That is not what is expected of a human being. The human values inherent in us must be given expression to. They have to be propagated. They must become part and parcel of our daily life and reflect in our behaviour. If they are merely propagated without being reflected in our behaviour, it becomes a futile exercise. Therefore, we must realise the inner meaning of the various festivals and act accordingly.

The human birth is most sacred. It is said, "Janthunam narajanma durlabham (out of all the living beings, the human birth is the rarest)." The word manava (human being) also means one who is sacred. Why are we resorting to debasing such a sacred human being? Man today advocates several good and sacred things, but, when it comes to practice, he backs out. That is the result of his past sins. When a conflict arises between precept and practice, man should stand up to the situation with courage and make an effort to tread the

sacred path.

You will, in your day-to-day life, encounter several people with bad qualities and bad behaviour. Do not join their company. Offer them a namaskar (salutation) and move away. Even Saint Thyagaraja prayed, "Oh Rama! For those who have faith in you, I offer my salutations." He offered salutations to both the good and evil people.

A question may arise here, as to why we should offer our salutations to the evil people. We salute the good people, not to lose their company. We also salute the evil people with a request that they move away from us. We must join the company of good people, cultivate good qualities, and lead a good life, thus sanctifying our life.

History is replete with the stories of several demons with evil qualities. Kamsa was one such demon, who was a contemporary of Lord Krishna. He was forewarned by an ethereal voice that the child born to his sister would kill him. Thereupon, he grew angry and pulled his sister Devaki out of the chariot and tried to kill her, then and there. But her husband, Vasudeva, prevented the situation by assuring Kamsa that he would see that no harm is done to him. He also reasoned with Kamsa, "How could you believe the words that the eighth offspring of Devaki would kill you? Even if you believe those words, it is not time yet. Please wait till the eighth child is born to Devaki. Why do you attempt to kill the just-married Devaki now itself? Please do not commit such a sin."

On hearing Vasudeva's advice, wisdom dawned on Kamsa to a certain extent. He waited till the eighth child was born to his sister, Devaki, somehow. But he did not have peace of mind during that period. Meanwhile, he killed several newborn babies, both of Devaki as well as others in his kingdom. He did not believe the divine voice that he had danger to his life only from the eighth child to be born to Devaki. That was the degree of his faith in divinity! His was

a 'demonic faith'.

It is not correct to develop faith in one aspect of God and lose in another. Your faith must always be steady and total in all respects. A small example.

Some ten years ago, a gentleman came here and proclaimed that Sri Sathya Sai Baba was God. Not only that, he also proclaimed and propagated that not only Sri Sathya Sai Baba but every living being was permeated by divinity. After some time, when some of his desires could not be fulfilled, he propagated that Baba was not God. The same individual proclaimed at one time that Baba was God and at another time that He was not God. How should we believe such a person with a double tongue? This type of double-speaking is a demonic quality.

For those who say 'yes', I say 'yes'.
For those who say 'no', I say 'no'.
'Yes' and 'no' are related to you,
but for Sai, everything is 'yes', 'yes', 'yes'.
(Telugu Poem)

For Me, all are good. There are no bad people. Those who develop negative feelings without enquiring into the good and bad of things in this objective world will only spoil their own life. As far as I am concerned, I love everybody. All are equally dear to Me. Some people may have some doubts. But they must be made to see reason with a proper explanation and counseling. As far as possible, you should not give room for doubts, for as long as the doubts persist, you will not have peace of mind. Cultivate love. When your heart is filled with love, everything is love only. There will be no scope for hatred at all. Where there is no hatred, there will be no anger. When there is no anger, there will be no scope for violence. Hence,

Where there is faith, there will be truth;
Where there is truth, there will be peace;
Where there is peace, there will be bliss;
Where there is bliss, there will be God.

First and foremost, cultivate faith. Further, there should be harmony between your thoughts, words, and deeds. Where there is no harmony between these three, your behaviour would be demonic. A true vyakthi (individual) is one who is pure in thought, word, and deed and who had maintained perfect harmony between these three. Who is a vyakthi? One who has manifested his latent sakthi (power) in all aspects. You must develop such a sakthi. You speak of developing energy, but you are becoming allergic to noble thoughts. What happiness do you derive out of such behaviour? All your sankalpas (resolutions) are becoming a futile exercise.

Dear Students!

First and foremost, develop love. This is easier to cultivate than all other qualities. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu prayed Lord Krishna, "I do not want Vaikuntha or Kailasa. I want only your prema (divine love). Please give me a small place in your Prema Samrajya (Kingdom of Love). I will be satisfied with that." There is nothing in this world that cannot be achieved with Love. What is Narakasura Vadha? It is destroying evil qualities and demonic nature in man with the weapon of Love.

You must develop good thoughts, good feelings, and good behaviour. It is only for this purpose that the human birth is given. Man is born not for eating and roaming about. Even the birds, beasts, and animals do the same. Human birth is noble, sacred, and sanctified. Therefore, every human being must make an effort to free himself from the demonic qualities. Only then will human beings become the embodiments of Divinity. Divinity expresses itself through such human beings.

You should never give scope for any demonic deeds. Always cultivate good feelings, good thoughts and good behaviour. Do not be carried away by others' opinions - either good or bad. Develop your own line of thinking, based on your conscience. Develop self-confidence.

Where there is self-confidence, there will be self-satisfaction.
Where there is self-satisfaction, there will be self-sacrifice.
And, through self-sacrifice comes self-realisation.

Self-confidence is the foundation for the building which remains below the surface of the earth.

Self-satisfaction represents the walls; self-sacrifice, the roof and self-realisation, the life.

Without the foundation of self-confidence, self-realisation cannot be achieved.

Therefore, build up your self-confidence slowly.

In this process, "Start early, drive slowly and reach your goal of self-realisation safely."

Today, several people wish "Good morning, good night", etc., when they come across somebody. This is not our culture. This is an alien culture. Instead, if you say 'namaskar', how happy you as well as the other person will feel! Today, even to say 'namaskar' has become burdensome for people who consider themselves modern. What is this 'Good morning' and 'Good evening'? Even a rustic person is able to say 'namaskar'. If you delve into the scientific truth, there is nothing like morning and evening or sunrise and sunset. All these changes are happening due to the earth rotating around

itself.

At least from today, children, respect your parents. Love your parents. Enjoy the love of your parents. It is only those who experience the love of their parents will have a bright future. Those who make their mothers feel sad will lead a life of difficulties and suffering. Therefore, never cause any pain to your parents under any circumstances. Make them happy. Only then you will feel happy and, in turn, your children will make you happy. Give happiness and take happiness. Happiness is not a one-way traffic, it is a two-way process of give and take. Speak good words. Develop samyak drishti (sacred vision). Lead a life of purity. Make your life sanctified.

Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi".

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html			

19. Responsibility Of Women: Character Building

Date: 19 November 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ladies Day

Divinity shines resplendently in the entire universe,
and the universe is encompassed by divinity.
There is an intimate and inseparable relationship
between God and the universe.
Listen to this truth, Oh valorous sons of Bharat!
(Telugu Poem)

From time immemorial, Bharat (India) demonstrated the pristine values of friendship and harmony. Bharat is the very birthplace of spirituality, virtues, charity and righteousness. It is the land of peace and prosperity. Since ancient times, Bharatiyas (Indians) made intense efforts to establish these values upon the earth. There is no country equal to the land of Bharat in proclaiming and propagating the truth. There are many in Bharat who have made great progress in the field of spirituality. This is the sacred land that was ruled by Lord Rama. This is the very land where Lord Krishna taught the Bhagavadgita. This is also the land where Sage Vyasa taught the Vedas and scriptures. It is the land where Sage Valmiki composed the Ramayana and taught the principles of truth and righteousness to mankind. There is absolutely no equal to this country in spiritual values. Having been born in this sacred land of Bharat, and having been called Bharatiyas, the people of Bharat are now not coming forward to propagate the ideals that this country stands for. Bharatiyas should respect and revere their culture. They should follow their culture and set an ideal to others

The wind that blows in Bharat is suffused with truth. The very dust that rises from our feet is full of dharma. The life of Bharatiyas is one of forbearance. The river Ganga that flows in this land is permeated with love. Why has Bharat, which is the fountainhead of truth, righteousness, peace, love, and

nonviolence, come down to such a deplorable state? In spite of the fact that from ancient times, Bharatiyas have demonstrated great ideals.

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat. Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance. The nectarous feeling in this country is like the feeling of love towards one's mother. (Telugu Poem)

Fortitude is the greatest virtue in this land, peace is its protective shield. What a pity it is that we who have been born in this land of Bharat are unable to uphold our own heritage of cultural values! Young boys and girls should study not to eke out a livelihood but with the sole purpose of demonstrating and propagating the ideals the country has stood for since ancient times. Modern boys and girls study for the sake of short-term benefits and not with an objective of experiencing and enjoying the tradition and culture of Bharat.

If women go out for jobs,
who will take care of the homes?
When husband and wife go out to offices,
who will do the household work?
If women go out to teach others' children,
who will look after their own children?
Just like men, if women also go to work,
who will cook food in the kitchen?
Earning money may solve some financial problems,
but how will it resolve domestic problems?
It seems that unalloyed happiness
is not the lot of womanhood.
(Telugu Poem)

Today, women, because they are educated, compete with men to take up

jobs. There is nothing wrong in going for a job. However, they must take care of their home needs before taking up a job. When wife and husband go to offices, who will look after their children at home? If the mother is not at home to guide them properly, the children go astray. If both parents go out for jobs, they may be able to satisfy their desire for money, but there is every possibility of their children getting spoiled because there will be nobody at home to discipline them. Whatever moral values you have learnt, you have to teach your children. Whatever you have studied will have value only when you care for your children's progress. Education is meant to bring out the innate potential of an individual.

Women should recognise their responsibilities and conduct themselves accordingly. There are many ideals set by women in this regard. Rajeswari Patel said that many women in the past developed virtues in them and led ideal lives. Savitri was exemplary in her conduct. Women of those days would not only discharge their household duties diligently but would also bring up their children in the most ideal manner. They would teach their children not merely by precept but by practice. However, we do not find many such ideal mothers today. They are interested in earning money rather than moulding their children into ideal citizens. They would help the nation to a great extent if only they could bring up their children in an ideal way. What is the point in women taking up jobs and earning money when their children are going astray with none to restrain them? So, first of all, women should look after their home and children properly. They should devote sufficient time to perform their household duties. The educated women of today employ a cook and a servant-maid to perform the household chores. They spend much of their earnings in paying salaries to them.

Chandramathi was a woman of sterling character. She always followed her husband, Harishchandra. When they were passing through difficulties, she infused courage in him saying, "Oh king, you are highly intelligent and educated. You should never give scope to weakness and waver from your chosen path. We are swimming in the ocean of truth. We should not give up our resolve till we reach the shores. " In this manner, women of those days would encourage their husbands to follow the path of truth. Women of Bharat

always upheld our sacred culture. Sita would not shed tears even in extremely trying circumstances. Though she was surrounded by demons, she was never afraid of them. She spent her time in the contemplation of her husband, Lord Rama, and thus she set an ideal. The same can be said of Damayanti also. She was one of virtues. With her strong determination, she helped her husband to regain his kingdom. In this manner, women of those days earned a name for themselves with their sterling character and ideal motherhood. Women of today should make them role models.

The happiness that one derives from virtues is far superior to the happiness that we get from the possession of wealth. Unfortunately, the educated youth are striving for wealth, physical strength, and friendship. But all these have little value without the wealth of character. For men or women, character is the foundation. If one lacks character, one becomes feeble in all other respects. People of those days strove for noble character. They were prepared to give up their very lives for a righteous cause. Women strived to uphold the honour of their husbands. The strength of an individual lies in character, not in the wealth one earns. One should be prepared to face any hardship to lead a virtuous life. The country is in dire straits due to the absence of men and women of character. Materialistic wealth is not what we need today. We need to earn the wealth of virtues. Wealth cannot confer true happiness on you.

Women should develop the wealth of virtues and also safeguard the honour of their husbands. Both men and women should have good character. Without good character, all your learning will prove futile.

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and an evil-minded person will not give up his wicked qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to true wisdom. What is the use of acquiring worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal. (Telugu Poem)

Modern education can help you only to eke out a livelihood. It is meant for a living and not for life. In fact, it is responsible for the present decline of morality in society. In olden days, people gave topmost priority to truth and righteousness. They considered divine love as their very life. The women of Bharat sacrificed their lives for the sake of truth.

This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women, like Savitri, who brought her dead husband back to life; Chandramati, who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth; Sita, who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed, and Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity.

This land of piety and nobility attained plenty and prosperity and became the teacher of all the nations of the world because of such women of chastity.

(Telugu Poem)

From time immemorial, the sacred land of Bharat has occupied the exalted position of a teacher to the rest of the world. It has been extolled askarma bhumi, thyaga bhumi , and yoga bhumi (the land of action, sacrifice, and spirituality). You have to discharge your duty. You cannot progress in life if you do not follow the path of karma.

Embodiments of Love!

You are wasting a lot of time in meaningless pursuits. Time wasted is life wasted. Our ancients never wasted even a minute. They considered God as the embodiment of time and extolled Him thus: Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah, Kalateetaya Namah, Kalaswarupaya Namah, Kalaniyamitaya Namah (salutations to the embodiment of time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, and to the one who ordains time).

Why have you forgotten the truth that time is verily God? You eagerly await a Sunday, thinking that you can relax and enjoy. In fact, you should feel sad that you are wasting time without doing any work on a Sunday. You have to utilise your time in a proper way. If you do not have any work, undertake social service. Help your fellowmen. Be prepared to make any sacrifice for the sake of your motherland. The Bhagavadgita says, Karmanyevadhikarasthe ma phaleshu kadachana (you have a right over action but not on the result). You have to sanctify your karmas (actions). People talk of punya karma (meritorious deeds) and papa karma (sinful action). When the feelings are pure, the karma becomes sanctified and the work will be transformed into worship. Life becomes meaningful only when you make proper use of time. Kaya (body) has been given to perform karma (action). Every karma is associated with a karana (cause) and kala (time). It is the primary duty of man to understand the principles of kala, karma, karana, and karthavya (duty) and act accordingly. This is the main teaching of Bharatiya (Indian) culture. It is its pristine culture that has been safeguarding Bharat since ancient times.

What is culture? You think it is a way of life. But it is not so. Indian culture is something that transforms your life into an ideal one. Today we do not find many who are interested in teaching about the greatness of Indian culture. Even if people are ready to teach, few are interested in listening to them. Even if they listen, they are not prepared to put it into practice. Some people want to practise but they lack proper support and encouragement.

Embodiments of Love!

Perform all your actions with purity of heart. Actions performed without a pure heart are futile. Even if a little work is done with a pure heart, it becomes fruitful.

Embodiments of Love!

This day (19 November) is being observed as Ladies Day. What does it mean?

You think that this day is meant to do some sacred acts, listen to Swami's discourse, etc. It is not merely that. You should spend time in a sacred manner. What you learn today should be an ideal for your lifetime. Develop self-confidence. Under any circumstances uphold your self-respect. What is the use of living a life bereft of these two? You may not have money or strength and you may be put to disrepute, but always maintain your self-respect.

Abraham Lincoln lived a life of self-respect under all circumstances. His mother taught him, "People may mock you and ridicule you, but never be perturbed. Always keep up your self-respect. " Lincoln followed her teachings implicitly. He studied under streetlights, since there was no light at home. Ultimately, he became the President of America. It was only because of his self-confidence and self-respect that he could occupy such an exalted position.

The teachings of mother play a vital role in shaping the future of her children. She should make every effort to drive away bad qualities from her children and infuse human values like sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa (truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence) in them. There are many who give speeches at length about the importance of these values in our daily life, but how many are translating them into action? Very few. They do not utter truth nor do they perform righteous deeds. Our ancients never deviated from the path of truth and righteousness under any circumstances. Sathyannasti paro dharma (there is no dharma greater than adherence to truth). The Vedas teach, Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness). Your thoughts, words, and deeds should be in harmony with each other. It is said, The proper study of mankind is man. Today, nobody knows what man has in his mind because his thoughts, words, and deeds are in total variance. He is wasting his life with such unethical behaviour. The tongue is given to speak truth.

O tongue, the knower of taste!

You are very sacred.

Speak the truth in the most pleasing manner.

Chant the divine names of Govinda, Madhava and Damodara incessantly.

This is your foremost duty.

(Sanskrit Verse)

The tongue, which is meant to utter sacred words, is being used to criticise others. One cannot describe in words the fate of such a person. Our ancients had so much love for their motherland that they wanted to be born again and again in this sacred land of Bharat. But today people have neither deshabhimana (love for the country) nor dharmabhimana (love for righteousness). Instead, they are developing dehabhimana (love for the body). Body is like a water bubble. How long can you protect it? It will burst sooner or later. Hence, develop Atmabhimana (love for the Atma), which alone can protect the entire world. Develop faith that the same Atma exists in you and all others. When you have such strong faith, the whole nation would prosper. One with Atmabhimana is a true human being. If one does not have Atmabhimana, one's life is wasted.

Embodiments of Love!

This day (November 19) is very sacred. Griham Ammayi, the mother of this body, used to speak to all with love. She could never withstand the suffering of others. She would come upstairs and plead with Me, saying, "Swami, they are in a sorrowful state. Please call them and talk to them. " Her heart was filled with compassion. That is why her fame has spread so much. In order to attain a good name, you have to utter sacred words and help others.

Whenever mother Easwaramma would come to Me with such a plea, I used to pretend to be angry and chide her, saying, "Why are you coming here with recommendations? I don't want to listen to them ". But she would persist. She would continue to plead, "Swami, please take pity on them. They are in dire need of Your help. Please talk to them once. " I used to be happy thinking, "How compassionate and kind-hearted she is! " Hri + Daya = Hridaya. That

which is filled with compassion is hridaya (heart). But today, man does not possess such a compassionate heart. He utters harsh words and thereby is put to disrepute. One should talk softly and sweetly. Never hurt others' feelings with harsh talk.

Embodiments of Love!

Primarily, women should keep their tongue under check. Since men are involved with multifarious activities, it may be difficult for them to control their tongue. Hence, it is the duty of women to look after the home diligently and conduct themselves in a pleasing manner. Treat guests in a cordial manner and, to the extent possible, extend your help to those who are in need of it. Today people do only lip service, they do not translate their words into action. You should empathise with those who are in difficulties and try to give them solace. You should comfort and console them with soothing words. Those who talk harsh words are verily demons. If you hurt others' feelings, you will be hurt twice as much. You cannot escape from the consequences of your actions. You have to bear this truth in mind. Your life will be sanctified when you conduct yourselves in such a manner as not to hurt others.

People aspire to attain liberation. What is liberation? Help ever, hurt never. That is true liberation. To get rid of moha (attachment) is true moksha (liberation). Do not try to find faults with others. If you point an accusing finger at someone, remember that three fingers are pointing at you. Sathyam kantasya bhushanam (Truth is the true ornament to the neck), Hasthasya bhushanam dhanam (charity is the true ornament to the hand). Your hands are useless if they do not perform acts of charity. You have to sanctify each limb of your body in sacred activities. Your eyes should look at only sacred things.

Do you know what an enormous power is latent in your eyes? There are crores of light rays in them. In olden days, people used to invoke the grace of sun god to have a better vision. When you perform Suryanamaskar (worship

of sun god) and invoke his grace, the light rays in your eyes will become more effulgent. On the other hand, if you look for mistakes in others, the sun god will withdraw his rays from your eyes making you blind. Hence, make proper use of the limbs given by God.

Embodiments of Love!

These teachings are simple to practise in your daily life. Just because they are simple, do not take them lightly. Though they appear to be simple, they lead you to liberation. It is your good fortune (adrishtam) that you are blessed with eyes to see. What is adrishtam? A-drishtam (that which cannot be seen). You may not be able to see the results of your meritorious deeds. But they confer on you all the happiness and comforts in due course of time. That is adrishtam. There are many things that follow you that cannot be seen by the naked eye.

Embodiments of Love!

This land of Bharat is highly illustrious one. It has given you the wealth of vijnana, sujnana, and prajnana. But the unfortunate ones are unable to receive them. The Upanishads extol manava (man) in several ways. Manava meant one who is sacred, one who is endowed with infinite power, and one who imparts wisdom. But man is unable to understand the meaning of his own name and is taking to the wrong path. Your fortune or misfortune depends on your actions. Without realising this truth, you are indulging in evil deeds. You feel sorry when the consequences of your sins haunt you. What is the use? You have to be careful right from the beginning not to commit sin. You have to make every effort to earn divine grace. Whatever action you may perform, do it as an offering to God. Only then will your life be sanctified. What you have to acquire is not worldly wealth and comforts. You have to earn the wealth of vijnana, sujnana, and prajnana, which will follow you eternally. When you acquire such true and eternal wealth, you would have acquired God's grace.

Embodiments of Love!

Many women have been eagerly awaiting November 19 to celebrate Ladies Day. It is really your good fortune to have such a noble thought. Give up all negative thoughts and develop sacred feelings. Lead an exemplary life. The Upanishads have accorded a great value to human life. You should live up to it. The Upanishads are the storehouse of knowledge. The Vedas contain mantras like Purusha Suktam, Sri Suktam. One may have mastered the Vedas, but if one does not study the Upanishads, all his learning will prove futile. That is why people start the study of the Upanishads after they complete the study of Vedas. The Upanishads take you closer to God. I wish that you follow the teachings of the Upanishads and manifest your latent divine power. I bless you all and bring My discourse to a close.

Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin ".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

20. Character - The True End Of Education

Date: 20 November 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

No trace of peace anywhere;
Truth has become equally scarce;
Fearsome weapons are stocked up galore;
Others abound who cover with dread;
Self love, the cause for this wicked furore;
Such is the truth of Sai's word.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Education is increasing day by day, but there is no commensurate transformation in human behaviour as a result. What kind of education do we need? Today, academic excellence in education has increased, but its salutary effect in human behaviour is decreasing.

Dear Students!

Today, the education being pursued by you is only secular (i.e. value neutral). Mere secular education is not enough. It must be supplemented by spiritual education. You must develop the principle of love. You must follow the path of truth. True education is that which is suffused with truth and love. Without truth, love is ineffective and devoid of value. Secular education is for making a living, whereas spiritual education is for reaching the goal of life. Therefore, it is the duty of students as well as educators to harmonise the secular education with spiritual education. Today, the world has recognised the importance of harmonious relationship between secular and spiritual education.

The whole world has started imparting spiritual education along with conventional curricula. People have realised the truth that spirituality is not a modern discovery, but ancient wisdom. However, the importance of this principle has been confined to only propounding and teaching of spirituality. Actually, there is a decline in the practice of spirituality in daily life. Therefore, practical education is most important today. Education without practice would lead to unrest.

Modern studies in institutions is referred to as education. But spiritual education that has its effect on one's heart, is 'educare'. 'Educare' means bringing out the latent divinity in a human being and establish it as an ideal to the whole world. Modern education ends with mere bookish knowledge. This is confined to what is contained in the books. Educare, however, is not related to the books. It is related to teaching about the source of all knowledge, that is latent in the heart of a human being. Therefore, underlying such type of education is the prime necessity today. People are pursuing higher education in the secular field. That is not enough. They have also to pursue spiritual education that teaches human values like truth, righteous conduct, and love, which bring about a transformation of the heart.

A harmonious blend of secular and spiritual education is ideally suited to the present-day world. One is an inner awakening; the other, an external teaching. Secular teachings are related to the physical world. They are the negative aspect, whereas teachings related to the inner awakening are positive. Take, for example, love. Who can define the form of love? The best way to define love is to love others and be loved by others and thereby experience the bliss of love. Such teachings related to the inner awakening are the urgent need of the hour. Educare is that which establishes love and kinship between human beings. Today, nobody knows what is in the mind of another individual; not to speak of the individual whose thought, word, and deed are not in harmony. He thinks something, speaks something else, and does something that is totally different. This is not the characteristic of true education. What you think, you speak; what you utter, you perform in action. Since there is no unity between thought, word, and deed, man today is not

rising to the level of a mahatma (noble soul). He is becoming a duratma (wicked person). It is said:

Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam manasyanyath
vachasyanyath karmanyanyath duratmanam.

Those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in complete harmony are noble
ones;
those with whom they are at variance.

It is the so-called 'educated elite' who are the greater criminals than the unlettered masses. It is they who are causing great damage to the country. The uneducated villagers are leading respectable lives and setting examples to others. For instance: those who are educated and those considered to be great intellectuals are leading luxurious lives in cities. On the other hand, those considered to be rustics and unlettered simpletons are living in villages. They are leading a very simple, happy, and contented life. Today, you will find several schools, colleges, and universities established in cities. You will also find constant unrest and agitations in the campuses of these educational institutions. On the other hand, there are hardly any such agitations in the villages, where such institutions of higher education are non-existent. What could be the reason for this situation? More of this so-called modern education!

You go to villages and observe. The moment you enter a village, the simple villagers enquire, "Oh brother! Where do you come from? What is your country, etc.?" They talk to you with respect and reverence and enquire after your welfare. But, in the towns and cities, even a father and son don't enquire the welfare of each other. They go about their daily routine in a most

mechanical way, with no concern for each other. The reason for this situation is modern education.

It is said: the end of education is character. Since people have lost their character nowadays, respect and reverence have also declined. Even parents contribute to this situation. Parents in villages send their children to cities for education. They expect their children to pursue higher education and earn degrees. Their intentions are, no doubt, good. But the children take to bad ways while in cities. While they were in villages, they used to respect elders and were obedient to their parents. Once they entered cities in pursuit of higher education, they lost all the good qualities of respect, reverence, character, and humility acquired at home. Students have now forgotten the value of a life of sanctity. They don't hesitate to smoke in front of even their parents. Bad habits are on the increase.

But the situation is somewhat different in the villages. The children in the villages behave with restraint in the presence of elders and parents. The healthy parental control is still surviving in the villages. No such control, however, exists in towns and cities. Youths smoke and offer cigarettes to their friends, they go to cinemas and indulge in ever so many bad habits. There is none to restrain them and wean them away from bad habits. What is the reason for this behaviour? Modern education. They have no respect for elders, parents, and society. When someone points out their mistakes, they begin to argue saying, "Why should I fear? It is my will, I smoke my cigarette."

A small example. Once, an Indian and a foreigner were traveling together in a railway compartment. The Indian was a chain-smoker. Not only that, he was puffing the smoke on the face of the foreigner. The foreigner tolerated it for sometime, but when he could not bear it anymore, he told the Indian, "My dear son! I am not feeling well. I cannot bear cigarette smoking. If you want to smoke, please go to the toilet."

The Indian who was brought up with modern education replied, "If you cannot tolerate my smoking a cigarette, you may go to the toilet. I bought the cigarette and I will smoke freely. I am at liberty to smoke and puff the smoke as I please." Thus, he began quarreling with the foreigner. The foreigner was helpless. After sometime, he went to the toilet and returned.

In the meanwhile, the Indian student threw out the shoes of the foreigner from the compartment. The foreigner saw this but thought that it was not wise to argue with this arrogant boy. He, therefore, went up to the upper berth and stretched himself out. Now it was the turn of the Indian boy. He went to the toilet. Before he returned, the foreigner threw away the coat of the Indian boy, to teach him a lesson. The boy returned from the toilet and enquired where his coat was. The foreigner replied that it has gone in search of his shoes, which were thrown out of the compartment by the boy. Then the boy realised his mistake.

As you are aware, for everything, there will be reaction, resound, and reflection in this Kali age. When you speak softly and sweetly to others, you will receive the same in return. If you are rude to others, others will also be rude towards you. Every individual, irrespective of his age and country, must, therefore, speak softly and sweetly. Whether one is educated or illiterate, one must speak softly and sweetly. He must have humility.

What is education?

Hear ye the word true of Sai. Culture, conduct, truth, faith, devotion, and discipline. These are education true; all else is trash. (Telugu Poem)

Man does not consider himself duty-bound today. Performance of one's own duty is discipline. What is the use of education without discipline? Education

without knowledge is useless, and knowledge without education is foolishness. Therefore, no purpose is served by pursuing such foolish and useless education. One must cultivate good behaviour also with high education. But, what we find today is high academics and degenerate behaviour. Therefore, you must acquire high education and lead a simple life. That is true education.

Once, Mahatma Gandhi was shedding tears while holding a book. He read that book before and found it to be trash. Meanwhile, a Britisher came there and asked Gandhiji why he was shedding tears. Gandhi replied that he believed that the heart of education was character and that the book he was holding did not promote such character building; hence he was shedding tears. There is a vast difference between modern education and ancient wisdom. The time in which you are pursuing your education may be modern, but your behaviour should always be in accordance with the ancient wisdom. Only then will your education command respect.

You must respect your parents. If an elderly gentleman visits your house, welcome him with reverence and respect. Speak to him sweetly and softly. When that gentleman enquires the whereabouts of your father, do not brush him aside saying, "Go and find out." That is not the reply you have to give. Politely tell him, "Sir! My father is in the drawing room, I will call him." When you thus speak sweetly and softly, the visitor will have a good opinion about you. He would think that you are the worthy son of a worthy father. You must protect the honour and prestige of your father. How? With your good behaviour and sweet and soft words. Otherwise, the visitors would form the opinion that "The father is a good and respectable person, but this son of that father is a bad fellow. He is rude and arrogant. He is not a worthy son." Therefore, what we have to learn today is to cultivate humility, in spite of our modern education and living in a modern age.

Who is a student? A student is one who is acquiring education and who conducts himself with humility, obedience and discipline. He, who has no obedience and discipline is not a student, but a stupid. There must be a calm

and serene atmosphere in campuses where a number of students pursue their education. Today, elders hesitate to go to places where there are students; the reason is, the elders are afraid that these students might create trouble. This was not the situation in earlier days. The students of those days used to conduct themselves with humility. They had a sense of discrimination, acquired through education. In modern education, honesty and integrity, duty, discipline and devotion are woefully lacking. What is the use of such education? In olden days, a student used to be initiated into learning with a sacred prayer to God "Om Namah Sivaya! Om Namo Narayanaya!" The elders in the neighbourhood were invited for the ceremony and their blessings for the child obtained. In contrast, today, a child is initiated into learning with a nursery rhyme "Ba Ba blacksheep", with the result that he will ultimately become a black sheep in society.

Dear students! You are pursuing your education in a sacred atmosphere. You must continue to develop this atmosphere later in your life. Modern science is, of course, great. But, your senses are at a low level. Along with science, the senses must also be raised to a higher level. Today, we are leading a high level life, keeping our senses at low level. This should not be what is meant by 'educare'. Educare is bringing out the latent divinity in a human being. Whatever words you speak, you must watch whether they are the result of your education or educare. Today, nobody is keeping this watch. I often refer to the spelling of the word, WATCH. The spelling consists of five letters, namely, W A T C H. These letters stand for:

PW - Watch your Words
A - Watch your Actions
T - Watch your Thoughts
C - Watch your Character
H - Watch your Heart

When you thus keep a watch on your words, actions, thoughts, character, and

heart, that is the real watch; not the one you tie to your wrist. The wrist-watch may come for repair, but the word 'watch' will never get spoiled. It will always bring purity of thought, word, and deed. How great these words are! Education in the olden days contributed to making man a noble and ideal human being.

Then, about cleanliness and purity. These two are most important aspects of education. Students must take good care in respect of personal hygiene, involving regular bath, neat and clean dress, etc. "Cleanliness is godliness". Therefore, be clean and pure. Lead a happy and contented life. Always help others. Help Ever, Hurt Never. Surely, you can pursue modern education. But, along with it, you must also learn ancient wisdom. There must be a harmonious blend of these two. Pursuit of scientific knowledge is, of course, necessary. But, today, we are understanding science in a perverted way. Science starts at a particular point and ends at a different point. It is not a full circle; whereas, spirituality is a full circle, ending at the point of origin. That is why it is said,

Poornamadah poornamidam poornat poornamudachyate poornasya
poornamadaya poornameva avashishyate.

That is full, this is full. When the full is taken out of the full, what remains is again the full.

Science starts with an enquiry. "What is this? What is this? On the other hand, spirituality begins its quest with the enquiry "What is that? What is that?" The enquiry "What is this?" indicates nearness, nearness to the senses. This is science. In contrast to this, the enquiry "What is that?" indicates distance, i.e. distance from senses. That is spirituality.

A small example. You all have come here from far-off places like Zambia and East Africa to have the darshan of Sai Baba. Since you are living at such distant places, you develop great love for Sai Baba and yearn to have His darshan. The same eagerness will not be there to see a person in a neighbouring village. It is natural to develop interest in an object that is far away. What is that "that"? "That" means: that which is beyond the senses, namely, spirituality. "Below senses" is dirty. We should not aspire for that. We must rise to the level of beyond senses. Only then can we lead a sacred life. Today, students are below the senses. They are becoming slaves to the senses. This is not proper education. You must become a "Master of Senses", not merely a "Master of Science". You must make the senses your servants. You should not become a servant of the senses.

You all know about Queen Kaikeyi in Ramayana. She was an adept in asthras and sasthras (all kinds of weapons). She was the daughter of the king of Kekaya kingdom. She was the youngest and dearest queen of King Dasaratha. She brought along with her a servant called Manthara to serve her in the palace. But, in course of time, she allowed Manthara to become her mentor, and she became her servant. Ultimately, she yielded herself to Manthara's advice and made her life most miserable. She lost her husband, King Dasaratha, who died unable to bear the pangs of separation from his beloved son, Sri Rama. She had also to face the anger of her own son, Bharatha, who did not like the idea of Rama being sent to the forest and his becoming king in Rama's place. Everyone in the kingdom hated her for sending Rama and Sita to the forest.

That is why, it is said that a servant should be kept as a servant and a master should remain a master. You are the master, and your senses are the servants. "Master the mind and be a mastermind." That is the quality of a student. Only then can you acquire true higher education and share it with others too. I can teach you at great length about education, but time is a constraint. What I teach the students centres round the principle of "simple living and high thinking". I Myself follow this principle. It is not education in terms of degrees that is important; culture is important. If we develop culture,

we can acquire any amount of purity and sacredness in our life. The aim of all this training being given to you, is to make you self-reliant. You must attend to all your personal chores yourself. For example, you must clean your dinner plates, wash your clothes, etc., by yourself. This is the duty of a real student. If you cultivate such good habits, what more is required? This is simple living and high thinking. You must lead a noble life, based on this principle.

I am also advising Jumsai that this principle of self-help must be implemented in all the schools run by the Institute of human values. Students of the institute must become self-reliant. The place of their study, the place of their stay, the book racks, etc., must always be kept clean by the students themselves. No separate servants must be engaged for this purpose. I often tell the students a joke: "The vegetable purchased is worth two annas; but the charges paid to the porter for carrying the vegetables are four annas." Will you ever pay a higher amount toward porter charges than the cost of the vegetable itself? You should not waste your money in such ways. Misuse of money is evil. The money you are spending in your student life is contributed by your parents. They earned it by their sweat and blood. Each rupee of such amount must be treated as a drop of their blood. Curtail your expenditure and pursue higher education.

Today, several students wish to go to foreign countries for higher education. How much money is required for this purpose! What do you do after reaching the foreign country, spending such a huge amount? You are not concentrating on your studies. On the other hand, you spend your time in ever so many activities, wasting your valuable money. If you are short of money as a result of this wasteful expenditure, you resort to cleaning cups and plates in a restaurant to supplement your income. Instead of cleaning cups and plates in a foreign country, why don't you do it in your own country and in your own home? By doing so, you will be helpful to your parents. Your parents will feel happy. Dear students! Make your parents happy. Make your teachers happy. You serve them. Only then, will you be able to receive good education from the teachers.

Embodiments of Love!

Realise the truth that real education is that which teaches humility. It is only when you cultivate this quality of humility, can you become ideal students and serve your country well. You keep yourself away from places of violence, for, if you go there, you will also receive injuries to your body. If you can, try to control such violent incidents, otherwise, keep yourself away from them. Try to establish a peaceful atmosphere everywhere.

Dear Students!

You are full of noble qualities. You are strong in body and mind. Along with that, try also to develop good character. There is no use developing friends' circle, wealth and strength, without developing character. You become ideal students and propagate the principles of Sathya Sai Education in the world and earn respect from the world.

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2003/titles2003.html			

21. The Best Way To Love God Is To Love All And Serve All

Date: 22 November 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 21

Those who could teach the essence of Vedanta to even the ancient rishis
Those who could make the inert stones dance by their sculptural skills
Those who could make the heads of the enemies roll like rubber balls with
their sharp swords
Those who could rule the entire world with their sovereign authority
Are there in the land of Bharat.
Of what use it is?
Not one of them is prepared to listen to the heart-rending cries of the
common people.
(Telugu Poem)

students!

What is meant by 'education?' What kind of education we must pursue? What should be the educational standards? What type of education contributes to the human development? What benefits do we derive from the present system of education?

A real student is one who contemplates on these five issues and understands them thoroughly. Vijnana (higher knowledge) and prajnana (supreme wisdom) are not merely products of education. Man can acquire these sacred powers only by culture and refinement gained through education. What is culture? Culture is the conscious effort put in by a man to achieve a transformation in his daily life from untruth to truth; from non-conformance to conformance to scriptural authority and from evanescence to eternity. It is a spiritual journey

toward divinity. Where is such divinity? It is in every human being as the embodiment of truth. What you have to protect today is not your country; but sathya (truth) and dharma (righteousness); they, in turn, will protect the country. Only then, the whole world will enjoy peace and prosperity. The entire universe is based upon sathya and dharma.

The creation emerges from truth and merges into truth,

Is there a place where truth does not exist?

Visualise such pure and unsullied truth.

(Telugu Poem)

The life of every human being is based upon truth. Truth and right conduct alone are protecting the universe. But, unfortunately, man is unable to recognise this fact and is leading a miserable life.

Embodiments of Love!

Education is not an exercise. Neither is it meant to make a living. It is for the purpose of achieving the goal of life.

Dear Students! You are born, brought up and living in this country of Bharat (India). But, you are unable to recognise the underlying philosophy for which this sacred country stands for. The land of Bharat is a karma bhumi (field of activity) in which you perform the sacred duty enjoined upon you. It is a land of virtue where you accumulate punya (merit) by the diligent performance of your kartavya (duty). What is the intimate relationship between this sacred land and God? This is hand; this is leg; this is head; this is stomach - all these are parts of the body. There is humanness in the body. That humanness is a part of society. That society is a part of nature. The nature, in turn, is associated with the Paramatma (Supreme Being). Thus, prakriti (nature) is an anga (part) of the Paramatma. Only when man recognises the nature of these parts and sub-parts (anganga) and conducts himself accordingly will he be able to understand Divinity.

Embodiments of Love!

If you seriously contemplate, you will understand that Divinity keeps humanity going. Without Divinity, man cannot live for even a moment. Man thinks, out of his ego, that he can live by himself. But, this is not true. Merely by spending some time, life is not fulfilled.

When you enquire into the matter whether duty or right comes first, several people insist upon right getting priority. Where did the right come from? When you perform your duty, its fruit in the shape of right accrues to you. How can a child exist without the mother? Therefore, right is not the first priority. In fact, man has no right at all. When he performs his duty, the result of that action comes as right. When you enquire into the fact, whether rain comes first or the flow of water, it becomes clear that flow of rain water follows rain. Without rain, there cannot be a flow. Here, flow can be compared to the right and rain to the duty.

Dear Students!

You are putting a lot of effort in your study to acquire high academic qualifications. In spite of all this effort, you are not having peace of mind. It is said, "Secular education is for happiness in the mundane world and spiritual education is for happiness in the other world. " In order to acquire spiritual education, one must spend some time in enquiry. Spiritual knowledge cannot be acquired with secular education. It is said, Adyatma vidya vidyanam (among various branches of knowledge, spiritual knowledge is the best) and "Sa vidya ya vimuktaye " (true education is that which liberates mankind). Therefore, students must first begin to enquire "Who am I "? They must also realise the fact that right carries responsibility also with it. Your parents have a right. When you protect their rights, they in turn will discharge their responsibility toward you. In Indian culture, first place has been given to the mother and father by proclaiming Matrudevo bhava (revere your mother as God) and Pitru devo bhava (revere your father as God).

Today, scientific knowledge is considered to be great. How did science acquire this greatness? Science deals with the physical aspect of the universe. It strives to explore the secrets of the universe, and not beyond. But, there is a knowledge beyond this that forms the basis for its creation, existence, and dissolution. That is spirituality. Without that spiritual basis, science has no effect. Churchill, the late Prime Minister of England once said, "Man has conquered all, but he has not conquered himself. " Man today is making efforts to explore everything in the world, but he is unable to realise his own nature. What is the use of such knowledge? Therefore, man must begin enquiry into himself as to who he is, what is his nature, what latent powers he has, etc.

In the olden days when the convocations were being held, the teachers used to teach the students such noble principles as mathrudevo bhava, pitrudevo bhava, acharyadevo bhava, atithidevo bhava (revere your mother, father, preceptor, and guest as God). First, it is mother, who gave you birth. Then, she shows you the father. The father takes you to the guru and finally the guru leads you to God. Unfortunately, today, there are very few gurus who lead you to God. That is a different matter. First and foremost, the mother who is responsible for your very birth in this world, is forgotten today. Similarly, the motherland where you are born is also neglected.

Dear Students!

Today, you take degrees from this Institute of Higher Learning and set your foot in the wide world. There are about two hundred universities in India. Several thousand colleges are functioning under those universities. Every year, these universities award degrees to several thousand students and send them into the wide world. But what are these students doing in the outside world? How do these highly educated people make their living? Students are taught education in these universities to make a living. It is not possible for all these degree holders to get jobs. Therefore, these educated people migrate to foreign countries. Having gone there, not all these people are able to make a decent living. Therefore, they undertake some menial jobs to supplement

their income. The question is, why don't they do the same service in their own country, Bharat (India). Today, the educated people are not serving their motherland. They don't serve their country but are prepared to undertake any type of job in a foreign country. No, no. This is not proper. This is not the purpose for which you acquired education. You should serve your own country with all your energy. Your entire life must be devoted to serve the country in which you are born and brought up. Being educated, you must face the battle of life with courage and valour and ultimately emerge victorious.

Today's students are not prepared to do hard work with patience and perseverance. Work is important. To pursue education and obtain degrees is not important. It is more than fifty years since India attained independence. Several thousands and lakhs of students have acquired higher qualification, during these fifty years and odd. But what are they doing? They are not undertaking service to society. They do not live up to the glory of this country. First and foremost, one must realise the sacredness of this great country, i.e. Bharat. How can one who cannot protect his own home protect another's?

Dear Students!

Give up the idea of going to foreign countries for higher education or job. Even if you are not able to get any employment in your country, remain here and serve the country. Serve society. Bring honour and glory to your motherland, Bharat. Attain the glory that "this student is a hero in action and sadhana (spiritual discipline). "

You all know about Abdul Kalam, President of India and the chief guest of today's function. I may tell you that he has not gone to a foreign country in search of a job or money. He is a great scientist. All the scientific knowledge he has acquired, was from the Indian Universities only. What is there in other countries that is not already here? It is said, Yanna Bharate, thanna Bharata (that which is not here in Bharat is not there in other countries). All the power and the glory is in India only. What can you do in a foreign land that is dry, leaving such a great country like India, which is basking in glory, honour, and

prestige in the world?

You are making use of all your education and energies for the development of a foreign country. Why don't you, instead make use of them for the development of your own country? Why don't you serve the people of your own country? You will attain glory only when you make use of your education for protecting your motherland?

You must, in the first instance, work hard. You must become heroes in action. It does not behoove of you to spend your time in idle talk without involving yourself in some solid work for the benefit of the nation. Bend your body and work hard to attain glory. A seed that is sown in the soil loses its shape to ultimately become a gigantic tree. That tree yields sweet fruits. On the same analogy, only when you destroy your ego and loose your identity does real fruit of your actions comes out. Therefore, remove your dehabhimana (attachment to your body) and develop deshabhimana (attachment to the country). Today, you will not find deshabhimana anywhere. Several students, today, are not aware of the national anthem and how to sing it. But, surprisingly, they are fully aware of the cinema songs in great number. Why don't you learn to sing the national anthem and try to understand the glory and characteristics of Bharat embedded in that song?

Dear Students!

You must protect the honour of this great country. You must develop self-respect. One who has lost self-respect, cannot attain glory. Self-respect comes only out of spiritual sadhana (spiritual discipline). Today, students wish to achieve wealth, physical strength, and friends' circle. What about character? Of what use is it to have the above three, without character?

Whenever they come across somebody, they wish him "hello " and try to make friendship. This is only a "hello, hello " friendship, but inside, everything

is hollow. Therefore, you must give first preference to character. When you respect others, others will respect you. You complain that others are not respecting you. But did you enquire into yourself whether you are respecting others? You serve others; others will then serve you. What you expect from others, you extend it to others first. Only then there will be reaction, reflection, and resound. You respect your neighbours and enquire into their welfare. You may have wealth; you may be great; you may be leading a comfortable life. But, all these things will not be of any value if you do not have character.

Dear Students!

You must cultivate the human values of sathya (truth), dharma (right conduct), santhi (peace), prema (love), and ahimsa (nonviolence). How can you call yourself a human being, without cultivating human values? It is only because of the human values that you are considered to be a human being. You do not have the human quality of respecting others; then how can you expect others to respect you? The human values are divine qualities. Anything can be achieved with these qualities.

Embodiments of Love!

The quality of "Love" permeates every living being. Truth is verily the embodiment of Divinity. It is in you, with you, around you, everywhere, protecting you always. You need not search for God in some distant place. Truth is the very embodiment of God. Do not ever move away from truth, even in times of danger to your life. Hold on to truth steadfastly at all times.

of Love!

One may be a big person and another a beggar. But, the truth that is underlying in both these persons is the same. If you realise that truth, all will become one. That type of unity must be achieved. When you realise the principle of unity in all human beings, you can realise true divinity. You observe the principle of unity in diversity expressing itself in the universe. For

example, there are several types of bulbs here in this Sai Kulwant Hall. But the electric current flowing in all these bulbs is the same. Indian culture has proclaimed one ideal "Sarvam khalvidam Brahma (verily all this is Brahman). " That is the Truth. When you realise that truth, all comforts and happiness will accrue to you. You need not have to struggle for them. Learn to speak good words. Never hurt anybody with harsh words. Speak softly and sweetly to make all people happy.

Embodiments of Love!

Good words bring good actions. You cannot always oblige; you can always speak obligingly. When you thus speak obligingly, how much your status grows! The society will respect you.

I have often quoted the example of Abhraham Lincoln, the late President of America. In his childhood days, Lincoln did not have enough money to prosecute his studies. He was so poor that he used to sit under the streetlight in the bazar and read. He used to borrow books from his classmates and read them during the night time and return them the next morning.

One day, his friends made fun of him saying how could this beggar pursue his education. Lincoln felt very sad and humiliated. He came home, crying. His mother tried to comfort him with soothing words. She enquired, "My dear son! Why are you crying? What is the reason? "

He replied, "Mother! I don't have any money even to drink a cup of tea. I realise the situation in our house. I am aware that you and father cannot afford spending money on my education. "

Thus, Lincoln struggled hard in his childhood days and studied well, with self-confidence and self-respect, with the moral support extended by his mother.

He did not hesitate to supplement the family income by doing some painting work and boot polishing. Nevertheless, throughout his educational career, he sustained his self-respect. By doing so, he earned a good name in society. In the meanwhile, he could secure a small job. With the meagre income from that job, he used to support his father and mother. The good name he earned in society commanded their respect and love for him. In due course, elections came. His well-wishers and supporters advised him to contest in the elections. They assured him of their support and votes. On their advice, he contested in the elections and got himself elected to the position of the President of America. How could a poor carpenter's son with no money even to pursue primary education, become the President of the United States of America? It is only because of the self-respect and self-confidence that he assiduously cultivated right from his childhood.

Therefore, Dear Students! Do not ever give up self-respect, wherever you are and whichever circumstances you are placed in. Always assure yourself, "I am man, I am not animal. " Man today is playing with the fire of sensual pleasures. But, how long you can continue like this? There is absolutely no purpose in indulging in this game. All your wealth and pleasures will disappear in a trice. It is only self-respect that continues to be your companion throughout your life. Therefore, cultivate self-respect, which is a divine quality. Only then can you achieve the highest honour of the country.

This evening, our students will present a drama. It is really a presentation based upon the story of the life of Abraham Lincoln. In this drama, a student wished to study medicine. He wanted to become a doctor. He worked hard, studied under streetlights even, and got admission into a reputed medical college. He had to pay 5 lakh rupees as fees, which he could not afford. Because he was feeling depressed and dejected, his father consoled him saying, "My dear son! Do not worry. God is there to fulfil your wish. He protects all people at all times. " These words of wisdom made an indelible mark on his heart.

Next day he sat in the college garden and started writing a letter to God, explaining his desire and his inability to fulfil his desire. "Oh God! People say you are omnipresent; my father also told me the same thing. I have full faith in the words of my father. If You are really omnipresent, why don't You manifest before me and fulfil my desire? " Thus, while he was writing this letter, the bell rang and he hurriedly got up to leave for his classroom. In the process, the letter slipped from his books. He did not notice it. A rich person who came to the garden after some time noticed the letter. He picked it up and read it. He was very much moved by the determination of the boy to pursue medical education and his inability to do so due to financial constraint. Therefore, he went straight to the principal of the medical college, showed him the letter written by the boy addressed to God and paid the entire fees for all the five years in one lump sum. He requested the Principal not to reveal his identity to the boy till he completed his studies.

The Principal called the boy and told him, "My dear son! Don't worry about paying fees. Somebody has already paid your fees. You have absolute faith in God. You are sure to complete the course and come out in flying colours with God's grace. "

When he completed his medical education and became a doctor, his friends congratulated him, saying, "You will become a great doctor and earn a lot of money. " But the boy said, "I am not interested in earning money. The purpose of my pursuing medical education is for serving the people. My life is dedicated to the service of society. Just as I studied this course paying no fees, similarly I wish to serve the people without taking any fees from them. "

Do you find such boys nowadays? Very rarely. You cannot admit your child in any school without paying fees. Even advance reservation is made in a school, for a newly born child. You book a seat by paying Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000/-. But, faith can work wonders. For a person who has self-confidence and absolute faith in God, anything is possible. Faith is the key. Without faith,

how can one live in this world?

People have lost their eyes of faith. They have become blind in this world.
(Telugu Poem)

There is no use of opening your charma chakshu (physical eyes). Open your jnana chakshu (inner eye). Only then, you will achieve the desired result.

Embodiments of Love!

You studied in Swami's institution for a long time. Did you ever spend any money for your education here? Tell me honestly. I am always worried whether you had to spend money on any occasion during your stay in this Institution. I am revealing a small incident that has happened sometime back. Normally, I will not reveal such things. Usually, during examination time, students study the whole night, keeping the lights on. One day, the warden advised the students to limit the period of their study during the night, since the charges for electricity are gradually on the increase. The students did not pay heed to the advice and continued to study for long hours in the night. Consequently, the electricity bill came to a huge amount. Meanwhile, exactly two months before the examinations, the Electricity Department disconnected power supply to the hostel due to non-payment of the bill. They cannot be blamed, for, it is their duty. There were no lights in the hostel rooms. Students were feeling a lot of inconvenience.

The warden came to Me and explained their plight. I asked him, Why he didn't bring it to my notice earlier. The warden replied, "Swami! You are spending so much amount on the education of the students. You are taking so much responsibility. How can I add some more burden? With that intention, I did not bring it to your notice. "

I asked him the amount of the bill. He replied that it came to Rs. 70,000/-. Thereupon I advised him, "Go immediately and pay the entire amount. Ask the Electric Department people to restore the power supply immediately. Do not reveal to the students anything of what transpired between you and Me. " Thus, I take so much trouble to look to the convenience and welfare of the students.

Today, I have given a cheque for sixty lakh rupees to Paramahansa, to be deposited in the names of the sixty children adopted under the scheme of "Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanoddharana Pathakam ". Some time ago, I happened to read a report about a mother who committed suicide after giving poison to her three children. She resorted to such a gruesome act because there was nobody to look after them after her husband's death. I felt very sorry reading this news. Our country, Bharat, has earned the appellation Annapurna (Goddess of food). In such a sacred land, how can we remain a mute witness to people dying of hunger and poverty? Hence, I decided to undertake a project under which poor children who lost their father, in some cases both parents, are adopted and provided the basic necessities of food, raiment, and shelter. Their education is also taken care of. These children are selected from Bukkapatnam, Kothacheruvu, and Puttaparthi Mandals. They belong to very poor families who are finding it hard to feed themselves. We told the children, "We will give you food, shelter, and also education. We will make you self-reliant. You need not worry. "

Within a short period of one month, I got houses constructed for them. One lakh rupees are deposited in the name of each child. By the time they complete their education, this money will get multiplied into three to four lakhs. They can lead a comfortable life. When this was told in the beginning, people could not believe it. How can they believe? They are carried away by untruth. When truth is conveyed to them, they are not prepared to believe it.

The children are being looked after very well. Paramahansa is taking care of them with all love. Every day, the children are brought here in a bus for Swami's darshan. They are extremely happy. All of them are learning the Vedic mantras even. Whenever I ask them, "Are you happy? " they say, "Yes

Swami. When You are looking after us like a wish-fulfilling tree, how can we be otherwise? " They are so happy because they are being looked after with love. Money cannot give such happiness. In this manner, we are performing many sacred activities. I am not interested in publicising them. Some people may not believe this, but I am not bothered. I will not give up My resolve. We should serve the poor and needy. We should strive for their uplift. After all, they are also human beings and we should treat them as our own.

Students!

Having completed your education, it is time for you to go back to your respective places, take up suitable jobs and serve your parents. Once in a while, you can come here to recharge your batteries. Otherwise, you may forget whatever you have learnt here. Your stay here becomes meaningful only when you practise what you have learnt here.

(Swami asked Mr Raghupathy Rao to get up.) He lost his father when he was very young. He came here with his mother. I gave her a job in the Anantapur Hostel. After some time, she also passed away. Then I brought this boy here and educated him. He has completed his MBA and is presently working as a lecturer in our Brindavan Campus. He pursued his education with sraddha (sincerity). I have been looking after many such students. This is My duty, because all are Mine. I belong to them and they belong to Me. Since they are being looked after with such love, they are shaping into ideal citizens. Here is the best example. He is a very good boy. He would never talk back to elders and would never ask anything from others. In the beginning I told him, "If you need anything, do not ask others. Come to Me straight and I shall give you. "

I am telling you all this because you should also undertake such sacred work. Service to society is very important. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Let others think whatever they like, you should hold on to this sacred path. Serve your parents. Never hurt their feelings. This is the essence of education.

Education confers humility, which in turn bestows deservedness.
Deservedness confers all types of wealth
through which man can attain happiness here and hereafter.
(Telugu Poem)

Humility is the hallmark of education. Give up ego and serve society with Self-confidence. Students who did not have even a naya paisa with them are now earning thousands of rupees every month. They are good boys. So, they will not have any problem. I will take care of their future. I told this boy that he could go out and take up a job, if he wished so. But he did not want to go anywhere. So, I gave him a job here with good salary. Whoever it is, I do not want anybody to work here without taking salaries. Outside people may not be aware of this. I do not take even a naya paisa from them. I undertake good work and hence, whatever I require will come to Me of its own accord. Lakhs of devotees are coming here. Did I ask anybody for anything? Never. There are many devotees who are coming here for more than forty years. But I have not asked them for any favour. I shall never ask. I shall not give up My resolve and shall continue the good work with firm resolve. My Mission is bound to succeed. It will never fail.

Children should be looked after well. Young men and women should be moulded into ideal citizens. For Me, there is no greater happiness than this. Children are My property. I am happy if they come up in life and earn a good name for themselves. I do not expect anything else.

Students!

Today you are receiving your degrees. The university gives you a degree in education, whereas I give you a degree in Educare. The degree I confer on you is related to Atmananda. That is educare. Discharge your duty sincerely and I shall take care of your requirements. Do not give room to laziness. Laziness is rust and dust. Realisation is best and rest. Be prepared to proceed

along the path of Self-realisation.

I am very happy that our President Abdul Kalam has come here and participated in the Convocation as the Chief Guest. He has immense love for the nation. He is a Muslim by birth. But he does not have any differences whatsoever. He loves all and treats all equally. He learnt all his knowledge in India itself. He is a scientist par excellence. There are many scientists in the country. But what is the use? As the poem goes, "Twinkle twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are? ", they are attracted by foreign lands. But Abdul Kalam is not such a person. He does not have even a trace of ahamkara (ego). His pure heart is his most beautiful alamkara (ornament). He is a paragon of virtues. That is why he could become the President of this country. I wish that he brings back the pristine glory of Bharat (India) during his tenure.

The function came to a close with the singing of National Anthem by all.

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html			

22. Listen To The Master Of The Universe

Date: 23 November 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 77

Who makes the sun rise in the morning and
set in the evening with utmost regularity every day?
Why does the stars glitter only at night and
hide themselves during the day?
How is it that the wind, without taking rest even for a moment,
blows incessantly, and sustains the living beings?
Who makes the rivers flow perennially,
making pleasant sounds of ripple and gurgle?
Who is the cause of delusion in creation?
How do you find differences based on money,
religion, community and nationality?
Who is the Master and under whose sovereignty
all these marvels are taking place?
Come, listen to His words and obey His command.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Every person and every living being aspires to attain peace and happiness. Everyone is trying to know the objective of life. But they are not able to succeed in their endeavour. One in a million will persist with strong determination and will not give up till the goal is realised. Ordinary mortals will not make any efforts in this direction since they think it is something beyond their reach. They spend their lives in the pursuit of physical and ephemeral pleasures. They are under the delusion that food, raiment, and shelter are the three main objectives of human life. Their life centres round their wives and children. They fail to realise that there is a higher purpose in life than this.

People pursue various paths to experience the everlasting bliss. The Taittiriya Upanishad gives the analogy of a bird in this context. The head of this bird is called sraddha (sincerity). The right and left wings are compared to ritham and sathyam (truth) respectively. The body symbolises mahattattwam and the tail, yoga.

What is ritham? Trikalabadhyam ritham (ritham remains unchanged in the three periods of time - past, present, and future).

Sraddha is very important. Sraddhavan labhate jnanam (with sincerity, wisdom is won). In the Bhagavadgita, Krishna said, "One with sraddha can attain Me. " He further declared, "I am the very embodiment of sraddha. " One without sraddha cannot accomplish even a small task. Especially, in the field of spirituality, sraddha is very essential. Strong and unwavering faith leads to sraddha. The Upanishads have expounded the principle of sraddha in varied ways. Wisdom attained through sraddha is tharakam (liberation). Lack of sraddha is marakam (bondage). The eternal principle of tharaka must be understood, practised and propagated. This is the fundamental teaching of Taittiriya Upanishad.

Embodiments of Love!

The Taittiriya Upanishad emphasises the need to develop sraddha in all walks of life. In spirituality sraddha is the Tharaka mantra. It is eternal and immortal. Man can attain jnana (wisdom) only when he purifies his heart by developing the five aspects, namely, sraddha (faith), sathyam (truth), ritham (unchanging), yogam (union), and mahattattwam. Jnana (wisdom) is not textual knowledge. Advaita darshanam jnanam (experience of non-dualism is wisdom). There is an underlying principle of non-dualism in the apparent dualism. This is the fundamental truth that the Taittiriya Upanishad teaches.

When Adi Sankara was proceeding on his Jaitra yatra (victory march), he met a great scholar by name Mandana Mishra in the northern part of India.

Sankara entered into a scholarly debate with him. Ubhaya Bharati, the wife of Mandana Mishra, was also a great scholar. She was well-versed in the principles of ritham, sathyam, mahattattwam, etc. It was decided that Mandana Mishra would take to sanyasa (the life of a runinciant) if he were to be defeated in the debate. Sankara chose Ubhaya Bharati to be the adjudicator of the contest. As the debate was in progress, she listened to the arguments and counter arguments with utmost concentration. She was impartial in her judgement and declared Sankara to be the winner. Being one of wisdom, she did not feel dejected that her husband was defeated in the debate. Mandana Mishra took to sanyasa in accordance with the terms and conditions of the debate. Ubhaya Bharathi, being his ardhangi (better half), followed suit. Both husband and wife renounced the world and propagated the path of wisdom. Human life has no value if one does not acquire wisdom.

It is said that Annam Brahma; raso Vishnuhu; bhokta devo Maheswarah (food is Brahma; the essence is Vishnu; the one who partakes of it is Maheswara). These three correspond to body, mind, and action, respectively.

Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam.

Those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in complete harmony are noble ones.

The oneness of thought, word, and deed is ritham. They represent the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara. Hence, everyone must strive for the purity of these three. Take for instance a glass chimney placed over a lamp. After some time, a thin layer of soot gets accumulated over the glass. Consequently, light becomes dim. It is only when you clean the glass that can you see the light clearly. This is what you are supposed to do. The soot that you find over the glass can be compared to ego that envelops your mind. It is because of ego that you are not able to visualise the Divya Jnana Jyoti (divine flame of wisdom). How does ego enter your mind? It enters your mind when you give up the path of truth. You become egoistic when you do not know

your true Self and develop worldly thoughts and feelings. In order to drive away ego, you should keep your worldly thoughts and feelings under control. It is impossible to acquire wisdom without getting rid of ego. To have the vision of the effulgent light of Atma, you have to remove the soot of ego covering your mind. This was the teaching of Ubhaya Bharati.

She was living in a hermitage on the banks of the river Ganga, imparting spiritual teachings to women. Many women had become her disciples. Every day in the morning, they used to go the Ganges to have a bath. On the way, there lived a sanyasi (renunciant) whom people called Brahma Jnani. Truly, he was a renunciant and one of wisdom. However, he was very much attached to a small earthen pot in which he used to preserve water. One day, he was lying down using the pot as a pillow, lest somebody might steal it. Ubhaya Bharati who was on her way to Ganges with her disciples observed this and remarked, "Though he is one of wisdom, there is a small defect in him. He has renounced the world, but is attached to his earthen pot which he is using as his pillow. "

The sanyasi overheard their conversation and became angry. When Ubhaya Bharati and her disciples were coming back from the Ganges, he threw away the pot on the road, just to show that he was not attached to it. Seeing this, Ubhaya Bharati said, "I thought there was only one defect in him - abhimana (attachment). Now I realise that he has another defect also - ahamkara (ego). How can one with - ahamkara and - abhimana be a jnani (one of wisdom)? " It was an eye-opener for the sanyasi.

Ubhaya Bharati toured the length and breadth of the country preaching and propagating the path of wisdom. Women are by nature the embodiments of vijnana, sujnana, and prajnana. They are the repositories of all virtues. But due to the impact of the Kali age (which is the present age), women are being looked down upon. It is a grave error. They must be treated with due respect. Today women compete with men to take up jobs. However, they must take care of their home needs before doing so.

If all the womenfolk go to work, who will take care of the homes? If husband and wife both go to office, who will run the household? If women go out to teach other children, who will teach their own children? If women go out like men holding books in their hand, who will work in the kitchen? Earning money may solve some financial problems, but how will it solve domestic problems? If you seriously think about it, there is no happiness for woman holding office. (Telugu Poem)

If women also go out and earn money, the financial constraints may be overcome, but there will be lot of problems on the home front. Women are the personifications of courage and determination. They put up with all hardships with fortitude and safeguard the honour of their family. They live up to the reputation of a grihini (housewife).

Man has to follow the path of truth to acquire wisdom. It is said, Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath sathyamapriyam (speak truth, speak pleasantly and do not speak unpalatable truth). These three correspond to moral, dharmic, and spiritual values respectively. Everything is contained in truth. You don't need to visit temples in search of God. Truth is verily God. It is all-pervasive. It confers plenty and prosperity on all. Hence, follow the path of truth. Practise righteousness. Acquire wisdom.

For all this sadhana (spiritual practice), partaking of proper food is the first step. Purify the food by offering it to God. Annam Brahma. Consider food as verily the form of Brahma. Raso Vishnuhu. The essence of food that spreads to all parts of your body is Vishnu Swarupa (the embodiment of Vishnu). Bhokta devo Maheswarah. The partaker of food is the very embodiment of Siva principle. When man develops such sacred feelings, he becomes Siva Himself.

Siva symbolises complete sacrifice and renunciation. In this world every one

has dehabhimana (body attachment). However, Siva has absolutely no body attachment. He has only Atmabhimana (love for the Self).

He has abundant hair with the moon adorning His head,
the cool water of the Ganga flowing between the matted locks,
with His radiant eye of wisdom in the middle of the forehead and
the purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a blackberry.
He wears serpent bracelets and a snake belt,
His entire body is smeared with vibhuti (holy ash),
His forehead is adorned with a kumkum dot,
His ruddy lips glow with the juice of the betel,
diamond-studded gold earrings dangle from His ears and
His whole swarthy body glows with divine effulgence.
(Telugu Poem)

Once, Parvati approached Lord Siva and expressed her desire to have a house built for themselves. She said, "Oh Lord, You go from house to house begging for alms and are not concerned to provide a dwelling for us. Without a proper shelter, how can we live together? "

Siva pacified her, saying, "Parvati! What is the use of building a house? Rats will make it their home before we even enter it. In order to control the rats, we need to have a cat. Then we will have to buy a cow to provide milk for the cat. In this manner, our requirements will get multiplied and we will lose our peace of mind. Hence, do not entertain such desires. "

Siva has no body attachment. He is the personification of renunciation. Total renunciation leads one to wisdom. This is the teaching of Lord Siva to mankind.

What is wisdom? Purity of thought, word, and deed is true wisdom. Your body, mind, and actions must be pure. On this basis it is said: The proper study of mankind is man. It means that the unity of thought, word, and deed is true humanness. It is very simple and easy to practise. But no one is making any effort in this direction. Though Ganges is flowing nearby, people do not take a dip in it and clean their body. People do not make use of the conveniences available to them. This is utter laziness and a sign of thamo guna (the lazy, indolent quality). You have to get rid of this animal quality, develop humanness in you, and rise to the level of Divine.

Embodiments of Love!

Strive to attain purity of heart. Let this be your foremost endeavour. With purity of heart, you can achieve anything. In order to attain purity of heart, you have to partake of sacred food. One who cooks food should have sacred feelings. In olden days, orthodox Brahmins used to insist on partaking of food prepared only by their wives. The reason being, housewives wished for the well-being of the entire family and prepared food. On the other hand, if you employ cooks, God knows with what feelings they prepare the food! The unsacred thoughts of the cook enter the food, which in turn poisons your mind. Annam Brahma (food is God). Hence, it should be prepared with sacred feelings. Mere physical cleanliness will not suffice, the mind also should be pure. You should see to it that the vegetables used for preparing food are procured in a righteous manner. For example, husband brings vegetables from the market. He might have misused his position of authority and brought them without making payment or the vendors themselves might have procured the vegetables by unfair means. When such vegetables are consumed, your mind gets polluted. You do not realise that the food you eat is responsible for the actions you perform. Unsacred food makes you do unsacred deeds.

Embodiments of Love!

Have your food only after praying and offering it to God. Only then the food will become sanctified and illumine your intellect. Once there lived a sanyasi

(renunciant) in a hermitage near Sivananda's ashram. He was a pious soul. One day an aged businessman donated money to prepare food for the ashramites on the eleventh day after the demise of his young wife. The businessman, being rich, somehow had enticed the girl's father with money and married his young daughter. She spent her time languishing over her fate in the businessman's house. Disgusted by leading such a life, one day she jumped into the Ganges and ended her life. The businessman was doing the obituary rites on the eleventh day. There was a convention in the ashram that cooked food was not accepted. So, the businessman gave the required amount for preparing the food. The pure-hearted sanyasi partook of the food along with other inmates of the ashram. He could not get proper sleep that night. He saw a young girl in his dream. He thought to himself, "I never had any such thought, nor do I have a craving for sensual pleasures. Then, why do I get such bad dreams? " He got the same vision even in his meditation.

he went to his guru by name Satchidanandam and explained his predicament: "Swami, why am I getting such unsacred visions? " guru told him not to worry. He sent word for the businessman, spoke to him, and found out the reason behind the untimely death of his wife. He understood that she was appearing in the dream of the sanyasi because he had partaken of the food prepared as part of her obituary rites. From that day, the sanyasi stopped eating food and lived merely on fruits and milk. Bhikshannam deharakshanartham (food is essential to sustain the body). A car needs petrol to run. In the same way, the body requires food to sustain it. So, one has to eat something or the other to sustain the body. Sometimes, you get bad dreams and bad visions during meditation. This is the result of unsacred food. You have to enquire before cooking whether the provisions are got through sacred means. Only then the food becomes fit for consumption.

Before partaking of food, you should pray,

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir
Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam
Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam
Brahma Karma Samadhina

If you pray with sacred feelings, the food gets sanctified.

At one time, King Vikramaditya convened a big conference. He posed a question, "Which is greater, buddhi (intellect) or medhas (intelligence)? " The participants said that medhas is greater. But Vikramaditya did not subscribe to their viewpoint. He said that buddhi is greater because it is very sacred and the knowledge of the Self is contained in it. Buddhigrahya matindriyam (intellect transcends mind and senses).

Embodiments of Love!

Before partaking of food, chant the sacred mantra. Then no unsacredness would enter your heart. Annam Brahma; Raso Vishnuhu; Bhokta Devo Maheswarah (food is Brahma; the essence is Vishnu; the one who partakes it is Maheswara). These three correspond to body, mind, and action respectively. Purity of thought, word, and deed is true wisdom. You don't need to undertake any other spiritual practice. People undertake various sadhanas (spiritual practices). But they confer only temporary satisfaction. On the other hand, when you have purity of thought, word, and deed, you will experience eternal happiness.

Embodiments of Love!

Ritham is that which is changeless in the three periods of time - past, present, and future. That is true wisdom. That which undergoes change is marakam and that which is changeless is Tharakam.

Understand the principle of Tharakam with the grace of Sadguru (true guru) and

find the difference between eternal and ephemeral.

Know the secret of Tharakam (Soham),

which the jivatma (individual soul) repeats without a break

in all the three states of

jagrat (waking), swapna (dream) and sushupti (deep sleep).

(Telugu Song)

You may belong to any religion or community; you have to understand this Tharaka mantra. Today people call themselves devotees, but their actions do not match their claim. Their thoughts, words, and deeds are filled with untruth and unrighteousness. Their love is tainted with selfishness and self-interest. They pose themselves to be devotees, go round the world, and indulge in all sorts of evil deeds. Externally, they look to be pious, but inwardly they are filled with evil propensities. They ruin their lives for the sake of money. You should beware of such people and keep them at a distance. It is a sin to even look at their faces.

Some devotees said, "Swami, we want to attend Your Birthday celebration, but we are unable to get leave. So, we have decided to apply for sick leave and come. " Then I told them, "It is not the right thing to do. It does not matter, if you are unable to come, but do not tell untruth. " Observe sathya vratam (vow of truth). Only then can you have the vision of Sarveswara (Lord of the universe). You can purify yourself through prayer. Wisdom will dawn on you through prayer, and that prayer is Annam Brahma; Raso Vishnuhu; Bhokta Devo Maheswarah. No other spiritual practice is required.

Nine paths of devotion have been prescribed for spiritual aspirants. They are:

Sravanam (listening),

Kirtanam (singing),
Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu),
Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet),
Vandanam (salutation),
Archanam (worship),
Dasyam (servitude),
Sneham (friendship),
Atmanivedanam (Self-surrender).

You should develop friendship with God. If God is your friend, the whole world will be under your control. But today, the unfortunate ones are losing their friendship with God. It is not easy to make friendship with God. But you have to make every effort in this direction. Once you develop friendship with God, you have to take full advantage of it through sadhana (spiritual practices). Do not waste time in idle talk.

Embodiments of Love!

Speak truth always. This is what you have to learn today. Truth is the basis of your life. Truth is verily God. Hence, never stray away from the path of truth.

Students!

Having pursued your education here and having listened to Swami's teachings, you should transform yourself into ideal human beings. People from far-off lands wait for a chance to come here. Having been blessed with the sacred opportunity of constantly living in the Divine Presence, make full use of it. Never use harsh words. Never speak untruth. Sometimes, telling truth may lead to danger. In such a situation, speak neither truth nor untruth; remain silent. You should transcend the dualities of truth and untruth. As you are all in the prime of your youth, this is the best time to embark on the sacred path. Start early, drive slowly, reach safely.

I am not at all interested in celebrating My Birthdays. Devotees wanted to arrange various programmes on this occasion. But I did not permit them. As many of you have gathered here, this meeting is taking place, otherwise, I have no interest in even this meeting. To Me, every day is a festival day. I am always blissful. I am the embodiment of eternal bliss. What type of bliss? It is not something that others give. I don't wait for others to give Me bliss. My bliss originates from within.

Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam.

God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, He is wisdom absolute, the One without a second, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the mahavakya Tattwamasi (That you are), eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three gunas (of sattwa, rajas and thamas. (the three qualities of serenity-purity, passion-activity, and inertia-indolence).

I am beyond all attributes. Believe it or not, I am bliss personified. If you think otherwise, the defect lies in you. Whatever I do is for your own good, for your welfare and for your happiness. Lead a blissful and unblemished life. That is what I desire from you. I have no worries or suffering at any point of time. Why should I worry when I have everything? I have no desires. Whatever I tell, whatever I do is good for you, not for Me. I have come for your sake. Hence, make full use of Me. I am always ready, provided you develop sacred thoughts. Lead a divine life.

Sometimes, I do not talk to you. You think, "We might have committed some mistake. That is why Swami is not talking to us. " But truly speaking, it is not My nature to look for defects in others. My vision is highly sacred. I always see good in you. The bad you see is your own imagination. Because there is bad in you, you are seeing the same in others. But to Me, even bad appears as good. Hence, do not entertain any doubts regarding Swami. Samsayatma vinasayati (one with doubts will perish). Have firm faith.

Embodiments of Love!

Welcome your guests and give them due respect. Give your love to all. Feed the hungry. Only then can you have peace of mind. Harmonise your thought, word, and deed. There is no greater wisdom than this. Practise ritham (that which is changeless in the three periods of time - past, present, and future). This is the path of tharakam (liberation). If you waver from time to time, you are the most unfortunate one. Waywardness is the nature of a monkey mind. You belong to mankind. Having been born as a human being, you should develop steadiness of mind. Mankind symbolises tharakam. Monkey mind stands for marakam (bondage).

Embodiments of Love!

On this Birthday, you have to learn something very important: do not waste your time in idle talk. Time once lost cannot be regained. Consider truth as God. Sathyannasti paro dharmah (there is no dharma greater than adherence to truth). Hence follow the path of truth and practise righteousness.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Sathya Dharmamu Santhi Premalato ".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html> _

23. Love And Morality - The Need Of The Hour

Date: 25 December 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

Abandon pride and all endear,
Shed anger and shed all care,
Restraint on hankering is the way to wealth,
Shunning greed is the royal road to joy.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

In this world every object has got five aspects, namely, sath, chith, ananda, rupa, and nama (being, awareness, bliss, form, and name). Being, awareness, and bliss are the three permanent attributes of every jiva (individual). Name and form are transitory. Man has forgotten his true Self and is leading his life believing the name and form to be real and the ephemeral world to be eternal. God is beyond all attributes and feelings. It is rather strange that man attributes qualities and feelings to Him. It is most essential for every individual to know the infinite love, truth, and compassion of God. Though man is essentially divine, he is conducting himself like a demon as he has forgotten his innate divinity. Every man is endowed with the qualities of diksha (determination) and dakshata (dexterity). One who makes use of these virtues for noble causes alone is a true human being.

The cosmic power lies in the navel of God. Hence, He is known as Hiranyagarbha. Since He is full of divine effulgence and radiance, He is said to be the very personification of beauty and splendour (soundaryavanthudu and tejomayudu). The life of a human being is the noblest because he is endowed with the principle of Hiranyagarbha. God is also known as Prajapathi because He is the creator of the entire universe. In order to understand the principle of divinity, you have to understand the inner meaning and significance

associated with each name of God. God has various names, and each of them has a profound inner meaning. That is why our ancients used to name their children by one or other of the names of God.

Today man is in search of God and is enquiring into the nature of divinity. When God is within, where is the need to search for Him? God is the embodiment of love. Truth is His very swarupa and swabhava (form and innate nature). Sathyannasti paro dharma (there is no dharma greater than adherence to truth). But today, man is unable to understand the meaning of truth. He considers untruth to be truth in order to satisfy his desires. Firstly, man should endeavour to understand his true nature which is sathyam, jnanam, and anantham (truth, knowledge, and infinitude). God has gifted man with the Vedas, Sastras, Puranas, and Itihasas to open his eyes to the truth that he is essentially divine. In this world every man is endowed with truth, righteousness, and love. He is the embodiment of sath, chith, and ananda. These attributes are verily divine. Sath is that which is changeless and eternal. Chith is Chaitanya (awareness). Atma is another term for God. Brahma is its synonym. It is present in every man in the form of Chaitanya. One who understands this principle of Chaitanya alone is a true human being. Sath-chith-ananda and sathyam-jnanam-anantham are different words, but they have the same meaning.

In this world, we find various schools of thought, like atheism, dualism, non-dualism, and qualified non-dualism. The divine name of Kesava is the most important of all. The essence of all philosophies is contained in this. It consists of three syllables, namely, Ka + esa + va, which represent the Divine Trinity of Brahma, Easwara, and Vishnu, respectively. Hence, Kesava symbolises the principles of creation (Brahma), sustenance (Vishnu), and dissolution (Easwara). Man can understand his true Self if he contemplates on the divine name of Kesava and understand its significance.

Our ancient sages undertook deep investigations and enquiry in order to understand Divinity. Ultimately, they declared to the world, Vedahametham purusham mahantham adityavarnam thamasah parasthath (I have visualised the supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of billion suns and who is

beyond thamas - the darkness of ignorance). They exhorted man to make efforts to have the vision of Divinity. From then on, man started believing in God. But, with the passage of time, his faith started diminishing. He is subjected to grief because of his disbelief in God.

He who is known as Allah by Muslims,
As Jehovah by Christian aspirants,
As the Lotus-eyed Lord by the worshippers of Vishnu,
As Sambhu, by those who revere Siva,
In whatever way He is worshipped,
He gladly responds,
Grants the grace of fame and fortune,
And showers happiness and joy.
He is the One,
The Supreme Self.
Know Him as Paramatma.
(Telugu Poem)

God is one, He has many names. Different religions have come into existence, but all of them lead to the same divinity.

Religions are many, but goal is one
Clothes are many, but yarn is one.
Jewels are many, but gold is one.
Cows are many, but milk is one.
Beings are many, but breath is one.
Castes are many, but humanity is one.
(Telugu Poem)

Therefore, if everyone enquires into his true nature, he can experience truth.

Jesus was a noble soul. He declared that he was the son of God, but he never said that he was God. When Jesus was born, three royal wise men from the east were guided by a star to a cowshed in Bethlehem where the baby Jesus lay in a manger. He was radiating divine effulgence. The first of them said, "This child will love God." The second said, "He will be loved by God." The third said, "He will love one and all. He is not different from God." The one who loves God is the messenger of God; the one whom God loves is the son of God; the one who understands the principle of unity becomes one with God. This is the inner meaning of the statements given in the Bible. The one you think you are; the one others think you are, and the one you really are. You should understand the import of these statements.

The child was brought up by mother, Mary, and his father was working as a carpenter. It was the time of a festival in Jerusalem, and the child Jesus was taken there along with his parents. They lost the child in the crowd and could not find him anywhere. Mother Mary naturally was very much worried. Finally, they went to the temple to pray. To their astonishment, they found young Jesus coming out of the temple. All the while, the child had been in the temple, listening to the holy discourse of the Rabbi (Jewish Priest) of the temple. The anxious mother took hold of her child and started asking him several questions as to what he was doing all the while. The child replied, "Mother, why were you afraid? All the while I was in the hands of God. I have been listening to the words of God expounded by the Rabbi in the temple." Thus, the child was God-minded from a very young age.

After some time, father Joseph passed away. Mary told her son, "Now that your father passed away; you should continue your father's profession, so that we may earn our livelihood." But the boy was not inclined to continue in his father's profession. The mother was also not interested to oppose the natural inclinations of young Jesus. One day, young Jesus went to a lonely hill top. The mother was very much worried, nay, depressed due to the absence of her son. Jesus was sitting and meditating on God all the while. After some time, he returned. As he was returning, he ran into a group of worried men on

the coast of the sea of Galilee. When young Jesus asked them the cause of their worry, they said that they were fishermen and that for quite some time past, they were not able to catch any fish in their nets. Jesus said, "Follow me; are there any waters that do not have fish?" He took them along with him in their boats to the middle of the sea and asked them to cast their nets at a particular spot. To their utter astonishment and great joy, the fishermen found that their nets were full with fish. This event created a lot of faith in the minds of the fishermen. Therefore, faith is indispensable for humanity.

Where there is faith, there is love; Where there is love, there is truth; Where there is truth, there is peace; Where there is peace, there is bliss; Where there is bliss, there is God.

Jesus could instill such great faith in those people. One of those fisherman was named by Jesus as Peter. He developed intense love and faith toward Jesus. From then on, the fisherman regularly used to take Jesus out on their fishing expeditions, and, after their return in the evening, Jesus used to expound spiritual matters to them. When Peter's father passed away, his mother was filled with sorrow, but Jesus consoled her by telling, "Death is but a dress of life. Wherefore do you shed tears? Death is like changing one's dress. Therefore, stop grieving. These physical bodies come and go. Therefore, do not waste your thought on these ephemeral things. The indweller who lives inside this body is the true divinity."

"The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later, but the indweller has neither birth nor death. He has no attachment whatsoever. Truly speaking, the indweller is verily God Himself, who is in the form of the Atma." (Telugu Poem)

In this manner, Jesus preached and instilled confidence in the people around

him. Thus, the fishermen community was spending its time happily in the company of Jesus. At that time, one Mathew, who was a tax collector for the Romans, used to visit them on official work and, during his visits, he also used to listen to Jesus and take notes of his teachings. Finally, he became a disciple of Jesus.

After a while, Jesus started facing obstacles and opposition to his preachings. Anyone donning a physical body cannot escape such vicissitudes of life. Without hardships man cannot exist. Death follows birth, and, with the same certainty, misery follows happiness. Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau (one should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat). Pleasure is an interval between two pains. Human life is for the purpose of investigating the supreme reality and not merely for eating, drinking, and procreation. Every human being must make an effort to know his inner nature and understand his true identity. Jesus was preaching such sacred truth, so he became very popular among his contemporaries. Becoming popular in the world automatically begets jealousy, and envy. Jealousy, pomposity, and egoism are evil traits, which will ultimately lead to ruin. None will pardon people with such traits.

You should not rebuke or ridicule others. Humanness will blossom in man only when he develops equal-mindedness. Today, man is subjected to untold suffering because he lacks human values. That which has the innate capability to burn is called fire. In the same manner, only the one with human values is a human being. One bereft of human values is not a human being at all. You may be highly educated and occupying an exalted position, but if you lack human values, you will be considered inhuman. Hence, drive away evil qualities in the first instance.

Today, the Messengers of Sathya Sai (old students' association of Anantapur Campus for girls) are celebrating their anniversary. They should not give scope to evil tendencies like asuya (jealousy), krodha (anger), and dwesha (hatred). Their members who are working in overseas countries are leading exemplary lives.

Today, you heard the speeches made by our former students from Japan and America. Their thoughts and feelings are noble. Their speech is full of sweetness. The girl from Japan who spoke earlier is the holder of a Ph.D. degree. They are highly qualified, yet they conduct themselves with humility and obedience. Their devotion and surrender is worthy of emulation. What is the use of high academic qualifications and doctorate degrees if one does not give up wicked traits like jealousy and carrying tales against others? I really detest such behaviour.

With love, enthusiasm and sacred feelings, you have established an organisation in the name of Sathya Sai for doing service to humanity. No doubt, a lot of good work is being done; but take care that the noble feelings do not degenerate into ill-feelings. I do not attach much importance to the work. What is important to Me is your qualities. Wherever you may be - whether in the forest or in the sky, whether in the towns or in the villages, you must develop noble qualities. Jealousy is a very bad quality. For people with jealousy, life will not go smoothly. Jealousy, in fact, is a living death. Added to this, if you have another bad quality of carrying tales, you are bound to suffer. Why do you criticise others? Instead criticise your own bad qualities. Remove your own ill-feelings and bad thoughts. You should not attribute bad qualities to others and spread such slander.

In spite of My repeated advice, there is no transformation in many people. I am disgusted with their behaviour over the last five-six years. What is the use of establishing organisations? You have Sathya Sai Seva Samithis and Bhajan Mandalis. You are undertaking social service, conducting study circles. But no purpose is served if such service is not backed by love in the heart. Love is God. Live in love. Instead people are developing hatred against one another. Such people deserve exemplary punishment, for others are also getting spoiled on account of such wicked people. I am prepared to give you anything, even My life, provided you get rid of your evil qualities.

When you take the name of Sathya Sai, how nobly should the organisation function! How much respect should you command in society! Whoever establishes an organisation in the name of Sathya Sai must adhere to the principle of truth. Functioning under the banner of Sathya Sai, if you deviate from the path of truth, what purpose does it serve? It is only when you cultivate love and tread along the path of truth and morality that the organisation will develop and prosper. Therefore, at least from today, develop the qualities of truth, love, and morality. This is your first and foremost duty. It is not proper to undertake demonic activities in the name of divine organisation.

God is worshipped by several names, such as, Sathya Dharma Parayanaya Namah, Sathya Swarupaya Namah, Prema Swarupaya Namah, etc. There is a lot of meaning in these names. He is the embodiment of love. In fact, human beings themselves are embodiments of divine love. Love is their chief quality. Life has no meaning if you do not cultivate love. Carrying tales against somebody and backbiting are qualities to be condemned. In the past, women were free from evil traits. But now, even women are no exception to these diseases. What a shame! In My opinion, this is a distortion which is the result of modern education.

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and a mean-minded person will not give up his wicked qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom. What is the use of acquiring worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal. (Telugu Poem)

No purpose is served with an education coupled with evil qualities. What is important is not education, but good qualities, character, and conduct.

If you associate yourselves with people with evil propensities, you too will become evil. Tyaja durjana samsargam; bhaja sadhu samagamam; kuru

punyam ahorathram (give up bad company; join good company, and perform meritorious deeds day and night). These three principles are most important for a human being. Karna was a great warrior in the Mahabharata. In fact, he even excelled Arjuna in this field. In spite of all this, why did he earn a bad name? It was because of his association with evil-minded people like Duryodhana and Dussasana. At last, he met with a miserable death in the battlefield. None of the great astras (certain weapons) he mastered could come to his rescue. Therefore, all your education will be of little use if your mind is not channeled in the right direction. Hence, Students - Boys and Girls! Cultivate noble qualities. There is no use acquiring wealth without virtues.

Excessive wealth gives rise to ego which in turn paves way to many wicked qualities. When wealth leaves you, ego also evaporates, and as a result the evil qualities disappear. (Telugu Poem)

Greatness does not lie in acquiring wealth. Cultivation of noble qualities is of paramount importance. Talk less. For the more you indulge in loose talk, the more you are prone to bad qualities. There is no point in joining a service organisation if you do not cultivate virtues and transform your behaviour into a good one. Some people talk sweetly, but in their heart of heart, they are vicious. Such dichotomy will lead you nowhere. You must first develop softness and sweetness in your heart. It is said, Hrid + Daya = Hridaya. Your hridaya (heart) must be full of dhaya (compassion). You deserve to be called a manava (human) only when your heart is filled with love and compassion.

Jesus Christ developed such noble qualities. He gave protection to several poor and destitute people with a loving heart. In fact, several such people sought refuge in him. In the process, he had to face the wrath of several enemies. You should help people even if you have to undergo some difficulties. Never indulge in reviling others, for the same Atma is permeating every living being. If you abuse others, it amounts to abusing your own self. If you do not like them, keep yourself away from them, but never abuse them.

Any amount of good work done by you will be of no use, if you do not give up bad qualities. If you cannot do good to others, at least speak good words. You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. If you find someone suffering, try to help him. Today it is his turn, but tomorrow it could be yours. Always keep this in mind. Nobody can escape from pain and suffering. Always pray for the welfare of all. It is only in this context, the universal prayer of Loka samasta sukhino bhavantu (May all the people of the world be happy!) is addressed.

Your heart should be transformed into Hiranyagarbha. It is only when you cultivate good feelings, can you become a good person. You need not be a great man, but you should aspire to become a good man. You must earn the love of one and all. One of the prayers addressed to God is Hiranyagarbhaya Namah. God is loved by everybody. He is always happy and blissful. He has no hatred toward anybody. Whatever He does is for your own good. Everyone must cultivate such divine love towards others. Always tread the path of truth and morality. A nation without morality is bound to degenerate and disintegrate. It is not enough if you have patriotism; along with it you should have morality too. Merely giving lectures on morality will not suffice; it must permeate every activity undertaken by you.

Embodiments of Love!

God is not moved simply by sweet words. You must translate those sweet words into action. You may be a great hero in giving lectures on a platform, but if you are a zero in putting them into action, it will be of no use. You must become heroes in practical life. That is what gives Me happiness. Jesus Christ and Mohammad were highly noble. How could they acquire such greatness and goodness? It was only by their good deeds. Therefore, you must acquire goodness along with greatness. In fact, goodness is greater than greatness. Several great souls took birth in this land of Bharat (India). Saint Thyagaraja, in one of his famous kirtans, sang, "Endaro mahanubhavulu, andariki vandanamulu" (there are several great souls, I prostrate before all of them). A great saint Thyagaraja himself, exhibited such humility. He was a great composer too. In one of his kirtans, he described the greatness of God thus:

You are beyond all description and human comprehension. Is it possible to estimate Your glory and splendour? I have been waiting for Your grace. Oh Lord! Listen to my prayer and redeem me. You are the one who brought back to life the dead son of Your preceptor. You are the one who suppressed the serpent Kaliya, freed Vasudeva and Devaki, and saved Droupadi from humiliation. You fulfilled Kuchela's desires, You made ugly-looking Kubja beautiful. You protected the Pandavas and saved the 16,000 Gopikas. You are beyond all description and human comprehension. Krishna, it is not possible for even Brahma to describe Your glory. I have been praying for Your grace. (Telugu Song)

When sublime feelings spring forth from the depths of one's own heart, they express themselves as great devotional poetry.

Embodiments of Love!

Today, you do not find peace anywhere in the world. You see only pieces! In fact, people are breaking their heart into pieces. How then can peace be acquired? There is only one solution to this problem. Love God. Have faith in God. Surrender unto Him. Dedicate your whole life to God and carry on every activity of yours as an offering to Him. Let all your activities be helpful to others. Help ever, hurt never. You cannot say that you are leading a problem-free life. Who knows what is in store for you the next moment! If you wish to be always happy, pray for the welfare of others. This is the real sadhana (spiritual discipline). Spirituality does not mean simply doing bhajans and performing some acts of worship. Cultivate noble qualities. Always be helpful to others and earn a good name. Jesus earned such a good name by sacrificing his body on the cross. You also must be prepared for such a great sacrifice. If you give up thyaga (sacrifice) and indulge in bhoga (sensual pleasures), you will end up with roga (disease). In fact, thyaga is true yoga and bhoga is roga. Do not become a victim of roga. Develop thyaga and achieve yoga (union with God).

Dear Students!

Whoever has acquired the quality of love will never be hated by others. Even the wild animals will not harm you when you have love. The great rishis (sages) of yore spent their lives peacefully in dense forests amidst wild animals. The wild animals fought among themselves, but they did not cause any harm to these rishis. What is the reason? The rishis possessed one single weapon of love, which protected them from these wild animals. In fact, these wild animals also used to love these great rishis.

What man has to acquire is this great weapon of love. Love alone can protect us, not atom bomb or hydrogen bomb. Consider My own example. I have one and only weapon, that is love. Because of this, millions of people from every nook and corner of the globe gather around Me. Did I ever send any invitation to you? No. It is only My pure and unsullied love that draws you here. In fact, My heart itself is a very powerful magnet. Because of the power of love in that magnet, all these 'iron filings' are attracted to this place. In order to be attracted by the magnet, the iron should be free from rust and dust.

Some people think, "Swami calls Himself a powerful magnet, but He is unable to attract us." The fault lies in them only. Their hearts are rusted. They will be attracted by the magnet of Swami's love only when they cleanse their hearts. How can you remove the 'rust and dust' accumulated in the heart? Only by rubbing and polishing it with love. Be they Indians or foreigners, everybody has to purify their heart with love, and that love must be totally selfless. When you cultivate such selfless love, you can attract the whole world. Self is lovelessness and love is selflessness. Therefore, lead a life full of love.

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manse Kaho".

Alternative [Link](#) to Discourse:

<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

24. Harmony And Beauty In The Ramayana

Date: 17 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

The entire creation is under the control of God. That God is under the control of the Truth. That truth is under the control of noble one. The noble people are greater than gods.

Embodiments of Love!

Society today is in utter need of Ramayana. We do not have children who respect their parents, nor do we have parents who have great affection for their children. We do not have disciples who revere their preceptors; nor do we have preceptors who have great love for their disciples. We do not have homes where parents shine as role models for their children. We do not have homes where brothers live with mutual love and affection; nor do we have homes where wives and husbands shine as ideals to others by virtue of their mutual love and affection. Good manners and courtesies have vanished. The Ramayana today stands as an ideal, in various fields of activity, for the trouble-torn society of today.

Parents of today don't bother to find out the ways and means of bringing up their children and keeping them under control. They think that their responsibility is over after admitting them to a primary school or a village school. The home is the first school for children. It is in this school that children should learn to respect their parents; to observe the truth, righteousness, peace, and nonviolence in the school; how to behave in the school; how to respect the teachers; how to behave with fellow students. They must know how to abide by the rules and regulations of the school and how to observe discipline. It is by learning these things the students turn into ideal students.

Wake up from bed, when the cock crows in the morn; Brush and bathe, eat properly and moderately. Go to school and study diligently. Earn a good name that you are an obedient student. Don't move when weather is damp. And never go to ditches. Run and play, have fun and frolic. If you abide by all the principles mentioned above, You will enjoy both health and wealth.

When the sage Vishwamitra came to Dasaratha, the emperor received him with all his courtesy, invited him to occupy a high seat, and asked him the reason for his arrival. When people come to our house, it is essential that we treat them respectfully and give joy to them.

The sage told the emperor, "O Dasaratha! I have decided to conduct a yagna (sacrificial ritual) for the welfare of the world. But the demons cause many problems during the course of the yagna. I have the power and the strength to face them, for I have powerful weapons at my command. But the rules of the yagna forbid me to use my weapons when I am engaged in the performance of it. Violence and bloodshed are prohibited for a rithvik performing a yagna. I seek the help of your sons to protect the yagna, which I am going to perform for the welfare and well being of the world."

These words came as a shock to Dasaratha. He didn't like the idea of sending such tender children to the forests. He thought that it was unjust on his part to send such tender children to the forests. He told the sage, "Master, pardon me. I will assume the responsibility for the protection of the yagna. These children are quite young, hardly thirteen years old. They are not well acquainted in the art of using weapons. How can they protect the yagna?"

Vishwamitra pretended to be angry when he heard the king's words. He roared, "The descendants of Ikshvaku never go back on their promises. You have promised me that you would certainly honour my word. It is unfair on your part to go back on your word. If you think that you are correct I am going back."

Dasaratha took to heart the words spoken by Vishwamitra. He knew that he should be extremely careful in dealing with snakes and sages. He also feared that Vishwamitra might curse him. He called Vasishta, the family guru, and held deliberations with him. It satisfied Dasaratha to some extent.

Sage Vasishta looked at Dasaratha and said, "These children are not ordinary children. You are downcast due to your attachment to your children. They will fall upon the enemies like thunder bolts. You are not able to realise their greatness."

Vasishta called for Rama. Rama came and stood in front of Vasista. Lakshmana also came, since it was his practice to be always with Rama. Dasaratha introduced his children to Vasista. They saluted their father Dasaratha, guru Vasishta, and sage Vishwamitra. They stood waiting there. Vasishta was transfixed, looking at the splendour of their faces. He desired to do namaskar to the children. But it was not appropriate to do namaskar to the children openly. So he saluted them in his heart.

The brothers Rama and Lakshmana, and Bharatha and Satrughna always moved together. Lakshmana followed Rama like a shadow. Satrughna always followed Bharatha. There was a reason for this. When Dasaratha performed the Putrakameshti Yaga, the chosen deity appeared and offered the vessel of sacred offering to Vasishta. Vasishta handed over the sacred vessel to Dasaratha, who in turn called Kausalya, his queen, to share it with other queens Sumitra and Kaikeyi. Kausalya had confidence that the son born to her would be the king of Ayodhya, since she was the eldest queen. Kaikeyi also had confidence that the son born to her would one day be coronated because Dasaratha had promised her father at the time of marriage. But the virtuous Sumitra had no such hopes. Since the emperor didn't make any promise to her, she thought that her son would only serve the king.

Sumitra carried her share of pudding in a bowl and placed it on the parapet wall on the terrace while drying her hair. From nowhere, an eagle came and carried away the bowl of sacred pudding. Horrified at this, she immediately ran down and informed Kausalya and Kaikeyi about what had happened.

Since Kausalya and Kaikeyi were virtuous, they shared their sacred pudding with her.

The queens were noble, without an iota of selfishness. They shone as examples of harmony, understanding, and mutual love. Their conduct is worthy of emulation in the current times. The three queens closed their eyes in prayer and ate the sacred pudding. Kausalya gave birth to Rama, Sumitra to Lakshmana and Satrughna, and Kaikeyi to Bharatha. The sons of Kausalya and Kaikeyi were happily playing in the cradle, whereas the sons of Sumitra were wailing all the time, day and night, without even eating. She went to sage Vasishta and told about her wailing children.

Sage Vasishta closed his eyes and went into yogic vision. The truth dawned on him. He said to Sumitra, "Since you ate the sacred pudding given to Kausalya, you gave birth to Lakshmana, who is an amsha (aspect) of Rama. Since you ate the pudding given by Kaikeyi, you gave birth to Satrughna, who is an aspect of Bharatha. Keep Lakshmana by Rama's side and Satrughna by Bharatha's side. They will rest peacefully."

Sumitra did as instructed by Vasishta. All the children slept peacefully without crying. Sumitra felt very happy at this and said to Kausalya and Kaikeyi "Lakshmana and Satrughna are your gifts. My children will serve your children. Lakshmana will serve Rama and Satrughna will serve Bharatha. It is my good fortune that my son will serve others."

Rama and Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shatrughna were intimately connected. Wherever Rama went, Lakshmana followed. Rama wouldn't eat unless Lakshmana ate with him. Similarly, Bharatha also wouldn't eat unless Satrughna was in his company. They wouldn't celebrate their birthdays without the company of the other brothers. When Bharatha went to see his grandfather, the King of Kashmir, Satrughna followed him to Kashmir, though no one told him to do so. When Rama was leaving for the forest, Lakshmana also started following Rama, though Rama had not told him to accompany him.

Rama even told Lakshmana, "Brother! You should remain in Ayodhya to serve our parents, who will be pining away in my absence. It is your duty to console them and giving happiness to them."

To this, Lakshmana answered, "Brother! My mother sent me to serve you. You are going to the forest in obedience to the command of our father, whereas I am following you in obedience to the command of my mother." Lakshmana followed Rama wherever he went. Similar was the case of Satrughna.

When the four sons of Dasaratha returned to Ayodhya from Mithila, accompanied by their consorts, Dasaratha was overjoyed. He told them, "When I set my eyes on all of you [his sons], I feel as though I am watching the ashtagrahas (8 planets). Since you are accompanied by your four consorts, I feel as though I shine with the splendour of the shodasakalas (16 splendours). These four consorts of yours are highly noble and virtuous. I will look after them as though they are my daughters. It is by divine grace that I have such daughters-in-law. Where is Mithila and where is Ayodhya? It is a divine wish that all of them should be united like this."

These four consorts of the four sons of Dasaratha were of exemplary excellence. Sita and Urmila, the daughters of Janaka, were married to Rama and Lakshmana, respectively. Mandavi and Shruthakeerthi, the daughters of Kushadwaja, Janaka's brother, were married to Bharatha and Satrughna, respectively. Since the four daughters-in-law were ideal women, the home of Dasaratha was an ideal home.

When Vishwamitra took permission of Dasaratha to take Rama with him for the protection of the yagna, Lakshmana automatically followed Rama. As they started moving in the forest, led by Vishwamitra, the sage taught them two mantras. He taught them the mantras Bala and Atibala so that they would not suffer from hunger and sleeplessness. Though Vishwamitra knew that Rama and Lakshmana were divine children, he came under the spell of maya (illusion) and taught them the sacred mantras. Vishwamitra taught these mantras so that they would not suffer from hunger and sleeplessness in the forest.

Dasaratha's home was an ideal home, where all the mothers lived in great harmony. Dasaratha's queens also lived in great unity and understanding. Nowadays, it is difficult to lead one's life with a single wife, much less three wives! But Dasaratha's home was an exception. Great harmony and understanding prevailed there. One may entertain the thought, "why did Kaikeyi behave in a selfish manner ,demanding Rama's exile for fourteen years?" She was working under the divine dictates of destiny, for it was destined that Rama should go into forest to kill the demons. People entertain the notion that Mandhara poisoned the mind of Kaikeyi by her evil counsel. Kaikeyi was not a lady who would listen to the words of a servant. She was a lady of character, endowed with great virtues. She loved Rama more than her son Bharatha.

When the devas (gods) and sages approached Brahma with a complaint to save them from the atrocities of Ravana, Brahma told them, "I gave the boon to Ravana that he would be killed neither by gods nor even by kinneras and kimpurushas, but he did not mention manava (Man). Hence, Ravana would be killed at the hands of Rama, who is an incarnation of Vishnu." Everything was happening according to the divine will.

Even Lankini gave utterance to divine will. When Hanuman had hit her, she said, "Bad times are ahead of Lanka." It was prophesied that when a monkey hit her, the downfall of Lanka would begin. In fact, when Hanuman hit her, Lankini fell flat on the ground. Lankini was a demoness of enormous strength, who was guarding the city of Lanka at the portals of the fortress.

Hanuman was also closely connected to Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Satrughna, since he was born to Anjani Devi out of the sacred rice pudding that the queens of Dasaratha had eaten. Because of this, Hanuman felt a close link with the four brothers.

Embodiments of Love!

The Ramayana stands out as a great ideal to the entire mankind. It lends ideals in every field of life. It shows how brothers, sisters, and parents should

live as ideals. The Ramayana is an ideal not only for the ancient times but also for the modern age. Every man is born in this world to shine as an ideal, but not to be a piece of decoration. Every man should stand out as an ideal to the best of his capacity. The Ramayana demonstrates to all what the ideal family and ideal manners should be like.

When Sita, Mandavi, Urmila, and Shruthakeerthi were leaving for Ayodhya along with their husbands, their parents did not shed tears of sorrow as parents do now. Their parents thought that the four women had to play an important role in the home of Dasaratha. The parents of these four women thought that their daughters were duty bound to go to the home of Dasaratha. They did not think that that they were going to another home. They did not shed any tears of sorrow. It was with tears of joy that they sent their daughters to the home of their husbands. Such were the ideals that the people of those days upheld.

It is a general feeling that Kausalya shed bitter tears when Rama was going to forest. In fact, this was not the case. Instead, she told Rama, "My son, it is God's will that I am your mother and you are my son. We should play our roles according to divine destiny. Don't feel bad that you are going into the forests. Ayodhya without you is a forest for us, and a forest, in your company, is Ayodhya." These were the ideals upheld by the great women of those days.

There are many ideals that the Ramayana upholds for the entire world. One day, Dasaratha noticed that the child Rama was massaging his own feet. He did not ask the services of the servants to massage his feet. Dasaratha, on looking at Rama's condition, sent for the servants immediately to massage Rama's feet. Rama told Dasaratha, "I don't want the services of these servants. I will do my own work. These are my legs and not someone else's. I should massage my own legs without depending on others. All are servants in this world."

Dasaratha was an emperor who exercised control over the dasa indriyas (ten senses). Since he could control his ten senses, he could get a son like Rama. To have a son like Rama, one should have the sense control of Dasaratha.

Even Kaikeyi, who is usually misunderstood as a selfish queen, was not an ordinary mortal. She was a lady of superlative virtues and sublime conduct. She loved Rama more than Bharatha. Kausalya was also a great woman. She did not shed tears when Rama was going on exile. She believed that it was divine destiny that Rama should go into exile for fourteen years.

Rama was full of lavanya (beauty). His character was the cause for His beauty. In fact, Rama and Krishna were ever youthful. Have you ever seen a picture of Rama or Krishna sporting a beard, moustache, and grey hairs? Have you ever seen a picture of Krishna with signs of old age? Have you ever seen Him as a grandfather? All avatars are ever youthful. This body of mine is seventy-seven years old. I don't know any weakness, and I can walk quickly. It may look funny if I walk quickly at this age. It may make people laugh. People will definitely laugh if a toddler walks with a walking stick in his hand. It will look funny if an old man plays with toys. Since the old man playing with toys will be a laughing stock, in the similar way, I may become a laughing stock if I run and jump. We should conduct ourselves according to the time, place, and circumstances. I conduct Myself according to these.

I don't know any weakness. Usually, old people have wrinkles on their faces, and they suffer from deafness and cataract. I don't have any signs of old age. There is not a single wrinkle on my face. My eyes shine like bulbs and my ears are like loudspeakers. People go for a cataract operation in their old age. My eyes are in perfect condition. I can see anything that is at a distance. Nobody knows My power and strength. But I use them according to the need and the situation. I use my senses discreetly with discrimination. Speed brakes are meant to control speed. They are necessary and they ensure the safety. I have full control over my senses. These are all the signs of My Divinity. You will know My divine signs slowly and steadily in course of time. Though I have a human body, I am free from human attachment. Though the body is human, I am entirely divine. The body has to perish one day or the other.

Though Rama and Krishna were born with human bodies, people entertained the wrong notion that they died in ordinary way. Rama and Krishna did not shed the body in the human way. Rama stepped into river Sarayu and

vanished. He had earlier sent Sita away. Similarly, Krishna went to Dwaraka. Uddhava saw Krishna sitting under a tree, and then Krishna immediately vanished. It was not a body to be killed by a hunter. You must earn the capacity to understand Divinity.

Embodiments of Love!

Since I eat like you, play with you and sing with you, you are deluded into the belief that I am a human being like you. It is sheer ignorance to think of Me in that way. Lady devotees think that there is something wrong with My legs when I walk slowly. I do not have any trouble with My legs, I am happy, and there is nothing wrong with My health. I walk slowly with measured steps because of the robe I wear. The robe I wear is stitched to the very hem, preventing Me from taking long steps. My walk is slow, gentle, and soft, without any roughness. I am all sweetness and softness.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

25. Evening Discourse

Date: 18 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

He who has ego is not loved by anyone; He who has anger ceases to discriminate; He who has excessive desires cannot control his mind; He who has greed cannot taste happiness.

Embodiments of Love!

As long as man has ego, nobody will love him. Even his own wife and children will shun him. When anger erupts in man, he ceases to be happy. Excessive desires make him lose control over his mind. The day man distances himself from greed, he will enjoy happiness.

Today's discussion on the Ramayana will be liked very much by the ladies. Rama and Lakshmana, along with Viswamitra, reached Mithila. After Rama broke Lord Siva's bow, Janaka sent an invitation to Dasaratha to come to Mithila. This meant that Rama and Lakshmana had four days at their disposal. When only one day was left for the arrival of their parents and brothers, Lakshmana approached Sage Viswamitra and said, "Master, my parents and brothers will be arriving tomorrow. If you permit, on this last remaining day, we would like to see the city of Mithila." Sage Viswamitra consented to the request.

Rama and Lakshmana soon walked along the streets of Mithila. Like a powerful magnet at work, the gaze of all citizens was attracted toward the two princes. Even the women working inside their houses came out to catch a glimpse of the two boys. Children at school also came rushing out. Everyone stared at the two brothers without batting an eyelid. They wondered, "Oh! What a heavenly beauty these boys have. They are resplendent like the sun and the moon. Where have they come from? What have they come for? Who

are they?" Thus, they kept wondering among themselves, but none of them knew the answers.

Finally, a young house wife appeared and explained to the women thus, "I was born in the city of Ayodhya. Since I am married into a family in Mithila, I now live here. These handsome boys are the sons of emperor Dasaratha . They are extremely handsome and bear the names Rama and Lakshmana. Even in Ayodhya, wherever they appear, they would instantly attract everybody's attention." In this way the lady gave the other women all the details of the attractive princes.

Meanwhile, though they were the center of intense attraction, Rama and Lakshmana never raised their heads. They were enjoying their walk with their heads bowed down. Some women, in order to attract the attention of the princes, threw flowers on their path, hoping that at least then the princes would look at them. They made every attempt possible to catch the eyes of Rama and Lakshmana. Some even waved the sacred Arathi. However, the princes remained unperturbed and would not look at anybody. The youth of those days had such sacred vision. At that young age, none of them ever looked at women.

Rama and Lakshmana finished their tour and returned to their palace. Meanwhile their parents and brothers had arrived. When the four brothers assembled, they shone like the moon amidst the stars. The citizens of Mithila were amazed by the beauty, gait, and looks of the four brothers. The following day, the bow of Lord Siva was to be displayed. A big function was organised. Rama came to the assembly along with his brothers. There were several other powerful kings and emperors in the hall. On seeing such a gathering, the wife of King Janaka, Sunetra, while watching from behind the curtains, started thinking, "There are so many handsome and valiant young princes in this assembly. Will it not be better to select one of them, marry my daughters to them, and quickly discharge the responsibility? Why does the emperor need to complicate the issue by announcing that the one who bends the bow of Lord Siva will be the eligible groom? Several heroic personalities have attempted in the past and have failed. Will these youngsters assembled

here succeed? How will their tender bodies bear the burden of the heavy bow?" She was very much worried about the issue and was discussing it with her companions.

Her fears came true when no one in the assembly could even lift the bow. Finally, Sage Viswamitra gave Rama permission to lift the bow. Rama went up to the box in which the bow was kept and opened the lid. The moment he did that a severe turbulence struck and shook everybody. Lakshmana got up and pressed down firmly on the earth with one foot. Even Viswamitra didn't know what Lakshmana was up to. He asked, "Lakshmana, what is happening? What are you doing?"

Lakshmana humbly bowed the head and said, "This is the help I must render to my elder brother". What Lakshmana meant was that, when Rama raised the bow, there was a sudden tilt in earth's balance leading to the turbulence. By pressing down on the earth, Lakshmana was balancing the shift.

What love the brothers had for each other! When they were once playing together, Bharatha came weeping and fell into Kausalya's lap. Kausalya lovingly asked, "Child, why are you crying? Did your elder brother scold you? Did your brothers fight with you? In this way, she tried to find out the cause of Bharatha's grief.

Bharatha replied, "Mother, none of my brothers would dream of scolding me and fighting with me. They all love me very much. But in order to make me win, despite my best efforts, Rama always keeps losing the game. He always wants me to win". The younger brothers should win and for that, Rama would deliberately lose. That was always Rama's aim. Every brother followed this path and strove to make the other brothers win. Rama knew that if his brothers won and were happy, he would be happy too. In this way, Rama put himself to many troubles just to make sure that his younger brothers prospered.

When Rama lifted the sacred bow of Lord Shiva out of its box, strung the thread, and twanged the string, a peel of thunder set out. Everybody

wondered how a boy of such a tender age could achieve such a stupendous task. The bow could not be lifted even if a thousand men were to try. Several elephants were required to pull the box into the hall. How could Rama lift such a heavy bow? How could he manage to string it? News of this wonderful feat spread throughout Mithila and created a sensation.

Janaka started making preparations for the wedding of his daughter to Rama . Kushadwaja was Janaka's brother. He had two daughters, named Mandavi and Shrutakirithi. King Janaka also had a second daughter Urmila. As the marriage preparations were going on, Sage Vasishtha approached Janaka and said, " O! King! Here are four resplendent youth shining like the very sun. They are all valiant and heroic. Vasishtha then consulted with Kushadwaja and proposed that his two daughters be given in marriage to Bharatha and Satrughna. Kushadwaja promptly agreed. Janaka shed tears of joy at the turn of events and was prepared to give his second daughter Urmila to Lakshmana.

The brides and the grooms were then readied and brought to the stage. As they were all seated on the stage, they appeared to light up the entire city of Mithila. The ladies experienced unlimited thrill. They praised their good fortune at being able to witness the wedding of not just Sita but all four princesses.

This is divine will. If God so wills, He can do anything. Who can do what God does? Who can possess what God has? Only God is the eternal witness. His will alone can accomplish anything.

The wedding was going on. But the four brothers would not raise their heads and look at anybody. In the modern age, on the other hand, conversations and frivolous behaviour begin much before marriage! But here the brides and grooms sat with their heads lowered in humility and modesty throughout the ceremony. They carried out the instructions of the priest without raising their heads.

I am narrating these incidents to you to highlight the high order of discipline and idealism entertained in those days. Janaka stood beside Rama and

prepared to give away the bride. He offered him Sita's hand and said, "Rama , here is my daughter, Sita." But Rama would not look at Sita despite Janaka's entreaties. This was because the custom of those days said that a woman would become a wife only when the sacred mangalashtra was tied around her neck. Until then, the bride and the groom were not expected to look at each other. This was a strict discipline exercised in those days. Such discipline will never appear either today or tomorrow. None can set or match the ideals that were established by the four brothers.

The wedding took place. It was now time for the garlanding ceremony. The brides waited with garlands in their hands, as did the grooms. The three brothers would begin their tasks only after Rama started it first. The parents waited behind the children. They went up to Rama and bade him place the garland around the Sita's neck so that other remaining brothers could also do the same. Rama did so, and all the brothers followed suit. It was now the turn of the brides. Sita waited with the garland in her hands. Moments passed, but Rama would not bend his head! His was a valour and dignity that raised, strung, and broke the mighty bow of Lord Siva. Therefore, he refused to bend his head in order to protect His own honour. He kept standing.

Rama was tall, broad shouldered, and valiant. Though young of age all the brothers were tall and physically strong. The long break set people to start murmuring among themselves. They wondered why Rama refused to bow His head. Rama was also not keen to remain thus. He looked at Lakshmana and made an almost imperceptible signal. The four brothers were always sharp and alert. This was depicted in Thyagaraja's song.

Would a monkey cross the ocean? Is it possible to tie you with a rope? Would the goddess Lakshmi worship you? Would Lakshmana willingly serve you? Would the highly intelligent Bharatha offer his prostrations to you? Oh! How great indeed is Lord Rama's strength!

Lakshmana was the incarnation of Adishesha - the heavenly serpent that had the strength to bear the entire world on its coils. He caught Rama's signal and understood that Rama wanted him to raise the portion of earth where Sita was standing. With an equally slight shake of his head, he indicated that this plan would defy the laws of nature and was therefore not suitable. If Sita was raised, so would everyone else! Rama signaled back to Lakshmana to find some plan to break the deadlock. Lakshmana hit upon an idea. He abruptly ran and fell at Rama's feet and would not get up. Rama was forced to bend down and raise Lakshmana from his feet. Grabbing this chance, Sita at once placed her garland on Rama's neck. The moment Sita garlanded Rama, the other sisters proceeded to garland their grooms. This incident amply demonstrates the lofty, disciplined, and honourable style of functioning and behaviour of the brothers.

The wedding was soon performed. The party returned to Ayodhya. They were received with much love and gaiety. What we need to look at is not merely the virtues of the four brothers. The characters of Sita, Urmila, Mandavi, and Shrutakirthis also need to be discussed and elaborated upon. They also were highly virtuous. They came from a highly reputed family. King Janaka was known to have mastered his senses. He was adept at karma yoga. He was an acknowledged expert in jnana yoga. Daughters from such a family cannot be ordinary mortals.

Only Rama was given the order to go into exile. But Sita would not agree to this idea. Rama meanwhile went to his mother. She was shattered when she got the sad news of her son's exile in place of the joyous news of his coronation. "Son you are merely obeying your father's command and going away to the forests. What about your mother's wishes? I am your father's "ardhangi" - his better half. What importance are you giving to the words of this half? I shall too come with you to the forest", she said.

Rama then preached to her, "Mother! Your husband is verily your God. There is no other deity beyond him. He is now aged. Added to that, this sad state of affairs has further crushed him. It is not proper for you to abandon him now, at this stage. You must serve and support him. Comfort him. Give him

strength and courage to bear his pain". In this way, Rama dissuaded his mother from following him to the forests.

Sita heard all this. When Rama returned to the palace to wear ochre robes, she also started to wear them, indicating her desire to follow Rama to the forest. Rama strongly prohibited her. In soft tones, she reminded him, "Lord! Why is there one set of moral codes for your mother and another for me? Is the code of conduct not common to all married women? Is it not the responsibility of a good wife to make her husband happy? She is supposed to look after his welfare. Does it not become my responsibility as well to do the same? Therefore, I shall defy your prohibition and accompany you to the forest."

Urmila was a great painter. She was in her room, painting the scene of Rama and Sita 's wedding, which she wanted to send to her father. At that moment, Lakshmana entered. He was in a very angry mood. Rama was not agreeing to his pleas and was going ahead with obeying Kaikeyi 's orders. He called out to Urmila and told her that he was going to the forests. Startled at the dramatic turn of events, Urmila got up in a hurry and in the process, accidentally toppled the canvas and spilled colours on it. She lamented, " Alas! This beautiful picture of Sri Rama 's wedding scene is totally spoilt now."

Lakshmana said, "Urmila ! I am responsible for spoiling your painting. Kaikeyi is responsible for ruining Rama 's coronation as the emperor. Today, both of us have caused only damage to others. I am leaving now."

Urmila's courage and strength of character now came to the fore. Lakshmana had already informed her that Sita was also accompanying Rama to the forest. Urmila was thrilled that her sister would accompany Rama and serve him. But she did not insist on following Lakshmana. On the contrary, she told Lakshmana, "Lord! I know that you are going to the forest with the sole objective of serving Sita and Rama . May you succeed without any obstacles. You must spend your days and nights in steadfast service to Rama and Sita. You need not worry about my welfare or even think about me. Never be concerned that you are not present by my side at Ayodhya to look after me.

Forget Ayodhya itself because, henceforth, the forest is your Ayodhya. This Ayodhya without you is the forest. Hence, don't give any scope for concerns about me. On my part, I shall happily contemplate on you and spend my time here."

Urmila thus gave tremendous courage to her husband. She also foresaw the possibility of Lakshmana's service to Rama and Sita being disturbed whenever he thought of her. Hence, she extracted a promise from her husband that he would not even think about her during the course of fourteen-year exile. She supposed, "In the forest, Rama will be your father and Sita, your mother. Your primary concern should be to serve them faithfully. Hence, forget all of us here." This was the promise she took from Lakshmana and cheerfully sent Lakshmana to the forest. Kausalya might have grieved a little, but not Urmila. This is the attribute of an ideal daughter-in-law. She must always encourage her husband by giving him strength and courage appropriately. A housewife is also called grihalakshmi and dharmapatni. Urmila discharged her duty as a dharmapathni by encouraging Lakshmana to tread the path of righteousness.

Bharatha, Satrughna, Mandavi, and Sruthakirthi were absent when all this action was taking place. They were away on a holiday to the Kaikeya kingdom. Mother Kausalya was highly distressed at the turn of events. At this juncture, Sumithra 's noble qualities had a close inspection. As her name, so was her character. She was verily the good friend. She had a pure heart. She didn't weep at the turn of the events. Instead, with joy, she consoled Kausalya, "Sister, why are you so sad? Rama, who has incarnated for the emancipation of mankind, can never come to any harm. If you are concerned about his physical welfare, my son Lakshmana is anyway always going to be there with Rama. He will be Rama's attendant and aide. You mustn't give any scope for fear or anxiety."

Yet, Kausalya was the womb that bore Rama. Her pain at his exile was, therefore, immense. In this context, the noble and courageous counsel of Sumithra to Kausalya was much more laudable. However when dealing with the epic Ramayana, hardly anyone discusses these noble attributes of

Sumithra. She further told Kausalya, "this entire drama is the master plan of God. You and I cannot add or change anything in this. For the welfare of the world and the establishment of dharma, God has enacted this mission. Hence, sister! Don't cry. Your tears at the time of departure of your sons will only prove inauspicious to them. With cheer and joy, bless them and send them." Thus did Sumithra stand by Kausalya and give her a great deal of courage. The princes and Sita soon left.

Meanwhile, Dasaratha regained consciousness and recalled everything. Utterly agitated, he rushed into the street, shouting, " Rama, are you going? No, no! Please wait!" Sumantha was the charioteer. Dasaratha implored, "O Sumantha! Stop! Stay a moment! Let me glimpse my Rama just once."

Rama neither asked Sumantha to stop nor tell him to move on. He merely told him to discharge his duty. Several scholars have depicted at this point that Rama had asked Sunantha to utter a lie and say that he hadn't heard the king's plea to stop. On the contrary, he maintained silence. In such matters of principle and discipline, both Rama and Lakshmana were very strict. They are the ideals to be emulated when it comes to attaining victory and obeying one's parents' commands.

Lakshmana lived in the forests with Sita and Rama for fourteen years. Yet, not even once did he raise his head and observe Sita's face. On the Rishyamukha mountain, when Sugriva and Rama met and talked, a bundle that contained all of Sita's jewellery was brought. She had hurled the bundle to the ground when Ravana was whisking her away by the aerial route to Lanka. Sugriva had preserved the bundle, since he didn't know to whom the jewellery belonged. When Sugriva was now engaged in a conversation with Rama and Lakshmana, he had the parcel opened and showed Rama the jewellery. He asked if they belonged to mother Sita or if some demons had dropped them accidentally. Rama examined everything but was at a loss to identify any of them. Nowadays, the entire list of the wife's jewellery, along with their appearance and shape is already available! Rama passed the jewellery to Lakshmana and asked him to identify them. Of all of them, Lakshmana positively identified only the anklets as having belonged to Sita. Rama asked,

"How could you say so?"

Lakshmana replied, "Every day after my bath, I would offer salutations at my mother Sita's feet. Hence, I know these by sight." What noble ideals! For fourteen years they were together in the same hut; yet, Lakshmana never looked at Sita's face.

Since they had such noble character, they were blessed with what has been described as lavanya. Lavanya in Sanskrit means a great reputation. It is used as a mere name today. It actually means purity derived from strict discipline and character.

This was the lofty standard of ideals established by Rama and Lakshmana. Meanwhile, Dasaratha, unable to bear the agony of separation from Rama, shed his mortal coils. There was now a dilemma as to who would perform his last rites. Rama and Lakshmana were away in exile. Bharatha and Satrughna were in their maternal uncle's house at Kaikeya kingdom. It would take at least ten days for their arrival. Hence, Vasishta, Viswamitra, and other sages decided that the body should be embalmed and preserved in oil. There was nothing like ice or morgue facilities in those days. And there remained Dasaratha's body for fourteen days.

Bharatha and Satrughna arrived. Satrughna is another role model that the Ramayana has to present. He matched Lakshmana in every way. While Satrughna would always serve Bharatha, Lakshmana engaged himself in service to Lord Rama. Hence, the twins spent their life in serving their elder brothers. Bharatha always relied on Satrughna's wisdom and sane counsel. True to his name, Satrughna was one of tremendous strength and valour - one who destroyed his enemies. There was none to surpass him when it came to routing the enemies. It was his presence that enabled Rama, Lakshmana, and Bharatha to remain safe and secure. Satrughna was one who never talked. Even Lakshmana would talk and sometimes argue, but not Satrughna.

Once, before the wedding episode, Rama, Lakshmana and Sage Viswamitra was going to the sage's hermitage. They crossed the river Sarayu in a boat

and reached the other bank. There, they saw a beautiful ashram or hermitage. Lakshmana was astounded and asked Rama, "Brother, what is this place? It appears like a beautiful township."

Viswamitra replied, "Don't be in a hurry. I'll explain. This hermitage is not an ordinary one. It belongs to Manmatha. He was supremely handsome. He could attract everyone to him. He developed his inner and external strengths and powers. However, he tried to influence Lord Siva and was cursed by him to remain formless - angaheena. That is why this domain is called Anga Desha - the kingdom of Anga. It is a sacred spot because Lord Siva traveled here. It is hence the gift of Lord Siva and His very own place."

They then rested for the night in the ashram. At dawn, the residents of the ashram made them board a boat and gave them a very warm send-off. They realised that the princes were the sons of emperor Dasaratha. Hence, they were honoured accordingly and put on a well-decorated boat to proceed with their journey.

Shortly, a terrific roar could be heard in the distance. A fearful forest, with full of wild beasts, came into view. Lakshmana asked Sage Viswamitra, "Master! Where is this loud sound coming from? What is the name of this eerie place?"

The sage replied, "Son! The booming sound is the river Sarayu merging into the mighty Ganges. The sacred Ganges is like a huge ocean into which this river Sarayu is merging. This is causing this huge roar. This forest is infested with wild beasts and terrible demons."

They soon stepped into the forest. In all directions wild beasts were seen, and eerie sounds were emanating from all directions. This was the domain of Ravana's sister, the demoness Surpanaka, and a sense of fear was stuck in anyone who dared enter the forest, since every step was fraught with danger. Hence Viswamitra repeatedly blessed Rama, "O Rama! May all auspiciousness be added on to you."

Shortly, Lakshmana fell behind while Rama and Viswamitra walked on.

Lakshmana, who wanted to attend to his ablutions, moved a certain distance away. When he caught up with them again, his mind has totally changed. He suddenly burst out, "Brother! What is all this trouble? Why are you, one who is supposed to enjoy every luxury, suffering here? Why am I supposed to suffer with you? I shall make remedies once we return. Let us go back to Ayodhya now. Why should we go further in this terrible forest? How are we expected to eat and foster ourselves?" This was the sudden burst of anger from Lakshmana.

Rama merely smiled and expressed no reaction. Instead, he took Lakshmana's hand and led him away from the forest and out of the forest. The anger that erupted in Lakshmana stayed till they reached the borders of the forest. The instant Rama led Lakshmana out of the forest, Lakshmana at once calmed down to his usual self. As Rama let Lakshmana relax and calm down under a tree, he explained to the perplexed Lakshmana, "This is the kingdom of Ravana 's sister, Surpanaka . She roams freely in this area. You two had stepped into that area. Hence, the vibrations of that place - sthalabalam - affected you. Surpanaka's evil qualities diffused into you and forced you to behave thus. We shall leave this place and go away."

Lakshmana felt thoroughly ashamed of his earlier behaviour. "Alas! What a shame! How could I utter such rough and uncultured words? It is not in me to talk thus. This is definitely the vibration of demonic surroundings. They are not my true feelings." So, consoling himself, he asked Rama's pardon, and they proceeded on their journey.

Shortly, they could experience the pleasant vibrations of Siddhashrama. The cool breeze and the vedic chants, charged the place with holiness. Viswamitra then explained, "Sons! This is our Siddhashrama . Lord Vamana was born here. Lord Siva resided here for a few days."

At Siddhashrama, Viswamitra entrusted Rama and Lakshmana with a job. He said, "Sons! You have come here to protect a yajna (sacred ritual or sacrifice). You should undertake that responsibility. This was also the command of your father. From this moment onward, you are expected to desist from eating and

resting. This itself is a big yajna that you two shall perform. You should sanctify it and emerge successful." Rama and Lakshmana were equal to the task. They never displayed any tiredness, difficulty ,or weakness.

As the dawn broke, the great yajna was started. The instant the mantras were uttered, Rama and Lakshmana went into high alert and patrolled the place. A huge roar could be heard. One of the sages told the brothers, "There come the demonic hordes. They will be lead by Chanda and Amarka. Be ready." They were without food or water or sleep. Yet, they successfully discharged their duty and killed the demons and saw to it that the yajna was performed successfully.

The total dedication of Rama and Lakshmana to the task entrusted by Viswamitra can be understood from the following episode. As the yajna concluded, a troop of soldiers came to the ashram. They handed an invitation to Sage Viswamitra. This was a personal invitation from King Janaka of Mithila. He had sent similar invitations to all kings and princes to try and lift the bow of Lord Siva and win the hand of his daughter, Sita. In such an assembly, he prayed that the great sage too be present and shower his blessings. Sage Viswamitra was happy and, with great excitement, narrated to Rama and Lakshmana the qualities of the great bow of Lord Siva. He said, "Sons! You must come and see the bow. There cannot be another of its kind in this world. It is a gift from the heavens. This bow is not an ordinary one. It is worth going and seeing."

Rama and Lakshmana naturally developed a curiosity to take a look at the bow. However, Rama gently reminded the sage, "Master! Our father had only asked us to come with you and protect the yajna. We have no instructions to go to Mithila and see the bow. We cannot transgress our father's orders."

For this Vishwamithra replied, " Was it also not your father's command that you should obey my instructions? Hence, you must obey my orders!" The princes could only keep quite and make preparations to accompany the sage on the new journey.

For the welfare of this country, you all need to minutely scrutinize how delicately, correctly, and righteously Rama handled each situation. He killed all the demons and safeguarded the righteous. All these are actually small parts of a Divine master plan. It was willed that Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Satrughna take birth so that they could cause the annihilation of the demons.

Lankini , the guardian deity of Lanka, also made the prophecy of the doom of the demons. When Brahma asked Ravana to pray for a boon, the demon said, "My death should not be caused by the Gods, Yakshas, demons, Kinchas, or Kimpurushas. Grant me this boon."

Rama had expertly detected the fatal flaw in this boon. The name of man was missing from the list! Since Ravana had made this omission, his death was certain at the hands of a man. Lord Vishnu hence decided to incarnate in human form. Thus, Rama prayed to Viswamitra, "Ravana's death at my hands is certain. You must therefore propagate to one and all that Rama is coming. He shall definitely kill Ravana."

In the entire creation, Divinity assumes the role of being the vital substance. Rama belonged to the solar dynasty. The Sun God was their guardian deity. Without the sun's nourishing rays, life cannot thrive on earth. When creation first began, it took a few crores of years for light to dawn. It was all darkness until then. Similarly, after the birth of Rama, the sun could not shine for fifteen days! Consequently, the moon also remained invisible. Both the sun and the moon lamented that they could not catch the glimpse of the divine incarnation of Lord Rama. The Moon God performed a penance, praying to catch a glimpse of Lord Rama. At that time, Lord Rama appeared before the Moon God and said, "I know that you could not see me for the first fifteen days after my birth. I hereby grant you a boon. In my next incarnation, you shall have my first darshan - even before anybody else can see me." And it so proved to be. When the next incarnation of Krishna took place, at the midnight hours, as Vasudeva carried the baby to the safety of Nanda's house, it was the moon that had the first darshan of the divine child.

In this way, there are several intricate, secret, and profound teachings in the Ramayana. There are no contradictions or confusions in this epic. The story of Rama is eternal and eminently readable. No matter how many times it is heard, it still does not satiate the desire to hear it again and again. This sacred story can never be forgotten. Rama 's divine actions can never be ignored. Everything that he did was steeped in righteousness. All that he spoke was only the truth. In such a sacred epic, several scholars have introduced distorted explanations and have painted an unholy hue about it. There can be no scope of perversions in the Ramayana. There can be no place in it for even an iota of untruth and falsehood. The entire story, from start to end, is nothing but the truth - eternal, pure, and serene.

Today, we shall stop with the events of Siddhashrama. The nature of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Satrughna is quite unique and wonderful. Sage Vasishtha has described it as follows:

They are wonderful; they are worshipped in all the three worlds; They are so close to one's heart, they are one's true friends; They are revered by the sages, men, animals and plants too; Such is the beauty of Lord Vishnu's deeds!

It is only the ignoramuses that are blind to the inner significance of the Lord's deeds and misinterpret them. This causes confusion and deviates the mind of the true seeker from the sacred truth. The history of Lord Rama is highly sacred. It is only when you hear the story fully that you can understand the holiness associated with it.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

26. As You Think, So You Become

Date: 19 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

The tongue is the cause of truth and prosperity.
The tongue also earns for us friends and relatives.
It is the tongue that brings bondage and death.

Embodiments of Love!

The words of man earn him wealth and riches. The words of man cause bondage. Hence, words are cause for good and evil. It is better to speak every word only after due ruminantion and reflection. Words help us a lot in life.

The power of words

Man should use his words with utmost care and caution. It is important that we should use words after weighing pros and cons. We should not be hurt, nor should we hurt others. Words give life and take away life.

Words are dainty delicacies.
Words are aromatic fragrance.
Words are the essence of nectar.
Words are sweet honeybees.

The words uttered by Rama were sweet and delicious. Words should be pleasant, and they should be used in moderation. Words were the cause of Rama's exile into the forest, Kaika's infamy, and Dasaratha's death. Since words contain potent sounds, we should use them with utmost care and caution, discretion and discrimination. The words of promise given by

Dasaratha to Kaikeyi at the time of battle brought sorrow and suffering to him. So we should use words with utmost care.

Life is impermanent.

Impermanent are wealth and youth.

Kith and kin are also important.

Only truth, good, and reputation are permanent.

The four sages Sanaka, Sanandana, and Sanatkumara, and Sanatsujata live in human beings and render help to them. They come to the rescue of human beings in time of dangers and ward off calamities. The four noble sages are eternal benefactors who work for the welfare of humanity, day and night.

When Rama was about to leave for the forest, Kausalya said to her son, "Rama! The four sages Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara, and Sanatsujata will be with you always and protect you as eyelids protect the eyes."

Before Kausalya gave birth to Rama she had a daughter named Shanta. Since she was a female child and was not qualified to succeed to the throne, he gave her in adoption to a sage. The sage brought her up and gave her in marriage to sage Rishyasringa.

Dasaratha invited noble sages to attend the putrakameshti yaga (a sacrificial ritual) on the advice of his minister Sumanta. Dasaratha invited sage Rishyasringa to come and grace the function. Rishyasringa was a noble sage. There were timely rains, peace, and prosperity, and people lived in joy and plenty wherever Rishya sringa set foot. Sumantha went to Rishyasringa and asked him to be the chief rithwik for the yaga.

Rishyasringa replied to him, "I can't come alone. I agree to be the chief rithwik, but my consort Shanta should come with me. She shall also function as a rithwik."

Sumanta agreed to this. Shanta and Rishyasringa reached there. As soon as she reached Ayodhya, Shanta did prostrations at the feet of Dasaratha and Kausalya. Dasaratha wondered who she was, since she looked like a rishi. Wherever she set foot, drought vanished, making place for timely rains. When the parents wondered who she was, Shanta had to reveal her identity to Dasaratha and Kausalya. She said "I am your daughter, Shanta". Dasaratha and Kausalya were overjoyed when they realised that she was Shanta, whom they had given away in adoption to a sage.

Rama and Lakshmana, led by sage Viswamitra, reached Siddhashrama. Both brothers guarded the yaga with great care and killed the demons that tried to disturb the yaga. They kept strict vigil over the yaga without food and sleep. Viswamitra was very happy on the successful completion of the yagna. Rama and Lakshmana prayed for permission to go back to Ayodhya. Viswamitra had promised Dasaratha that he would send them back hale and healthy. At that time, a messenger came from Mithilapura with a message for him. Janaka sent a message to Viswamitra, praying to him to come and attend the function, where the bow of Siva was to be lifted and strung.

After getting Janaka's message, the venerable sage said to Rama and Lakshmana, "You should go to Mithila to see the bow of Shiva". As the two brothers were interested in the bow of Siva, they obeyed the command of the sage and went to Mithila with him. Rama broke the bow, but he refused to marry Sita without the permission of his parents.

Rama said to Viswamitra, "We have come with you for the protection of the yaga and not for entering into marital relationships. We won't take a step further in this regard without the permission of our father." Viswamitra somehow wanted to convince Rama and Lakshmana for the marriage.

Once upon a time, Viswamitra was a great emperor. He wanted to take away Shabala, the sacred cow, from the ashram of Vashista without his permission. A fierce battle ensued between the army of Viswamitra and the army created by the cow. Viswamitra was defeated in the battle, and all his sons died. Realizing that material wealth was no match to spiritual wealth, he became

an ascetic.

Viswamitra asked Rama and Lakshmana to marry without waiting for permission of Dasaratha, but Rama and Lakshmana were very firm. They said to the sage, "O! Master, the descendents of Ikshvaku always observed the command of their parents. They would not do anything without the permission of the parents. Hence, it is not proper on our part to act without the permission of our parents." Rama was steadfast in His adherence to Truth. He always spoke Truth and never swerved away from it. It is said,

The world is born of Truth.

Everything merges in Truth.

There is no place in the world, where the power of Truth is not felt.

This is the pure Truth, which all of you should know.

Dasaratha and his three consorts Kausalya, Sumithra, and Kaikeyi agreed to the marriage. After the marriage, as they were returning to Ayodhya, Sage Parashurama encountered them. "Who is the stupid person who broke the Siva's bow?", roared Parashurama. He challenged Rama to a fight. Rama defeated him, and Parashurama submitted his two *kalas* (splendours) to Rama, who was endowed with twelve kalas. Rama shone with his own twelve kalas, two kalas from his brothers, and other two given by Parashurama. That is how Rama shone brilliantly with sixteen kalas.

Rama defeated Parashurama with love. Parashurama gave away his powerful weapons to Rama and said to Him, "Rama! You are now shining with sixteen kalas." He praised Rama and uttered the names of the Lord, and at the very end, he said

Ramaya Namaha

Salutations to Rama

Parashurama was an embodiment of Truth and divine powers. Parashurama surrendered to Rama, who was Truth par excellence. With the surrender of Parashurama, Rama's power became full and complete. Rama became Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent.

Once, sages and men went to Dasaratha and told about the atrocities performed by Ravana. Dasaratha asked them to go to Brahma and pray for his help. They went to Brahma, accompanied by sages Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatkumara, and Sanatsujatha.

Brahma said to them, "Ravana shall die only at the hands of a human being, since I gave the boon that he would not be killed by gods and demons."

Moved by the prayers of sages and people, Vishnu said to them, "I know all about your sufferings. Very soon, I will be born as a son to Dasaratha, and then I will relieve you of your sufferings." Vishnu fulfilled His promise, which he had given to the sages, by killing Ravana ultimately.

When Hanuman was about to enter Lanka, Lankini, who was guarding the gates of Lanka, said to him, "It won't be possible for you to enter Lanka without my permission. I am the guardian of Lanka." Saying these words she moved forward to hit at Hanuman.

When she was about to hit him, Hanuman lifted Lankini with his left hand and threw her down. Then Lankini remembered the prophecy, "It was the beginning of the doom of Lanka when a monkey hit her". Further she said, "Your touch has sanctified me."

Darshanam Papa nashanam,
Sparshanam karma vimochanam,
Sambashanam sankata nashanam.

The vision destroys all sins,
the touch frees a person from consequence of all actions, and,
the conversation eliminates all troubles.

Lankini said these words and received all blessings from Hanuman. "It is time for me to leave my body." Saying so, she breathed her last.

Kausalya felt sad that she was not able to experience Rama's divinity. "I will regard Rama as a human till He shows me the sign of His divinity." - that is how Kausalya was treating Rama as a human.

One day, Sumithra came and said to her, "Sister, Rama is not an ordinary boy. Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Satrughna also are not ordinary mortals."

Sita was firm in her decision to follow Rama into the forests. She said that it was her bounden duty to follow Rama to the forests. Sita went with Rama and Lakshmana in the forests.

Bharatha settled at Nandigrama, twelve miles from Ayodhya. He installed the *padukas* (sandals) of Rama and worshipped them with great devotion. The four brothers were the incarnations of the four Vedas. Rama was Yajur Veda; Lakshmana, who would always chant the praises of Rama, was Rig Veda; Bharatha, who would always sing the glory of Rama, was Sama Veda; Satrughna, who wielded the weapons for protection of Ayodhya and his brothers, was Atharvana Veda.

Bharatha lived in Nandigrama, devoting himself entirely to the contemplation of Rama, forgoing even food and sleep. His wife Mandavi was also a great devotee of Rama. She also lived in Nandigrama for fourteen years, serving her husband. Since Bharatha was immersed in the contemplation of Rama, He shone like Rama. When he entered Ayodhya with Rama, people could not distinguish between Rama and Bharatha.

Yad bhavam tad bhavathi
You become what you think

Mandavi was a virtuous lady, who was devoted to her husband. She payed due obedience to the mothers-in-law and her husband. She shone as an ideal to others. She too became like an ascetic, with only one plait of hair. When Rama was entering Ayodhya followed by three brothers and their wives, people could not distinguish between Sita and Mandavi.

Sita shone like an ascetic due to fourteen years of contemplation of Rama. Mandavi also shone like her, since she was always immersed in the contemplation of the Lord.

Bramhavid Bramhaiva Bhavati
The one who contemplates on the Brahman becomes brahman

As all the brothers had oneness of thought and feeling, their four consorts also had the same. All of them constituted an ideal home.

The other day, the lady from Greece mentioned about *vishwakutumba* (universal family). God is universal. The people of the universe are his kith and kin. The four consorts of the four brothers were the embodiments of virtues and ideal conduct. In fact, women are greater than men for, men have only three powers whereas women are endowed with seven powers. Since they have four powers extra, they shine with greater splendour.

Wasn't Savitri, who revived her dead husband, an Indian lady?
Wasn't Chandramati, who extinguished the consuming flames by the power of her truthfulness, an Indian lady?

Wasn't Sita, who leapt into the burning fire to prove her chastity, an Indian lady?

Wasn't Damayanti, who burnt the wicked hunter burn to ashes, an Indian lady?

Bharath, surrounded by seven seas and sanctified by the women of chastity, A land of noble culture, was indeed the teacher to the entire world.

Can you find chaste women like Savitri, Damayanti, etc., anywhere in the world? India is a great nation. Many eminent men took birth in this country, lived noble lives, and stood as examples to the entire mankind. The Ramayana is full of ideal men and women who shone as examples to humanity.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

27. The Ideal Brothers

Date: 20 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

All forms of His have manifested as Peace, All His names have manifested as Auspiciousness, He is the embodiment of Existence, Awareness, Bliss, and Nondualism, He is Truth, Auspiciousness, and Beauty.

The strength and capacities of the Divine are beyond comprehension. Yet, without understanding this, criticism of Divinity is rife. One may praise, another may defy, but Divinity remains the same. Neither will criticism diminish Divinity nor will praise enhance it. The traits of ebbing and rising are of this world. Divinity is unaffected by both of these. Those who hanker after name and fame can never comprehend Divinity. Thousands of students have passed out of the portals of this university, having acquired a totally free education. We have not published or advertised this fact. I derive my joy from their joy and remain contented.

Yesterday, we saw that Bharatha didn't go to Ayodhya with Rama's sandals. Instead, he built a tiny ashram at Nandi Grama and remained there, worshipping Rama's Lotus Feet. His wife Mandavi also spent her time contemplating Rama's name and thus gave support to her husband.

Rama and Sita spent their time moving in the forest. Lakshmana was totally dedicated to their service. But little is known about Satrughna. None of the texts mention about him. Intellectuals thrive in the thousands. People with a power to ask are also many. Sadly, there are very few who tend to enquire into the intricate and delicate spiritual matters.

From the times of Dasaratha, Sumantha remained the chief minister of the kingdom. He would obey every command of Dasaratha's regarding administration. In such a situation, the legal heir, Rama was in the forest. His

representative, Bharatha, was on a self-imposed exile at Nandi Grama. So, who was handling the day-to-day administration of Ayodhya? It is here that we must probe deeply. From dawn to dusk, it was Satrughna who stayed at Ayodhya, enquired into the problems of the citizens, and governed the kingdom. By night, he would faithfully report everything to Bharatha. Satrughna carried out every aspect of administration of the kingdom. Though he did so much, his name never appears anywhere in literature.

Both the sons of Sumithra always engaged in serving their elder brothers and fostering unity among themselves. They never went after name and fame. Satrughna dedicated himself totally to Bharatha and executed all his commands. He was highly intelligent, able, and powerful. Sadly, such a noble character has never been enquired into. For the long years, it was Satrughna who held the reins of the kingdom in his able hands. However, he would never disturb Bharatha even if he had doubts. The reason was that he worried that he would be responsible for disturbing Bharatha's concentration, since Bharatha was in constant meditation of Rama.

Sumithra had already made a promise to the other queens, "Kausalya! Your son may become the king. My son Lakshmana will become his personal aide. Kaikeyi! Bharatha may also become king. I shall then send Satrughna to serve him. Both my sons were born to serve and not to earn name, fame, or kingdoms."

How noble were the two brothers Lakshmana and Satrughna! Without them, both Rama and Bharatha would not have achieved their fame and glory. They always stood by their elder brothers, giving them solid support. This cooperation caused the brothers to remain very dear to each other.

At the time of the battle, when Lakshmana swooned, Rama lamented thus, "If I search, I may find a wife like Sita; I may find a mother like Kausalya; but a brother like Lakshmana can never be found." Rama was ready to give up anything for the sake of Lakshmana.

At that time, Hanuman came up to Rama. Rama told him, "Brother! You must

come to my assistance in My hour of need. Though your dedication and devotion are well known, I still ask of you this favour. You must go and bring me the Sanjeevani plant."

Hanuman was one who always obeyed Rama's command. He always moved as one amongst the four brothers. He promptly left, but ,unable to identify the plant, he uprooted the entire mountain and carried it to Lanka. As he was flying over Ayodhya, Bharatha spotted him. Bharatha was getting regular reports from the forest that the demons were troubling Rama. Bharatha promptly suspected this huge figure to be a rakshasa (demon) who intended serious harm to Rama. He took out his bow and shot at Hanuman.

Hanuman alighted, along with the mountain. Paying his respects to Bharatha, he said, "Oh! King! Lakshmana has fainted on the battlefield. I am taking this mountain containing the Sanjeevani herb to revive him. I don't know where the herb is on this mountain. Hence, in order to carry out Rama's command, I am taking away the entire mountain."

Bharatha was ecstatic at this news. He sent word for mother Kausalya and said, "Mother! This messenger has news about Rama." He then introduced Hanuman to her who went on to tell her in detail all the news of the battlefield.

"There is a fierce battle going on between Rama and Ravana. It shall definitely be over in a day or two. Lakshmana has fainted, and these herbs are meant to revive him."

Sumithra was also asked to come to Bharatha. She didn't express any anxiety at the news about Lakshmana. On the contrary she said, " I am never worried about my son's welfare. My only fear is that Rama may be put to inconvenience. If my son Lakshmana dies, I shall definitely send my other son Satrughna to serve Rama. My only aim is to see Rama happy. We should see to that there are no obstructions in the service to Rama. It is with this intention that I had sent Lakshmana to the forest with Rama."

Hanuman then conveyed the news of Lakshmana's fainting to Lakshmana's wife, Urmila. She had spent the entire fourteen years painting the scene of Rama's wedding to Sita. Bharatha approached her and broke the news. He said, "Lakshmana's life is in danger. I am at a loss for words and don't know what to do."

Urmila didn't show a trace of fear or worry. She said, "My husband's heart is filled with the name of Rama. Therefore, he is perhaps sleeping peacefully. All the pain and suffering must be only Rama's. No danger can befall my husband. He will always remain safe."

What we need to recognize here is that, the wives of the four brothers were as virtuous and noble as their husbands. The happiness and prosperity of the husbands was caused by the noble qualities of their wives. The good conduct and good actions of the wives were also responsible. Their character gave their husbands tremendous support.

After the news was conveyed, Hanuman quickly continued his journey to the battlefield. What we need to know here is, as much as the four brothers spread their ideals to the world, their wives didn't lag behind in doing the same. Since her husband Satrughna ruled the kingdom, Shrutakeerti lent admirable support to him, just as Mandavi stood by Bharatha. They never aspired for anything else. Except at the time of dawn and dusk when they would go to mother Kausalya for her blessings, they never had any other commitments. It was a good fortune of the ancient times to have obtained such daughter-in-laws. The good influence of such noble characters can be felt throughout the Ramayana.

For fourteen long years, Ayodhya saw peace, prosperity, and security aplenty. Truth was spoken and righteousness was adhered to in every corner of the country. Satrughna's able rule assured this. He would not sleep or rest at all, anticipating some problem or other. He used to worry that any lapse in his administration would fetch a bad name for Bharatha. Satrughna found it intolerable that Bharatha would get a bad name due to his mistakes. He looked after the kingdom with care and concern as a gift from Lord Rama. He

always followed Rama's command. Satrughna ruled Ayodhya with such noble feelings.

Bharatha never played an active role in the administration of the kingdom. He would merely nod and accede to anything that Satrughna said. What was the reason for this blind trust? Bharatha knew Satrughna's selfless love. He also knew that Satrughna was very able and would never allow any enemy to plan a misadventure toward Ayodhya. True to his name, Satrughna could destroy any such enemy. This led to lasting peace in Ayodhya.

The principle followed by the ancient Indians were: Speak the truth, follow righteousness (Sathyam vada; dharmam chara) and pray for the safety of the world. They also laid emphasis on unity amongst the brothers. None must face disrepute. Everyone must live his life with virtue and good name.

Once, a message arrived from Rama speaking of the enormous trouble that demons were heaping on Him. A particular mention was made of the terrible duo Khara and Dushana. Khara was a close associate of the demon king Ravana. He was very fond of troubling everybody. He even attempted to secretly harm Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita. Bharatha was informed of these developments. Dushana was the commander-in-chief of Khara's army. It was Surpanaka who poisoned the ears of Khara and Dushana and goaded them to attack the brothers. Hence, Bharatha was anxiously awaiting news about Rama from his messengers. He was also hesitant to approach the elders with this news. Such news was generally conveyed to Sumitra. She was a great lady. She would always use soft words and advise aptly. Therefore, she was relied upon.

At this moment of Bharatha's anxiety, she approached him and asked him the reason for his worry. It may be observed that Bharatha did not summon Kaikeyi. Sumitra consoled Bharatha and said, "Don't worry about Rama. You brothers have different bodies, but your souls are the same. Don't look for any differences amongst yourselves because there is none. Stay united at this juncture and have courage. Rama will not come to any harm. He is Divinity incarnate. Therefore, don't give scope for any worries." She thus advised

Bharatha and left.

Though Satrughna ruled the kingdom on behalf of Bharatha, he could never summon courage to advise his elder brother. He never talked back to his elders. Even if you are replying to elders, you must think carefully and answer. It is a grave mistake to talk to them as you like. Such actions may even lead to some dangers. Truth must be spoken. Righteousness must be adhered to. Brothers and sisters must live as a closely-knit unit, with understanding among themselves. In this way, Bharatha and Satrughna spent their time in Ayodhya, waiting for Rama.

Shrutakeerti's is another character in the Ramayana that is extremely noble. It was always her desire to meet her husband at night times, listen to what problems he was facing, and, if possible, lighten his burden by giving him suitable advice. She would never utter words that could harm others. 'Shruta+Keerti', as the name suggests, she would always listen to good only. In turn, she would always speak what was good and propagated that which was pleasant and pleasing to the ear. She would encourage only that which was good and beneficial to others. Dasaratha had daughters-in-law who were real gems.

However, in our story, only Rama and Sita are depicted as the lead characters. Not much importance is given to the other roles in the epic. If Lakshmana, Satrughna, Urmila, Mandavi, and Shrutakeerti were not there, the glory of Rama and Sita could not have been highlighted. Rama could not live even a minute without Lakshmana by his side. He wouldn't eat without Lakshmana's company. Neither would he go to sleep without Lakshmana. Hence, Rama demonstrated the ideal of unity and coexistence to the world. In the Vedas, there is a sloka that aptly describes this idealism.

Let us all move together, let us all grow together, Let us all stay united and share our knowledge, Let us live together with friendship and without disharmony.

The four brothers displayed such a unity amongst themselves. Today, if there are four children in the house, they take to four different directions.

Surpanaka ran wailing to her brother Ravana in Lanka. She was bleeding from her wounds and lamented to Ravana, "Brother! There are two princes who are the sons of emperor Dasaratha. They are responsible for my sorry state."

Ravana had a very pertinent question to ask her. He said, "Sister! Your nose and ears are separate entities on your face. Both couldn't have been cut off at the same time. How is it that you didn't escape after your nose was mutilated? Why did you remain standing till your ears were also cut off?"

Surpanaka replied, "Brother! I can't explain this. The moment Lakshmana touched me; I was lost in a trance. Their handsome and regal bearing enraptured me. It was like I lost all my consciousness and remained rooted to the spot." In this way, she kept eulogizing the two princes' noble bearing and virtues. There are several such incidents and descriptions in the epic Ramayana.

Today, we have seen what an important role Satrughna played in governing Ayodhya ably for fourteen long years. Bharatha was the ruler representative only in name. The groundwork was carried out entirely by Satrughna. He alone was responsible for keeping the boundaries of Ayodhya safe. During the fourteen years, not even a single enemy dared march on Ayodhya. There was no unrest amongst the civilians.

Initially, there were fears about an Ayodhya without a king. Rama advised Bharatha regarding the duties of a ruler. He said, "Bharatha, you are now the king. Our father was a mighty emperor, who ruled his kingdom well. After his death, it is your responsibility now. Don't answer back to anyone. Never use harsh words to hurt anyone. Always carry out pleasant conversations. There must be no agitation in our kingdom." Bharatha and Satrughna both received the advice and followed it sincerely.

Today, Mariwala spoke extensively about the achievements of our hospital. I always advise my students not to publicise what we do in the hospital. There are several wonderful things that are happening. One patient from Nepal had his heart on his right hand side! Our doctors have shifted it back to the correct location. The surgery was understandably highly complicated. Still it was carried out. I told my students that no one need be informed about this. People may accuse us of praising ourselves. I told them that their main task is to make everyone happy.

Today, Mariwala narrated so many incidents that he had never briefed Me about. These boys from the hospital sleep on the ground floor ,while I stay on the first floor. They always discuss only hospital-related matters. I keep telling them, "Don't speak about them anywhere outside. You do your duty sincerely. Extend every possible comforts to those who come."

The other day, I was informed that a particular injection was to be administered to a patient in order to save his life. That injection costs Rs. 80,000! Mariwala came and asked if we could go ahead and buy such an expensive injection. I replied that to save a life, any amount should be spent. I shall bear the expenses, but get the medicine and save his life.

Instantly we dispatched a courier to Bangalore and obtained the required injection. These are several such expensive medicines that need to be used in the hospital. No one knows about these details. I believe that we must not look at the cost if it will save a life. I tell our doctors to continue with their duty and keep the patients healthy and safe. The patients should not be subjected to any form of inconvenience.

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html			

28. Rama, The Ideal Hero

Date: 21 May 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

The one whose heart is laden with compassion, The one whose words are marked by truth, The one whose time is spent in performing beneficial deeds for the welfare of others, Such ones are not affected by influence of the age of Kali.

Embodiments of Love!

Today, the power of Kali affects everybody without any distinction. Realising that Ravana would pass away in a few minutes, many sages, scholars, and noble men came to Ravana and asked him, "O Ravana! You performed many good deeds as well as evil deeds. What is it the most memorable thing that you have discovered in your life?"

Ravana replied, "Sirs! Don't delay the noble acts you want to perform at any time. Put into action whatever noble thoughts and feelings that arise in your heart instantaneously. Procrastination is the thief of time. It is dangerous to delay. At one time, I thought of connecting the earth and heaven with a ladder. I wished to turn the saline water surrounding Lanka into sweet water. I wished to bring comfort and solace to the residents of Hell. Though I decided to do these things, I delayed acting. Thereafter, I could never succeed in doing them. Translate into action whatever good resolve emanates in your minds. We waste our time in postponing the good deeds. We should be ever ready to put into action all the good thoughts that arise in the mind."

This is the noble advice that Ravana gave to the people who came to him at the fag end of his life. Since he delayed the performance of good deeds, it brought disaster to him.

While Rama and Lakshmana were moving in the forest in search of Sita, they accosted a strange person who had his face in his stomach. Seeing his form, they concluded that this person was a demon. Rama and Lakshmana went to the demon and asked him, "Who are you? You don't have any head. How do you live? Why don't you have a neck, like other people have?"

The strange creature answered, "O sir! My name is Kabandha. I have hands that can extend to ten miles. They can grasp any prey that I desire to eat. I fill my stomach without moving much. Who are you? Why have you entered this dense and terrible forest? You seem to be tender beings. You look like princes. To which kingdom do you belong?"

Rama, who always spoke the truth, replied, "We have come here in obedience to the command of our father. I suffer from the pangs of separation from my wife. Someone has kidnapped her. Please tell us where she is and what happened to her."

Kabandha told Rama, "O sir! First burn me to ashes. I will then give you all the information you need."

They killed him and burned his body. A handsome being arose out of the ashes and told them, "I was forced to assume this ugly form due to the curses of sages. I was told that whoever burns me to ashes is verily God himself."

Lakshmana answered Kabandha, "He is Rama, my elder brother."

Kabandha said, "O Rama! Your Sita is in Lanka. She is a lady of great chastity. Whoever dares touch her will be burned to ashes. Very soon you will see Sita in Lanka and will go back to Ayodhya. My words never fail. May you enjoy comfort and solace immediately."

After saying these words, Kabandha vanished.

Vali and Sugriva were brothers, who ruled over their kingdoms. They were men of great valour and courage. Vali decided to deprive Sugriva of his

kingdom. Vali wanted to put Sugriva to many troubles and banish him from the Kishkinda kingdom. Rama befriended Sugriva, Hanuman, and other Vanara warriors. Sugriva rendered all help required to search for Sita. He rallied his forces and reached the shores of the sea.

They then encountered the problem as to who would cross the sea and go to Lanka. The veterans said that they did not have enough strength to cross over. No one came forward to cross the ocean. Hanuman volunteered to do so and accomplish Rama's mission. He was ever ready to do any work for the Lord.

In the meanwhile let us find out about Vali. Vali was a very strong and powerful Vanara king, but he was wicked and indulged in evil deeds. Once, Vali fought against a powerful demon Dundhubi. He killed him in the fight and hurled his dead body. The body fell on the Rishyamukha Mountain, where the sage Matanga was doing penance. The blood dripping from the body of the demon fell on sage Matanga and disturbed him. Enraged, he cursed that whoever killed Dundhubi would have his head broken into a thousand pieces if ever he set foot on that mountain.

Vali picked up a quarrel with Sugriva, his own brother, and banished him from the kingdom. Sugriva started living on the Rishyamukha Mountain for he felt that Vali would not be able to touch him if he went to Rishyamukha due to sage Matanga's curse. Hence, Sugriva, accompanied by Hanuman and other well wishers, settled on the Rishyamukha Mountain. He was contemplating on the ways and means of defeating Vali.

One day, Sugriva and Hanuman noticed two handsome persons walking at a distance in the forest. He wondered who they were. He thought that they might have come for hunting. He sent Hanuman to find out about the two brothers.

Hanuman disguised himself as a Brahmin and met Rama and Lakshmana. Hanuman's speech was soft and gentle. He introduced himself as a Minister of Sugriva and volunteered to carry them on his shoulders and take them to

Sugriva.

There ensued a beautiful conversation between Rama and Sugriva. Rama understood from the conversation that Vali was unjust towards Sugriva. Vali had appropriated the kingdom of Sugriva and driven him out of the kingdom. He accused Sugriva of criminal conduct. Sugriva had never indulged in any such crime. Sugriva was in need of a friend who was stronger than Vali. He wanted to test whether Rama was stronger than Vali. He wanted to enlist the help of Rama only if he proved himself to be stronger than Vali.

So, Sugriva said to Rama, " Rama, my brother is of great power and strength. He has also many virtues. I want to find out whether you are stronger than my brother." When Rama nodded his ascent, he further said to him, "Once my brother shot an arrow through the sal trees. It pierced five sal trees in a row and emerged out of them. It is very difficult to charge an arrow through a sal tree because it is made of hardwood. Shoot an arrow and let it pierce through at least four trees."

Rama smiled and discharged the arrow. The arrow pierced a number of trees. Sugriva was deeply impressed by the strength of Rama. He sought the help of Rama to defeat Vali. He also promised to help Rama in searching for Sita. Rama asked Sugriva to call his brother for a fight but cautioned him that that the fight should take place ten miles away from Kishkindha.

Rama requested Sugriva to do this because the rules of exile prohibited him from entering into cities and villages. These rules compelled him to confine himself only to the forests. Hence, he wanted Sugriva to call Vali out of his kingdom so that he would be able to help Sugriva.

As advised by Rama, Sugriva roared and called Vali for a fight.

Tara was the faithful wife of Vali. She wanted to restrain him from entering into a fight with Sugriva. She pleaded with him by holding his hands; "You should not go for a fight now. I have heard that Sugriva befriended some powerful princes to help him. Don't be in haste. It is dangerous to be hasty.

The wise ones pause and ponder before doing any work. Haste can make waste. It can be dangerous too."

Tara spoke these words to Vali and took him back. She was a chaste wife who had many virtues. She was highly intelligent and virtuous.

However, when Sugriva persisted in his challenge, Vali came out running to fight. Sugriva fought valiantly, but slowly Vali gained an upper hand. He then beat Sugriva black and blue.

Sugriva felt disappointed that Rama had not come to his rescue. He expressed his disappointment to Sri Rama. Sri Rama explained to him that he could not distinguish the two brothers, since they looked alike. Rama talked to him sweetly and consoled him. He also infused courage into him and assured him that he would kill Vali in the next fight. But he asked Sugriva to have a garland around his neck so that He would be able to distinguish him from Vali. He asked Lakshmana to gather flowers in the forest and string them into a garland. Sugriva put the garland on and challenged Vali for a fight for the second time.

A fierce fight ensued between the two brothers. Rama, hiding behind a tree, shot an arrow at Vali and brought him down. Though Vali fell down, there was still life left in him. Sri Rama went to Vali and said to him, " You have sinned against your brother Sugriva, you have appropriated his wife. That is a sin because a brother's wife is like one's mother. You appropriated his kingdom, banished him, and appropriated his wife. You blamed him for crimes that he had not committed. Since he surrendered to Me, I promised him that I would help him".

Vali said to him, "O Rama! You have come into the forest to keep up the word of your father. But you have interfered between my brother and me. It is unjust on your part to kill a person hiding behind a tree".

Sri Rama replied, "O Vali! What you have said is correct. I no longer live in Ayodhya. I am like a hunter moving in the forest. I am in exile, and you

belong to the race of animals. A hunter kills an animal hiding behind a tree. He never goes face to face with an animal to kill it. So I had to kill you hiding behind a tree".

Vali listened to him and further said, "Rama, you are of great power and strength, you could have come face to face to fight with me".

Sri Rama replied to him, "Vali, I know the boon that was bestowed on you. You have a boon that whoever fights you face to face, half of his strength will enter into you. I know this secret".

Vali entered into long argumentation with Rama, but Rama convinced him of his folly. Finally, Vali called out to Rama and said, "O Rama! My life is ebbing away. Make a promise to me that you will make my son, Angada, the crown-prince of Kishkinda". Rama agreed to this and fulfilled the promise that He gave to Vali. He crowned Sugriva as the king and Angada as the crown prince.

There are three clashes amongst brothers mentioned in the Ramayana. They are:

- (1) the clash between Vali and Sugriva
- (2) the clash between Ravana and Vibhishana, and
- (3) the 'clash' between Rama and Bharatha.

Vibhishana protested against the evil actions of his brother Ravana and incurred his anger. When Ravana banished Vibhishana, he sought refuge at Rama's feet. He helped Rama against Ravana. Rama crowned him as the King of Lanka after killing Ravana. Sugriva sought the help of Rama to kill Vali; he then became the King of Kishkinda.

In the first two cases, one brother became the king by standing against his own other brother. But the 'clash' between Rama and Bharatha was of a different kind! Neither of the brothers wanted to become king of Ayodhya!

Bharatha told Rama, "Rama, you are the eldest and only you have the right to become the king."

But Rama protested, " I will not step into Ayodhya, since I want to respect the promise given to my father. You have to rule over the kingdom, since it is mother's wish". Thus, Rama refused to yield to the request of Bharatha and rule over the Kingdom. Both brothers wanted to convince the other to rule over Ayodhya. At last, sage Vashishta came out with the solution that Bharatha should take care of Ayodhya, keeping Rama's sandals on the throne, till Rama came to Ayodhya after fourteen years of exile. Both brothers had to accept Vashishta's solution.

Rama adhered to truth at all times, "Sathyam Nasthi Parodharmah". For him observance of truth was the highest dharma. He clung to dharma tenaciously and believed that truth would be triumphant at the end. Rama was steadfast in his observance of sathya (truth) and dharma.

At last, the battle between Rama and Ravana started. Rama had respect for Ravana, though he was his enemy. He even praised the virtues of Ravana. He knew that Ravana was under the curse given to Jaya and Vijaya. Though Rama killed Ravana, he forgave him.

Rama had to act by public opinion also. Since some people had doubts about the chastity of Sita, He had to make Sita undergo the ordeal of fire. Rama had to make Sita undergo the ordeal of fire to respect the public opinion. The fire god said to Rama, "Sita is pure and flawless."

Rama acted justly at every step. The Ramayana was a drama in which Sri Rama was the sutradhari (director). He was also a patradhari (actor). The people also had their parts to play in the drama. Rama performed his role excellently. The Ramayana has survived the test of time. It has survived even though thousands of years have passed. Sri Rama was dear to everybody. He was an ideal that mankind needs to emulate.

The people of Mithila were fascinated by the appearance of Rama. They went

into ecstasy watching the conduct and beauty of Rama. They thought that Rama and Sita made an excellent match. They sang songs inviting people to see the marriage of Rama and Sita. One such song goes like this:

Come all of you to see Rama's marriage; Let all of us go together to see Rama's marriage. Many a people have come to see Rama's marriage. The ladies have rich jewellery; they have put on Garlands of pearls and diamonds. They are beautified with ornaments studded with precious stones. Rama will tie the sacred Mangalya to Sita today. They make a fine match! It appears as though they are made for each other. Dasaratha has made grand arrangements for marriage. He has called sage Vashishta and other sages. People have come in great numbers to rejoice at the marriage of Rama and Sita. We will earn merit if we see their marriage. Ramachandra is shining splendourously and Sita is resplendent. Rama is a noble prince, who enquires the welfare of one and all. Come; let us go to see Rama and Sita's marriage.

People sang songs like this, rejoicing at the marriage of Rama and Sita. The people of Ayodhya as well as of Mithila were greatly delighted. They rejoiced immensely.

The Ramayana is the history of Rama. It is HIS-story. It is full of noble characters. The four brothers and their wives hold out great ideals for mankind. The mothers, Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi, were also great women. They were embodiments of virtue and good conduct. People blame Kaikeyi, saying that she was responsible for the suffering of Rama and Sita. She was actually a divine instrument in the mission of Rama. She was not the kind of lady who would be swayed away by the words of Manthara. She was instrumental in sending Rama to the forest so that He could punish the wicked and protect the good. There are great subtleties and secrets in the Ramayana . We will try to know them in the days to come.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

29. Ramayana - The Divine Master Plan

Date: 22 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

That which fosters universal peace,
That which destroys all scope for mean thoughts,
That which encourages unity and cooperation,
Is real Education;
This is the education a student should aspire to acquire.

Embodiments of Love!

The principle of Rama attracts everybody. Such a principle can be explained for days one end and still cannot be explained satisfactorily. As you keep hearing the song of the cuckoo bird, it may bore you after sometime. As you keep drinking, even the nectar may taste sour at some point of time. But the story of Rama can be read any number of times and it would still feel new. He who sings, or reads, or hears, or gets to read this sacred story of Rama will find it highly nectarine.

No one knows the origin of the Ramayana or from when it was being sung in public. However, based on certain evidences, scholars have made a few predictions. The conversation that Ravana was having with Sita while abducting her gives a hint of the age of the characters in the epic, in that era. Ravana told Sita, "My age is now 2000 years, your husband Rama is just 40 years of age, and your own age is 39 years."

The earth is invested with several forms of energy. In between ether and the earth, a vast body of energy field is condensed. This is why ether cannot attract the earth. The power of planet earth is unimaginable. Hence, earth is considered to be the storehouse of all energies. Predominant among the energies is the power of magnetism. Repeated investigations have failed to

throw light on the nature of this energy.

Sita is a daughter of Goddess Earth - Bhudevi. She is therefore also called Bhujatha. When Rama went to lift Lord Siva's bow, Bhudevi rejoiced. The various kings and princes who had assembled were not of the right age for Sita. Their looks were of no match to those of Sita. Only Rama looked extremely youthful. His physical features were beyond description. He was extremely handsome. Bhudevi decided that Rama was the right match for Sita. She saw to it that there was no obstruction on Rama's path to victory in the assembly. When Rama lifted Lord Siva's bow, He used his left hand. This indicates that Rama required just His left hand to accomplish something that others found impossible. This was actually the great strength of mother earth at work. She reduced the weight of the bow and enhanced Rama's strength. In this way, mother earth always conducted herself as occasion demanded.

The wonderful powers of the earth are indescribable. However, all the minerals, metals, and chemicals that are in the earth are also present in man. Electric, chemical, magnetic - these and many more strengths are in man. One cannot say how many, but every kind of energy and material in the core of earth are already in man. But there is no realization in man regarding his great potential.

The Divinity in man is extremely sacred. Man is tremendously powerful because of this Divinity in him. He can do anything, if only he wills. Today, thanks to the influence of science, man has reached the moon. He has also brought back dust from the moon. But these are all expressions of the inner strength of man. It is a pity that man cannot recognize his own strength.

Today, everyone asks the other, "Who are you?" Not even one asks the question, "Who am I?" All your problems get solved when you inquire into this question. In this question is embedded the answer to all questions.

Ravana was abducting Sita across the ocean to Lanka. He was highly materialistic and hence wanted to impress Sita with glimpses of his riches, power, opulence, and acquisitions. With this intention, he took Sita into the

inner apartments of his palace. But Sita didn't open her eyes to any of these.

Mandodari was very sad at the turn of events. She advised Ravana thus, "Oh! Lord! Why are you inviting your doom? Rightly is it said that as the time of destruction approaches, good sense takes leave. Why did you have to bring here such a chaste and pious lady like Sita? This is our fate. You are not making attempts to understand the true nature of mother Sita. For that, you need to know and control yourself first. She definitely cannot stay in the inner palace. Instead select a peaceful location and put her there, so that she can derive some solace by thinking about Lord Rama."

Paying heed to Mandodari's advice, Ravana set up a small house in the Ashoka Vana (small forest of Ashoka trees) for Sita to live in peace.

Mandodari is ranked as an ideal wife because, like a minister who warns his king against danger, she gave timely advice to Ravana and made sincere attempts to prohibit him from going astray. She told him, "Lord! Instead of doing Ramachinta (thoughts about Lord Rama) you are doing kamachinta (indulging in lustful thoughts). You will never face good times. Your doom is approaching. This is why you are entertaining such wicked, destructive thoughts. You should never cause a woman to cry and make her shed tears. If you do, for every tear that she sheds, you will have to shed a thousand. Never hurt a woman. She should never be made to worry." Thus Mandodari tried her best to make Ravana realize his folly.

One day, Mandodari herself went to Sita. She implored, "O daughter of Mother earth! Accept my salutations. You are a chaste and noble lady. You are highly sacred and pure. My husband is an evil man. His evil deeds are dragging him to his destruction. It is said that,

With good feelings, man enjoys happiness; With evil feelings, he himself becomes evil.

His bad intentions are making him evil. Please forgive him and save me from widowhood." This episode of Mandodari pleading with Sita is not chronicled in any version of the Ramayana.

Meanwhile, Sita was totally lost in contemplation of Rama. Mandodari's pleas did not even register in her.

At such a time, what was the situation in Lanka? Just like the situation today, people were highly agitated. There was a strange sense of uneasiness and unrest amongst the citizens. They suppressed their sufferings in their heart and would not express them freely for fear of persecution by Ravana.

Meanwhile, Vibhishana's wife Sarama took upon herself the task of serving Sita. She had several conversations with Sita and tried to give her strength. She said, "Mother! I am indeed fortunate to serve such a holy person like you. Your pure character alone can lend some peace to Lanka. Ravana is no ordinary king. He is exceptionally wicked, and it is our misfortune that you have got caught in his hands." Sarama did her best to thus console Sita and lift her spirits.

One night, Sarama had a prophetic dream. She had a daughter named Sakini, who had an identical dream. The dream vividly showed Lanka as being totally dry and arid. It showed all the trees as having withered and fallen. The royal palace was seen utterly ruined, and Ravana was stumbling about without even water to drink. This was the dream. She understood that what she saw to be Ravana's fate was a direct consequence of his own wicked deeds. At the same time, she could not but help feel sad.

Meanwhile, Ravana appeared at the Ashoka gardens. He visited Sita everyday to announce the countdown to the number of days left for her to accept him. Sita would remain oblivious to all such threats.

One day, Sarama approached Sita, caught Her feet and prayed, "Mother! This has been a unique good fortune that I have had. My daughter also has been

blessed by this opportunity. My husband is a person of sound character. He is also a devotee of Rama. He has surrendered himself to Rama at the seashore. I am thrilled that our entire family has had this unique opportunity of being at Rama's service."

Sita felt a little peaceful when she heard this from Sarama; she realized that she had someone she could trust, around her.

At that moment, Hanuman entered the scene. He had been searching for Sita all over Lanka. He was constantly censuring himself at the predicament he was in. To find Sita, he was forced to look amongst and at the ladies. He hence entered the inner apartments of the palace. He could feel the evil vibrations from the cruel demonesses who inhabited the rooms. Their actions were most grotesque. Hanuman scolded himself, "Alas! What a sin I am committing! Are these the scenes I am expected to see? These eyes must see the divine form of Lord Rama and not such ugly spectacles. Yet, I am forced to do so if I must succeed in finding Sita. I must not allow these situations to overcome me." So strengthening his resolve, Hanuman climbed over the walls of the inner chambers and continued his search.

At the time when Hanuman was captured and brought before Ravana, an interesting conversation took place between the two. Ravana was holding a court in a gigantic hall of the palace. Ravana looked at the captive Hanuman and demanded, "You are a monkey. You have destroyed entire gardens. Who has sent you here, O foolish fellow?"

Hanuman was no ordinary being! He replied using the same harsh language, "Foolish fellow! The same hero who chopped off the ears and nose of your sister has sent me here!"

Ravana was angry at this. He threatened Hanuman, "You impudent fellow! No king has dared address me in such derogatory terms! Watch your tongue, or I shall silence it forever!".

Hanuman shot back, "Maybe none has dared to demean you like this. I am

Rama's servant, and I will definitely talk to you in this tone for you deserve nothing better!"

This was the conversation between Hanuman and Ravana. Ravana had already got the news of Hanuman visiting Sita and the exchange of messages between the two. When Hanuman set fire to Lanka and went back, Ravana started worrying that Rama would definitely come, anytime from then on. He looked at the possible defeat at Rama's hands. These were the effects of his own guilty conscience! It led him to hallucinate all such scenarios and did not give him a moment's peace!

We shall now go back to Hanuman's search for Sita. Hanuman was on the rooftop of the inner apartments, and from a distance, he espied the tall trees of Ashoka Vana. He jumped and reached the gardens. And there, under a tree, he finally saw the forlorn form of Mother Sita. She was definitely very sad. Hanuman climbed the tree under which she sat and started singing the glory of Dasaratha's son from the beginning.

Sita was perplexed and looked up in astonishment. She wondered, "Who is this monkey?" She had never seen a vanara (monkey) before. Hence, Hanuman was a total stranger to Sita.

As an answer to her enquiring look, Hanuman respectfully folded his palms and said, "Mother! I am a servant of Lord Rama. I am here to serve Your lotus feet."

Hanuman's arguments didn't have any effect on Sita. She didn't acknowledge his presence or his explanations. It was her bitter experience that the demons acquired a variety of forms and were masters of illusory tactics. She suspected that Hanuman too was a part of such a ploy.

Hanuman jumped down from the tree. Constantly chanting the name of Rama, he addressed Sita, "Mother! Here is proof of my identity." He then handed over to Sita the ring given by Rama to him.

Sita respectfully pressed the ring to her eyes. She told Hanuman, "Hanuman, how lucky you are! Did Rama Himself give you this ring? This was a gift to my Lord from King Janaka at the time of my wedding. Where is Rama now? How is He?" She eagerly enquired about the Lord in this way.

Hanuman gave her courage by saying, "Mother! Be brave, He is coming shortly. He shall definitely come and take you back with Him. You must not worry. If You are anxious and permit this humble servant, please sit on my back. I shall fly you to Rama immediately."

Sita smiled and said, "Hanuman, if I was to sit on your back and go back to Rama, you would be accused of committing the same sin of abduction as Ravana. I don't want you to get such a bad name. Rama Himself must come. He must kill Ravana and release me from this prison. Till then, I shall wait and put up with this torture. Kindly carry this news to my Lord Rama." With great reluctance and sadness, she gave permission for Hanuman to leave.

Hanuman couldn't bear to see the sadness in Sita. He decided to teach the demons a lesson and proceeded to lay the beautiful Asoka gardens to utter waste, . He was finally captured and brought before Ravana.

Hanuman accused Ravana of being a sinner and a wicked king. He told that it was the misfortune of the citizens of Lanka to have him as their king. If the ruler was so wicked, he wondered, what could be said about the ruled? Hanuman poured scorn on Ravana thus.

Later, when he reached Rama, Hanuman conveyed the good news to Him. Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, and all other vanaras (monkeys) were waiting eagerly on the seashore. Hanuman landed in front of them. He was greeted with congratulations and benedictions of victory from the ecstatic battalions of vanaras. They praised Hanuman and said, "Hanuman! It is by such timely, helpful and sacred spirit of service to Rama that you have won His heart. You have indeed brought good news. May all auspiciousness greet Rama from now on."

Before Hanuman took leave of Sita, she gave him her crown jewel. This was one among several that were presented to her by Sage Agastya's wife, Anusuya. Rama was aware of this jewel. The moment Hanuman handed over this to Rama; Rama was both joyful and agonized. He heard the news that Sita was safe. This gladdened His heart. Hanuman explained to Rama everything that had occurred in Lanka.

Oh! Sri Rama, listen to my prayers! Accept the sacred jewel Sita has sent for you. I have seen Sita shivering like a parrot in a cage. Surrounded she is by a number of fierce demonesses. Oh! How they scare her by their threats and weapons. Poor mother can only bow her head in fear and anguish. Oh! Sri Rama, listen to my prayers! Firstly, there is Indrajit. Then comes the commander in chief, Prahasta. The vast courtyards, the palatial bungalows, The big markets, and the dazzling orchids, I have seen them all! Oh! Rama listen to my prayers!

In this way, Hanuman described in great detail everything that he had seen in Lanka. Hearing about Sita's plight, Lakshmana immediately grabbed his bow and arrows. He urged his brother to get up and act immediately. He said, "This is not the time to rest even for a moment. Let us proceed immediately and put an end to Mother Sita's plight and bring Her back safely."

Rama calmly replied, "Peace, peace, peace! One should not act in haste. Without proper enquiry, investigations, and planning, any action can produce only negative results. Let us therefore proceed cautiously."

Sugriva sent instructions to his friends and kinsmen to mobilize a huge army. He instructed that the army enter Lanka, destroy Ravana, and only then return.

With such enthusiasm and vigour, the vanara army, comprising experienced heroes like Sugriva, Hanuman, Jambavanta, and others, soon reached the

shores of Lanka. The entire city was panic-stricken. The vanara army was all over the countryside around Lanka. They were on the hills, on the treetops, on the plains, and everywhere! The Lankans were strangers to monkeys till they saw Hanuman. The memory of the destruction that Hanuman caused during his previous visit was all too fresh in their minds. They were wondering among themselves.

Oh! Where from has this terrible monkey come? Who has sent this messenger of destruction to Lanka? Our houses are in ruins, our families are homeless. All the houses are on fire, oh! Where are we to take shelter? We hear he is Rama's messenger come to see Sita. He is contented with the cooling vision of Sita. But his anger has heated up our Lanka! Oh! What destruction! What a calamity! Our city lies in ruins, thanks to the monkey! Oh! Where from has this terrible monkey come? Ravana will face certain ruin. He has abducted chaste and pious Sita. If the messenger be so strong, Oh! What to say of the Master!

In this way, the citizens of Lanka were terror stricken. The monkey that had caused tremendous destruction earlier had now reappeared with more of its kind! Ravana's ministers, courtiers and allies were at a loss as to what to do.

How did the vanara (monkey) army cross the ocean? The mighty Hanuman could do it, but what about the entire army? Rama propitiated the God of Ocean with an arrow. The deity responded and facilitated the crossing.

The vanaras were raising war cries against the demons. Ravana could not stand the noise. A fierce battle was imminent. Ravana was sure to meet his end in the war. This was also the popular sentiment of the citizens of Lanka. They all wondered, "Why is this wicked person so keen to meet his doom? He is aiming to burn to ashes not just himself but his entire kingdom as well". Everybody was thus criticizing Ravana within themselves. None of them entertained any pleasant feelings for Ravana.

War commenced. It was a fierce pitched battle. Indrajit, the son of Ravana, who had defeated Indra himself, entered the battle. He was the eldest son of Ravana. It was the second day of the battle. He was geared splendidly in the war attire. The vanaras mistook him to be Ravana himself. He caused a great deal of havoc and destruction in their ranks. There was none in the army equal to him in might and valour.

Vibhishana approached Rama and explained, "Rama! You must kill him somehow. If you kill him, it is as good as striking at Ravana himself. Indrajit is a mighty support for Ravana's army. If you hit his thumb, he is sure to fall".

And so it was done as told. Indrajit fell. Vibhishana was observed wiping his tears. Lakshmana was surprised. He asked Vibhishana, "So many have died in the battle. But why do you weep for Indrajit alone?"

Vibheeshana replied, "Lord! He was like my only son. It is with this filial attachment that I weep. But in truth, it was vital that Indrajit be removed from the scene. Ravana's arrogance was primarily based on the might of Indrajit. There are several more such heroes on whom Ravana depends".

In this way, Vibheeshana gave Rama a brief account of several warriors in Ravana's army. Gradually Ravana started losing each one of his celebrated generals.

Soon, Kumbhakarna entered the fray. But he too met his end. How can one expect a person to fight when he is always either eating or sleeping? A poet once explained an interesting aspect in the names of the three brothers. These names are written as, Rabhana, Vibhashana, and Kumbhakarna. The second syllable in all the names is that of 'Bha'. The syllable 'Bha' signifies 'AH'. Hence, it is indicated that they would all be burnt to ashes.

Finally, Ravana himself came to the battlefield. Deep within himself he was worried; but he hid it and fought. As each of his head was knocked off, another took its place. It was proving to be impossible to vanquish Ravana.

Once again, it was Vibhishana who revealed to Rama the secret of Ravana's invincibility and directed where the arrow had to be shot. He said, "ama! There is no sin in betraying such a wicked person. His death is highly beneficial for the world. I don't aspire for or desire to rule the kingdom. But this evil Ravana must be killed."

Rama followed Vibheeshana's directions and shot his arrow. Ravana fell on the battlefield.

Mandodari came running and wailed in agony, "Lord! I warned you several times not to meddle with chaste and pious married women. I told you not to cast lustful eyes on spiritually accomplished women. You are now reaping the consequence of your sins. You have accumulated plenty of vices. I tried to dissuade you. But you would never pay me any attention." It is rightly said,

Good advice is never accepted. Though given with a good heart. Evil counsel is immensely attractive to the ears. How will such people ever realize Me?

Of what use is one's accomplishment if one doesn't listen to good advice? One is bound to be ruined. Ravana too could not escape this fate, and he paid for it with his life.

The vanaras rejoiced at Ravana's fall. They had also lost a number of their own members.

Sita was brought to Rama. Strangely, Rama wouldn't raise his head to look at Sita. Sita was highly anxious and eager to catch a glimpse of Rama. She had been away from her husband for ten months and wanted to see Him at least once. Rama did not seem to show any interest. Instead, He ordered Lakshmana to light a fire for Sita to prove Her chastity. It was Rama's intention that Sita pass through the fire and prove to the world that She was blemishless, sacred, and pure. It was only after this proof that Rama was

willing to accept Her.

Rama knew about Sita's innocence, but the world was bound to spread rumours about Her character. If Sita were to prove Herself with a trial by fire, none would dare open their mouths.

Sita saluted Rama, circumambulated the fire thrice, and hurled Herself into it.

The Fire God appeared. He proclaimed, "Rama! Sita is innocent. She is a highly accomplished, sacred, and virtuous lady. There is no need for you to prosecute Her. I am withdrawing and extinguishing Myself."

Thus Sita was brought to Rama. The monkeys were all agog to catch a glimpse of Mother Sita and fell one over the other in total disarray in their eagerness to see Sita. Rama accepted Sita as His own.

Meanwhile Vibhishana brought the aerial vehicle - pushpaka vimana - and put it at Rama's disposal. This vehicle belonged to the stepbrother of Ravana. Ravana had vanquished him in battle and usurped it. Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Vibhishana, Sugriva, and all others boarded the vehicle and proceeded to fly toward Ayodhya.

At the same time, Bharatha was eagerly awaiting Rama's arrival. The deadline Rama had given him for His reaching Ayodhya was over that day. He was disturbed with anxiety as to whether Rama would come or not. He had a chariot kept ready to receive Rama and take Him to Ayodhya. Shortly, to his great joy he saw pushpaka vimana approaching in the sky. The citizens of Ayodhya were overjoyed. Their hearts were dry without seeing Rama for fourteen long years. The state of the women was beyond description. They had spent fourteen years in great despair. They were unable to relish their food. They had all become almost skeletons in appearance. They had spent their time chanting Rama's name and consoling themselves.

Meanwhile, Satrughna arrived from Ayodhya with garlands for his brothers and sister-in-law. Pushpaka vimana landed, and everyone alighted from it.

And then a wonder occurred. Satrughna had not seen Bharatha for a very long time, since Bharatha was on a self-imposed exile at Nandi Grama. He was astonished to see that Bharatha and Rama looked identical! This wonder was witnessed by one and all. Since Bharatha had spent every moment of the fourteen years in constant contemplation of Rama, he had acquired Rama's features and attributes. As everyone was wondering, Lakshmana came to Satrughna's rescue. Rama was garlanded, and one garland was presented to Sita. The entire group moved in a procession toward Ayodhya.

At Ayodhya, there was gaiety and happiness all around. Functions were organized everyday. The populace was extremely happy to get Rama back after fourteen years. This was all due to the power of His Mother's blessings. Kausalya blessed Rama, "Son! May you pass the fourteen long years like you spent just fourteen minutes. No obstacle will obstruct You because You are the incarnation of Lord Narayana. None can trouble You. You will definitely reach Ayodhya safe and sound." She lovingly embraced Rama on His return.

It was now Sumitra's turn. She is a good friend to all. Her virtues cannot be described. She too was thrilled at the victorious return of Rama. She was confident all through that none could harm Rama or cause Him an iota of trouble for the simple reason that no such person could be born. She brought her daughter-in-law Urmila to Lakshmana.

It was fourteen years since Lakshmana and Urmila had seen each other. She fell at her husband's feet and said, "Lord! It was your total dedication to Rama that has saved and protected you so far. You would always think of Rama. It was that sacred name that guarded and guided you." She was overjoyed and applied vermilion to Lakshmana's feet, as was the custom in those days.

Kaikeyi too arrived on the scene. She was not wicked, as is commonly depicted. She was fully aware of the purpose of Rama's incarnation. She praised Sumitra that it was her good wishes and blessings that had kept her son Lakshmana safe and secure. The house of Dasaratha was indeed fortunate to have four gems of sons and four equally virtuous daughters-in-law.

Sumitra gathered the four couples together, blessed them contently and retired from the scene. She told Rama, "I spent fourteen years life thinking of You. It was my cherished desire that I see You after fourteen years. I have seen You now and sanctified myself. My life's purpose is served." There was nothing else she wanted from life, and she soon died peacefully.

Kaikeyi was also highly contended and at peace with herself. She was subjected to malignant attacks. But she did not heed any attention to them. She was fully aware of the mission that Rama was to undertake. When Rama was very young, she was teaching him archery. Rama had then already cautioned her, " Mother! I incarnated to put an end to the demons. You must plan to be a part of this mission".

This is the reason that Kaikeyi went on to ask the two seemingly heartless boons from Dasaratha. She pretended to succumb to Manthara's wicked promptings and asked Dasaratha to banish Rama. All that was now past. Rama had returned victorious, and everybody was singing praises of His glory. Kaikeyi also passed away, contented with her role in the master plan. Ayodhya was decked in all frenzy and rejoiced at the return of her princes.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

30. God Has No Form

Date: 23 May 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

A tree can be fashioned without any twist and turn, A stone can be fashioned without any defect. Can we fashion the mind, without any defect? The word of Sai is the word of truth.

Embodiments of Love!

Our warden has asked me to talk about the three akashas (infinities). That which cannot be seen by the eye, that cannot be heard by the ear, and that cannot be expressed by words characterizes the realm of akasha. It cannot be comprehended by the mind either. The sun and the moon, the clouds and the stars belong to the realm of akasha. There are three akashas: bhutakasha, chittakasha, and chidakasha.

The bhutakasha envelops the visible and the invisible phenomenon. For example, some stars are visible in the sky; but there are many more that remain invisible. The distance between the earth and the sun is about nine crores and eleven lakh miles. The bhutakasha spreads over an extent that is impossible to calculate. The sun is a star, and there are countless other stars scattered in the cosmos. They match our own sun in size. Since they are so far away, they appear like tiny stars to us. Each star shines with the splendour of the sun. The light of these stars travels at an incredible speed of 16,000 crores of miles per second! There are other stars whose light has not yet reached the earth.

The light emanating from the stars is stupendous in its intensity. The brilliance cannot be withstood by anything or anyone on the earth. Our sun imparts only a portion of its radiance to earth. Neither the huge stars nor the sun and the moon are capable of generating this effulgence on their own.

There is a fundamental power that is the basis of all this. It is the basic illumination from which the rest of the brilliance originates. This primordial power is that of the Atma. It allows the stars, sun, and moon to shine.

All these mentioned above are encompassed in the bhutakasha. What is chittakasha then? Since everything that is visible is bhutakasha, it cannot be argued that those invisible belong to chittakasha. There is a power that is invisible, silent, imperceptible, and eternal. This power is the chittakasha. In it is reflected or imprinted everything that is seen is bhutakasha. The span of the chittakasha is very small and subtle. On the other hand, the gross and visible bhutakasha spans a terrific extent. Yet, the entire contents of bhutakasha appear in the chittakasha as small blips! For example, you see a huge mountain. When you close your eyes after seeing it, you will be able to visualize the image of the mountain from the chittakasha. Similarly, the stars and sky and all that is seen are permanently etched on the chittakasha.

The exact physical extent and dimensions of the bhutakasha have not been estimated to date. But something can be known of the chittakasha. The entire visible creation is stored in chittakasha in a subtle form. Every form and sound in the chittakasha is a reflection of some entity in the bhutakasha. Bhutakasha is physically perceptible. That which is mentally perceptible is chittakasha.

The third is called chidakasha. It is also called Atma. Atma has no form. It has no movement. It is without any attributes, ever effulgent, eternal, victorious, pure, unsullied, and everlasting. He who has seen this chidakasha is one who has had the experience of Atma. No educational qualifications, scholarship, or special abilities are required to see chittakasha. On the other hand, none can see even the reflection or shadow of chidakasha, however strenuous the effort.

The distance of several stars from the earth is measurable. But there are many more stars that are so far away that they are beyond any human estimation. Scientists have made several attempts to investigate such a phenomenon. They attempted to reach the chidakasha with their scientific

examinations. All their efforts can take them at most till the chittakasha, and not a step more. Chidakasha couldn't be adequately described even by the Vedanta. Science also fails in its efforts. However, pointers are to some extent available from Vedanta on chidakasha. The reflection of bhutakasha is chittakasha. That which reflects chittakasha itself is chidakasha. The relation between the three is explained as follows:

1. The one you think you are is bhutakasha because it contains all that you see, hear, and experience. 2. The one that others think you are is the chittakasha, because it reflects in your mind's eye whatever you contemplate on. 3. The one you really are is the chidakasha or the principle of Atma, your true nature. It is Divine Bliss.

Bliss, I, reflection of Divinity, and Atma all are mean the same. 'I' is related exclusively to the Atma. 'I' is a single lettered word. The Vedas declare "Ekam sat vipahraha bahuda vadanti". 'I' is the truth. It is interpreted in several ways by scholars. I may call "Anil Kumar", and the reply comes 'I'. I may call "Girigaru" - once again the reply comes from the other side, 'I'. In this way I may call out the names of several lakhs of people; the reply is always 'I'. This unity in diversity is 'I'. It is the Atmatatwa. It can't be explained as being the sky or earth etc. It is so infinitely expansive that it has no measure at all. Scholars therefore say, "Akasam gaganam sunyam." There is nothing but empty space in which you may see a few stars and clouds. But to what extent can you see them? Only up to a certain distance. Anything beyond that is invisible to your eyes. That which can't be seen but only visualized is chittakasha. 'I' also cannot be visualized. None can give its true meaning.

However, Vedanta always propounds unity in diversity through all its teachings. For instance the phrase "Aham Bramhasmi" translates to 'I am Brahma'. The word Brahma follows the single letter 'I'. Any other word has to follow Aham. Without the letter 'I', the word Atma can't appear. Brahma is

originated from 'I'. Therefore, the letter 'I' signifies the primordial principle.

Vedanta advises that though one may have read scriptures and texts, one should still make every effort to find out their true nature. One should repeatedly ask oneself, "Who am I?" This question cannot be answered with your scholarship or practical applications. When asked "Who are you?" you reply, "I am Anil Kumar". To whom is the name "Anil Kumar" given? Your parents have given that name to your body. What was your name before you were so christened? There is no answer. Therefore all names are only given; none of them were born with you. They were all added to you at the time of your birth for identifying you in this material world. They don't establish your true identity. Atma has no fixed name. It is its own identity. It has no other form.

Bhutakasha and chittakasha can be discussed and studied up to some extent. However chidakasha has no form or attribute. What form and name can you assign to the formless one? It is therefore its own identity. No one is able to comprehend the true meaning of the word 'I'. 'I' should not be confused with ego. Ego has form, but not 'I'. Vedanta describes 'I' by negation. It is not ether, ego, sound, or any such thing.

A master once asked his disciple to find out who he really was. The next day, the disciple appeared and said, "Sir, I've found the answer. My name is Ramaiah."

The master once again asked him, "Who are you?" After further enquiry, the answer came, "I am the son of Mallaiah, and my mother's name is Pullamma."

These are all names of various bodies. None of them is your true identity because names relate to the body. They are useful for you to introduce yourself in the physical world. Only one name was born with you and not given. It is 'I'. Atma, 'I' all mean the same. Make efforts to realize the nature of 'I'. There is nothing else you need to know further. There is no need for you to say, "I am Ramaiah" when announcing your true identity. 'I' is itself enough. No other words need to follow 'I' to reinforce your identity. 'I' is

unique and always single. Realising this is the secret contained in all of Vedanta.

Chidakasha has nothing to do with reflections, reactions, and resounds. It is beyond all three. It cannot be identified or comprehended with any name or form. At one point of time, in Uttar Pradesh, there was a bangle seller on the banks of river Ganges. One day, a radiant form emerged from the Ganges and asked him, "Sir, will you please sell me some bangles?"

The bangle seller complied, and taking out some bangles for her size, made her put them on. The form said, " I don't have the money for this bangles with me. However, I will give you an address and directions to reach the house. Go to the person and collect the money from him. He is my father."

The bangle seller then asked her, "Madam, what is your name? I will need to identify you at your house for collecting the money." The form replied, "You can tell them that my name is Ganga" and then vanished.

As directed, the bangle seller reached the house and told the owner that he had come to collect the money due to him from his daughter Ganga to whom he had sold some bangles. The astonished owner replied, "I am not even married. How can I then have a daughter and how would she buy bangles?"

The bangle seller replied, " The lady was certainly telling the truth. How else could I have discovered and found my way to your house? She even identified your name for me. Is this your name or not?" The person agreed that it was so.

The bangle seller argued, " If all this is true, the lady certainly was not lying." The house owner didn't even know that he had the amount with him. He searched in his locker and was astounded to find the amount there exactly as predicted.

This person was an ardent devotee of mother Ganges. He was thrilled and told the bangle-seller, "Sir! I worship mother Ganges. She is my patron deity. I

have offered myself to her and have hence chosen to remain unmarried. I am eager to see the sacred spot where you saw my mother Ganges. Let us go!"

The bangle seller obliged and soon both arrived at the banks of the river. The bangle-seller ardently prayed, "Mother! You appeared to me and took the bangles. You guided me to your devotee's house to take the payment. Will you not appear again and show me your form? I have come to you with gratitude to tell you that I have received the payment due to me."

A voice replied, "Here is the blessing that I confer for your gratitude," and a hand emerged from the river, with the newly bought bangles adorning it!

The devotee saw the hand and was ecstatic. He exclaimed, "Mother! Won't you show me your true form and sanctify me?" He kept pleading and praying.

The voice replied, "Son! I cannot show any form to anybody. That is because I do not have a particular form. All forms that you can see are God's forms only! God can appear in any form that a devotee prays to Him to appear in. God Himself has no specific form or attribute. I showed you my hand filled with bangles just as a proof that I have indeed bought the bangles, and you must pay the bangle seller."

The devotee saw the hand; he was thrilled at the grace conferred on him and said, "Mother! I have seen at least your hand and have been sanctified! I don't want anything else in life". He fell into the Ganges and breathed his last.

Divinity always assumes the form that a devotee visualizes and prays for. None can actually fix and estimate what Divinity looks like, because there is no form at all! Ramakrishna Paramahansa too had a similar experience. He was staying at Kamarpakur. He was gripped by a strong desire to have darshan of the Goddess Kali. Unable to bear the pain of separation anymore, he attempted to commit suicide by jumping into the Ganges. Surprisingly, however far he walked into the river, he found that the water came only up to his knees! He prayed, "O Mother of the universe! Why are you testing me so? Why don't you reveal your form to me? Why don't you allow me to merge in

you? I am unable to bear this tortuous pain."

The mother Goddess replied, "Son! I can show you my form if I had one in the first place! I have no form for you to see. My only form is that of Atma. You can see any form that you think of. All the forms that you see are products of your illusion. None of them can be taken to be the true identity of Divinity."

You say that Rama or Krishna or Sai Baba, etc. have appeared before you. Several people make such claims. These are all figments of one's illusion (bhrama). As long as you have bhrama you will be far away from Brahma (Divinity). On the other hand if you have realized Brahma, bhrama can come nowhere near you. The need of the hour is therefore to overcome this illusion. Get rid off the body attachment. Cultivate attachment to the Atma instead. Your true identity is Atma. It has neither a name nor a form. It is the embodiment of bliss. Atma is therefore described as;

Nityanandam Parama Sukhadam Kevalam Gnanamurthym Dwandwathetam
Gaganasadrusham Tatwamatsyadi Lakshyam Ekam, nityam, vimalam,
achalam, sarvadi sakshibhutam.

Eternal bliss, supreme happiness, wisdom, non-dual, ethereal and ultimate, the single one, eternal, pure, immobile and eternal witness - these are the various names and descriptions of the Atma. However, it has no form. Hence, do not aim to see the form of God. Instead consider all the forms that you see to be that of God. Do not fix various forms as unique to God.

The feature of bhutakasha is that it encompasses the sun, the stars, and all the galaxies in it. Don't take these to be the permanent attributes of God! They will all perish someday, pass on, or change forms. They will withdraw themselves and disappear from creation itself at some point of time. There is only one thing that will always be with you, in you, around you, above you, and below you and that is bliss.

Bliss has no form. There is only one way to know it. People think that bursting out into laughter is bliss! Even laughter should not be a guffaw. How does Divinity laugh? It is by a delicate smile. No sound accompanies this smile. It is not a guffaw, but it confers plenty of joy to those who see it. Loud laughter is called a "prahasan" while the soundless smile is called "hasan". God always smiles and never laughs. What you see around you is an exercise in histrionics that is passed on as laughter. Seeing this, people imagine that God must also be laughing like this!

There is one aspect that you can use to identify Divinity: gratitude. God is giving you so many things. When you are not well, a doctor comes and gives you an injection. You pay the doctor his fees. Your expression of gratitude ends there. When you are hungry, you tell your mother that you would like to eat something. Your mother gives you some food that you relish with great joy. This itself is an expression of gratitude to your mother. You may be suffering. When someone comes and consoles you and gives you strength, you express gratitude to him. In this way, all help rendered is gratefully acknowledged without fail. This should be the custom. Unfortunately, there is no such tradition today.

God is giving you so much. You are getting free education, free medical aid, and free water. He is talking with you so freely and moving about amongst you so freely. He is giving you everything so 'free'! How do you express your gratitude for all these? You must give up your ego and spread happiness like He does. That will be the right thing to do. As it is said,

That heart that you have given me, O Lord! I give it back to you, O mighty One! What else can I offer you, my Master! Except for my tears of gratitude, O Lord! Accept them all with my heart.

It is these tears of joy and gratitude that you must offer to God. Without doing this, you will become an ungrateful wretch. You will collapse into the endless

cycle of birth and death. Suffering and agony will shadow you. Your tears of gratitude will liberate you from all such problems. You will always be blissful, with cheerful smiles. This is the result of expressing your gratitude to God.

Once, there lived a devotee of Lord Krishna who spent his time constantly contemplating on Krishna's name. But he had a problem! Krishna was depicted in various ways in different pictures. Which form to select while contemplating on Lord Krishna? He could not decide. These photographs are artificially created ones. It is said, "Daivam manusha rupena (God is in the human form)." The crowns and jewels in the pictures are additions provided by artists; they are not His true form. His true nature is that He is ever smiling and is always making others smile! He is always blissful and presents bliss to others. That is the true hallmark of Lord Krishna. "Be happy; make others happy." It is a give-and-take philosophy! Give bliss and accept bliss in return. That is the only true form of gratitude you can express to God.

Without expressing your gratitude, you cannot aim to please God with anything that you may do. You will not attain any happiness in return. When you see your presiding deity, give a smile. Do not stand with a twisted face! With such a serious face, you can never hope to experience bliss. You must always be happy because bliss is your true nature. Always maintain a pleasant smile on your face. You may definitely face some problems and obstacles in life. Grief and sorrow may sometimes assail you. Don't break down and cry. These are things that come and go. They are passing clouds and will never stand permanently to trouble you. Don't bow to them; face them instead. A steady faith in God will give you the satisfaction of being a true devotee.

Today, you worry about your mother and father, kith and kin. How do you expect to attain happiness with so many worries? Who are your parents? They are the ones who gave you a physical body. Whose body is it? It is only a physical entity. Forget the body. Contemplate on Divinity instead. This is true devotion. Forget bhutakasha entirely, though it is what you actually see. Chittakasha can be relied on to the same extent. Once you assimilate everything in chittakasha, you will reach chidakasha. Hence, develop the

capability to completely merge in chidakasha.

How will you visualize and merge into chittakasha?

I shall explain it in detail later. In this world, several scholars and experts explain Divinity quite extensively. However, Divinity that can be explained is not true Divinity! These are only descriptions and pointers to Divinity. They can easily make you happy or even delude you. But you must go beyond these and aim to see the reality that is "Tat". "Tat twam asi (Thou Art That)". "Thou" means "this". "That" is "Tat". Both should therefore become one.

In response to Narasimhamurthy's prayer, I have explained the three akashas of bhutakasha, chittakasha, and chidakasha to you. True "akasha" is "hridayakasha (the heart)". Chidakasha is vital and ultimate. Every attempt should be made to know its nature.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

31. Reduce Your Desires

Date: 24 May 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

There is no disease greater than greed, One's anger is his greatest enemy,
There is no sorrow deeper than poverty, There is no greater peace than
wisdom.

Embodiments of Love!

Love, aham, Atma, I - these are all synonyms of the same entity. Every person commonly uses the word 'I'. It means he is revealing his true identity of being the Atma. Sarvam khalvidam Brahma (This entire creation is Divinity). Whatever you hear, see, or experience is all Brahma alone. Brahma is yet another synonym for 'I'.

Einstein once said, "There is no matter in creation, it is all energy and energy has no form". He discovered this truth in this age, after a number of investigations. A few thousands of years prior to this, the seven-year-old Prahlada came to the same conclusion with out any kind of experimentations. He stated, "It isn't possible to decide that God is present here and not present there. He is everywhere, and there can be no doubt about it. You can find Him wherever you search for Him".

How did the young lad have such an experience? His own father, Hiranyakasipu, tried to have him killed by the bite of poisonous snakes. All Prahlada did was to chant the Lord's name, "Om Namō Narayana!" and lo and behold, the serpents turned into garlands! Hiranyakasipu then ordered that Prahlada be chopped into pieces. Several swords were used, but Prahlada kept chanting, "Om Namō Narayana", and the swords couldn't make a scratch on the boy. They then decided to make him drink poison. Prahlada kept repeating, "Om Namō Narayana!" He didn't have any other name or thought

in his mind. As a consequence, the poison changed into nectar. Seeing the futility of these procedures, they hurled the boy from the hilltop into the ocean below. Prahlada kept chanting the Divine name, "Om Namō Narayana!" and smilingly fell into the ocean. The deity of the ocean rescued the boy and brought him to the shore.

The inner significance of these events is that faith is highly essential. It is the basis. Without this faith, any number of times the Lord's name may be chanted, but it will prove ineffective. It is the same as a tape recorder repeating God's name. Prahalada was tuned into the primordial sound of Brahma Tatwa, which originated from his navel.

Man's body is a powerful dynamo . The entire limbs and the body constitute a generator. There is a steady supply of current from the body. Everything in man is Divine power . Prahalada experienced this current and therefore firmly believed that God can be found wherever He is looked for.

Today's scientists have performed several experiments to ascertain Einstein's statement regarding matter and energy. They came to the same conclusion. Energy can neither be created nor destroyed.

Newton echoed similar sentiments. He had dedicated his entire life to investigate the attractive power of the Earth. He realized that the power of gravity cannot be destroyed. It has no specific point of origin or destination.

He is eternal without birth or death, He is ancient without beginning or an end, He doesn't die, he doesn't take birth, he is blameless, He remains the eternal witness.

Newton investigated in great detail about such a divine power. He was a great scientist who understood the force of gravity associated with earth. How did he learn this? It is because he discovered aspects of this attractive power

wherever he looked. He saw the magnetic power in everything; he also concluded that this energy could not be created or destroyed by anyone. However, it could be transformed from one form of energy to the other. For example, magnetic energy can be transformed into electrical energy. Electrical energy can be transformed to light energy. Though the basic magnetic energy can be converted into any type of energy, it itself retains its original identity. It can vary its intensity - ebbing and growing as necessary. It changes all the time but never diminishes away. As long as the earth is there, magnetic strength remains. It attracts our steps; it attracts our vision and our hearing.

When born, man when was without any desires. At such a time he was in a pure and pristine state. He was steady and peaceful. All the strengths of man were at their highest intensity. In the eyes of every man, thirteen crores of light receptors enable him to see. His tongue has thirty lakhs of taste buds. A further fifty lakh cells in his ears help him in his hearing. The entire body of man is a divine experience itself. It is said, "Sarvam khalvidam Brahma (The creation is entirely Brahma alone) ."

Ancient man was so pure that when he touched any object, the object would get stuck to him! Such was the extent of divine powers that pulsed through his body from head to toe. As desires gradually multiplied, these divine powers in him started to recede. You need not think so deeply to understand this concept. You can test this idea now itself. You have several desires. Let us say that you have thirty such desires that are to be fulfilled. Out of the thirty, eradicate three of them completely. You can easily feel the difference in the energy flowing through the body! Your memory also increases. The sages of yore could easily recount from memory incidents that happened long ago and recite things learnt a long time ago. This was because they had minimal desires in them.

Sage Saraswati was the first one to initiate the chanting of Vedas in the sense that he contributed eight letters: Ka, Cha, Ta, Tha, Pa, Ya, Sa, Ha. In these eight letters originated the entire Vedas because these letters were used as the basis to form syllables and words. Man hence developed his vocabulary.

He first created eight names, glorifying God as the embodiment of eight essential features. These eight names are sabdhabrahmamayi, characharamayi, jyothirmayi, vangmayi, nityanandamayi, paratparamayi, mayamayi, and srimayi. These eight names describe God as the embodiment of sound, movement, light, speech, eternal bliss, eternal strength, illusion, and prosperity, respectively.

The entire Vedas came up using just the eight letters given initially. The sages explained, "O Citizens! We have visualised the divine form shining like a brilliant sun beyond tamas."

The citizens were naturally curious to know where they had seen Divinity; was it inside or was it outside?

The answer came "Antharbahishcha tat sarvam vyapya Narayana stithaha", which means that He is there inside, outside, and everywhere. He can be seen wherever He is looked for. Divinity is therefore all pervasive. A consequence of this all pervasiveness was that the rishis (sages) would not travel around. They would remain seated at one spot and spent their time contemplating on the Lord. It was their constant worry that if they traveled about, they would stamp upon this all pervasive God! They did not wish that Divinity come in contact with their feet. Such was the sacred feeling with which tasks were carried out by the sages of yore. Such sentiments were responsible for the highly idealistic characters developed by the people of the yore.

What a far cry it is today! With deliberate audacity, one does not mind placing his legs on the idol itself! These are all extreme perversions in action. Why have they originated? The saying goes, "As one's doom approaches, good sense takes leave." In those days there was a pious environment and therefore pious feelings abounded.

What are the forms that God's strength assumes? The rishis of the yore gave these strengths certain names. The first is "Saikotikam maha". What does this statement mean? It praises God as follows, "Wherever I see, it is your divine

form and your sacred sound."

Gradually, as the power of investigations improved, a second name was given to God. This name was "Bhakshakthi". This means divine power. None can touch this power in its absolute form. However, you can feel a fraction of it in yourself. Just hold your own hand while you are walking and you can feel it. Such divine power was experienced, enjoyed, and shared amongst one and all in those days.

Is it possible to have such an experience and share it with others today? Most certainly, yes! Will you ever be able to grasp such a power in your hands? Certainly! All it needs is to develop the required faith. Where is this faith? Man does not have faith in himself, so how can you expect him to develop such strong faith in God?

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

Such a feeling of love needs to be fostered. Without love, where will you even experience the truth? If there is no truth, peace can never be obtained. And without peace, bliss is a far cry. Bliss is like a wave pulsating throughout the creation. It would soak the hermits in the deep forests who were lost in the contemplation of God. When this bliss touched them, the sages would go into fits of ecstasy.

The sages and hermits walked and lived all alone in dense and fierce forests. What gave them the courage to do so? What weapons did they possess? Guns and bombs were obviously unheard of! Effectively, they had none of these with them, but they had a great deal of faith in God. This faith was like a big bomb in their hands. Their faith enabled them to accomplish many things.

India has remained rock steady down the ages because of the faith that our

people had in God. You will find nothing in India that is temporal and not steady. You will see only things that are permanent, associated with truth and peace. A notable feature of those times in India was the extremely young age at which people would take to the forests. Children below the age of nine would be active in performing penances.

How old was Dhruva? He was just 6 years old. He was emboldened by the humiliation he had suffered at the hands of his stepmother. He took his mother's blessings saying, "Mother! I shall obtain the grace and blessings of the Lord and only then return." He selected a spot that was totally deserted and isolated. It was a totally peaceful and silent locality. There, the forest was so thick that one could not even take a step on clear ground. Moving about was out of question. At such a place, little Dhruva stood on one leg and carried out a determined penance by chanting, "Narayana! Narayana!"

The lord appeared and asked him, "Child! What do you want?" The intelligence of the child Dhruva cannot be matched even by the grown ups and educated lot of today! Dhruva replied, "I am a small boy. I am here in a totally isolated area, and yet you found me. It is only you who could have known about my presence here. You who know where I am will definitely know what I want."

The Lord replied, "Son! Manasekam, vachasekam, karmanyekan, mahatmanam. You must become a noble person by synthesizing your thought, word, and deed. You have determined in your mind to do penance and obtain the Lord's grace. Accordingly you commanded your body, came and did severe penance. Your thought and your action are hence in cohesion. But your words are yet to be ascertained and have not been expressed yet. This is why I am asking you what you need."

Dhruva replied, "When I started out, I desired a cheap trinket of a glass piece. But now I have got a priceless diamond instead. Once I have got this diamond, why should I desire the glass piece? I had come to do penance with a great desire that I become a prince and sit on my father's lap. Now I don't have any such desires. I want only you."

The Lord replied, "Son! I am ready to give you anything. But I must first sanctify you. You have thought of something and acted accordingly. But your words are not in harmony with your thought and action. Your desire will be fulfilled only if all three are in harmony. Therefore, you should now set about to achieve this harmony. I shall then satisfy what you have now wished for."

Obedying the Lord's command Dhruva returned home.

What a high degree of intelligence was there among the children in those days! Such sacredness in their thought! What a noble path they chose to tread! Prahlada was a great devotee of the Lord. He had a steady faith in Lord Narayana. He didn't rely on his own father or mother. He knew that mother and father are related to him through desire. He used to say, "Lord Narayana is related to me without any attachments. The Lord doesn't relate to me with some desires in mind. His only aim is to cause my emancipation. Hence, I desire only He who has no desires in him. I should express my desires only to He who Himself has none."

It was therefore advised to everybody that desires must be gradually curtailed. As desires multiply, attachment increases. This leads to more and more bondage. Bondage causes man to suffer in several ways. Where does the bondage come from? Your own desires create your bondage. Your sorrows are your bondage. Reduce your desires and you will be peaceful. You will not face any dangers. Therefore reducing desires give peace to man. It is rightly said, "Less luggage, more comfort."

Today, desires are growing at an alarming pace. Even if he is about to die in a couple of minutes, man still expresses some desire or the other! What are these desires? What are you gaining from these? Nothing! On the other hand, if you had no desires, you would be so very peaceful. You may believe it or not, I have no desires within Me. That is why I have no worries. Follow Me! When you too have no desires your heart will be blissful. Desires only imprison you; they don't set you free as you think.

When your wishes are fulfilled, you praise Me sky high; If your wishes are unfulfilled, you censure Me severely; You commit sinful acts and pray for good fruits; Crying to me to pull you out of the mess And save you, You put the blame on Me For misfortunes of your own making!

You commit several sins. But ask for fruits of meritorious deeds instead! This is not proper. You must not subject yourself to sin in the first place. Always enter into virtuous deeds. As far as possible we should be of some help to others. God Himself is always helping others. Can't you do at least a fraction of this good work to others?

Follow the Master, Face the devil, Fight till the end, Finish the game.

Make it a point to follow the Master. You will then receive His abundant grace. You have been worshipping for several years with devotion. You take ritualistic bath and sing bhajans unflinchingly. Has at least an iota of dirt in your mind been wiped out? On the contrary, it is increasing day by day. Are you able to experience at least a moment of bliss wholeheartedly? Definitely not! If yes, why then have you so many desires? What do you gain by desiring progeny? To some extent this desire is essential. It is a duty to be discharged by you. Certainly do it. But once done, God will take care of the rest. You need not entertain worries on that count. Today, you are indulging in looking after their welfare. What is the result? Is it not much better to offer the responsibility to God and let Him handle it? You will be happy and so will they.

Therefore, don't ride on your desires. They should be gradually reduced. Lesser the desires, more the happiness. First make attempts to understand the nature of God.

When earth was first formed, there was only pitch darkness everywhere.

Nothing was visible. At such a time, everyone prayed. As a result, it rained heavily for crores of years thereafter. It is an effect of this deluge that the oceans formed. After the rains, the clouds cleared. Gradually the stars appeared. The sun shone and showered its rays on the earth. The light enabled man to go about his daily life, grow crops, and eke out a livelihood. When there was total darkness, man had no desires. As light gradually appeared, so did man desires, because he could now see the creation. Today, his day begins with desires! However, during the night he is not assailed by desires. Hence, darkness appears to give no scope for desires. On this count at least one should welcome darkness!

At the time of Rama's birth, for fifteen days there was no sunshine. It was darkness all around. Consequently, the moon was agitated. It lamented, "Alas! I am unable to have a glimpse of Lord Rama!" After the passing of fifteen days the sun itself was curious to see Rama. He gradually started rising. Consequently, the moon started its lunar phases. The sun and the moon started executing their assigned tasks. This caused day and night to appear on earth. If you investigate the mystery of nature, you will find that man plays no role anywhere in it.

How will you visualize and merge into chittakasha? I shall explain it in detail later. In this world, several scholars and experts explain Divinity quite extensively. However, Divinity that can be explained is not true Divinity! These are only descriptions and pointers to Divinity. They can easily make you happy or even delude you. But you must go beyond these and aim to see the reality that is "Tat". "Tat twam asi (Thou Art That)." "Thou" means "this". "That" is "Tat". Both should therefore become one.

Today, man is inventing medicines to control the population. Such a thing is not possible through medicines. When desires go down, automatically the mind is turned toward God. What is first required is sense control. Tomorrow, we shall see in more detail the story of Prahlada.

This day, people from several countries have gathered to spread the message of Lord Buddha to the world. You must all listen to the nature of Buddha and

use it to control your mind. Today, controls are being exercised on everything except the mind and desires. It is the desires that must first be controlled. This will give you a great deal of peace. You will be surprised to see so much peace in yourself. Peace is natural to man and will arise on its own, once desires are controlled.

Peace is everywhere. Truth and love are everywhere. You are the very embodiment of the love. You are the embodiment of peace and truth. You are the embodiment of God. Realise this truth first. Truth is not at some far of place. Truth is here itself! Where there is truth there is God. We chant santhi (peace) three times. Outside what you will find is only pieces. Peace is God's property and is available only with Him.

Develop the feeling that God is in your heart. Believe in the truth that God is always residing in your heart. When you have faith in this truth, peace will definitely dawn.

God created everything from truth. Everything will merge one day in this truth. There is no place that is not pervaded by truth. This is the highest and purest truth, realise that!

We need not set out to search for God. Wherever there is truth, God appears. Where Narayana appears, his consort Lakshmi, the goddess of plenty and prosperity, also appears. Hence, if you want wealth, you have to take the first step! When you succeed in installing Lord Narayana in your heart, goddess Lakshmi follows her Master into your heart.

With noble thoughts, good deeds, and constant contemplation of God, undertake good actions. Help others. Never entertain jealousy. Jealousy leads to total ruin. It makes man totally useless. Unfortunately, today, jealousy thrives. Some people even cry when they see someone else better off! They cannot tolerate the other person being happy. This is a very bad trait. You

must feel happy at other's happiness. You will also then enjoy success and gain bliss. This is the secret of Divinity.

There is plenty of grace that God can give you. But it is at a depth! Some effort is required to obtain it. If you need to fetch water from a well, you need to tie a rope to a bucket, lower it into the well, and draw the water out. You are neither tying the rope to the bucket nor lowering the bucket into the well, so water is therefore not reaching you. The rope to use is that of devotion. This rope must be tied to the vessel of your heart and lowered into the well of God's grace. What you receive from the well, when the water is drawn out, is the water of pure bliss. The well is that of God's grace (anugraha) and not that of anger (agraha) or jealousy (asuya)!

Get rid of the bad qualities in you. In this sacred environment, why do you give scope for bad habits? By developing bad habits, you are leading yourself to a bad fate.

Embodiments of Love!

Live in love with everybody. Once you earn this love, everything else will be added unto you.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

32. You Are The Embodiment Of God

Date: 26 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Buddha Purnima, Summer Course 2002

All His forms are manifestations of peace.
All His forms are manifestations of Auspiciousness.
He is the embodiment of Awareness and Bliss.
He is not two, but One.
He is Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

Embodiments of Love!

There is not of much description and information about the five senses in any scientific, secular, or spiritual literature.

Man makes several frantic efforts to gain joy. He reads books, visits elders, and roams around the world in search of the elusive happiness. But He fails to find happiness in the end.

The Buddha made similar effort to find the source of happiness. He searched for God everywhere, and at last found that God was within him. He realized that he himself was an embodiment of ananda (Bliss). He searched for ananda like a man who searched for his spectacles while they were on his nose all the time! The Buddha searched for bliss everywhere and at last found it within him.

Man can learn many lessons from the five elements. The five elements are earth, fire, water, air, and ether. The entire physical phenomena is also a manifestation of God. God manifests in truth, goodness, and beauty in the world that we see. Every human being is a manifestation of sat (existence) chit (awareness) and ananda (bliss). God manifests himself in the water that exists in the world. God exists as jagrath (wakefulness) in fire. God manifests

himself in the element air as life. God manifests himself as Omkara in ether. Since god manifests himself in all five elements, It is said "Isa Vasyam Idam Jagat (God is omnipresent and there is no place in the world where he doesn't exist)." His hands and feet are everywhere - "Sarvatah panipadam."

Though God is present everywhere, people ask why we are not able to see him. The water reflects the sky above. When the water is disturbed, the reflection of the sky is also disturbed. Similarly, God is in every man. But he is not able to see him because of the disturbed mind. A disturbed and vacillating mind can never reflect God. The disturbed mind causes confusion and depression.

The mind is highly fickle and unsteady. All the sadhana (spiritual exercise) that man has to perform is to see that his mind is steady and not fickle. There is no use doing japa (soft repetition of the name), dhyana (meditation), and yoga without any objective. Once you keep the five elements under control, God manifests himself all around you. Why then is man is not able to see God? The limitless and wayward desires of man prevent him from seeing God. Desires are the root cause of the disturbance in Man.

Sense control enables us to acquire ananda. The ceiling on desires will help us to see God all around and experience Him face to face. We should not encourage all sorts of desires to arise in us. We should also not bother about the evil thoughts that people entertain about us. We should not be worried by the evil talk in which they indulge in. We should not be affected by calumny and criticism leveled against us.

The Buddha wanted to control the five senses, which are the manifestation of the five elements. He decided, first and foremost, to acquire samyak drishti (right vision). Man today is not able to control his vision because of the fickleness of the mind. Cinemas, videos, TVs, etc. foul the mind of man. He does not see good and hear good. Man is the cause of his own restlessness. Not only that, humanness is fast giving way to devilishness and beastliness. Animal qualities are fast increasing within us. Animals have season and reason, but man has none.

Man can obtain peace of mind by abhyasa (practice). It is by abhyasa that man can control mind and obtain peace. It is only in a peaceful mind that noble thoughts can arise. Mind should be under the control of man. Master the mind and be a mastermind.

Unfortunately, instead of controlling the mind, man is coming under the control of senses. Moreover, he is developing attachment to the body (dehabhimana). Man is easily disturbed if people find fault with him. Why should he worry about the body, when the body is like a water bubble? You should set aside body attachment. Desires are growing by leaps and bounds without any limit.

For example, a person first stands as a candidate for the post of panchayat president. If he is selected, he desires to become a chairman. Later, these desires grow frantically. Once he becomes the chairman, he wants to become the chief minister and later the prime minister!

Desires are the cause for evil in man. Evil desires cause reaction, reflection, and resound. Man should not give place for evil desires and thoughts. Evil desires cause evil thoughts in man. Sense control will keep the desires under control. It is necessary to leave the area where evil people set foot. Move away from such a place where there are such people. The Buddha taught people to cultivate strong, steady, and good vision. His vision should be selfless and steady.

The Buddha practised detachment. He reduced his desires day by day and made them almost nil. He insisted upon cultivating pure and noble vision. He attained the state of desirelessness. He was so detached that he renounced the family and even his attachment toward his tender son. That was the mark of sacrifice. He developed tremendous detachment toward the body. He realised that he was not the body but the conscience.

When we say that this is my body, my mind, my buddhi, (intellect), my chittha (subconscious mind), my anthakarna (inner fourfold instruments of mind, intellect, memory, and ego) - it shows that I am separate from mind,

body, intellect, etc. You are separate from the body. It is a bhrama (delusion) to think that you are the body. As we go on cultivating bhrama, we go far away from Brahma (supreme consciousness). We must leave deha bhrantheni (attachment toward body) and deha abhimana (love for the body).

The Buddha reduced deha abhimana completely and devoted himself to find the truth. He approached the gurus and listened to their teachings. He read books that contained the teachings of various masters. He finally realized that reading books was a wasteful exercise.

The students of today go abroad for higher studies. It is a madness to go abroad with a desire to find something that is not here in our country. People go abroad spending lots of money and return empty handed. The parents encourage their children to go abroad by fanning the craze. They are actually misleading their children. You have to work hard in a foreign country to earn money. If you expend the same effort here you can earn enough money in India too. Some people go abroad and earn papa (sin). Stay in your country and earn punya (merit) instead. There is an increasing desire in people to go abroad and earn money. But all of them don't succeed in earning money. Some people came back with empty hands.

People have been trying to take me abroad. But Swami has not gone to any country. People say, "Swami come to my country." Which is your country? You do not belong to any country permanently. Nothing is permanent. Your body itself is not permanent. We must give up our desire to go abroad.

Adi Shankara wrote the sloka (verse),

Punarapi Jananam, Punarapi Maranam
Punarapi Janani Jatare Shayanam
Iha Samsare Bahudustare
Krupaya Pahe Pahi Murare.

Oh man! Birth leads to death. Death leads to birth. The worldly life is hard and difficult. Pray for the compassion of the Lord. Having taken human birth

you must find fulfillment in life. You must pursue a noble path. You should be above praise and blame. Neither should we be inflated or deflated. We must foster peace. In fact, everything is there in you.

You are the embodiment of peace.

You are the embodiment of truth.

You are the embodiment of love.

You are the embodiment of God.

When everything is in you, why do you go outside in search of happiness? If you look inside you will obtain ananda (bliss). Joy is our property. You cannot exist without ananda. Our true nature is ananda.

Embodiments of Love!

Buddha was not an ordinary person. He was born in a royal family and brought up amidst material comforts. It is said, "It is neither by action nor by progeny nor by wealth but only by sacrifice that one can attain immortality." The Buddha followed this vedic injunction. He had no attachment. Hence, he could give up his attachment for kith and kin. His father was pained for he had attachment. Buddha moved far and wide. He carried on his ascetic practices. A lady took pity on him. She wanted to get food for him. The Buddha said, "This is not the food I want. I want jnana biksha (food of wisdom). Anybody can get ordinary food. I don't want this food."

One day, he saw a farmer distributing grains. The Buddha went to him for alms. The farmer said to him, "O! lazy monk! Why should I give you alms? I give food for those people who work hard. I also work hard. I till the soil. I sow the seed, remove the weeds, water the fields, and harvest the grains. But you don't do anything."

To this, the Buddha answered, "I till the soil of the heart; I water it with love; I remove the weeds - bad tendencies; I harvest the grain of wisdom; I get the fruit of bliss." The Buddha thus convinced the farmer how he too was working hard, but in a different level!.

The joy we get from singing bhajans and by performing worship is temporary. But by experiencing the essence of "soham" mantra, you will get eternal joy. This soham is also known by the name "Hamsa Gayatri". "So" means "that"; "ham" means "I am". "I am that" is the meaning of soham. You should chant soham with every breath. When you breathe, you are inhaling "so" and you are exhaling "ham". If we repeat soham mantra with every inhalation and exhalation of breath, it will do a lot of good to you. Repeat "soham" with every breath and watch your breath carefully.

The word WATCH has an important message to convey. WATCH means:

W: Watch your Words
A: Watch your Actions
T: Watch your Thoughts
C: Watch your Character
H: Watch your Heart

The watch you that you wear breaks one day or other. But this watch is unbreakable. Watch whether you are speaking good or bad. Watch whether you abuse others or appreciate others. Your tongue can indulge in many sins. You should not use your tongue in abusing others. Abusing others is not a virtue but a vice. If you abuse others, others will also abuse you. There is reaction, reflection, and resound for everything. Hence, exercise control over the tongue. Don't allow the tongue to indulge in sin. The tongue that criticises others is a sinful tongue. Don't allow the tongue to indulge in gossip and criticism of others.

The Buddha observed silence and became very quiet. He began to experience soham within him. You can chant the names of Rama, Krishna, and Govinda for some time as a part of your sadhana (spiritual exercise). Continue the sadhana till the mind becomes steady. Once the mind becomes steady, practice the silence of the mind. Speech is silver, whereas silence is golden.

Once words become less, the activities and vagaries of the mind also become less. As words increase, the vagaries of the mind also increase. Hence, we should kill the mind.

But it is not the nature of the mind to die. Man may die but the mind will not die. But it is possible to kill the mind. Mind vanishes when words vanish from the mind. Observing mounam (silence) is one of the ways of silencing the mind. Don't allow the mind to go wherever it likes and do whatever it likes. Don't allow the mind to ridicule, hurt, and hate others. If you hurt anybody, you will be hurt ten times more. You may take pride that you have scolded somebody very thoroughly, but you cannot escape the consequences of your misdeeds. There will come somebody who will scold you someday.

Embodiments of Love!

We have taken human birth. What should we do having taken human birth? Should we use human birth for earning wealth? No, we should use the mind for the acquisition of virtues and not wealth. The students of today are interested in acquiring kalimi (wealth), balimi (strength), and chelimi (friendship), but not guna (virtue). What is the use of leading a life without acquiring virtues?

The dunce studies and becomes an eminent one. He studies all disciplines of learning but ends up as a dunce. The wretched one may master many types of learning but he cannot be free from the vices that he had cultivated. Too much learning encourages a person to become a logician. But he cannot acquire wisdom at anytime; what is the use of learning and dying. Master that education which knows no death.

The body is temporary. It is a water bubble. The body comes and goes, as the water bubbles come and go.

The body is a den of diseases. It is a basket that degenerates in course of time It is a weak raft that cannot cross the ocean of samsara It is a quiver of arrows. O man! Do not think that the mind is permanent. Surrender yourself at the feet of Hari (The Lord).

We should perform all deeds with a spirit of devotion to God.

The Buddha gave utmost importance to sense control. To control the mind, control the five senses. Only then will you be able to realise God.

Embodiments of Love!

All these things can be acquired by love alone. Love is God, live in love. We can acquire understanding of spirituality only by cultivation of love. That is why I often say,

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

Everything is possible by the power of love. Love is everything in this world. The world cannot exist without love. But the world exists to some people who have bad desires. Those people who are drowned in bad desires will not have even a peaceful death. We must keep the mind peaceful and sacred. We can acquire peace of mind only by love for God.

Embodiments of Love!

You have come here from long distances, facing much stress and strain. You should always be full of joy and peace. You may have troubles, but you should not allow the troubles to gain hold over you. Only if you set your troubles

aside can you earn peace.

It is not enough if you pray to God. You should consider that you are God. The Buddha asked people to think that they were divine and hence he asked people to contemplate on the subject "I am God". The Buddha believed that man is divine. God is always in you, with you, around you, below you. If you enter through the gate of spirituality, you will become God. But if you enter the world, you will become a dog. You must cultivate the feeling of oneness with God.

You have come here from different parts of the world, enduring stress and strain. I bless you that you will go back home safe and secure, peacefully and joyfully. Cultivate the faith that everything happens to you by the will of God. The Buddha tried different kinds of sadhana (spiritual exercise). The Buddha believed that sense control is very important to realise God. What are spiritual practices? Control of the five senses is real spiritual practice. We should not allow the senses to go wayward. Senses can be controlled only by love. Always live in love. We must make others happy with love. Never harbour hatred or evil toward anybody. Help ever, hurt never. It is said,

Paropakara punyaya papaya parapeedanam Merit lies in helping others, sin lies in hurting others.

You can control the mind by silence and by surrendering it to God. You can do your sadhana (spiritual exercise) based on your faith. In the beginning sadhana may be difficult. But it gives happiness to some extent in course of time. It is said,

Body is the temple of God. God exists in you. God does not exist elsewhere. He exists in you. Sin is not elsewhere. It exists where wrong action is committed.

Whatever spiritual practices you may pursue, there is always God in you. God is intertwined with your life. All that you need is self-confidence. Self-Confidence is most important for spiritual development.

Where there is self-confidence, there is truth. Where there is truth, there is bliss. Where there is bliss, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is God.

Hence you must cultivate self-confidence. Otherwise there will be utter confusion. You must build every thing on the foundation of self-confidence. For example, take this very building. The foundation is the basis for the building. The building cannot exist without the foundation. Similarly, faith is the foundation for everything. Do your duties. The Buddha sacrificed many things in life for the sake of ananada. Where there is sacrifice, there is ananada.

Embodiments of Love!

Reduce your attachment to the body. As you go on increasing your attachment to your body, your suffering also increases. Your body is the temple of God. Think that this is not your body, but as a temple of God. The body is sacred, because God resides in it. Hence, you must use the body for performing good deeds. You have been gifted with the body to obtain ananada. You may do your spiritual practices, but perform your spiritual practices with the feeling "God is none other than you." Strengthen this feeling in you and shape your lives accordingly. "Live in Love and Live with Love."

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

33. Divine Discourse

Date: 27 July 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Discourse for American Devotees

Embodiments of Love!

Many of you who have assembled here have made repeated visits to Prasanthi Nilayam in the past. You have come here many times and spent a lot of money. Why are you coming? You are coming here to experience bliss. Are you experiencing bliss? No. Where is bliss? Only when you investigate and find out where real bliss is, you can experience it. You are searching for bliss by going to many places, doing many sadhanas, doing bhajans and visiting many gurus. But still you don't experience bliss. What is the use of reading many books? Are you practicing at least one or two teachings of Swami? Without practicing Bhagawan's teachings what is the use of coming again and again? Many times I have taught about Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteousness), and Shanthi (Peace).

What is Truth (Sathya)? There are three syllables in the word 'Sathya' - sath, a, ya. Sath is permanent. That is life. A stands for annamu (food). Ya is the procedure for this investigation. For life, food is essential. Ya is Sun (not son) who provides the food. For the Sath which is life you need A which is annamu (food) and Sun is essential for providing food. So, Sathya means: by the grace of Sun God you appease hunger and lead a comfortable life. There is another way to look at this - Sa, Tha, Ya. When you consider it in the reverse order, Ya stands for Yama and Niyama of sadhanas. That leads to Tha which is Thathwa (Reality) which in turn leads to Sa which is divinity. When you do austerities with Yama and Niyama, you experience divinity. Man should talk less and do more sadhana. You come here for spiritual sadhana, and how can you progress when you indulge in too much talking even here? Today you undertake spiritual practices like penance, japa, worship, and meditation. You can never attain divinity by such routine practices.

Buddha did many spiritual practices, visited many places, read many books,

and visited many gurus. But he found futility in all of them. Then he inquired what the gifts of God are. When we make use of God's gifts properly, we can experience peace and happiness. For example, God has given us the tongue. We should use it properly by speaking sacred words to others, so that they can understand. Buddha inquired if he was doing this or not. God has gifted us five senses, five life breaths i.e., prana, apana, vyana, udana and samana. Space (Akasha) is awareness. Wind is life. Fire is effulgence. Water is life. You are not making proper use of these gifts of God. First, Buddha realized that the tongue is given to speak soft, sweet, truthful, and noble words. Then he inquired whether he was speaking words which are sweet and useful to others, or only for his selfish purposes.

After such thorough investigation, he threw away all the books finding they were not useful. Then he sat under the bodhi tree (peepul tree, Ficus religiosa). He first realized the importance of Samyak Vak (sacred speech). So he prayed that he should speak only truthful, sacred and noble words beneficial to others. Later he closed his eyes. Eyes are given to see the world and God. But he realized that he was using his eyes to see the unreal and transitory world but not God. He felt disgusted with the futility of this world full of sorrow. He found the world to be the source of all sorrows and misery, but not happiness. Thus he realized the value of Samyak Dristhi (sacred vision). After realizing the importance of good speech and good vision, he inquired about good speaking and good listening. Then he realized that he was not saying any words useful to others, and thus his life was being wasted. Merit lies in helping others, and it is sinful to hurt others.

Next, he realized the importance of Samyak Shravanam (sacred hearing). Thus he felt he should see good, hear good, and speak good. Then he realized the fundamental basis for all these is Samyak Hridayam (sacred heart). If you have a good heart, you have good speech, good hearing, and good vision. The heart may be compared to a generator and the power that comes from it makes the ears, eyes, and speech function. Finally he came to the conclusion of Samyak Bhavam (sacred feelings). For everything feelings are important. If you don't have good feelings, you cannot have good speech, or good vision, or good hearing. Bhava Shuddhi is Jnana Siddhi i.e., purity of thought leads to

the realization of wisdom. Wisdom (Jnana) cannot be realized by reading books. Thus he acquired good speech, good vision, good hearing, and good vibration.

Ultimately he inquired how all these were going to be useful for the society and the world. Then he realized the need for Samyak Karma (sacred work). Instead of doing good work, if you are thinking about the world, collecting the information about the world, and are involved in mundane activities, it would be useless. In Gujarat, there was a great devotee named Patel. He had money, possessions, conveniences, conveyances, and children. He used to sit for meditation as soon as he got up in the morning. Once his friend who was a businessman from America came to meet with him. Patel sent him a message that he would see him after his meditation was over. After a long wait when Patel showed up, his friend asked him why he was meditating when he had plenty of money, comforts, children and all the conveniences. Then Patel replied he was praying not for worldly objects which he had in abundance but only for what he did not have, namely peace and bliss which God alone could give. Then the American realized the sacred feelings of Bharatiyas (Indians). He admired their attitude of giving up what they have and desiring what is in the possession of God. So you should all pray for the things which only God can provide. Secondly, bliss is also only His gift. Peace and Bliss are not in the world, and are only the Lord's gifts. In the world you find only pieces not peace. You can experience bliss only in the presence of God. So you should pray to God only for peace and bliss. After such inquiry, Buddha prayed for sacred vision.

What is sacred vision? You should see all good things. In general, people in the world hurt others, but do not help them. The people who help have good hearts. This is the message of God in the Gita and Bhagavatha. Bhagavatha preached that helping others is a meritorious action, and hurting others is sinful action. So "Help Ever and Hurt Never". You should feed hungry persons and that will give you satisfaction. Your words should be sacred. People use harsh words. You should always speak softly and sweetly using nectarine words. But sweet utterances can come only if the heart is full of sweetness. So you should fill your heart with peace, bliss and sweetness.

Once you fill your heart thus, your words will also be sweet and peaceful.

Thus you should develop these five virtues of Samyak Drishti (sacred vision), Samyak Sravanam (sacred hearing), Samyak Vak (sacred speech), Samyak Hridayam (sacred heart), and Samyak Karma (sacred work). That's why Bhagawan says: "See No Evil, See What Is Good", "Hear No Evil, Hear What Is Good", "Speak No Evil, Say What Is Good", "Think No Evil, Think What Is Good", and "Do No Evil, Do What Is Good". "This Is The Way To God".

So these five are the gifts of God. Buddha's cousin, brother Ananda, did not know this truth, and he was crying at the deathbed of Buddha. Watching this, Buddha told him that it was not good or proper for him to cry when Buddha was experiencing bliss. Also He chided him saying, "Your name is Ananda which means you should be in bliss and not sad". He told him also to be happy and blissful, but not jealous when He was experiencing bliss. Buddha told him to give up jealousy and then breathed His last. Then Ananda realized the truth. He felt remorseful that in his life he did not help others and did not give happiness to others, nor did he enjoy any happiness. He felt the purpose of life is to fulfill the meaning of the title MAN "MA" which stands for Maya (illusion), and the message is to give up Maya. "AA" stands for Atma (Self) and the message is to experience Atmic Consciousness. "NA" stands for Nirvana (liberation). It is sad that having the title MAN, he is not able to give up Maya and experience Atma and attain Nirvana.

What is the purpose of life? Man has to get rid of Maya. Maya is to believe that the unreal is real. There is nothing permanent and real in this world and all things are passing clouds. What is the purpose and use of human life with all the knowledge and the intelligence when one behaves like an animal? At least animals have a reason and season, but nowadays man does not have reason or a season. This is disgusting.

As a man, one should develop Prajnana (spiritual awareness). Veda and Bhagavatha have taught the following four principles:

1. **Âñ Prajnanam Brahma** Âñ. God has given man Prajnanam but man is misusing this and having bad thoughts. Prajnanam is not worldly knowledge, but it is constant integrated awareness which is a gift from God. So one should manifest this awareness.

2. Âñ Tat-Twam-AsiÂñ , means ÂñThat Thou ArtÂñ. You should realize that God is not separate from you, and that God is in you, and you are in God. 3. Âñ AyamAtmaBrahma Âñ(Iam Atma, Brahma.) means that you are not man, but you are Atma and Brahma. Being Brahman if you do not realize that you are Atma, what is the use of your life and all the education you acquire? You should realize the truth ÂñI am IÂñ - that you are with God and you are in God and God is in you.

4. ÂñAham BrahmasmiÂñ . Realize the truth that you are God. As a separate individual you are Jeeva, and as cosmic Self you are God. God is unity in diversity. Without realizing this, there is no use reading books or giving lectures. At least practice one or two teachings of Swami. Even at the worldly level, are you helping anyone? ÂñHelp Ever and Hurt Never.Âñ Never use any harsh or hurtful words. The words come from the heart, and if you fill your heart with sacredness, your words also will be good. If you want to speak good words, you should fill your heart with good feelings.

A great saint named Thiruthonda Alvar realized that he was not separate from God and that God was residing in him. He said to God, ÂñI and You are OneÂñ. ThatÂñs why Bhagawan says repeatedly, ÂñNever consider God as separate from YouÂñ. God is hridaya vasi (resident of the heart), antharyami (indweller) and Atma swarup (embodiment of Atma). When you say I, it refers to Atma.

You should always remember that God is with you, in you, around you, above you, and below you. You should realize this fundamental truth. Many do spiritual practices, but they donÂñt get any permanent results. These practices are like passing clouds. People get up in the morning and do japa and meditation. But these practices should be practical, not temporary and imaginary. God neither comes nor goes but is eternal and infinite. You donÂñt

need to search for God anywhere; rather turn your vision inward. When you see all the faces in the outside world, they are in fact projections of what is already in you. So everything is reflection, reaction, and resound of your inner being. You feel sad that somebody is criticizing you. No one is criticizing you. You are criticizing yourself. You think others are hurting you. In fact, there are no others.

Jesus also mentioned "JOY" which denotes "J" Jesus first, "O" others next, and "Y" you last. Finally, you should realize that you are Jesus and that you are God. When you repeatedly think that you are God and you are not separate from God, you verily become God. If you consider that God is separate from you, God will always remain separate from you. God is not separate from you; God is in you and you are in God. You should first realize this truth. You do many spiritual practices and also service activities in the organization. As long as you consider yourself as a man and have the feeling of I, you should serve others. Then slowly you will realize that the one you are serving is your reflection, reaction, and resound. God is One, the Goal is One, but it appears as many in the society. You should see the unity in the society because unity is divinity.

Then only, your spiritual practices will have fulfillment. Today you read many books without doing any practice. Swami stands for practical science, not platform speeches. You do not need to do a lot, just at least do one teaching. Even when you do one sincerely, you will be redeemed. Are you at least following one of the teachings of Bhagawan? No. Then what is the use? Having come to Bhagawan, you should practice His teachings and share them with others. You do not need to go into the streets and publicize. First share your love and start this at home by respecting parents, and loving brothers and sisters.

Sharing love is your first spiritual sadhana. When you see somebody is suffering, you should try your best to help. However, do within the limitations of your capabilities, but not beyond. If you do this in excess, beyond limits, that will be harmful to you. If you do it in Mita (limit) and Hita (beneficial), it will lead you to success. Hence the saying,

Â

Na Sreyo Niyamam VinaÂ, Â
No success without discipline.Â

If you don't follow discipline, it results in danger. If you are thirsty, you need only a glass of water, but not the entire water of the Ganges river. But nowadays people's desires are unrealistic. Similarly when you are hungry, you just eat enough to appease your hunger, but you don't need bags of rice. You may have all things, but you may not survive until tomorrow. You should have everything within limits, but not in excess.

Swami is repeatedly warning that many people are misusing Swami's name. The people who misuse Swami's name will face the consequences. When you do spiritual practices like bhajan, it should come from the heart and others should be able to join. First Gurunanak started community bhajans. One is happier doing bhajans with others than doing them alone. So Samyak Bhajan (community bhajans) are very good. When you are alone at home, you may do them yourself. But you should join the community and sing the glory of God. If you don't like to join the community bhajans, you may do them alone.

You should see no one is hurt by your actions. To the extent possible, you should teach only good. When outsiders come, explain Bhagawan's teachings clearly. Your explanations should be based on your experience. Then it will go to their hearts.

Embodiments of Love!

There are many devotees in this world. Devotion is there, but not of the proper type. One should first understand what is meant by devotion and spirituality. Spirituality means eliminating animal tendencies and divinizing

human qualities. This is real sadhana (spirituality). Spirituality does not merely mean doing japa, meditation and bhajan. You have to kill the bestial temperament in you. Man's life is fulfilled only when animal qualities are annihilated and human qualities are transformed into divine qualities.

Embodiments of Love!

You are doing many types of spiritual practices. But most importantly, help the needy and distressed. Help others. There is no higher spiritual practice than this. Swami says, " "

Charity is the ornament for the hands, not bracelets.
Truth is the ornament for the neck, not necklaces.
Listening to the scriptures, and dharma is the ornament for the ears.
These are the real precious jewels for the human body.
Only truth should come from the throat."

Embodiments of Love!

Women do lot of work. (Some doctors are also doing sincere work without any selfishness). Women are feeling sad that they are not able to do more work. But they are not independent. If they are really independent, they would have spent more time serving. Women have their husbands who are like bondage for them. Naturally they have to follow their husbands and serve them. In fact, they serve their husbands, respect them, and make them happy. To help others is the real spiritual practice. Even if you cannot do much, at least make others happy by speaking good words.

(Bhagawan asked Dr. Goldstein if he has any questions, and that He would answer them.)

Dr. Goldstein : Swami, in the service conference some questions were asked

by delegates. They wanted to know if the Sathya Sai Organization activities can be affiliated with any other humanitarian organizations?

Swami : In my opinion, there should not be any kind of affiliation. You do service according to your own rules and regulations. There should not be any comparison with other organizations. They do their way, and you do your own way.

Dr. Goldstein : Devotees are asking how they can bring Swami's message to the public, and how the Sathya Sai Organization can interact with the public and bring Bhagawan's teachings to them? Also how can they bring knowledge of Swami and the advent of the Avatar to the public?

Swami : In order to bring Bhagawan's message to the public, poetry and literary gimmicks are not necessary. But your practice of Swami's teachings in your life will be the best message for the public.

In foreign countries, some Indians are claiming themselves to be Swami's devotees, and they are telling many lies using the name of Swami for collecting money. Some claim they are constructing temples and schools for Swami, and they collect money. These are all blatant lies. Swami has not accepted any money for any purpose. So be careful, and keep those people at a distance who approach you for money in the name of Sai.

Dr. Goldstein : Many devotees are asking how the centers in the various countries can be a better reflection of spirituality within their own society? The selection of bhajans, the appearance of the Sai Baba Centers, and all of the programs should be a function of each culture because Swami has planted the seed of Divinity in the land of every country all over the world.

Swami : Each country should follow its own procedure and culture but not compare themselves with others. You should not imitate others.

Swami is not stretching His hand to ask anything from anybody. Swami says "I am not a beggar, but I am bigger" in good thoughts.

Bhagawan declares His life is His message and you should follow the example of Swami's life. Do what pleases Swami and definitely you will attain divinity. There is no other spiritual practice higher than that. Spiritual practice really means respecting and following Swami's teachings. Importantly, you should respect all. Don't expect others to respect you. Even if others do not respect you, you should respect others because the same divinity resides in all. When you respect everyone, you respect God. Even if anyone criticizes you or abuses you, still you should respect him. Even if he criticizes you, you should not criticize in return. Then only there will be transformation in the other person. You should remain silent and fill your heart with love. There is nothing higher than love. Swami's entire property is only love. All of you have share in my property. So all of you are shareholders in the property of Bhagawan. Wherever you do service, Bhagawan is with you, in you, and around you.

Embodiments of Love!

Many of you come and go, but you are not able to understand Swami's teachings and put them in practice. You need not do any spiritual practice. But respect everyone and talk with love. Even if they are not devotees they are bound to change. First there should be transformation in you; then the whole world will be transformed. Earlier Swami mentioned a devotee by name, Patel, who was praying to God for peace and bliss. But modern man has limitless desires. Though he has plenty, still he wants more. What is the use of having plenty if it is not put for good and sacred use? Sacred use does not mean giving money indiscriminately to anyone who asks. You should help only the deserving man. Watching your giving nature, many people may run after you. If you give to everyone without discrimination that becomes misuse of money and it is a mistake to do so. You should discriminate if it is good or bad, right or wrong and then give for good use only. Then only the purpose is fulfilled. All organizations have their eyes on America now because it has lots of money. Though it is a rich country, it is really poor. Who is the poorest man in the world? The one who has many desires is the poorest man. He who has much satisfaction is the richest man. Keep these two principles in your mind.

In my view, you should never give any scope to doubts. By the remembrance of God, all the doubts will be cleared. Some doubts come and go in this world; they are like passing clouds. You should not be mindful of these passing clouds.

You may face some difficulties, losses and sorrows in life, but you should not worry about them. Consider that they are all good for you. When you get difficulties say, "This is good for me. This is good for me. God has given these troubles and difficulties for my good". So do not be troubled and disappointed. Your disappointment is appointment for Me. If you develop those kinds of good feelings, you will have bliss. If you experience depression out of disappointment, even God will not come close to you. If you consider disappointment as a gift from God, then He will come to you and relieve you of your difficulties.

Some youngsters have many doubts. This is because of their ignorance. You have to blame yourself, not others. You should not accuse or criticize anybody. You should always be blissful. Every Sai devotee should lead a blissful life.

In my opinion, food is very important. As is the food, so is the head. As is the head, so is God. Food, head, and God are interrelated. Americans find it difficult to give up eating meat. Bhagawan will not force you to give up. It is good to give up eating meat, because it will help you to develop Satwik (sacred) tendencies. Our thoughts depend on the food we eat. Bad food is the main cause for all bad thoughts. You have to exercise control on these three: drinking alcohol, eating meat, and smoking. They deplete all the good thoughts from you.

After smoking, if you breathe forcibly on a white cloth, you will find a yellowish-black spot on the cloth. It is like poison, and you are taking it inside. This will lead to many diseases like heart ailments, asthma, eosinophilia, and stomach disorders. All these diseases are due to smoking.

Eating meat is very bad. Why do you want to eat meat? Do you think you

need to eat meat because it contains vitamins and proteins? You can have plenty of protein by eating curds (yogurt), pulses and drinking milk. Do you think you can get better protein than these by eating meat? Now I am going to tell you a secret. In countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Germany, because of nuclear explosions, due to nuclear testing, the seawater is polluted. With this the creatures in the waters consume this poison (nuclear pollutants). When you eat these creatures, you also take part of the poison. This leads to cancer. Because of this even children in countries like Singapore and Malaysia suffer from cancer of the head and other parts of the body.

There is lot of polluted food in this world and this harms human beings. Modern day doctors say that the increased detection of incidence of cancer nowadays is due to better diagnostic facilities, and in the olden days it went undetected. They say this merely to justify themselves. In earlier days there were some incidences of cancer but it was not this rampant. In those days they used to call it a growth. Nowadays if there is any little swelling everyone including the doctors are alarmed that it may be cancer. They want to do tests for everything to rule out cancer. If you take pure and sacred food, cancer will not come any where near you. Cases of cancer are increasing because of the pollution of air, water and food. Once cancer sets in, it is not possible to cure it. So you should take good food to prevent illness and lead a healthy, happy life.

Embodiments of Love!

Lead a happy, healthy, peaceful, and long life. What is the use of good health when you do not have peace? Be healthy, happy and share the happiness with others.

(Upon conclusion of His Divine Discourse, one of the devotees asked Swami when the swelling on His face would go down. For several weeks preceding Guru Poornima, Swami had developed a large area of swelling on his right cheek. It had subsided substantially by Guru Poornima, but was still evident.)

Swami : "It will go down tomorrow. Diseases like smallpox, chickenpox, and

typhoid run their usual course of time. Similarly, even this glandular swelling lasts for 21 days. No medicine would help it. Diet has to be controlled and observed carefully. After 21 days it subsides spontaneously. Today it is 19th day and by day after tomorrow it should be gone. Today being the 19th day, it already decreased and there is not much swelling. By taking the illness on Myself from that other person, I gave comfort to him. Bearing the ailment patiently, I do not waste any time. How many discourses I am giving and how much work I am doing! The swelling started near the joint of the right cheek. It was difficult even to talk and drink water.

When the International Seva Conference started, the All India President, Mr. Srinivasan, requested Swami to give a discourse. When I tried I could not even speak. Then I felt what is the use if I can't give happiness to all these people? Then I willed that the swelling should move from the joint to a forward point. I do not cure Myself because then it becomes selfish. There is no selfishness in Me. On the 13th day I shifted the swelling. That day it was an unbearable and excruciating pain.

I preach to everybody to get rid of the body attachment and develop attachment to Atma (Self). So I had to show by example not to have body attachment and to ignore the terrible pain. That's how I could do so much work and give these many discourses. I do not take any holidays like you. No Sunday or any other holidays. Only holy days for Swami.

I do not pay much attention to the ailment as it comes and goes. Still two more days are remaining. Day after tomorrow, it will be normal. You may not be aware, but the swelling was of the size of a ripe orange. No one should feel sad that Swami has taken this illness. These things come and go. Who invited them and who bids farewell to them? They come and go. But you have to control your thoughts. If you pay too much attention to the illness it will cause you more pain. One child was suffering, and the principal of the school sent a telegram to the parents of the child. The parents took the child to the doctor, and the doctor said it could not be cured, the child had to undergo suffering. The child was crying all the time without eating and drinking. I went by car to the school, and called the child along with the parents into a room. I asked

the boy, "What do you want?" He wanted the pain to be removed.

I said, "I will remove the pain; you tell me the food you like". He wanted biscuits as he had not eaten for three days. I materialized the biscuits, fed him, blessed him, and told him to go to his classroom in the school. The parents were concerned and wanted to take the child home. But I told the child to stay in the school. Then he returned to the classroom, and he had no pain. That's how I took his illness upon Myself. I do many things like this. Once I took upon Myself the paralysis of a devotee. There was a devotee by name Krishnappa, a vendor of flowers in Bangalore. He suffered from paralysis, and he had a large family to support. So I took over his paralysis upon Myself. Even though I take it upon Myself, I don't cure Myself. If I cure Myself it becomes selfish. There was a mother of three children in Nainital who lost her husband. She was working as a clerk, and there was no body to support her. She felt sad for the demise of her husband, and she used to work day and night to support the family. While going to the office, she suffered a heart attack. I was in Bangalore at that time when this happened in Nainital. I said, "Laxmi, do not fear".

At that time I left My body, and the students who were with Me were all worried. Then I came back and told them not to worry, but to take Me upstairs. So I took upon Myself the heart attack, and she became well and the children were happy. The second day I sent a telegram to her asking her to come to Brindavan. She came along with her children. I called them privately, and told them not to worry and to go back to work. I took upon Myself the illness for nine days and could not move. I suffered and then got better. Sometimes I have to take these illnesses. This happens to all Avatars. This happened to the Shirdi Avatar and the Krishna Avatar. Though all these are not recorded, all incarnations have taken over the sufferings of devotees. God does His duty whether it is recorded or not. I am ready to take the sufferings of anyone when they cannot bear it. I am ready, ready, and ever ready for this. These incidents do not come as obstacles in the way of God. Everything will go on as usual. As you have seen during the last 15 days I attended all the functions; I had to do lots of work and give many discourses. Doctors come and advise me to take rest. I don't want and I don't need any rest. It

is a mistake to think that I will become healthy by taking rest. Doing work while undergoing suffering is My rest.Â□

(This was followed by bhajans by the American devotees and concluded with arathi).

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba July 27, 2002 Mandir at Prasanthi Nilayam

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html			

34. God Is The Indweller

Date: 09 October 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

The entire 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 Verse)

People undertake various spiritual practices to attain Divinity. One may be evil-minded, yet with the blessings of elders and in the company of noble souls, one can easily get rid of evil tendencies and develop virtues. The life of Ratnakara, the highway robber, bears ample testimony to this. His life was transformed as he came into contact with the saptharishis (seven sages). He gave up his evil ways and unwaveringly followed their teachings and ultimately became the Sage Valmiki. He set an ideal to mankind and composed the great epic, Ramayana.

Prahlada, the son of demon king Hiranyakasipu, constantly contemplated on Lord Narayana and chanted His Name. As a result, he had the same divine effulgence of Lord Narayana Himself. Likewise, Charles Darwin resembled his master Henslow in all respects as he continuously thought of him and followed his teachings. Similarly our ancient sages and seers always contemplated on God constantly and adhered to His dictates. As a consequence, their faces radiated divine brilliance.

Lord Krishna has said the same in the Bhagavadgita, Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathanah (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). He said, "Arjuna, it is My Divine effulgence that shines forth in all. " God is all-

pervasive. He is present in all elements and in all beings in the form of radiance.

When God is ever present within, why does man suffer? Some people say that they are facing hardships and are leading a miserable life. It is foolish on their part to say so. God, the indweller, has absolutely no sorrow and worries. He is the embodiment of supreme bliss. Is it not a sign of foolishness to think that you are haunted by misery when God is installed on the altar of your heart? God says, "I am present in you. You are but a spark of My Divinity. " Such being the case, how can one be affected by difficulties and sorrows? When you enquire on these lines, you will realise that the demonic and bestial tendencies in you are responsible for this. You will not be able to experience the truth *Mamaivamsho* ... unless and until you give up evil qualities.

Though God is present within, man behaves as if he is under the influence of a demon. First of all, he should realise that he is a spark of divinity and that no evil spirits can control him. God says that He resides in your heart. Heart is a single seat. There is room for one only. So, only God should be seated in your heart and none else.

Today, man is failing to comprehend that he is an aspect of divinity. He is unaware of the fact that God is within and deludes himself that there is none to care for him. Everyone is endowed with a heart that is divine and by nature full of compassion. God dwells in such a heart. But today man has become hard-hearted, since he has lost this natural compassion. Such a person cannot be called a spark of the Divine; he is verily a demon. The assertion *Mamaivamsho* ... does not apply in such case.

There is a spark of divinity in the heart of everyone. It is because of *bhrama* (delusion) that man is unable to realise his divine nature. In the first instance, man should make efforts to overcome this delusion and realise that God is always with him, in him, around him, above him, and below him. Delusion causes evil feelings to arise in your heart and mind. They are sheer

imagination and have nothing to do with divinity.

God is present in the heart of one and all. He does not have a particular form and is not confined to a particular place. He is present in your heart and is all-pervasive.

Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvata sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya thishthati

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

Such effulgent divine principle of the Self is termed Atma. Krishna has asserted, this Atma is a part of His own aspects. There cannot be any defects or imperfections in such divine principle. Whatever defects you think you see are purely the result of your imagination. God is the embodiment of virtues. Hence, man too should lead a life of virtues. Evil propensities are impediments to the spiritual path. For a start, man should distance himself from all evil actions and undertake good deeds. Only then will he have the right to call himself a human being. Human life is highly sacred.

The Upanishads consider human life to be verily divine. Man considers himself to be a weakling because he has forgotten the principle of The Self, which is beyond all attributes. His evil qualities, wicked deeds and misconduct have brought him down to this sorry state. As the company, so are the thoughts. Hence, it is said, "Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are. " Your

friendship influences your nature. Ratnakara became Sage Valmiki because of his association with the saptarishis (seven sages). Prahlada was the son of a demon, yet he was always in the company of noble souls.

Sathsangatwe nissangatwam,
nissangatwe nirmohatwam,
nirmohatwe nischalatattwam,
nischalatattwe jivanmukti
(Sanskrit sloka)

Good company leads to detachment,
detachment makes one free from delusion,
freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind,
and steadiness of mind confers liberation.

What is the inner significance of Devi Navaratri? People worship the Triune Goddesses Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswathi during these nine days. Who is Durga? She is the embodiment of all powers. Saraswati is the presiding deity of speech and wisdom.

The Gayatri Mantra begins with "Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah. " Bhuh means materialisation. It represents matter, which is subject to change. Bhuvah represents life principle, i.e. vibration. Savitri is the presiding deity of the life principle. You must have heard the story of Savitri, who restored her dead husband back to life with the power of her devotion and surrender. Saraswati is worshipped as Jnana Devata, since she confers good intellect and wisdom. This is described in the Vedas as Prajnanam Brahma. Prajnana does not mean worldly knowledge. It is Constant Integrated Awareness, which is changeless and eternal.

The divine mother has three names: Gayatri, Savitri, and Saraswati. Gayantham trayathe iti Gayathri (Gayatri protects those who sing her glory). Gayatri, being the presiding deity of our senses, helps us to master the senses. Savitri, being the presiding deity of the life principle, protects our life. Saraswati bestows on us the changeless and eternal wisdom.

Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati are present in every man, but he is not able to understand and experience their presence. Consequently, he is giving room to wicked qualities and indulging in evil deeds, thereby ruining his life. His bad habits are responsible for his downfall. First of all, man has to develop good habits and transform himself.

How could Savitri revive her dead husband back to life? She transformed the vibration in her into divine vibration by contemplating on God incessantly. That led to the resurrection of her husband. When you develop divine feelings, nothing is impossible for you. Any mighty task can be accomplished through pure and selfless love.

Love develops divine power in you. There is nothing that love cannot conquer in this world. Sages perform penance in dense forests infested with wild animals. They don't possess any weapon for self-protection. The weapon that protects them is their intense love and yearning for God. They tame the wild beasts with their power of love and transform them into docile beings. Man's character gets transformed into good or bad depending his company. Noble company bestows noble feelings and bad company gives rise to evil traits. Your speech and conduct are based on your feelings. You deserve to be called a human being only when you develop good feelings.

Form alone does not constitute a human being. A true human being is one who embodies good habits, helps ever, and hurts never. You should not merely be an akara manava (human in form); you should become an achara manava (human in practice). Speak good, see good, do good, and be good.

Divinity will manifest in you only when your conduct is good. God is not somewhere in a distant land; He is very much in you, with you, and around you, guiding you and guarding you. Develop divine feelings and listen to the divine voice from within. The human body can be compared to the musical instrument veena. You can enjoy the divine melody only when it is tuned to divine feelings. The divine melody will bestow bliss on you and make you forget yourself in ecstasy. On the other hand, profane feelings will give rise to discordant notes. Hence, let your thoughts, words and deeds be suffused with sacred feelings.

Do not hurt others. Paropakaraya punyaya, papaya parapeedanam (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). Hence, the Vedas teach, Help ever, hurt never. The Vedas emphasise the need to cultivate sacred feelings. In fact, the sacred feelings are within, but man has forgotten them.

The human being is the repository of divine energy. Durga (goddess of energy), Lakshmi (goddess of wealth), and Saraswati (goddess of wisdom) are present in the human. Man is not poor in any sense. He is not weak or forlorn. He has all the capacity to experience divine bliss. In spite of being endowed with all powers, man is weak. This is the effect of evil company. You should not take it amiss, but the fact is that the modern system of education is ruining the lives of many. Modern education is leading to agitation instead of elevation. It is giving rise to evil qualities like anger, greed, desire, and jealousy. In fact, people who are unlettered have the virtues of humility, obedience, love, and peace. Humility is the hallmark of education. One may acquire high qualification, but all one's knowledge becomes useless if one lacks humility.

In spite of his education and intelligence,
a foolish man will not know his true Self,
and a mean-minded person will not give up his wicked qualities.

Modern education leads only to argumentation,
not to total wisdom.

What is the use of acquiring worldly education
if it cannot lead you to immortality?

Acquire the knowledge that will confer on you immortality.

(Telugu Poem)

True education is that which fosters truth, morality, integrity and culture. Education should develop human values in you. You should respect elders and serve your parents. People talk of friendship but we do not find true friends anywhere. Today friendship is tainted with wickedness and self-interest.

Tyaja durjana samsargam;
Bhaja sadhu samagamam;
Kuru punyam ahorathram;
Smara nityam anityatham.

Shun bad company;
Seek good company, and
Perform righteous deeds the whole day;
Discriminate between permanent and ephemeral.

This is what you are supposed to do. Some people appear to be good and talk sweetly, but their minds are filled with wicked feelings. Beware of such people and keep them at a distance. It is because of such people abound that present-day society is in turmoil.

Prahlada was the son of a demon king, yet his thoughts were always centred

on Lord Narayana. He repeated His Name always. His father and his teachers tried their best to divert him from spiritual path and infuse demonic traits in him. Once Hiranyakasipu asked Prahlada what he had learnt from his preceptors. Prahlada replied, "The teachers have taught me many things. I have learnt the principles of dharma and artha (righteousness and wealth) and studied sacred scriptures. In fact, I have learnt the very essence of all knowledge. "

Hiranyakasipu was overjoyed to hear all this. He said, "Oh son! Let me have the pleasure of listening to that great knowledge. "

Prahlada said, "Oh father, the Name of Hari will destroy all our sins. Of what use is one's education if one does not contemplate on Lord Hari and attain liberation? "

Hiranyakasipu became furious on hearing this. He pushed him from his lap. But Prahlada was not the least perturbed. He continued to chant the name of Lord Narayana. Hiranyakasipu subjected him to various ordeals. He made elephants trample upon him and set poisonous snakes to bite him. Prahlada's unflinching faith in Lord Narayana protected him from all these dangers. Prahlada felt the mighty elephant to be as light as a feather, and the poison turned into nectar by the power of his devotion. Such things can be understood only by experience and not by mere description.

Though he was young, Prahlada was firm in his resolve. Hiranyakasipu was overcome by fury. He roared, "Oh madcap, you talk very high of your God, where is He? "

Prahlada very calmly replied,
"Father, never doubt that God is here and not there.
In fact, He is present wherever you look for Him. "
(Telugu Poem)

If God is all-pervasive, can you show Him in this pillar? ", he challenged Prahlada. "Yes, I can ", pat came the answer.

Such was Prahlada's faith and devotion. One can attain divinity only with confidence.

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

Hiranyakasipu at once hit the pillar with a mace. Lo and behold! Lord Narasimha emerged from it. What is the inner meaning of this? The body is like a pillar. One can have the vision of Atma only when one breaks the manacles of body attachment. You can develop Atmabhimana (love for the Atma) once you give up dehabhimana (body attachment). It is only Atmabhimana that will protect you always. Learn the language of the heart. It can be taught only by divinity and not by teachers.

Students!

What you need today is unwavering faith in God. Faith alone can protect you. Under all circumstances, at all times, consider God as the basis of your life.

Give up evil qualities like anger, greed, and jealousy. Anger can be compared to Ravana's pyre. It keeps burning always. Desire is the cause of man's downfall. Hence, eradicate desire and anger.

You should manifest love and be embodiments of love. Love is God, live in love. If you have love, you can achieve anything.

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.

Hence, develop the spirit of love. Love is the most potent weapon that can win over anyone. What was the weapon that protected our ancients who lived in forests? It was not the hydrogen bomb or atom bomb. It was love and love alone. So, one need not acquire the atom bomb or hydrogen bomb; it is enough if one has the weapon of love. You can conquer the entire world with the power of love.

People worship Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati during these nine days. Durga destroyed the demons. Since the weapons are no longer needed, people perform ayudha puja. When you pray to Durga wholeheartedly, she will protect you in all your endeavours.

You are not able to understand the principle of divinity. Nobody in this world can help you the way God helps you. Hence, surrender yourself to God and pray for His help. Also, devotion to God safeguards our ancient culture. People are haunted by misery and grief since they have forgotten God.

Control your emotions. Develop love. Do not entertain evil thoughts. Nothing can confer the experience of bliss that the proximity of God gives. Love all and all will love you. Share your love with even dogs, monkeys, and cats. You can see how they reciprocate your love. Man lacks the sense of gratitude that even dogs have. We see many foreigners having dogs and cats as their pets. When you love them, they too will love you in turn.

Yad bhavam tad bhavathi (as you think so you become). You are bound to experience the reflection, reaction, and resound of your feelings, be they good or bad. If you see bad in others, it is only a reflection of your bad feelings. It is a mistake to blame others while ignoring your own faults. Purify your feelings in the first instance. Love even those whom you consider as wicked. In fact, nobody is wicked in this world. It is because of bhrama (delusion) that you consider some as good and some wicked. Develop sathya sankalpas (noble feelings) and follow the path of truth. Do not indulge in vain gossip. Instead, sanctify your time by chanting the divine name. There is nothing sweeter than divine name.

(Bhagawan sang the bhajan, "Hare Rama, Hare Rama " and continued His discourse.)

Remember what Shivaji taught his minister. This body will be respected so long as there is life in it. Once the life ebbs away, it will not have any value. The same was stated by Duryodhana during his last moments. He said, "I was respected so long as I was alive. Tomorrow, crows and dogs are going to feast on me. "

Whatever has to happen will happen. Lead a respectable life while you are alive. Develop divine feelings in you. Only then you would have led a true human life. Today, man is leading a purely materialistic life. This is also necessary to a certain extent. Remember that there is the transcendental principle even in this secular life.

Embodiments of Love!

The divine vibrations that result from the bhajan you have just sung is spreading to all parts of the world. The divine name that you chant purifies the hearts of many. Hence, do not entertain bad feelings. Do not use bad words. Use only sacred words. Sing the glory of God. By doing so, you will render a great help to the whole world. Do not hurt others. Help everybody. When you help others, you will certainly achieve positive results. Make proper

use of your time. Chant God's Name and make your heart sacred.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

35. God Alone Can Confer Love And Peace

Date: 10 October 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara (day 2)

All the names and forms are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being,
who is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute and non-dual.

He is the embodiment of Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram
(Truth, Goodness, Beauty).

(Telugu Poem)

The cosmos is an object of awe and mystery.

The leelas of the Lord are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds.
They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage.

(Telugu Poem)

Unity is indispensable, be it for the wealth and prosperity of a nation or peace and happiness in a family. The whole world will be plunged into unrest and chaos in the absence of unity. Unity confers peace and bliss. Disunity leads to discontent and restlessness and makes one forget divinity. Peace is what man has to aspire and pray for. In fact, one does not need to go in search of peace. You are yourself the embodiment of peace. Sarva rupa dharam santham (Every human form is the very personification of peace). Sarva nama dharam sivam (All names are equally auspicious).

But this awareness of such sacred truths is not present in modern man. People are not ready to believe that man is the embodiment of peace. Does anybody know where peace exists? Man is going all over the world in search of peace, since he is not aware that it is present within himself. He is like a foolish person who searches for his spectacles while wearing them all the

time right over his nose. What is the reason for all the troubles, anxieties, and unrest that man is facing today? The reason is that he has forgotten his true Self and is identifying himself with something that he is not. Every man aspires for peace. Is it not a sign of one's ignorance to look for peace elsewhere when one is himself the embodiment of peace?

One day, Sankaracharya was on his way to the Ganges along with his disciples. He found a brahmin sitting under a tree and repeating the rules of Panini's grammar, "Dukrun karane, dukrun karane? " He was trying to master Panini's grammar to become a great scholar. On being questioned by Sankara, the brahmin replied that he wanted to exhibit his scholarship in the royal court and obtain liberal material rewards.

Sankara asked, "What are you going to do with the wealth? " The brahmin said that he would enjoy all the comforts and luxuries so long as he was alive. Sankara questioned him further, "After death, what will happen to your wealth? Will you be able to remember whatever you are learning now? " The brahmin had no answer to this. Then Sankara said, "Oh simpleton, try to understand the divine principle that is always within you - before your birth, in this birth, and after your death. "

Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam Govindam Bhaja Mooda Mathe
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane.

Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda, the rules of grammar will not come to your rescue when the end approaches.

No one accompanied you at the time of birth nor will anyone follow you after

your death. You have come all alone and will go back in the same way.

Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam Iha
Samsare Bahu Dustare Kripayapare Pahi Murare.

(Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death; time and again, I am experiencing the agony of staying in the mother's womb. It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life. Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.)

A person is on his deathbed. He is surrounded by his near and dear ones who are wailing over his imminent death. He opens his eyes and asks, "Why do you all cry? " They say, "You are going to leave this world once for all. That makes us feel sad. " He realises that all the material wealth he has acquired has to be left behind and he has to go empty-handed. It is then that one realises the folly of the pursuit of material possessions.

He alone is a human being who enquires into his true nature. He asks others, "Who are you? ", but does not know, "Who am I? " It is the symptom of the delusion that is the root cause of all grief. Prior to birth, in what way is one related to another? After death, who will follow whom? Physical relationship is impermanent. Ultimately, each one is left to himself; nobody will accompany another. Taking such transient and ephemeral world to be real, man is leading a life of delusion. He should make an effort to understand his true identity and experience peace. Being unaware of the fact that peace is within, man is searching for peace elsewhere.

You cannot experience peace in the external world. Wherever you go, you

find only unrest and agitation. The peace that you aspire for is very much in you. The divine principle in you is verily the embodiment of peace. Forgetting such reality, you are craving for non-lasting peace in the external world. Stop searching for peace outside. Turn inward and try to experience peace, which is your very form.

Whatever you seek in the external world is present in you. There is nothing outside which is not within. When you open your eyes, you are able to see thousands of heads. Once you close your eyes, you cannot see anyone. From this, it is clear that all that you see with your physical eyes is transient. As long as the physical eyes are functional, you are able to see the world. Once they become non-functional, you cannot see anything. But there is something that you can see whether you open your eyes or close them. That is Divinity. It is changeless and eternal. It has neither birth nor death. In fact, you are the embodiment of such a divine principle. Understand this truth.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is your true nature. Nothing can exist in this world without love. You are an embodiment of love. Forgetting such reality, you are craving mundane things. What you have to aspire for and what you have to experience and enjoy in this world is love and love alone. Other than love, nothing is permanent.

First of all, you have to enquire into your true identity which is love. Love is present in all names and forms. It is eternal, non-dual and blissful. Man is selective in his love, he lavishes it on the near and dear ones but is indifferent about others. As long as he is immersed in such a dualistic feeling, he cannot experience non-dual bliss. A man with a dual mind is half blind. You should identify yourself with others and experience unity. Advaita darshanam jnanam (perception of non-duality is supreme wisdom). Man is the embodiment of wisdom. But, he has forgotten this reality and is deluded by the transient and ephemeral forms. He reposes his faith in the physical body and craves for worldly gains.

Give up body attachment. Understand the truth that all are in you and you are in all. The Atma that dwells in you is the same as the one that dwells in others. Visualise such oneness and experience bliss. Since you are unable to experience this oneness, you are giving room to hatred and jealousy.

There was a dog in search of food. It found a dry bone and started biting it. After some time, a piece of the bone pierced its gums and blood started oozing out. The dog was happily licking its own blood thinking that it was oozing from the bone it had bitten. In the same manner, man forgets his innate bliss and is under the delusion that he is able to derive happiness from the external world. In fact, all that he fancies that he is experiencing in the external world originate from within him. Pain or pleasure is the result of his own imagination. It is said, "Pleasure is an interval between two pains. " Pleasure and pain are within, not outside. All that is seen is only a reflection, the reality is within. Hence, Vedanta exhorts man, "Know thyself. "

Once, an I.C.S officer camped in a village. Some villagers cautioned him the house in which he was lodged was a haunted one. The officer wanted to investigate the veracity of their statement. He put off the main light and switched on the bed lamp. He reclined on the bed keeping one leg over the other. He was shaking his legs and was lost in thought. Suddenly, he noticed a giant shadow of his legs on the wall. The shadow moved as he shook his legs. The foolish officer mistook it for a ghost and was fear-stricken. Likewise, man is put to suffering because of his own delusion. In fact, nothing other than Divinity exists in this world. All are essentially divine. Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti (Truth is one, but the wise call it by different names). Have firm faith in this principle of unity in diversity. Only then will you be free from worries and fear.

Embodiments of Love!

You may ask, how one can visualise unity. Gradually, reduce your dehabhimanam (body attachment) and develop Atmabhimanam (love for the Self). In every human being, there exists the eternal truth in the form of love. Love is God, God is love. Hence, strengthen the love in your self. Love alone

can confer peace and courage on you.

You see many forms in nature, each unique in its own way. No two forms are alike. Bear this truth in mind always. Enquire, why God has given you this body. What are you supposed to achieve with this? What is the purpose of human birth? Is it to study or to play sports and games or to learn fine arts or to amass riches? No. You are born to know your Self. Hence, question yourself, "Who am I? " Once you know who you really are, you would have known everything else.

Embodiments of sacred Atma!

It is rather difficult to know about others but there is nothing simpler than knowing your own Self. Hence, undertake spiritual practices that help you to know your Self. Due to defects in your food and habits, sometimes, your body is afflicted with ailments. Do not be unduly worried about it. First and foremost, understand the purpose of life. Students come here to acquire education. They should understand the purpose of their stay and make efforts in the right direction. Only then will they be able to realise their goal. But man has forgotten the purpose for which he is born and is immersed in vain pursuits. Man can know the truth only when he develops love.

As you can see, there are a number of bulbs glowing in this hall. Bulbs are different but the current is the same. Likewise, it is the same Atmic principle which makes different bodies function. It is the same Atma that makes the eyes see and the ears hear. That is divinity, that is chaitanya (awareness). It is not confined to a particular place; it neither comes nor goes. It is present everywhere at all times.

One should not entertain doubts or misunderstanding in the spiritual path. As long as there are doubts, one can never experience truth. Faith is very essential. One without faith is equivalent to a blind person. Saint Surdas said, "Oh Lord! Having eyes, people have become blind, since they are not interested in seeing your beautiful form. Having ears, they have become deaf, since they are not interested in listening to your melodious voice. They have

forgotten God and are craving for worldly life. " Do not depend on the physical eyes, develop divine vision. Turn your mind toward the divine light that is present in one and all. The same is proclaimed by Adi Sankara in his famous song Bhaja Govindam. Think of God, sing His glory. In fact, God is not separate from you. You are God yourself. I and You are one. Give up the feeling that God is different from you and that you are His devotee.

The arishadvargas (six inner enemies - desire, anger, greed, pride, infatuation, and jealousy) are responsible for man's misconduct and suffering. Even animals have these evil qualities. If man behaves in the same way as animals, in what way is he superior to them? Man is endowed with prajana. The Vedas say Prajnanam Brahma (Brahman is Supreme Consciousness). When he makes proper use of his intellect, he will not suffer. All matters relating to the world are like passing clouds. Why should he get attached to them and worry about them? He should hold on to the Atmicmic principle which is changeless and divine. Brahmaivid Brahmaiva Bhavathi (The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman).

As I mentioned yesterday, every being has the spark of divinity within. Lord Krishna said, Mamaivamsho jeevaloke jeevabhuta sanathana (The eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). Such being the case, how is it that man is facing hardships and misery? The reason is that he has filled his heart with bestial tendencies. He has to drive them out and cleanse his heart. Here is a tumbler filled with water. If you want to fill it with milk, the water has to be poured out. Likewise, in order to fill your heart with noble feelings, you have to get rid of the evil qualities in the first instance.

In order to fill his small stomach, man is trying to earn lakhs of rupees. Does he make use of all the money he earns to fill his stomach? No. He neither spends it nor gives it in charity to others. Without understanding the temporal nature of life, he is undergoing various ordeals. Body is momentary. It is like a water bubble. Mind is like a mad monkey. Hence, do not follow the body, do not follow the mind. Follow the conscience. Follow the principle of love. This is the education that you have to acquire.

What is the use of acquiring worldly education
if it cannot lead you to immortality?
Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.
(Telugu Poem)

What is the purpose of education? Is it only to feed your stomach? Even an uneducated beggar feeds his stomach. Hence, the purpose of education is not just to feed your stomach but to fill your heart with love and compassion. Hri + Daya (compassion) = Hridaya (heart). That which is filled with compassion is Hridaya.

Students!

You are studying various subjects that are related to this physical world. Along with worldly education, you should acquire spiritual knowledge also. Only then can you experience eternal bliss. Worldly education is meant for life here; spiritual knowledge, for life hereafter.

A short while ago, you listened to Rasgotra. He said some very valuable ideas. His educational accomplishments are unparalleled. He has held positions of eminence. He has everything that one could ask for. Then why does he come here? He comes here to experience Swami's love. In fact, if you already had that love within you, you would not have come here. You do not have that love. You do not have peace. That is why you come here. You should pray to God for that which is not with you and which God alone can confer on you.

There was a businessman by name Patel. He was very affluent and had all worldly comforts. One day a friend of his came to his house. At that time, Patel was in his puja room. His friend had to wait for a long time. When Patel

at last emerged from the puja room, his friend confronted him with a question: "Patel, you are leading a luxurious life. You do not lack anything. Then what for are you praying to God? Why do you pray so long? "

Patel smiled at his query and said, "Sir, I do not pray for worldly possessions because I already have them. I pray to God for that which is not with me. "

His friend was surprised. He asked, "What is it that you do not have? " Patel said, "I lack peace and love. They are with God only. I pray to God to grant me peace and love. " One can earn and acquire all worldly possessions by one's own efforts. But one cannot earn peace and love from the world. God alone can grant them. When you have sugar, you can prepare any type of sweet. Similarly, when you have love, you can achieve anything. Hence pray to God for His love.

Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Prema mudita manase kaho ".

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html			

36. Where There Is Purity, There Is Divinity

Date: 11 October 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara (day 3)

Those who have the spirit of sacrifice
without any trace of body attachment
or infatuation are truly our gurus then and now.
The word of Sai is verily the truth.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

God pervades every cell and atom of the universe, spreading His divine effulgence everywhere. The Upanishads have declared that God is all-pervasive and all that one sees is only the manifestation of divinity. Unfortunately, man today is not making any attempt to understand and experience the teachings of Upanishads and that of ancient sages and seers. Though the Upanishads have revealed the all-pervasiveness of Divinity in the simplest manner, it is rather surprising that man is not making any effort to understand the same.

A number of examples can be given to prove the existence of Divinity. Who is responsible for the sweetness in sugarcane? Who has made the chillies hot and spicy? Every object in this world has a unique attribute, which proves the existence of divinity as its very life principle. Who is the cause for the bitterness in neem and fragrance in flower? It is the manifestation and expression of Divinity. Any number of examples can be given, which will help you to understand the existence of Divinity.

People say fragrance is the natural quality of a flower and do not enquire

further. Who is responsible for this natural quality? You feel thrilled when you look at a mountain. Boundless joy flows through you when you see a stream in full flow. You feel ecstatic watching a lush green forest. Is it just the law of nature or the mystery of God? It is not merely the law of nature but the mysterious manifestation of God in the form of nature. How can one explain the presence of bird inside an egg? All these are pointers to Divinity. You do not need to undertake any particular sadhana (spiritual exercise) in order to visualise Divinity. You can experience Him in each atom and each cell of the creation.

Man is born to parents. Everyone, including you and Me, transcendental. This being so, how can man understand God in His fullness? Hence, it is not easy to please God and earn His grace. Only when you understand the divine principle fully well would you have worshipped God in the true sense.

How can one understand the divine principle, which is Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam (attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). Can anyone comprehend the mystery behind the existence of the bird in an egg? How has the sugarcane acquired sweetness? It is not possible to understand these subtleties. The sweetness of sugarcane, the hot taste of chilli, the sour taste of tamarind, the bitter taste of neem - all these are the expressions of God. God has created these things to make us understand His existence. The mighty mountains, the beautiful rivers, and the raging waves of ocean - all these speak of the mystery, grandeur and beauty of God. It is impossible to describe the splendour of God and to comprehend His powers. But man tries to estimate the infinite Divine power with his finite mind and limited capacity.

Embodiments of Love!

Divinity can neither be expressed in words nor be gauged by the mind. Yatho vacho nivarthanthe aprapya manasa saha (whence the words along with the mind rebound in futility without comprehending Divinity), people attempt to

describe God based on their own finite understanding. Only Himself and none else knows God's plans, His mysterious nature and ways. When your mind is unable to comprehend even trivial matters, how can it estimate the infinite Divine principle? Hence, do not try to understand the ways of the Divine. Instead purify your heart and try to know your true nature.

The same is stated in Vedanta : "Know Thyself ". Modern students argue foolishly, "Where is the need to know, 'who I am', when I am already aware of it? " They think that knowing their names, nativity, profession, nationality, etc., amounts to knowing themselves. They say, "I am so and so, I belong to such and such a place. I do such and such job, etc. " These answers relate to the body and not to the real Self. These are born out of body attachment and not out of awareness of the Self.

The vedantic statement "Know Thyself " does not mean knowing about your physical body-height, weight, complexion, etc. You are not merely an individual (vyashti). Your true identity corresponds to samashti (society). The same 'I' exists in you as well as in society.

Sarvata Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Sruthimalloke
Sarvamavruthya Thishthati

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

The Atmic principle is all-pervasive and is uniformly present in all beings.

There may be difference based on names, forms and educational qualifications, but the Atma is one and the same in everyone. You have to make efforts to visualise and experience this oneness.

Embodiments of Love!

Instead of visualising the unity in diversity, man is doing the opposite. The essence of Vedanta lies in seeing unity in diversity. Vedanta is the quintessence of the Upanishads . What is the inner meaning of the term Upanishads ? Upa - near, ni - down, and shad - sit. It means that you should sit down at the feet of the master and listen to his teachings. Even in schools, the teacher is seated on a higher pedestal and the students sit down close to him. The Upanishads contain many lofty ideals and sacred inner meanings. The truth the Upanishads teach is embodied in the principle of the Atma .

The Atma is formless and steady. It has no feet, but It moves about everywhere. It has no ears, but It can hear everything. It is present everywhere, but none can grasp it. Everything is under its control. This is the mysterious and magnificent power of Atma .

When you respect and love an individual, he will respect you and love you in turn. But when you respect and love everyone, God Himself will respect you and love you. You should make efforts to become recipients of God's love.

The divine principle of Atma present in humanity is all-encompassing. Its vastness is beyond any description or estimation. However, physical forms can be considered as pointers to it. When someone asks you, "Sir, have you seen Anil Kumar in Prasanthi Nilayam? ", you say, "Yes, I have seen him. He wears a good suit, speaks good English, is brown-complexioned, talks in a humorous manner. " You are able to recognise only his physical features and behaviour. But there are many more things in him that you cannot see. Can you recognise the feelings he has in his mind? It is impossible.

You are able to see only the physical body and the external behaviour. But you are not able to visualise the eternal flow of bliss within. All types of power

are latent in man. You may be highly educated, but from where did you acquire your education? You have not acquired it from outside. It has originated from the Self.

Non-dualism is the essence of Ved anta . Advaita darshanam jnanam (Perception of non-duality is the supreme wisdom). Not all can have the experience of non-dualism. Man is immersed in dualism. Dual mind is the root cause of unsteadiness. A man with dual mind is half blind. How can such a person understand the sacred teachings of Ved anta ? The teachings that are found in Ved anta are not found in any other text. Each verse in Ved anta is a repository of supreme bliss. Even if you were to use the ocean water as the ink, it will not be sufficient to describe the greatness of these verses in full. Each sloka (verse) is pregnant with such profound meaning. Man is not making any attempt to understand these slokas . As a result, he is being immersed in shoka (sorrow).

Sage Valmiki composed the great epic Ramayana , the inner significance of which could not be understood by all. G.G. Krishna was a great astrologer and a saint. He said that, as he read the Ramayana repeatedly, he was able to get new insights into the sacred epic. He was curious to know how Sage Valmiki described the mysterious birth of Sita. It is mentioned in the Ramayana that King Janaka found her while he was ploughing the field for the performance of a yajna . But nothing is mentioned as to how she was born. He called her Bhujatha , meaning, one born out of Mother Earth.

King Janaka had the Siva Dhanus (bow of Lord Siva) in his palace. It was so heavy that no ordinary mortal could lift it. When Sita was young, one day she was enjoying a game of ball with other girls. It so happened that the ball rolled over and went under the case in which Siva's bow was kept. All the girls tried their might to move the bow aside, but in vain. Other strong men were called and they used all their strength to move the bow, but it did not budge an inch. King Janaka was watching all this from the balcony with curiosity. But Sita did not notice her father. After some time, she smilingly asked everybody to move aside and casually pulled the bow with her left hand and retrieved the ball. King Janaka was astonished at Sita's mighty power. He thought, "It is

because of merits done in many past lives that I could have Sita as my daughter. " He decided that he would give her in marriage only to the one who could lift Lord Siva's bow.

He performed a grand yajna and invited many kings to try their hand at lifting Lord Siva's bow and win Sita's hand. Many kings and princes assembled in King Janaka's court. The bow was so heavy that hundreds of elephants were required to carry it to the place of contest. People wondered how anybody could lift such a heavy bow. Kings, one after the other, tried to lift the bow, but miserably failed in their attempts.

Then came Ravana. His very appearance instilled fear in the minds of people. They felt that Ravana was no match to Sita, the embodiment of all beauty. Sita's mother Sunayana was praying fervently to Lord Siva to see that Ravana failed in his attempt to lift the bow. Meanwhile, Ravana used all his might to lift the bow, and in the process, lost his balance and fell down. He got trapped under the bow and could not extricate himself. He felt humiliated in the open court.

At the insistence of Viswamitra, Rama walked slowly and majestically toward the bow. Lakshmana was sure that Rama could lift the bow. People were stricken with awe, watching the splendour and gait of Rama. They felt He was a perfect match to Sita. Sunayana also had the same feeling. But she was anxious whether the young Rama would be able to lift the mighty bow and win the hand of Sita. As people watched with amazement, Rama effortlessly lifted the bow with his left hand, even as Sita had done it with her left hand earlier. As Rama bent the bow to string it, it broke with a deafening sound.

The musicians with their various instruments burst into song. King Janaka's joy knew no bounds. He at once came toward Rama along with his daughter Sita, who was holding a garland in her hand. He said, "Rama, I had made a

promise that Sita would be given in marriage to the one who lifted the bow of Lord Siva. I want to give my daughter to you and keep up my promise. "

But Rama was not willing to accept the marriage proposal without the permission of His parents. He was the paragon of all virtues. "Sarve loka hithe rathah (one engaged in the welfare of all). Sarve jnanopasampannah (one who is endowed with all wisdom). Sarve samudhitha gunaihi (one replete with all praiseworthy virtues) ". Rama embodied these ideals. When Janaka brought Sita to Him, He did not even look at her, for He considered it improper to look at her before marriage.

The conduct of modern youth stands in stark contrast to the exemplary behaviour of Rama. They are besides themselves at the thought of marriage. The question of their seeking the permission of their parents does not even arise in their minds. Viswamitra also tried to persuade Rama to accept the marriage proposal. But Rama was firm in His resolve. He said, "I have to follow dharma , and not the wishes of individuals. However, I respect everybody. "

After three days, King Dasaratha along with his entire family, friends, and relatives arrived in Mithila. It is only after obtaining His father's permission that Rama agreed to the wedding. But, later on, when His father Dasaratha and preceptor Vasishtha urged Him to ascend the throne, He did not pay heed to their words. He went into the forest against their wishes. His only intention was to uphold the promise made by His father. He did not want to put His father's name to disrepute. Hence, He sacrificed the kingdom and all comforts and left for the forest.

The marriage ceremony was in progress. As part of the ritual, a curtain was placed between the bride and groom. As long as it was there, they were not supposed to look at each other. But, Sita and Rama, being highly virtuous, did not look at each other even after the curtain was removed. Both were looking down. Then Viswamitra in a lighter vein said, "Oh Rama! Sita is the daughter

of Mother Earth. Why don't You look at her, instead of looking at Mother Earth? " Rama had not seen Sita till then. Since He had not tied the mangalasutra till then, He felt it was a sin to look at her. He considered all women to be His mothers. One should try to emulate such exemplary behaviour. In a family, both husband and wife should lead a virtuous life. Even if one of them is wanting in virtues, they cannot enjoy peace and happiness.

The wedding took place. It was now time for the garlanding ceremony. Sita waited with the garland in her hands. She, being short in stature, could not garland Rama, who was tall and broad-shouldered. Moments passed but Rama would not bend His head! He did not want to bend His head before a woman in order to protect His own honour. He looked at Lakshmana and made an almost imperceptible gesture. The four brothers were always sharp and alert. This was depicted in Thyagaraja's song.

But for their devotion to Rama,
Would a monkey cross the ocean?
Would the goddess Lakshmi worship You?
Would Lakshmana willingly serve You?
Would the highly intelligent Bharata offer his prostrations to You?
Oh! How great indeed is the power of devotion to Lord Rama's strength.
(Telugu Poem)

Lakshmana was the incarnation of Adishesha - the heavenly serpent that carried the entire world on its hood. He understood that Rama wanted him to raise the portion of earth where Sita was standing. He indicated that if Sita was raised, so would everyone else! Lakshmana hit upon an idea. All of a sudden, he fell at Rama's feet and would not get up. Rama was forced to bend down and raise Lakshmana from His feet. Sita was highly intelligent. Grabbing this chance, she at once placed her garland on Rama's neck. There should be such an understanding between husband and wife.

If you aspire to attain God, you have to make efforts to acquire the necessary eligibility. That is true spirituality. That is the essence of the Upanishads . God submits Himself to those who understand the essence of the Upanishads and act accordingly. Who is God? What does He look like? Do not limit Him to a name and a form like Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana, etc. In fact, He has no specific name and form. He is the embodiment of Energy. These Navaratri celebrations are meant to worship God in the form of energy. One should not pray for temporary results. Instead, one should pray for divine grace with pure, steady and selfless devotion. Once you have divine grace, you can achieve anything.

Embodiments of Love!

Nobody can understand the efficacy of the mantras that the rithwiks chant during the performance of the yajna . These brahmins are pure-hearted. I want to tell you a small example. At 12 o' clock in the noon, the brahmins assembled for lunch here. But the person who was doing the Sahasra Lingarchana did not get up from his place, since he had not completed the ritual. Similarly, the person who was reading the Bhagavata and the four brahmins who were doing Veda Parayanam did not get up from their seats till they completed their tasks. The person who does Sahasra Lingarchana did not get up till 2'o clock in the afternoon. It is because of their dedication and devotion that the mantras they chant assume greater significance. Even if you do not understand their meanings, you will derive immense benefit by listening to them. This listening will ultimately take you to liberation.

Sravanam (listening), kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (servitude), sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (Self-surrender). As long as you do not develop sneham with God, you will not be able to attain the stage of Atmanivedanam . The first step to self-surrender is sravanam .

The yajna that we are performing now is meant for loka kalyanam (good of

the world). Do not think that we are performing the yajna just because people are performing yajnas elsewhere. This yajna is being performed with total spirit of sacrifice. We have no desires or expectations. Our only desire is that everyone should be happy. People perform yajna and yagas to overcome famine and drought situations. But I don't take such things into consideration. I do not give scope for such constricted vision. Famine, drought, etc., come and go. Whatever you do should confer everlasting happiness on all. It should help you to attain divine grace.

Tomorrow, I shall explain the teachings of Upanishads and their inner meanings.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan , "Hari Bhajana Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi... ".)

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

37. Soham - The Right Sadhana

Date: 12 October 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara (day 4)

Brahma is the Creator of the whole Universe,
Vishnu is the Sustainer, and
Siva is the Destroyer of all sins.
This is the Truth I am revealing to you.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

What is man, immersed in an ocean of sorrow, seeking in this vast and limitless universe? What for is he doing sadhana (spiritual exercises)? Some are seeking fulfilment in worldly things; some others are wasting their valuable time in trying to seek satisfaction of their unfulfilled desires. Yet, others are entering the spiritual path with a desire to have darshan, sparshan, and sambhashan of Divinity. Human beings contemplate on God as Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara. But these are not Gods with a human form. They have neither a form nor a place. If one enquires into the nature of their form, it will become clear that they have only some attributes, with no specific upadhi (vesture).

It is said "Easwarah sarva bhoothanam (God is the indweller of every living being) ". But with what form? How can one contemplate on God with an invisible form? What is the use of such contemplation? Divinity is the very life breath that can be perceived and heard. How can one recognise and experience the sound of this Divine breath?

The Upanishads have given the names of Brahman and Atma invisible divine

breath in human beings. But one cannot understand these abstract concepts, with any amount of explanation.

What is the meaning of Easwarathwa (Divinity)? It can be understood as the Divine, auspicious breath of soham that emanates from a human being. Soham means "I am that " (Divinity). The sound of the breath in human being, i.e. soham establishes the nature of Divinity. If one tries to contemplate on the form without recognising the sound, he will not be able to understand the nature of Divinity. Soham is sathwic (pure, serene) in nature. This sathwa guna is Easwarathwa (the Shiva Principle).

There is another principle that emanates from this Divine breath, namely, Vishnuthwa (the Vishnu Principle). What is the form of this Vishnu Principle? The feelings in the mind. In other words, mind is the Vishnu Principle. There is yet another form that emerges from the navel of Vishnu, namely, Brahma. Thus, the principles of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara are emanating from the Soham Tathwa in a human being itself.

In this trinity, Shiva is the Soham Tathwa, Vishnu is the mind, and Brahma is the vak swarupa (in the form of words). It means, every word that emerges from the human being is Brahma; every resolve (sankalpa) emerging from the mind is Vishnu and every breath coming out of the body is Easwara. Thus, Divinity is permeating the entire human body. The body is living as long as the life breath emanates from the body. Mind is made up of (sankalpa (resolution) and vikalpa (negation or dissolution). This is the Vishnu Principle. The Principle that emerges from the navel of Vishnu is Brahma. What is the root cause for this Brahma Principle? That which attracts the sound (sabda).

It is said, Sabda Brahmamayi (sound is Brahman), Characharamayi (that which permeates the whole universe, movable and immovable is Brahman), and Vangmayi (word is Brahman). Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswathi are the embodiments of these three, namely, sound, pervasiveness, and word. In

every breath of the human being, there is this soham chanting. Without this soham sound, the breath cannot exist. Similarly, devoid of mind, sankalpa cannot arise. And, without sankalpa, the word cannot emerge. Thus, there is inseparable and inter-dependent relationship between the soham sound, the sankalpa in the mind, and the word. Several efforts are being made by several people to recognise this relationship. However, this principle cannot be understood by sadhana (spiritual exercise). It can be realised only through enquiry.

Man today is engaged in the study of several Upanishads. What is the essence of these Upanishads? The essence of Upanishads is the principle of unity in diversity. We are nourishing and nurturing the body. For what purpose? What is the benefit accruing out of this nourishment? In fact, nothing. As long as the body exists, we have to feed it. As long as we take food, we sleep as well. During sleep, we experience happiness. But, once we wake up, are we able to experience the same happiness? No. Therefore, in order to experience everlasting bliss, we have to realise the essence of the Upanishads. Divinity has no names. All names and forms belong to God. There is no place in which He does not exist. Nor is there an object in this world, which does not belong to Him.

Embodiments of Love!

The essential nature of Divinity is Love. However, few make the effort to recognise this principle of love. There are several systems in the human body like the digestive system, nervous system, etc. But there is one main switch, which controls all the systems in the body. The eyes see several colours. The tongue tastes several delicacies. The ears hear several types of sounds. But, what is the basis for all these experiences? That basis is called the fundamental principle, because of which man is able to experience all these things. That fundamental principle is given the name of Atma.

Because of this Atma Tathwa, several sankalpas and bhavas arise in our heart. Hridaya (heart) is the Veda. The sankalpas are the sruthis. The essence

of these sruthis is Vedanta. Hence, it should not be presumed that the Vedas are somewhere in a distant corner. The all-pervading sound of the sruthis is constantly in us, with us, and is part of us. Therefore, we have to recognise the sounds that emerge from the Veda of our heart. During the past three days, in the morning you must have observed the pandits chanting the Vedic mantras with several intonations, in the Poornachandra Auditorium. When you hear the sound of the mantras, you feel very happy, even though you are not able to understand their meanings. There may be several meanings for the words in these mantras. But the very sound emerging from the chanting of these mantras will make you happy.

In order to know the true meanings of the words in these mantras, one must enter into the process of spiritual enquiry in an environment of deep silence. For, it is only in the depth of silence, the voice of God can be heard. Yesterday, I was mentioning to you in My discourse about the inherent nature (sahaja) of an object. How did sweetness come into the sugarcane? How did hot taste come into the chillies? How did bitterness come into the neem leaves? How did fragrance come into the jasmine flower? We call it nature. No, no. The divine Nature is expressing itself through these forms.

In order to understand the nature of Divinity (Paramatma), we must engage our mind in the contemplation of the Transcendental Principle (Parathathwa). Where does the mind come from? It comes from the sankalpa (resolve) and vikalpa (negation or dissolution). They in turn come from the nature of sabda (sound). Sound is the real Brahmathathwa (the Principle of Brahma). The soham principle in the Brahmathathwa is Atmathathwa, in essence. Therefore, in order to understand Atmathathwa, one has to recognise the nature of the swasa (divine breath).

Soham is also called as Hamsa Gayathri. So (sah) means that, and ham (aham), means I. Thus, soham means "I am that".

What is this "that"? What is it that proclaims "I am that"? Is it mind? If so, the

mind becomes an obstacle to realise the soham principle, since it is like a mad monkey. How can you march forward in your spiritual journey by relying on such an unsteady mind? This kind of approach is not correct. Manas (mind) is verily the embodiment of Vishnu, who is all-pervading. Without such a mind, there cannot be the swasa (breath). It is only on account of the life breath that the mind functions.

In order to understand such subtle meanings, one has to depend upon the method of enquiry. When you sit for meditation on the soham principle, you will observe that the so comes in and ham goes out while inhaling and exhaling. This process has to be watched carefully. Here so relates to the Divine Principle and ham to ahamkara (ego). Thus, while Divinity enters into our body, ego leaves us. And that Divine Principle which has entered into our body must be held firmly in our system by the process of kumbhakam (holding on).

People doing pranayama sadhana call these processes puraka (inhaling), kumbhaka (holding) and rechaka (exhaling) of the breath. Soham, the Hamsa Gayathri, consists of inhaling the breath through one nostril while chanting so and exhaling the breath through the other nostril while chanting ham and in between holding the breath for sometime. The most effective method lies in observing strict timings for all the three processes involved in the soham. Disregarding the timings, if one does pranayama, it will endanger one's life itself. The time spent for the three processes of puraka, kumbhaka, and rechaka must be exactly the same. Time is the essence of this pranayama sadhana, since God is Kalaswarupa (the embodiment of time).

Our sankalpa (resolutions) must always be sathwic (pure) in nature. In order that we have sathwic sankalpas, our swasa (breath) must be pure in nature. Thus, the principle of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara are inseparable and interdependant. They are one and the same. We must try to understand the essential nature of their unity.

Today, no one is able to realise the true meaning of the Upanishads. It will take at least a month to describe, analyse, and understand the inner meaning of each one of the slokas (verses) in the Upanishads. There are several meanings for each word, and we must take that meaning that is appropriate to a given situation.

A small example. There is a young boy who is still in the process of learning to talk. Considering his age, if you say orally the word "Rama ", he will pronounce it as "Lama ". That is the correct pronunciation at his age, as far as he is concerned. But in our view, it may be wrong. Only when we take into consideration all factors like the age, time, and the particular word used, is it possible to decide whether it is right or wrong. There are many educated boys. If you ask them to spell chapa (mat), they will pronounce it as chepa (fish). Only when one knows what chapa is will one be able to distinguish it from chepa. Otherwise both chapa and chepa would mean the same for him. In the Gajendra Moksha episode in Bhagawatha, Lord Vishnu was rushing to the rescue of the elephant from the jaws of the crocodile. His consort, Lakshmi, was on his side at that time. She wanted to ask Him where He was rushing to, but there was no time. The famous poet Pothana was describing that scene beautifully thus:

Running fast behind Lord Vishnu
To enquire as to what has happened;
But she was not sure, whether He would reply;
Anxious and confused,
Her locks of hair loosening while running,
Unable to catch up with Him
She sat down dumb-founded.

Thus, each language and each country have some beautiful ways of portraying a given situation, which are specific to them.

Dear students,

If you want to know the meanings of the Upanishads, you have to approach the great souls who are well-versed in them. The essence of all the Upanishads is derived from the Brahmathathwa. And this Brahmathathwa expresses itself through the vak (word). Vishnuthathwa is based on the mind. It consists of good thoughts. When there are good thoughts in the mind, they will find expression through good words. The good words in turn, give good meanings. The Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara are not three separate entities. Brahma is swasa (breath), Vishnu is manas (mind), and Maheswara is vak (word). The unity of these three is the Atmathathwa.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

You will not be able to understand these concepts, if I go on repeating them like this. It is also possible that those who do not know the real meaning of the Upanishads may have some misconceptions. Therefore, the Upanishads have to be taught in a peaceful, sacred and calm environment.

The mantras have to be chanted with a clean breath. A particular mantra has been prescribed in the Upanishads for cleansing the breath, while explaining the Swasathathwa. If you chant this mantra, several diseases will be cured. First and foremost, our breath will become clean. The blockages in the vascular system will be removed and blood will flow freely; the cataract in the eye will get dissolved; the sound coming out of our throat will be purified. However, we must chant these mantras with correct intonations. Only then will the proper meaning of these mantras be revealed to us.

The entire nature of the body will be revealed by the essence of the Upanishads. How does the tongue know the taste? The tongue is able to reveal different tastes of different food materials. How is it possible? There are lakhs of taste buds on the tongue, with the help of which the tongue reveals the different tastes. Similarly, there are crores of light rays in the

eyes. Thus, the Upanishadic mantras will be able to cure several diseases of the body when chanted properly. Also, when you realise their correct meanings, your behaviour itself will undergo a tremendous change. Alongwith the change of behaviour, sacred feelings arise in your heart. Ultimately, these sacred feelings find their expression as sacred words.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

There are several words in several languages in the world. They have several meanings as well. But, there must an intimate relationship between the words and their meanings. There is no use spending all your time in dilating on the meanings. It will become an exercise in futility, especially in the spiritual field. The proper swara (sound) in chanting the various mantras is very important. I often quote the example of people chanting the Aum mantra. Several people do not chant Omkara with correct intonation as they do it in a most mechanical way. The chanting of this mantra is done with three syllables, namely, 'A', 'U' and 'M'. 'A' comes from the throat, 'U' from the tongue, and 'M' from the lips. The combined form of these three syllables, namely, AUM emerges from the navel. Several people when asked to chant AUM they give us the spelling. This is not what is required. All the three syllables must be chanted simultaneously in unison. The chanting of Omkara can be compared to the taking off, soaring in the sky, and finally landing of the aeroplane. It is only when a mantra is chanted in the proper manner that you get good feelings. Several people tell Me, "Swami, I am doing Omkara for several years. But, I am unable to have a steady faith. " Yes, I know. How is it possible when you are not chanting with correct intonation and not understanding its true meaning?

The Upanishads appear to be very difficult to understand. But, if you know the meanings of the various concepts nothing is more easy. Those who have lost their teeth will have difficulty in chanting various mantras. Even the sounds while chanting the mantras will be different. While practising, you need not have to chant the mantras loudly. You do it within yourself.

In music, some people concentrate on the swara (note). They will change their tone to be in tune with the swara. While doing so, they change their physical posture also. Very often this posture appears awkward. People know that when the swara is not in tune with the sruthi it becomes apaswara (discordant note). In order to avoid this, one has to control the body also.

You must have observed several people, while singing bhajans. When they sing loudly there will be a change in their tone (swara). This should not happen. This must be controlled. Some people close their eyes while singing devotional songs. Some people raise one eye while the other eye is kept at a low level. All these contortions present an awkward picture. That is why some people while playing on the harmonium keep a small mirror over it in order to observe their lips, eyes, etc. If the song is not sung in a proper swara, he can see that his own face looked awkward. He will himself feel disgusted with this. It is important that one's posture is also good while singing a keertan or a bhajan song. He should not make others unhappy by the contortions of his face.

Absolute concentration is necessary while performing such things. We often do certain acts inadvertently. For example, while drinking milk or coffee we indulge in conversation. Then the milk will spill and spatter on our dress and may even get our throat choked. We should never talk while drinking something or eating. In the olden days, the great rishis used to maintain silence while eating or drinking. Not only that; they invariably used to chant the following mantra before partaking of the food.

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam Brahmaiva
Thena Ganthavyam Brahma Karma Samadhina.

You affirm that the food is an offering to Brahman. Then where is Brahman?

He is within. So, immediately God replies from within:

Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva Pranimam Dehamasritah Pranapana Samayuktah
Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.

If you talk while taking food, the digestive system will be spoiled. Once the digestive system is spoiled, several diseases will confront you. Pray to God silently keeping your eyes closed and then partake of your food. Most of the children do not know this rule. Take your food in silence in a calm atmosphere. Do not howl, talk, and chit chat. Do not laugh or cry while taking food. Do not entertain any worry before or while taking food. These are some of the precautions one has to take to lead a happy daily life.

Embodiments of Divine Love

You speak of sadhana. But, sadhana is not that easy. It is easier to repeat names of the nine forms of bhakti (devotion), like sravanam, keertanam, etc. When do you get into the ultimate step of atmanivedanam (self-surrender)? It is only after you establish sneham (friendship) with God.

Several people do not know what is real friendship. In their opinion friendship means wishing each other 'hello, hello'. What is this 'hello, hello'? Nothing. It simply does not mean anything. It is only a casual accosting. This is not friendship.

Friendship presupposes an inseparable relationship between two individuals. Their bodies may be different. But their life principle is one and the same. When the two individuals have different thoughts and feelings, it is not friendship. It is said, "A man with a dual mind is half blind. " Where there are two kinds of thoughts, it becomes a dual mind. How then can you

contemplate on divinity with a dual mind?

Children are serious of doing sadhana. Considering their sraddha (earnest spirit of enquiry) I wish to elaborate on this aspect. Do not ever leave the sacred path. Then only will you have a sacred life. You can definitely achieve this. Do not waste time. At present you are wasting a lot of time in vain pursuits. Time is our life. It is said Kalaya namaha, kala kalaya namaha. Time is everything. If you spend such a valuable time indulging in vain and unsacred things, how can you get it back? It is only to sanctify the time that God has given you your span of time.

If you channelise your thoughts in the right path, your actions will be right. The kala (time) karma (action) karana (cause), and karthavya (duty) must be harmonised to become one.

What is this human body after all? It is just a water bubble. Any moment it may burst. It is bound to perish any day - either today, tomorrow or day after. We should not grieve over such a perishable body, for that which has come is bound to go; that which has gone is bound to return. Therefore, we need not attach much importance to this coming and going. We must make effort to realise that which has no birth and death, which is sacred and which is unsacred, which is happiness and which is sorrow.

What are difficulties? In My view, difficulties are better than pleasure and comforts. It is not prudent to pray for happiness and comfort. The wisdom you gain in times of difficulty is not available in happy times. You ask any realised soul or a saintly person ahow he acquired this great wisdom. He will tell you that he underwent several sorrows and difficulties and then only he could get that wisdom. Today, people desire to have kaivalya (liberation) without undergoing any difficulty or spending a pie. How is it possible? You must work hard. Just by sitting somewhere and happily enjoying things you will find

difficulties painful. It is only after undergoing difficulties you must enjoy happiness.

Once Krishna came to Kunti to enquire about her welfare. Kunti asked Krishna, "When did You come? How is the war going on? "

Krishna replied, "Mother, birth and death, good and bad - these are common to everybody. You forget about these things. You tell Me what do you want ".

Then Kunti requested Krishna, "My son, until I leave my body and merge in your Lotus Feet, please continue to give me difficulties. "

Krishna enquired, "Oh Mother! You have been undergoing difficulties right from the time you married King Pandu. Will that not suffice? Why are you asking for further difficulties "?

Kunti replied, "Oh Krishna, You do not know the happiness in undergoing difficulties. I only know about it. Because I had undergone several difficulties, I am enjoying your divine presence constantly. All my sons earned your grace. The sons born out of my womb became the recipients of your divine Grace. That itself gives me great pleasure. What is the use of having several children without earning your divine Grace? What happiness do I derive from that? "

King Dhritarashtra had a number of sons,
but ultimately what was his fate?
Sage Suka was not married and had no son,
but did he suffer on account of this?
(Telugu Poem)

Kunti continued, "There is no happiness by having sons nor is there any loss by not having sons. The children that are born must bring credit to the family. They must lead a life of good behaviour. They must join good company. My sons are under your divine umbrella. From morning till evening they constantly chant your divine Name. What more happiness do I desire? I pray that I continue to enjoy the bliss. Oh Krishna "

Will the mothers of present times pray like this? Do they court difficulties of their own accord? No, no. They want sons. But they do not desire that they live in the divine presence of God. They are afraid of such a prospect. What is the use, if they sit somewhere, without reaching the divine Presence. The purpose of a human birth is to reach the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

Having grasped what ought to be grasped,
Do not let go of the grip till you succeed.
Having desired what ought to be desired,
Hold on till your desire is fulfilled.
Having asked what ought to be asked,
Hold on till you obtain what you had asked for.
Having thought what ought to be thought,
Hold on till you succeed.
Either God should yield to your prayer
Or you should ask wholeheartedly with intensity.
This is the path a true devotee should pursue.
(Telugu Poem)

There will be several sorrows, losses and difficulties confronting us in life. You should not mind them. We should always consider the divine presence as the greatest treasure that we can seek. You must develop an unwavering and abiding faith and devotion in the eternal truth that is Divinity. That is the only thing you should pray for. Your devotion should be steady, pure and selfless.

People want devotion as well as everything else in the objective world. How is it possible? You have only one mouth and you want to drink both milk and water simultaneously. That is not possible. Therefore, you must desire only one, that is divinity. If you develop yearning for God, He will Himself look after all your needs. Divine presence will give you real happiness. It is the only permanent happiness in this world. There is no sorrow, no unhappiness, and no worry in the divine Presence.

Someone came to Me and enquired. "Swami, I am a devotee of God. How is that I am always deep in sorrow "? I replied, "If you are really a devotee, how did this sorrow come to you? What you derive from God is happiness and not sorrow. If you say that you are experiencing sorrow, it is not correct. God always gives happiness and bliss. There is nothing like sorrow with God. What you experience is not God's sorrow. You must have borrowed it from somebody and attributed it to God. That is not correct. God is the embodiment of bliss. He always gives happiness only. "

Mamaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathanah (The eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being) is the declaration of Lord Krishna. You, who are the amsa (part) of the divine will get only divine feelings. Will God's prasada be ever bitter? No, never. But people out of their ignorance think that way.

Madhwacharya, the great exponent of dualism, used to live in the Kannada region. He was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. Once he told his disciples that they should observe the ekadashi vrata. Commencing from that day, for three days they observed fasting constantly, contemplating on God, without even taking any food or even water. On the third day, in the night, Madhwacharya appeared in their dream and advised them "My dear disciples, this is not sadhana. You hold on to the principles, to the divine Feet of Lord Krishna; not to the formalities. Otherwise when will you sanctify your life? This is what I have practised throughout my life ".

People observe ekadashi vrata and fast for three days. On the fourth day, they make preparations for making forty dosas (savory pancakes). Is this ekadashi vrata? This is not correct. What you have to do on the fourth day is to add love to your sadhana. Once you cultivate love for God, you will forget hunger and thirst.

Sage Viswamithra was taking Rama and Lakshmana to the forest to protect the yajna being performed by him. Rama and Lakshmana, sons of King Dasaratha, were of tender age at that time. They never experienced any difficulties till then. Dasaratha was much worried about their welfare in the forest. When they reached the banks of river Sarayu, Viswamithra wanted to teach them the mantras of bala and athibala so that they would not be bothered by hunger and lack of sleep. They happily followed Sage Viswamithra, who initiated them into the mantra. Did Sage Viswamithra not know that Rama was an Avatar? In spite of knowing this fact, why did he initiate Rama into these mantras?

Several people argue like this. It is true that Rama and Lakshmana were divine personalities. But they had taken up human frames, which needed food and sleep. Therefore, in order that they did not suffer from hunger and lack of sleep Viswamithra initiated them into bala and athibala mantras. If one is not troubled by hunger and lack of sleep, any amount of sadhana can be undertaken. Anything can be achieved. Even the most dreadful demons can be defeated in a battle. That is why Sage Viswamithra initiated them into these mantras.

After walking some distance, Lakshmana enquired as to why they were initiated into these mantras. Viswamithra replied, "My dear sons, you are of tender age. You cannot bear the hunger and lack of sleep. While you are taking food or sleeping if the demons confront you, you will be in trouble. Therefore you must always be alert and on your guard. These bala and athibala mantras now relieve you of hunger and lack of sleep".

Mahatmas (great souls) teach mantras to establish peace in the world. Therefore, one should not put silly questions like, "Did Viswamithra not know that Rama was an Avatar? " The mantras were taught to them keeping in view the requirement at that time.

Bhagawan concluded His divine discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Muditha Manase Kaho ".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

38. Purify The Mind And Focus It On Divinity

Date: 13 October 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara (day 5)

Oh foolish Mind!

Why do you go hither and thither in search of Brahman
when He is present in you?

Turn inward, and you will find Him there.

There is no greater fortune than this.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

God's creation is wonderful and mysterious. Spiritual aspirants undertake various sadhanas (spiritual disciplines) to have the vision of God. Each mantra is a combination of words with profound inner meanings. It has myriad meanings, but we have to take that which is suitable to our place and circumstances. The divine Dakshinamurthy gave inner meanings of these mantras for the benefit of seekers so that they could understand them easily and experience bliss. He taught the mantras to the world in a simple and lucid way. He laid special emphasis on three words representing jeeva (individual), deva (God), and manas (mind).

What is the role of mind which separates individual and God? God is the embodiment of chaitanya (consciousness). Mind is assigned the task of bringing together jada (inert) and chaitanya. Individual, God, and the mind in conjunction constitute a mantra. Jeeveswaraprakriti is the term used to describe these three.

The duty of mind lies in transforming individual into Divine. How does the mind perform this function? The individual is represented by the term vyashti,

whereas God is the embodiment of samashti (society). Mind is a combination of vyashti and samashti. Hence, the mind is endowed with sacred power.

In this modern age, the mind is described as a mad monkey. It is not as mad a monkey as people believe. Mind represents mankind. It acts as a link between man and God. Hence, the mind is highly sacred and powerful. Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo (mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation of man). The power of mind is unique. But people have not grasped the greatness and grandeur of the mind and hence have not accorded due respect to it. They have not even understood the correct meaning of the word "mind " and are using it for trivial worldly tasks. The mind is very intense and has several facets. It is endowed with purity, valour, courage, etc. No one has been able to understand the nature and power of the mind. Without the mind, the terms jiva and deva will lose their significance. It is the mind that demonstrates the mighty power connecting the individual and God. One has to make efforts to understand the difference between mind, individual and the divinity therein.

As I told you yesterday, the mind represents Vishnu; the breath, Easwara; and the speech, Brahma. It is said that Brahma has emerged from the navel of Vishnu. Likewise, speech originates from the mind. Speech is endowed with immense power. The Vedas and the Upanishads contain many teachings, each consisting of three words. These words became mantras themselves. Not all can comprehend the essence of these mantras.

Tat Twam Asi (That Thou Art)

Ayam Atma Brahma (this Atma is verily Brahman)

Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma (verily all this is Brahman)

Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman).

All these teachings of the Upanishads are verily sacred mantras. Even the divine names, which appear as mere appellations are mantras. They can be

interpreted in many ways.

There are four profound statements in each of the four Vedas - the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharvana Veda. These give the very essence of the Vedas. Each mantra contains the essence of all the mantras. Hence, it is not necessary to know all the mantras and their meanings. Take for instance, Tat Twam Asi (That Thou Art) and Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman). When you enquire deeply, you can very clearly see that both mean the same. The mantra, Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma (All this is verily Brahman) also conveys the same truth. In this manner, all the mantras essentially proclaim the same truth. True spiritual practice lies in understanding this unity. Brahmaivid Brahmaiva Bhavati (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself). One who understands unity verily becomes God. This is the message of the Upanishads.

Embodiments of Love!

You are God. Understand this truth in the first instance. Every one is divine. Then, you may wonder where is the need to worship God? You have to worship Him till you understand and experience this unity. You are leading a very ordinary and worldly life. Such being the case, how can you understand the transcendental divine principle? You are Vyashtiswarupa (individual self), whereas God is Samashtiswarupa (Cosmic Form). Hence, it is not possible for vyashti to understand samashti. Neither spiritual practices nor chanting of the mantras can transform vyashti into samashti. Transformation is possible only when vyashti identifies himself with samashti. Vyashti should firmly believe, "I am God".

A potter collects clay from the river bank, mixes water in it, puts it on a wheel, and makes pots. The pot cannot hold water unless it undergoes agni samskara (refinement through fire). Just as a pot becomes strong when it is processed in fire, man becomes God when he undergoes refinement in the fire of wisdom. The pot that came from mud will ultimately disintegrate and become one with it. Likewise, every object and every being in this world will

ultimately go back to its source of origin. A human being can be compared to a pot, and God is the potter. If the pot is not processed in fire of wisdom, it will break when put to use. What is wisdom? Advaita darshanam jnanam (perception of non-duality is wisdom). One should refine oneself in the fire of wisdom and experience non-dualism. Clay gains value when it is refined and made into a pot. The metal gold gains added value and strength when it is made into a beautiful ornament. Likewise, refinement manifests the latent power in man and increases his value.

God's Will is Vajra sankalpa. God is known as Hiranyagarbha (one with a golden womb). He is present in everyone. Since you are the embodiments of God, I address you as Bangaru (gold)! It is not enough if you merely have gold. It has to be made into an ornament. In order to make an ornament out of gold, you need to add a few metals, like copper and brass. Only then will gold become strong, heavy, and sturdy. Science students can easily understand this. The food that we eat contains many metals like gold, copper, and iron. Iron content is more in leafy vegetables. Tamarind and lemon preparations develop amla, which is the basic constituent in the formation of cells. In this manner, food strengthens our body.

The dreams that you experience are actually the reactions of your food and habits. There is an intricate and inseparable relationship between food, head, and God. Food plays a vital role in the spiritual path. When we consume the right kind of food, it helps us in our effort to understand Divinity. As is the food, so is the mind. Only one with pure mind can understand Divinity. In order to cultivate purity of mind, you should partake of sathwic (pure) food. You should consider food as God. It is said, Yad bhavam tad bhavati (as you think so you become).

If you consider food as mere padartha (matter), it will remain so. Depending on the feeling, it undergoes change. Take for instance, the magnetic power in the body. It gets transformed into electric power. It gives rise to sound energy and develops tejas (effulgence). Jewellery shines with added brilliance when it is polished. Likewise every man is endowed with tejas, which is known as

Chaitanya shakti (power of consciousness).

If you enquire deeply, you can visualise God in every human being and in every material. Any padartha (matter) should not be looked upon as mere padartha. It should be considered as Parartha (the essence of Divinity). There is a gulf of difference between padartha and Parartha. Padartha corresponds to worldly matter, whereas Parartha is the transcendental divine principle. Since padartha is viewed as mere matter and not as Parartha, its value is demeaned. We attach value to that which has no real value. On the other hand, we do not value that which has to be valued most. The mind is responsible for all this. Hence, we have to purify the mind and focus it on Divinity. When the mind is focused on Divinity, our tejas also increases.

Today man is wasting his energy by entertaining bad thoughts and feelings. To keep bad thoughts in check, one has to develop divine thoughts. What are divine thoughts? You should consider everything as divine. Every drop of blood in your body is suffused with Divinity. Food generates blood and energy in the body. This divine energy has to be properly utilised by entertaining divine thoughts.

One cannot partake of paddy in its raw form. It has to be de-husked and refined into rice and then cooked well. Only then will it be fit for consumption. When paddy undergoes refinement and becomes rice, its value enhanced several fold. The process of refinement involves grinding, separating the husk, removing the dust, and polishing. In the same way, one cannot get happiness for the mere asking. One has to work for it. The more one engages in right works, the greater will be the reward. So, one should be prepared to work hard and get refined. Studying, eating, walking, sitting, running, smiling, and weeping - all these constitute the process of refinement. How does weeping refine man? When one weeps, one gets rid of impure water.

The process of refinement lies in accepting that which is good and rejecting all that is bad. Consider our breathing process for example. We inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. Whenever a marriage function is held, people gather in large numbers, and hence more carbon dioxide is released polluting

the atmosphere. Green leaves absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. That is why our ancients used to decorate the venue of marriage with buntings of fresh mango leaves and plantain leaves.

Unfortunately, people have forgotten the inner significance of such sacred tradition. They decorate their houses with buntings of plastic leaves because they are long lasting and easy to procure. In the name of modernism, they are spoiling their health. They do not understand the sanctity of food. They adopt modern methods to prepare food and in the process waste a lot of money. Modernism has made them lazy. They are prepared to pay a rupee to a coolie to carry vegetables purchased for half a rupee. Such is the sorry state of affairs.

Embodiments of Love!

Consider food as Parartha (God) and not mere padartha (matter). Take care that the food that you eat helps you maintain good health. Do not consume stale food. It is like poison.

Students!

You are not putting into practice what you are studying. You have learnt that the combination of hydrogen and oxygen results in water. But how far is it useful in your daily life? What is the use of doing experiments in the laboratory if people are not benefited by it? Today, people in several places are suffering from water scarcity. Is it possible to mix hydrogen and oxygen and provide them water? No. There are many rivers in Bharat (India), but what is the use? Their waters are flowing into the ocean without being properly utilised. Today different States are engaged in conflicts with each other over the water issue. Why don't they make proper use of the water available? Make proper use of the rivers that are flowing in Bharat. Bharat is a highly sacred and prosperous land. It has earned the appellation Annapurna (land of plenty of food). But today, people of Bharat are suffering for want of food. What is the reason? People are misusing the available resources. If you

put them to proper use, you as well as your fellowman can be happy.

Embodiments of Love!

Do not waste anything. Even while washing their hands; some people open the taps too much and in the process much water gets wasted. Wastage of water really pains Me. Don't waste water; don't waste food.

Many people in the world are dying of hunger. Hence, instead of wasting food, give it to those who are in dire need of it. There are some who resort to escapist sophistry, saying that the food they throw will not be wasted because dogs would feed on it. Even dogs would not touch such food because it would be in a completely spoiled state. In this modern age, not only human beings, but even animals are very intelligent. They decide to eat or not to eat it only after sniffing at it.

Don't waste food, time, energy and water. Understand that time is very important. Time wasted is life wasted. Yesterday, I spoke to you at length on various topics. Since I am speaking everyday, My voice is becoming louder and clearer. It only shows that when you speak good words, you will get more strength. Do not indulge in unnecessary talk. Speak to the extent needed. Don't waste your word. If you talk loudly, it amounts to wasting your word. Only those for whom they are meant should hear your words. There are some who talk very loudly even while walking on the road. Nobody will respect such people. You have to uphold your self-respect and manifest it by your speech and conduct. Na sreyo niyamam vina (without discipline, there can be no welfare).

Why do I walk slowly? It is only to give you darshan for more time. I can walk much faster, but I don't like to do it because if I walk slowly all of you can have My darshan to your heart's content. I am happy when you are happy. I walk slowly only to make you happy. Students! Do not talk without restraint. You will earn the respect of others only when you respect your words. You

may study well and get good marks but that is not enough. You should develop self-confidence and follow the dictates of your conscience. When you satisfy your conscience, you will certainly attain an exalted position in life.

Abraham Lincoln was born in a poor family. In his childhood, he did not have even proper food to eat. His dresses were torn and dirty. His fellow students hailing from rich families used to make fun of his dress. Lincoln could not bear the humiliation any longer. One day, he came back from school crying. When his mother questioned, he said his classmates were making fun of his poverty. He wanted a pair of new clothes to be stitched for him. His mother consoled him saying, "Son, let others say what they want. You respect all. Do not hate anybody. Understand our family position and act accordingly. With our meagre income, we cannot afford to buy a new dress for you. Keep your dress neat and clean. Develop self-confidence. Uphold your self-respect. " The words of his mother made an indelible impression on the tender heart of Lincoln. He followed his mother's teachings and ultimately became the President of America. He could occupy such an exalted position because of his self-confidence. He respected all.

I give you My own example. When I was studying in 3rd standard and 4th standard, I had only one pair of shorts and shirt. I could not afford to give them to dhobi for washing and ironing. Everyday, after returning from school, I would wear a towel and wash My clothes. I used to put live embers in a small metal container and use it for ironing. Later on, I had two pairs of dresses for the whole year. Whenever Pedda Venkama Raju enquired whether I needed a new dress, I used to say, "I have enough number of dresses. I don't need anything. " I did not want to waste money. Misuse of money is evil. In those days, a pair of shorts and a shirt cost only a few annas. Yet I never used to ask for them.

I always used to do My work Myself. Even now, I do My work Myself. People may think that Swami is having a number of servants to do His work. Nobody need to serve nor do I expect any service from others. Since My childhood, I respected all. Today the whole world is respecting Me. As I told you the other

day, when you love and respect all, you will be loved and respected by all. Love everybody irrespective of caste, language, religion and nationality. Then God will shower His love on you. The more you serve others with the spirit of sacrifice, the greater will be the reward.

Modern students lack goodness. They are not concerned about their parents. They wear all types of fancy dress and roam about in the streets. Students should develop humility and give respect to others. You should not talk to elders in a disrespectful manner. First of all, learn to respect everyone. If you want to attain good name, your conduct should be good. Today the whole world respects Me because I respect everyone. I address devotees as Bangaru and talk to them lovingly. Likewise, you too should learn to talk in a pleasing manner. Lincoln faced acute poverty and yet could come up in life because of his humility and self-confidence. Emulate his ideal. Be satisfied with what you have. Do not entertain excessive desires.

Students!

Many sacred teachings are contained in the Upanishads. Put them into practice and earn a good name for yourself. You need not become great, it is enough if you are good.

Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

39. Truth Is Your Very Life Breath

Date: 14 October 2002 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara (day 6)

The creation emerges from truth and merges into truth,
Is there a place where truth does not exist?
Visualise such pure and unsullied truth.
(Telugu Poem)

Sathyam bhruyath, priyam bhruyath, na bhruyath sathyamapriyam (speak truth, speak pleasantly and do not speak unpalatable truth).

Sathyam vada dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness).

These are the profound teachings of the Vedas. For all living beings, food is most indispensable. Without food, no being can survive. The Sun provides food, in the sense that it brings us rains, which in turn help the crops to grow. The Upanishads declare that food originates from sathyam (truth). It consists of three syllables: Sath, ya, and M. Sath is life, ya represents food, and M, the Sun. Sathyam does not mean merely to say out things as they are seen by the naked eye. The sun provides food that sustains life. The sun, food, and life together constitute Sathyam. This is what I mean when I say that the creation emerges from truth and merges into truth. " It is Sathyam that satisfies the hunger, gives strength to the body and in fact safeguards and sustains the whole world. This is the inner significance of the word Sathyam.

This can be interpreted in a different way also. Sathya has three syllables in it: Sa, Tha, Ya. If you read it from right to left, it becomes Tha, Tha, Sa, which means when one follows the path of yama (control of senses) and niyama (discipline) and performs thapas (penance), one has the vision of Sathya

Swarupa (embodiment of Truth). Truth is God.

Where is truth? It is all-pervasive. It encompasses the entire creation. Trikalabadhyam sathyam (that which remains unchanged in the modes of perceived time - past, present, and future - is Truth). Truth is the power that one gets by strictly adhering to yama and niyama and performing penance. Such penance leads ultimately to the vision of God.

Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma (Brahman is the embodiment of truth, wisdom and eternity). Truth is wisdom. Advaita Darshanam Jnanam (perception of non-duality is wisdom).

There is only one principle in this world, and that is Truth. Wisdom is infinite. It is not mere textual knowledge. It has neither a beginning nor an end. Only by following the path of Truth one can experience wisdom. Truth is the essence of the Vedas. In fact, Truth is the origin of the Vedas. In this manner, if you enquire deeply, you will realise that Truth has a number of consistent interpretations.

Sages and saints of yore considered Truth as their very life-breath. All types of wealth and comforts are present in Truth. Hence, truth is not an expression of worldly facts. In ancient times, saints and sages renounced everything and did severe penance to know the nature of truth. Truth is the very expression of Brahman.

A deep enquiry reveals that Sath is the fundamental basis of life. Without Sath, Chit (awareness) cannot exist. Sath is the positive power. Chit takes Sath as the basis for its functioning and hence it is not the fundamental principle. It is the complimentary negative in nature. When Sath, the positive, combines with Chit, what results is Ananda (bliss). Sath can also be compared to sugar and Chit to water. When you add sugar to water, you get syrup. Likewise, Sath and Chit together give bliss.

Where is God? In what form does He exist? Just as sugar is present in every drop of syrup, God pervades the entire creation. Sugar and syrup are inseparable. The same can be said of milk and butter. Similarly, God and the universe are inseparable. Our ancient sages realised this truth by performing intense penance for several years.

Once a congregation of sages was held to discuss the principle of Divinity. Some of them said that they could not have the vision of God in spite of performing intense penance and undertaking severe austerities. Then one of the sages, by name Sathya Swarupa, came forward and declared, Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adityavarnam Thamasa Parasthath (I know the Supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of the sun and who is beyond primordial darkness). He said that Divinity cannot be explained in words.

The sages questioned him, "Where did you see the Supreme Being? Did you see Him during the day or at night? Is it in the waking state or in thuriya state or in meditation? " They kept on questioning him in this manner.

Then Sathya Swarupa replied, "Divinity transcends time and space. It is not limited to any form. It is ageless, it is beyond the duality of day and night. " Further, he said that the truth was perceived by him by a process of revelation. In the wakeful state, we see with our physical eyes. Such physical eyes are not confined to human beings only. Most living things like animals and birds and even worms and insects possess this faculty. Physical eyes can see only physical objects. Seeing physical objects is not a big feat. The eyes of wisdom alone can reveal the subtle internal form. Therefore, Divinity can be seen irrespective of place, time or condition. Why wait, right now you turn your attention inwards and concentrate on that Effulgent Being.

Saying thus, Sathya Swarupa placed his thumb on their foreheads, and at once they had the vision of the Supreme Being. They also started chanting Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham! They asserted to the assembly of saints, scholars, and common people that they also had the vision of that Effulgent Being, a being of the effulgence of the sun. Such vision is not confined to special locations; it is available everywhere for the deserving person. That is why it is said, Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest), and is omnipresent.

Bliss is Truth. What is the nature of bliss? The brilliant whiteness of this effulgence is the awareness of bliss. The sages were taught in this manner by direct perception. After all this happened, the sages enquired from the Person as to who he was. Thamasa Parasthath (the one beyond darkness), he replied. In this manner, Divinity pervades this physical universe and is aware of all that is, but it itself is not available for perception by anybody. This is the truth that we have to realise today. Today, the world abounds with people with reputation of knowledge and academic excellence. If you go actually into the actual content of their knowledge, you will find nothing worthwhile. They are not aware of their own reality. They cannot see even their physical forms themselves except with the help of a mirror and even the reflection that is seen on the mirror is not true. Everything that you see is actually such reflections only. That is why the Person said, "Adityavarnam thamasa parasthath. That is, the brightness of the sun along with an enveloping darkness. It is not possible to conceive of light without darkness. This unity is to be understood. Good and evil are complementary. One cannot appreciate goodness without the existence of evil and evil cannot be judged but against a background of goodness. Hence, it is not possible for you to comprehend my true form. " The sages were determined to comprehend this reality. Then the Person said, "All that you see is my form. "

Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad (God has a thousand heads, eyes, and feet). How can one visualise with ordinary eyes such a form that has myriad heads, hands, eyes, and feet! There is chaitanya (consciousness) in each of these forms, but you are not able to see it. The chaitanya in all these forms is one and indivisible. It is rather difficult to

understand such spiritual matters.

To understand the principle of truth that is hidden in this objective world and visualise the blissful form of divinity is true spirituality. But few are making any effort in this direction. People sit for meditation, close their eyes and start imagining a particular form. But these forms are only reflections and not reality. One should go beyond reflection, reaction, and resound and visualise the reality. For example, now I am speaking to you. Where does the sound emanate from? You say, it is from the mouth. But in fact, the sound emanates from the navel. That is reality. Reflection, reaction, and resound are concealing the reality. In order to visualise the reality, you should give up dehabhimana (body attachment) and develop Atmabhimana (yearning for the Self).

Today, people have no regard for truth. Many do not really mean what they speak. They have something in their mind but say just the opposite. They manipulate their words according to the person and situation. Truth is that which does not change with time. Truth is one, not two. The Upanishads extolled the principle of Truth in many ways. Truth cannot be described in words. Bliss is its form. When you close your eyes and start contemplating on Truth, you will experience inexpressable bliss. You will start smiling without your knowledge. When you are dual-minded, you cannot experience such bliss.

Happiness is union with God and is eternal. Worldly happiness is transient. Such happiness is no happiness at all. You might have noticed, I am always blissful and ever smiling. Did you ever see Me putting on a sour face? Never. What is the source of My happiness? It comes from within. Some people are very moody. They are cheerful one moment and sorrowful the very next moment. One should always be cool and composed. Bliss is something that does not change. It cannot be acquired. It manifests from within when we understand the Upanishadic teachings and put them into practice.

Once, during their exile, Dharmaja and Droupadi were walking through the forest when Droupadi saw a huge fruit on a tree. She wanted to have the fruit, since it could make a sumptuous meal for all of them. Responding to Droupadi's wish, Dharmaja brought the fruit down by shooting an arrow. He then tried to lift the fruit but could not; it was very heavy. Meanwhile, Arjuna appeared on the scene and tried to lift the fruit. Dharmaja and Droupadi gave a helping hand. but the three of them together still could not lift the fruit. Meanwhile, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva arrived on the spot. Bhima made a sarcastic remark, "It is rather surprising that my younger brother Arjuna, who can lift the Gandiva, is unable to lift this small fruit. Perhaps the Gandiva is made of ... " He tried at first quite casually, using just one hand, but the fruit would not budge. He then became serious and used both his hands, but failed. All six then tried to heave the fruit, but still they could not succeed.

Now. there is a story behind this unusual fruit. In this forest there lived a rishi (sage) named Romarishi - meaning the one with long hair. His hair had spread all over the place. It was he who had nursed this tree, doing intense penance, to attain the fruit. This fruit was known as Amrutaphala, and by eating it, one would be free from the cycle of birth and death for ever. That was why Romarishi was keen on having it. As the Pandavas were trying desperately to lift the fruit, the rishi felt the disturbance as strands of his hair were being trodden and pulled. He realised that there was someone trying to steal the fruit, and he became very angry. His long sprawling hair then started extending in search of the Pandavas in order to tie them down. Droupadi was frightened by the approaching coils of hair. She prayed, "Oh Krishna, You have been protecting us all along. You must come to our rescue once more. We have no refuge other than You. "

In response to her prayer, Krishna appeared there, smiling as usual. He came up with a ruse that would save the Pandavas from the wrath of Romarishi. He said, "If you want to be saved, you have to implicitly obey My command. " Then Dharmaja said, "Krishna! Did we ever disobey Your command? We are prepared to do whatever You say. " Then Krishna said, "Dharmaja! There is not much time to lose now. You cannot remain here any longer. I will go to Romarishi's ashram at once. All of you come there after five minutes.

Whatever will happen there, remain tight-lipped. Be careful and remain silent throughout. "

In the meantime, Romarishi was furious with anger. He was about to curse the poachers. At that very moment Krishna entered the ashram of the rishi. Romarishi hastened to welcome Krishna. He fell at His Feet and said, "Lord, how lucky and fortunate am I to have You visit my humble abode! " The Sage was bubbling with joy. Meanwhile, the Pandavas came to the hermitage in accordance with Krishna's Masterplan. Though Krishna was busy conversing with the sage, He pretended as though He just then noticed the arrival of Pandavas. God's attention is always fixed on His devotees.

As soon as Krishna saw the Pandavas, instantly He started prostrating most reverentially before them one by one. He even fell at Droupadi's feet. The Pandavas were feeling very embarrassed, but remembering Krishna's command, they said nothing.

He rishi was stunned to see all this. He thought in himself, "Krishna is verily God, and He is prostrating before these people. These people must be even greater than Him. " So, following Krishna's example, he also fell at the feet of the Pandavas one by one. Having once prostrated, he could no longer curse them to whom salutation has been offered. The rishi's anger quickly vanished.

The rishi then asked Krishna, "Lord, what is all this mystery? There is none greater than You, and yet, You are prostrating before these humans! What is the inner significance of this? "

Krishna smiled and replied, "Oh noble one, I dwell in the hearts of My devotees. I am the captive of My devotees. These Pandavas have extraordinary devotion for Me. No matter what the circumstance, they never forget Me. I am under the control of such devotees! "

The sage realised the greatness of the Pandavas and said, "Please take this fruit; I don't need it. " Droupadi sliced the fruit and offered a piece to Krishna. Then Krishna said, "Are you not aware that I do not eat fruits? " Not only then, even now, I do not eat fruits. Then Droupadi prayed to Krishna to at least touch the fruit with His Divine Hands so that they could have it as prasadam. Women are endowed with such devotion. It is because of them that men take to the path of devotion. Moved by Krishna's love for His devotees, Romarishi was shedding tears of bliss. Krishna told the sage that his life had found fulfilment. He then placed His hand on the sage, who merged in Krishna.

Seeing this, the Pandavas too prayed for merger. They said, "Swami, we have no more desires. We have experienced everything in life. Please grant us liberation too. "

Krishna said, "Your part in this drama of life is not yet over. You have many more things to achieve. "

A drama consists of many scenes. An actor cannot ask the director to relieve him after the end of the first scene. He cannot leave till the whole play is over. Krishna told the Pandavas, "There is a lot more to be achieved in this drama of life. You have to set an ideal to the world, and Dharma has to be established. How can you leave the world without accomplishing your assigned task? Every human is born to understand and experience truth. What is the use of your human birth if you do not achieve this? Play your roles to perfection in this drama of life. " Saying so, Krishna disappeared.

When Krishna killed Kamsa, many wicked kings wanted to take revenge on Him. They made several attempts to capture Krishna and harassed the Yadavas endlessly. The Yadavas then prayed to Krishna to come to their rescue. Krishna told them, "Tonight, you sleep in Repalle, and tomorrow

morning, see for yourself where you will be. " When they woke up the next morning, they found themselves in Dwaraka. The mere Will of Krishna transported them even with all their belongings to Dwaraka. In this manner, Krishna performed many stupendous feats.

After the Mahabharata war, Arjuna went to Dwaraka to see Krishna and had not returned for a long time. Mother Kunti became anxious and worried. At last, Arjuna arrived and conveyed the shocking news that Krishna had left for His Divine abode. On hearing this, Kunti at once left her mortal coil, as if she had gone in search of Krishna. She breathed her last by keeping her head on the lap of Dharmaja, who was with her side at that time.

Dharmaja was not in a position to get up. He summoned Bhima and told him to make arrangements for their departure to the forest. He told Arjuna to get things ready for Parikshit's coronation. Nakula and Sahadeva were asked to make preparations for the last rites of mother Kunti. As per the command of Dharmaja, arrangements were made for the Pandavas' departure to the forest, Parikshit's coronation and Kunti's last rites, all at the same time and on the same day. Such a thing is not possible for anyone else.

Parikshit's coronation took place. Immediately, Dharmaja started walking in the northern direction. Droupadi and the four brothers followed him one behind the other. They were not conversing with each other. They did not even look at each other. Gradually, Arjuna, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva fell down dead one after the other. But Dharmaja was unperturbed. He continued his journey. He was one who adhered to the path of Truth strictly. Yama Dharmaraja, the Lord of Death followed him in the form of a dog. They reached Yamaloka (the abode of Lord of death). Dharmaja was moved by the pitiable cries of the beings undergoing punishment. As soon as Dharmaja entered Yamaloka, all those beings were at once relieved of their sufferings. They said, "Dharmaja! We have become free from our sins by having your darshan. Your presence has relieved us of our suffering. Hence, please remain here. "

Meanwhile, the messengers of heaven wanted to take Dharmaja along with them. But Dharmaja wanted to remain in Yamaloka and wanted to serve the beings there. Such were his noble feelings he had maintained as his life-breath. However, during the war, he uttered, Aswatthama hathah kunjaraha (an elephant by name Aswatthama was killed). While saying so, intentionally he uttered the word kunjaraha (elephant) in a very low tone. Consequently, Dronacharya thought his son Aswatthama was killed, and he also gave up his life. As a result of this sin, Dharmaja had to spend some time in Yamaloka. Yama Dharmaraja extolled the virtues of Dharmaja and sent him to heaven. Today, nobody realises the greatness of sathya and dharma. Whoever follows the path of sathya and dharma will never be put to suffering.

Students!

Sometimes, you may be tempted to utter falsehood. Even if you have to lose your life, never utter a lie. Sathyannasti paro dharma (there is no dharma greater than adherence to truth). Hence, follow the path of truth and revive the ancient glory of Bharat (India). Do not give room for untruth, unrighteousness and injustice. Truth can transform Earth into heaven and heaven into earth. Hence, consider truth as your very life-breath and experience bliss therefrom. This is the education you are supposed to learn.

Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma ".

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

40. Summer Course 2002

Date: 26 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Buddha Purnima, Summer Course 2002

Man wants to enjoy bliss. In the process, he listens to the wise words of his elders, performs rituals and austerities, reads scriptures, and undertakes pilgrimages. Yet, he has no experience of bliss.

Buddha also went through this routine and finally discovered the Truth - that he was himself the embodiment of Bliss. Man undertakes sadhana (spiritual exercises) in the hope of enjoying Bliss. Whatever is seen and heard is in the material world contributes merely to external happiness. True Bliss is internal.

Man is the embodiment of five elements: earth, water, fire, wind, and ether. God resides in each one of the five elements. Since there is no place in creation where the five elements do not exist, it can be argued that God is all-pervasive. And yet, why is man not able to experience this Divinity?

Water can certainly reflect objects. However, the reflection is not steady like the object. Similarly, God cannot be seen as a reflection in each of us if we suffer from manochanchala (a wavering mind). Such a mind leads to confusion and depression, and such a mind can never enable a seeker to realise the Divinity within. What is essential for a steady mind is control of the five senses.

Too many desires also contribute to a wavering mind. One must therefore exercise a ceiling on desires if one is to experience Divinity. Don't maintain foolish aspirations. The Buddha prescribed good vision, good hearing, good words, good feelings, and good thoughts as the prerequisites to God-realisation. Good vision in particular is of primary importance. Today, cinema, TV, and advertisements show all kinds of perversions. There is nothing good to see there. Lack of good vision goes hand-in-hand with bad hearing. Both cause humanity to degrade to demonic and bestial stages.

There is a severe degradation of noble traits like honesty, mercy, compassion, cooperation in people. One must first develop good habits. Good habits lead to peace of mind, which in turn gives good thoughts. One must master the mind and be a master mind by controlling one's senses. Today, people are slaves to their senses. They have become highly intolerant to criticism. This intolerance is a sign of body attachment. Body is perishable, like a water bubble. Hence, why should you be so agitated when someone criticizes the body?

When you say, 'My Body', 'My senses', 'My intellect' and the like, who is this 'My'? Clearly, you are the master, and the body, mind, senses, and intellect are merely your instruments. Identifying your true Self with these is bhrama (illusion), which is dragging you away from Brahma (Divinity). Today, social action is also contributing to the confusion of the mind and creating illusions. Several people start with the ideals that they do jana seva and samaja seva (service to society). What they actually do is swayam seva (serving oneself)!

Buddha realised the temporary nature of the world and renounced it. He knew that it could give him nothing but misery.

Students!

You aim to run abroad with the view to earn much. You only lose what you have in the process. You take to lowly jobs there to sustain yourself and earn a little extra. Can't you do those jobs in your own country? The mistake lies also with the parents for encouraging such foolishness. They proudly declare, "My son is earning well abroad!" He is only earning sin! Instead of going abroad and earning sin, stay in the country and earn some merit. Follow the dictum

"Help ever, Hurt never".

Do good to the society you live in. People from several countries have been inviting Swami to come to their country. Your body is itself not yours; how can you then claim a country to be your own? Give up this attachment to the body. By all means foster the body; but extinguish body attachment. Otherwise, you will fall into the endless cycle of rebirth.

Don't be swayed by praises people shower on you. Craving such praises is also a sign of body attachment. It builds up your ego. Don't feed your ego. Instead, foster peace. Peace is your biggest asset. Bliss is your greatest property. The Buddha came from a royal family. He lacked nothing by way of material comforts. Yet it was only when he sacrificed everything that he realised his Self.

When he was moving about on the streets once, a lady said that she would give him some food since he was starving. The Buddha said, "I am starving for the food of wisdom. The food that you want to give me is eaten by all. Why should I aspire for that?"

At another time, he saw a farmer gathering in his harvest and giving the workers their share. He went to him and asked for his own share. The farmer replied that the distribution was being made only for those who put in an effort to till and cultivate the land.

Buddha replied, "I have also tilled the land of my heart and have watered it with love; I tilled the land with my sadhana (spiritual exercises) and have grown the trees of wisdom on it. I now enjoy the fruits of bliss from the trees!"

Your sadhana like bhajans and meditation give temporary results. Bliss is eternal. The eternal sadhana to do for attaining the eternal bliss is to watch your breath. The answer lies there. When you inhale and exhale, you chant everytime SO-HAM - I am that! This is the *Hamsa Gayathri*. Know that you are verily divine. Watch, and your true form will reveal itself. What must you 'watch'?

Watch your **W**ords, **A**ctions, **T**houghts, **C**haracter, and **H**earT.

In particular, you must watch your words very carefully. Avoid criticizing others. For every one person you defile thus, a thousand others will criticize you and cause you suffering.

Chanting the names of Gods is essential up to a certain extent, until the mind is steadied. After this stage, silence is best. The fewer words you speak, the greater the stillness of the mind. That is the only way to kill the mind. Students today aspire to earn only *dhanam* (wealth), *balam* (power) and *kalimi* (friendship). Of what use is an education that will serve you only till your death? Earn the wisdom that will help in releasing you from bondage and put you on the road to immortality.

If you entertain bad thoughts, you will not have a peaceful death. God's love can give you a peaceful, pure, and serene mind. Obstacles in life must be overcome and not bowed to; God's love can be got by the best namasmarana - the chant of 'I am God'. Today, you do not see G-O-D but see D-O-G instead! If you face problems head on, you are making a front entry - 'G'; you see GOD. If you buckle and turn back, you see the rear entry - 'D'; you see DOG!

No visit to temples, mosques, churches, or other holy places will confer bliss on you. Your body is itself a temple. Why look for God elsewhere? Buddha's biggest *bodha* (teaching) was to undertake *thyaga* (sacrifice) and not *bhoga* (indulgence). If you increase your body attachment, suffering will multiply. The body is the temple of God; He will look after it. When several people prostrated to the Buddha, he said, "I am Myself saluting My body because it is the temple of God."

Your body is given to you to seek and experience Bliss. Do your *sadhana* (spiritual exercises), by all means. But never forget that God is in you, with

you, around you, below you, and above you. Believe "I am never alone! God is always there with me."

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

41. Summer Course 2002

Date: 24 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

There is no disease greater than greed;
One's worst enemy is his anger;
There is no bigger sorrow than one's misfortune;
there is no greater joy than wisdom.

Love, Aham, Atma, I - these are all synonyms of one and same entity. When every man uses these words, he is actually expressing his true nature. It is said,

Sarvam khalvidam Brahma
whatever there is to see and experience is all Brahma.

Brahma is another synonym for Atma. The great scientist Einstein made a conclusion after extensive investigations: "There is nothing in this creation except energy, and it is present everywhere."

Thousands of years before Einstein, the seven-year-old Prahlada had already come to the same conclusion without the help of any experimentation! He would avidly state; "You can't say that God is present here and not present there. God is present everywhere." How was it possible for the young Prahlada to have such a firm conviction? He withstood all the punishments heaped on him by his father by chanting "Om Namō Narayanaya". It is this faith that saved him. Firm faith is the basis. Without faith, any amount of *namasmarana* (remembrance of God's name) will fetch no result. Man's body is like a powerful dynamo - a generator from which the divine current always flows. Prahlada constantly experienced this and hence was confident that God

is Omnipresent.

Newton was another great scientist who experienced this truth, like Einstein. Newton spent his entire life in investigating the gravitational attractive power of earth. He stated that this gravitational power cannot be created or destroyed and has no birth or death. It is all encompassing. Newton attributed the gravitational force of earth to the divine power of magnetism and experienced Divinity thus.

Though energy can be neither created nor destroyed, it can certainly be transformed from one form to another. Through these transformations, each form of energy still retains its identity. For example, magnetic energy can be transformed to electrical energy, which in turn can be changed to light energy. There can be many such forms, but magnetic energy is still magnetic energy. It can change its intensity, but it remains indestructible.

At the time of birth, man has no desires. He is pure and peaceful. His body is the storehouse of an enormous quantity of energy and power. There are about 13 crores of light-sensors in the retina of his eye, about 30 lakh taste buds on his small tongue, and around 50 lakh cells involved in helping him hear! The divine power pulsates in him from head to toe, keeping a powerhouse at his disposal. However, as desires steadily increase, this Divine power starts to ebb. Just try to reduce a few of your desires and you will see how much your power increases. Your memory also sharpens.

The ancient *rishis* (sages) had little or no desires. Their memories were hence so powerful that they could recall anything instantly, however long the time past. Sage Saraswat was the first one to initiate the recitation of the Vedas, in that he contributed the eight letters - Ka, Cha, Ta, Tha, Pa, Ya, Sa, Ha. From these eight letters came the entire vocabulary. Words that praised God originated and were conveyed everywhere by the wind God.

God has been given eight names - each depicting him to the embodiment of an important power of nature: *Sabdha Bramhamayi, Chara charamayi, Jyothirmayi, Vangmayi, Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi, Srimayi* -

i.e., God is the embodiment of sound, mobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, supreme strength, illusion, and prosperity, respectively.

The entire Vedas came from these eight names of God. The ancient seers and sages declared: "Divinity, that is radiant like a thousand suns, lies beyond tamas." They experienced Divinity everywhere. They wouldn't even travel anywhere, since they felt that if they walked, they would stamp on Divinity. Today, perversions abound. People even keep their feet on idols. Rightly is it said:

Vinashakale viparithabuddhi

As one's doom approaches, good sense takes leave.

Those were good times, and sacred ideals abounded. Based on their experience, the seers of the past termed Divinity as:

* **Saikotikam**: It means that whenever or whatever you see, it is only the sound, feeling and vision of God alone.

* **Bhakshakthi**: It is the divine power that none can touch. It was this power that was experienced and shared in the past.

Today, you need faith in God to experience Him.

Where there is love, there is peace.

Where there is peace, there is truth.

Where there is truth, there is bliss.

Where there is bliss, there is God.

Hence, the cycle hence begins at faith and finally leads to God. Faith alone is a strong shield and weapon that can save man in any situation. It can accomplish anything. In those days, children as young as 6 years would be stricken with the desire to seek God.

Dhruva was hurt by his step-mother's humiliating treatment and went to a totally secluded spot, silent and peaceful, to do penance. When Lord Narayana appeared, the conversation between the Lord and His devotee indicates the maturity of the child.

When the Lord asked Dhruva what he wished for, the child answered, "You, who could find me out in this isolated spot, will certainly know what I want!"

The Lord replied,

Manas ekam, vachas ekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam
You have resolved in your mind to meditate and have done the action of doing penance. I wish you to ask in words what you need.

Dhruva answered, "I set out to ask for a glass piece. I have found a huge diamond instead. I don't want the glass piece, take me into you!"

The Lord replied, "You had done penance to obtain the chance to sit on your father's lap and rule the kingdom. Your words do not match your thoughts. Hence, though I can give you anything, you must finish your desire; I shall then grace you."

Such was the keen intelligence of the children of those days. As desires increase, bondage too increases. If you reduce your desires, you experience peace and security. As is said,

"Less luggage, more comfort".

I have no desires in me at all, so I am always happy.

When people's wishes are granted they praise Me;
When they fail to succeed, they criticize Me;
You commit all kinds of sins, and pray for liberation;
How is it possible to do this, pray, tell Me?

As far as possible, you must help others. God helps everybody - follow Him.

Follow the Master ;
Face the Devil ;
Fight to the End;
Finish the Game.

You have been conducting bhajans, satsangs, and doing prayers for God for so many days. But neither has the dirt in your mind reduced an iota nor have you experienced bliss even for a moment.

What can you achieve by worrying? Instead, offer everything to God and experience bliss. When creation first came up, there was total darkness. Then came a deluge of rainfall, and oceans formed. Then the clouds cleared and the sunshine fell on the earth. Crops grew, life forms thrived, and living was eked out.

But as more light dawned, man's desires also multiplied. Today, man starts his day with desires! But when it is dark, he sleeps peacefully. On this count

at least, man must welcome darkness, since it gives no scope for desires to proliferate! Truth is all-pervasive. Creation originates in Truth and terminates in Truth. When Truth is realized, Lord Narayana presides. Where the Lord resides, His consort, Goddess Lakshmi, also appears.

Hence, Truth alone can give you prosperity, peace, and plenty. You must help others as far as possible. Do not entertain jealousy because it will ruin everything you have. God's grace is always there. But you need to put in some effort to earn it. Using the rope of *bhakthi* (devotion), and, tying it to the bucket of your heart, you must send it down the well of *Anugraha* (Grace). This will give you the sweet water of *ananda* (bliss).

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html			

42. Summer Course 2002

Date: 23 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

Our warden has asked me to speak about the three '*akasa*' today. It is said,

"Akasam Gaganam Soonyam
(ether is total emptiness)".

It may hence mean that I am not expected to speak anything today!

Akasa is not just the sky that you see above, with the sun, moon, and stars. It is much more than that. It is classified into three categories.

(1) Bhutakasa,

(2) Chittakasa, and

(3) Chidakasa.

(1) Bhutakasa is the entire cosmos. It spans the entire physical plane that you see and can investigate. It includes the sun, stars, moon, galaxies, and every thing seen. The sun that showers its rays on the earth is at a distance of 9,11,00,000 miles from the earth. There are several thousands suns more out there that appear as small stars because they are so far away from earth. The light from these stars travel at a speed of 16,000 crore miles per second. Some of the light rays have not even reached earth yet! This should give an idea of the expanse of Bhutakasa. All the suns radiate brilliant amounts of energy. It is the power of Atma that causes this brilliance.

(2) Chittakasa is the cosmic mind. All that you visualize and see in the Bhutakasa appears just as a tiny blip on the Chittakasa. For example, you

have seen a huge mountain. When you close your eyes and think of the scene, you instantly see it in your mind. Chittakasa hence contains within itself the entire constituents of the Bhutakasa in a subtle form. One can say that it contains the reflection of Bhutakasa.

(3) Chidakasa is the Atma itself. Bhutakasa is associated with the physical plane; Chittakasa is associated with the subtle plane. Chidakasa is beyond all these planes of existence. It has neither form nor attribute. It is pure bliss - unalloyed, untainted, beyond comprehension and the reach of knowledge. He that understands this truth will experience pure bliss. Chidakasa can be only experienced, and not understood. Scientists may conduct any number of investigations. It can take them only up to Chittakasa and not a step beyond.

Hence, Bhutakasa is reflected in Chittakasa. Chittakasa is contained in Chidakasa. This may be explained as follows:

The one you think you are: This is Bhutakasa, because it constitutes what you see, hear, feel, sense, and experience in the physical world.

The one others think you are: This is Chittakasa, since it is what others think of you based on the mind's projections and impressions.

The one you really are: This is Chidakasa. You are really the Atma.

The letter 'I' is the true definition of Atma. It is just one letter and has nothing attached to it. One may call anybody by name and ask, 'who is so-and-so?' Invariably, the answer is 'I' from one and all. The letter 'I' therefore indicates unity in diversity. It represents the truth. As is said,

"Truth is one; scholars interpret it in different ways
(Ekam sath viprah bahuda vadanti)."

The Vedanta declares "Aham Brahmasmi". Here, Aham (I) comes first and Brahma follows. Hence, everything, including Brahma, originates from 'I'. This 'I' cannot be explained by scholarship or knowledge. It is also not right to associate 'I' with the names given to the body. The body, at birth, had no name. Yet it existed! So how is it to be correctly described? The worldly names are attached artificially to help identify you in this physical plane. They are not born with you and can never identify your true Divine Self.

Aham does not mean ego. Ego is when 'I' is attached and experienced with the body. Your true identity from the time of birth till death and beyond is Aham - I. Once you realize this Truth, there is nothing else left to learn, because Aham is its own identification. Chidakasa is beyond reflection, reaction and resound.

A story is told about a bangle seller in Uttar Pradesh. He sold bangles to a divine form that appeared from the river Ganges. Further, she guided him to collect the money from a particular person, whose name and address she gave, and disappeared. It turned out that this was the house of a devotee of Mother Ganga! He hurried to the spot and pleaded again and again that the mother appear in her physical form. All that appeared was a hand with the new bangles. A soft voice said, "Son! I do not have any physical form, so I can't show you any. All forms are mine, and I assume the form that the devotee prays for. I really have no form or attributes. I showed you my hand as proof that I indeed bought the bangles!"

God appears in any form that the devotee desires. Divinity has no name, form, or shape. When you think of Divinity, think of the Atma. You may say that you have seen Rama, Krishna, or Sai Baba - it is all illusion (*bhrama*). As long as you have this bhrama and associate God with physical forms, you will never realize "Brahma". You must not determine to see the form. Instead, consider all forms as His and recognize that truth.

Bhutakasa is not the absolute. Whatever is in the physical plane is temporary and will be destroyed sometime or the other. It is only the bliss (ananda) of realization that stays with you all the time. Ananda or bliss is not the same as

laughter! Laughter is *prahasana* - a loud guffaw. God always has only *hasana* - a blissful, soundless, delicate smile. It is this hasana that confers bliss on all.

What is the true gift you must give God? Only gratitude. Today, you are all taking free education, medical help, and water from me. So many of you are also taking plenty of happiness from me. All I expect is your gratitude. Never fail to express your gratitude to anyone who helps you. An ungrateful wretch will suffer sorrow all through. There will be no end to his cycle of rebirth. He will never taste success and will suffer pain and agony.

The gratitude I expect from you is your own happiness. Always be cheerful and spread good cheer. Real gratitude is to take bliss from God and share it with others. It is 'to give and take'. It is no gratitude if you aim to please only God. God is happy if you make everyone else happy. Obstacles, pitfalls, and problems in life are like passing clouds. If you determine not to be bowled over by them, you are a true devotee. Forget the body and think of the Atma. As illustrated in 'Tat Twam Asi' - 'that' must combine with 'this' to give Atma - 'thou art that'.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

43. Summer Course 2002

Date: 20 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

None can estimate or comprehend the power of Divinity. Yet, there are enough people who criticize God! Divinity remains unaffected by praise or censure. Praise cannot enhance it nor criticisms diminish it. Divinity does not aspire for praise or publicity.

Thousands of students have passed out of this University, having obtained an education totally free of cost. But we have never advertised this fact. The joy of the students is all that gives me enough pleasure.

In the Ramayana, Bharatha resided at Nandigram, lost in the contemplation of Rama. Laksmana was away serving Rama and Sita. Satrugna governed the kingdom during those 14 years. Though Bharatha was Rama's representative, it was Satrugna who carried out the day-to-day administration of the kingdom. He strove from dawn to dusk to solve problems. He guarded its boundaries and kept the kingdom safe and secure. He was so totally dedicated to Bharatha's service that he would never report to Bharatha for the fear of disturbing his meditation. Sumitra once explained to Kausalya and Kaikeyi, "If Rama were to be the King, my son Lakshmana would dedicate himself to Rama. If Bharatha were to become the King, my son Satrugna would dedicate himself to his service. I gave birth to the twins not for them to achieve name, fame, or kingdoms but for them to engage themselves in service".

An ample measure of the fame Rama and Bharatha achieved was due to the brothers Lakshmana and Satrugna. Their unity and rock-like affection for each other is an ideal worth emulating. This is why Rama lamented bitterly when Lakshmana swooned in the battle. He wept, "I may find a wife of Sita's virtues; I may find a mother of Kausalya's caliber and nobility; but never will I be able to find a brother like you!"

It was Hanuman that came to the rescue and picked the entire mountain that

contained the life saving Sanjivani plant. On his return journey, he had to pass over Ayodhya. By that time, Bharatha was already aware of the troubles the demons were heaping on Rama. Sighting the huge form overhead, he shot an arrow at Hanuman, thinking him to be a demon. Hanuman descended with the mountain, introduced himself, and explained the situation. The ecstatic Bharatha sent for the queen mothers. Mother Sumitra's noble quality is again illustrated here. She said, "Lakshmana is forever lost in Rama's *seva* (service). I do not worry for him. I only worry that there is now a disturbance in Rama's *seva*! If something does happen to Lakshmana, my son Satrugna shall go to serve Rama."

Urmila also expressed such noble sentiments. When told that her husband's life was in danger, she said, "My husband has only the thought of Rama in him. Rama will certainly take up all his problems. My husband shall always be peaceful and safe". The four sisters were certainly not far behind when it came to noble traits!

Meanwhile, under Satrugna's able administration, people spoke the truth and followed righteousness. He never rested, and it was his constant apprehension that problems of the kingdom would reach Bharatha and disturb him. Such was the love that the brothers had for each other. Meanwhile, news reached Satrugna that in the forest, the demoness Surpanaka had raked up trouble for Rama and Lakshmana. She succeeded in goading the demons Kara and Dushana to wage a battle against the brothers. These demons were close aides of Ravana. Satrugna sought his mother's advice; Sumitra counseled that Rama was divinity incarnated and hence there was nothing to worry about. Satrugna always had problems when confronting Bharatha with such news. He would never dare to talk back to his elder brother or even give him any advice. He set a perfect ideal. One should never talk back to elders or even attempt to advise them. Extreme care must be exercised before replying to their questions. One must always speak the truth. Satrugna exemplified these ideals. Sruthakeerthi, Satrugna's wife, was known not to talk much. True to her name - sruti+keerthi - she always paid attention to hearing only noble and virtuous words. Therefore, she always did only good and spread good ideals. The brothers were always united in their

love for each other.

Rama loved Lakshmana dearly and would always love to have Lakshmana at his side. The brothers and their wives exemplified the Vedic ideal:

Let us all move together, let us all grow together.
Let us all stay united and share our knowledge.

When Rama and Lakshmana left for the forests, they took only a crowbar and a wicker basket. They did not take any weapon from the kingdom of Ayodhya. Sage Vishwamithra turned his entire armoury of divine weapons and missiles to the brothers, and they used them. Using them, Rama alone could destroy the entire army of 40000 demons of Khara and Dushana, who tried to trouble them. When Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita visited sage Agastya's ashram, the great sage directed them to Panchavati. The brothers decided to set up their hermitage and stay for the rest of their time of exile at this place. It was also at this place that the episode of Surpanaka occurred. When she came to Rama to ask him to marry her, Rama and Lakshmana decided to humour her and sent her shuttling to and fro between them. When the infuriated demoness tried to attack Sita, Lakshmana cut off Surpanaka's ears and nose. Surpanaka went and complained to her brother Ravana. When Ravana wanted to know why she waited long enough for Lakshmana to cut off both her ears and nose, she confessed that she went into a trance when Lakshmana touched her, smitten by his handsomeness!

Rama had advised Bharatha, "Our father ruled wisely. You are now the King. Don't talk much and don't waste time in arguments. Act more. Respect one and all". The brothers followed the advice, and Ayodhya prospered.

Today, you have been told about what the Super Specialty Hospital has achieved. I do not generally like these incidents to be made public. My advice to the boys has always been that you must publicize less. Instead, give joy to

the people with your sincere work, and that will make me happy. But I would like to tell you that we never turn away deserving cases. I can spend anything and do anything if it will give joy to people.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

44. Summer Course 2002

Date: 22 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

True education is that which facilitates universal peace, which destroys any scope for mean thoughts to germinate, and which fosters unity and co-operation.
A true student must acquire such an education

The sacred story of Rama is ageless. It does not satiate one's heart even after one listens to it any number of times. He who sings, hears, or narrates this sacred story is indeed blessed.

Mother earth has enormous powers hidden in her depths. There has not been any investigation that has succeeded in probing this secret. Sita is the daughter of mother earth. At the time of the *swayamvara*, mother earth saw that among all the princes and kings gathered for Sita's hand, Rama was the most ideal. Hence, even nature helped Rama when he lifted the sacred bow of Siva and broke it. Rama is depicted as lifting the bow with his left hand, which is normally weaker than the right hand. This is just to show to the world that there is nothing called a difficult or impossible task for the Divinity.

Man is the storehouse of every mineral, metal, and energy that the earth contains. He has in him the electric, magnetic, and several other forms of energy. Sadly, man does not realise this. There is the enormous strength of Divinity latent in him that enables him to do anything that he sets his mind to. Man's achievements such as bringing the dust from the moon are glimpses of the great potential that is latent in him. All he needs is the will and the determination to realise this strength and potential.

Ravana abducted Sita to Lanka. He wanted to influence her by showing off his opulence, power, and acquisitions. He took Sita to his inner palace. But Sita

was only lost in the contemplation of Rama and would not even look up. Mandodari, Ravana's wife, was extremely unhappy with her husband's behaviour. She cautioned Ravana, "Lord! Surely your destruction is near; otherwise, you would not plan and commit such dastardly acts! Sita is a highly chaste and pure woman. She is already wedded to Rama. You are inviting your doom by abducting here. Being away from her lord, she will never be happy even if you put her in this great palace. Keep her in a simple peaceful place where she can contemplate on her lord and can derive some solace!"

Listening to her words Ravana accommodated Sita in the beautiful Asoka gardens. Mandodari further warned Ravana, "Lord! Instead of spending time in 'Rama chinta' you have become a slave to 'Kamachinta' (lust). Why are you inviting your own death? One must never let a woman suffer. If you make a woman shed one teardrop, you will yourself shed thousands."

Her advice fell on deaf ears. She then visited Sita and pleaded to pardon her husband for his mad adventure and protect her from widowhood. Sita was thinking only of Rama and therefore couldn't hear anything else or talk to anyone else. None in Lanka was happy with Ravana's deeds. Fearing his wrath, they kept silent. Vibhishana's wife, Sarama, and daughter attended to Sita. One night, both of them had a dream that Lanka had become an arid and barren land; the trees had all withered and fallen; the palaces and houses were all in ruin and Ravana himself was seen stumbling about seeking water. Sarama realised that doom was inevitable to Ravana as well as Lanka. She resolved to serve Sita better and make her as happy as possible.

When Hanuman reached Lanka, he searched through all the inner palaces for Sita. At once, He felt that it was inappropriate to look at all the women there. But to accomplish the task of searching Sita he had no choice but to continue. Finally when he saw her sitting forlorn under a tree at Asoka gardens, his joy knew no bounds. He jumped on to the tree and started singing Rama's praise. Sita was overjoyed for a moment. But later she thought that it was just another trick orchestrated by Ravana's demon servants to win her attention. It was only when Hanuman showed her Rama's ring that she relaxed. The ring

was gifted by king Janaka to Rama during the wedding.

Seeing Sita's plight of being away from her lord, Hanuman offered to place her on his back and take her back. Sita replied, "If you were to do that, it would be a repetition of the same mistake that Ravana did. Rama has to come to Lanka; kill Ravana and take me. Please tell this to my lord." She gave Hanuman a jewel to be presented to Rama on her behalf. It was one amongst the several jewels presented to her by Anasuya, sage Agastya's wife.

Hanuman assured Sita that he would do what she had said and was prepared to leave. But before returning, he destroyed the beautiful Asoka Vana and proceeded to cause enormous destruction to Lanka in order to teach a lesson to the asuras (demons). While doing this he was caught and brought before Ravana.

Ravana was furious and demanded, "O, monkey! Who are you and who sent you here? You have caused such enormous destruction!" Hanuman retorted, "Foolish fellow! I am here as a messenger of the One who cut off the ears and nose of your sister!"

Taken aback, Ravana said, "How dare you address me thus! No one has the audacity to use such words with me!"

Hanuman replied, "Maybe it applies to the gods, demi-gods, gandharvas (celestial musicians), and others whom you have subdued. But I am Lord Rama's messenger and will use these words because you deserve nothing better."

After reaching back safely, Hanuman described Sita's sorry state and how she was eagerly awaiting Rama's arrival. Lakshmana excitedly wanted instant action! Rama calmed him down and told him that one must not leap into action without assessing the situation properly. Plans were made and Sugreeva mobilised his army to reach Lanka.

As the hordes of vanaras occupied every space on hills and land in Lanka, the

city shivered in the thought of their looming doom. The earlier destruction caused by Hanuman was still fresh in their minds. He had come back and had brought several more of his kind! The terrible battle was fought. Indrajith, the mighty son of Ravana, who had conquered Indra himself in a battle, appeared in the battlefield and caused a great deal of destruction in the Vanara army. Vibhishana told Rama the secret of Indrajith's apparent invincibility. Defenseless now, Indrajith was killed in the battle. Ravana's second brother, Kumbhakarna, met a similar fate and died.

Then Ravana himself came to the battlefield. Vibhishana revealed the secret of Ravana's weak point and told Rama to shoot the arrow at that point. As the arrow hit there, Ravana fell dead. Mandodari wailed, "Lord! I warned you repeatedly not to foster lust and not to abduct chaste and pious ladies. But you never ever listened to a sane advice. You have now got the punishment for your sins."

When Sita was brought before Rama, in order to prove to the world her chastity, Rama had her pass through the fire. She emerged unscathed. Meanwhile, Vibhishana brought the aerial vehicle - Pushpaka Vimana. Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Sugriva, and all others got into it and flew toward Ayodhya. Pushpaka Vimana earlier belonged to Ravana's stepbrother. Ravana defeated him and took away the Vimana. Bharatha meanwhile emerged from his self-imposed exile and kept a chariot ready for receiving Rama. Shatrughna too arrived from Ayodhya with a garland.

Wonder of wonders! Shatrughna could not distinguish between Rama and Bharatha! Bharatha had spent 14 years meditating on Rama and had acquired his attributes. Lakshmana finally helped Shatrughna to garland Rama. Then they all proceeded to the palace. Sumithra was very happy at this sight and blessed all the sons. Urmila fell at Lakshmana's feet. She had vermilion on her forehead, as was the custom of those days. Lakshmana's feet were anointed with that vermilion as she kept her forehead on his feet.

Kaikeyi appeared and profusely blessed Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita. Though she had earned disrepute, it was for a good purpose. The truth is that Rama

in His young age while learning archery from her, had already explained to her His Divine Mission. She was merely playing out her role. She was as thrilled as Sumithra to see the successful completion of the Divine mission. Sumithra and Kaikeyi were in peace completely. They had no more aspirations in the world. They died peacefully and contentedly seeing the return of Rama from exile.

All the people in Ayodhya were very happy to get back their beloved princes and their wives. They rejoiced and decked the city up grandly. Their Rama was back home.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

45. Summer Course 2002

Date: 21 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

He whose heart is filled with compassion,
whose words are steeped in Truth, and
whose body is engaged in service to others
will never be affected by the influence of the Kali age

Just before Ravana shed his mortal coils, several sages, scholars, and good men gathered and asked him, "O Ravana! In your life you have done several deeds that were both good and bad. What did you consider to be the greatest lesson that you have learnt?"

Ravana replied, "O Sirs! He who wishes to enter into any noble task that can cause only good to others should never entertain any delay. The instant such pious thoughts are born in the heart, they should be executed. I too had such idealistic thoughts - that I would build a bridge linking earth with heaven, that I would sweeten the saline waters of the oceans around Lanka and distribute it to the people, and that I would provide succor and relief to all those poor souls suffering in hell. I delayed, and I could never do it because my evil overtook me. You must not repeat this mistake."

Today, the main item of agenda for humanity is to indulge in good behaviour and good conduct and to put into action all the good thoughts. Ravana did several deeds. But the lack of proper direction and good intent in these actions defiled them, and therefore he could never execute the good tasks that he had planned to do.

As Rama and Lakshmana searched for Sita after her abduction, they encountered a strange creature called Kabandha. Kabandha's face was in his stomach, from which protruded a huge tongue. He espied the two brothers

and learnt about their mission. He then asked that a pyre be lit and his body be burnt to ashes in it. If so done, he promised to help them.

Lakshmana did as he was told, and out of the pyre emerged a beautiful form that bowed to him and said, " O Prince! Due to a curse, I was forced to assume that terrible form. I was destined to be burnt and liberated by you. I know that you are merely enacting a role in the divine drama. None can harm you; agony and grief cannot approach you. However, I shall perform my role too. Sita has been abducted and kept in Lanka. She is a pious and a chaste lady. None can touch her without being burnt to ashes. Go and befriend the monkey king Sugreeva. He will help you." Advising Rama thus, the form vanished.

The episode of Vali and Sugreeva is that of the enmity between two brothers. Vali was Sugreeva's elder brother, who drove his younger brother out of the kingdom and retained his wife. Earlier, Vali had killed a demon Dundubhi and hurled the carcass far away. Unfortunately, the body landed on the Rishyamukha hills, where some drops of blood fell on the sage Matanga. Infuriated at this act of defiling his hermitage and person, the sage cursed that whoever was responsible for this act would suffer instant death if he came to the hill. It was to this Rishyamukha hills that Sugreeva, with some of his trusted courtiers and followers, escaped. When Sugreeva spotted the two noble princes, he dispatched Hanuman to find out their intentions. Hanuman discovered who they were and carried them on his shoulders to Sugreeva, the son of Sun God.

Before sealing the act of friendship and hence seeking Rama's help to slay Vali, Sugreeva wished to test Rama's strength. The rule one must remember is that one must always befriend someone who is more powerful than one's enemy. Rama demonstrated to Sugreeva that he was more than a match for Vali's valour and strength. The pact of friendship was sealed between Sugreeva and Rama, with the fire God as witness.

Sugreeva agreed to help Rama rescue Sita and Rama promised to help Sugreeva get back his wife and kingdom. When Vali rushed out to meet the

challenge, his wife Tara, stopped him. She wisely counseled him, "Surely, he must have made a powerful friend; otherwise, he wouldn't have dared to challenge your might. I hear that the princes of Ayodhya are lending him their support. Please ask before accepting the challenge." Vali brushed aside her advice and went on to give a sound thrashing to Sugreeva. During their fight, Rama could do nothing because both the brothers looked exactly alike in stature, features, and strength! Sugreeva, beaten black and blue, showed a clean pair of heels and retreated. Rama consoled him with sweet words and sent him out again. This time, Lakshmana placed a garland around Sugreeva to distinguish him from Vali. Rama did not miss his mark, and Vali fell, with Rama's arrow in his chest.

The conversation between Vali and Rama is very interesting to follow. When Vali demanded to know why Rama interfered in an internal matter between the brothers, Rama replied, "Your mistake was that you trumped up charges of treachery against Sugreeva just to grab the throne. You should treat your brother's wife like your mother. Instead, you usurped Sugreeva's wife. You sinned grievously and hence deserved punishment."

Vali then asked if it was justified for Rama to hit him from behind a tree. Rama replied, "You belong to the animal race, and I am a prince. Animals must be killed from hiding, so I did nothing wrong."

Vali demanded, "If so, you could have alerted me and then faced me in a fair fight." Rama replied, "You have the boon that whoever fights you face to face would lose half his strength to you. Therefore, I had to shoot you from behind a tree."

Vali repented, made peace with his brother and asking that Angada, his son, be made the crown prince, and died. Ramayana contains in it three important battles.

1. The battle between Vali and Sugreeva.

2. The battle between Vibheeshana and Ravana.
3. The battle between Bharatha and Rama.

Sugreeva asked for Rama's help, had Vali killed, and took over the kingdom. Vibheeshana surrendered to Rama, fought against his brother Ravana, helped Rama to kill Ravana, and became the king of Lanka. In stark contrast, both Bharatha and Rama 'fought' that the other be made the king!

Rama vowed that he would not enter Ayodhya for fourteen years and hence commanded Bharatha to be king. Bharatha was equally firm and said that, as long as Rama did not enter Ayodhya, he also would not enter the city. Instead, he would wait for Rama to be the king! This 'battle' is highly dharmic, as opposed to the other two. In the battle, before killing Ravana, Rama extolled his virtues. Ravana was indeed a person of great accomplishments. Rama, in fact, was liberating Jaya and Vijaya from a curse when he killed Ravana.

After the battle was over, Rama wished to show the world the purity and chastity of Sita. Rumours were bound to fly otherwise. Therefore, he made her undergo the trial-by-fire. When Sita emerged unscathed, Rama accepted her and effectively scorched any rumours.

In the entire Ramayana, we see Rama acting his role like all the other characters; still, he remained unaffected by anything. He is the actor and also the director! Though the epic is centuries old, its values retain their relevance even to this day. Valmiki's original Ramayana is pure and unsullied - giving no room for distortions. It is only the interpretations in between that introduced confusions in the great epic. It is a story and some call the Ramayana History. History = HIS + Story. It is nothing but the story of the Lord Himself!

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

46. Summer Course 2002

Date: 19 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

Man's speech earns him wealth;
his speech helps him find friends and endears him to his relatives;
his speech is responsible for his bondage;
his speech is responsible for his death and destruction.

Words carry enormous weight. It is therefore essential that man weigh his words carefully, discriminate thoroughly, and only then speak. Every man has sacredness inherent in his words. He should not misuse them to hurt others or cause harm to himself either. The Ramayana is a storehouse of sacred words that are as sweet as honey - nectarine, fragrant, and profound.

Rama is an ideal example of a character in the Ramayana who always used sweet words. He always spoke with restraint and used pleasing words. Before exercising one's speech, a great deal of vision and foresight is essential. In the thick of battle, Kaikeyi had lent great help to Dasaratha. Pleased, Dasaratha, without discrimination, gave her his word to satisfy any two of her wishes. The agony that resulted was a direct consequence of this lack of foresight.

This world is impermanent.
The age of youth and wealth are all like passing clouds;
your wife and children have to be left behind some day.
It is only Truth and one's good name that are permanent.

Under these circumstances, man has only four true friends within him. They are the four sages: Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatkumara, Sanatsujatha. They are ever vigilant and always guard him from misfortune and danger. They never develop any hatred for man and are alert day and night, protecting him. Even Kausalya blessed Rama at the time of exile, invoking these four eternal friends to always be with Rama and guard him.

There is one aspect of the Ramayana that is relatively unknown. Kausalya and Dasaratha already had a daughter named Santha. But, being a female child, she could never be a legal heir to the throne. Consequently, she was given away at a very young age in marriage to Sage Rishyashringa. Thereafter, Dasaratha did not even bother keeping in touch with his daughter. This ill treatment of the girl-child was common even in those days! Meanwhile, Santha grew up to be a noble and virtuous lady. She attained great spiritual powers with her austerities. When Dasaratha set out to perform the *Putrakameshti yajna* (sacred ritual) to seek divine help and obtain male issues, Sumantha, his chief Minister, suggested that they invite the great Sage Rishyashringa to be the chief priest. The sage agreed; but he insisted that Santha accompany him. It was said that in whichever kingdom this couple set foot, their purity would remove all problems. There would be timely rains, rich harvests, peace, and prosperity. Such was their spiritual strength. It may even be emphasized that ultimately, if Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Satrugana were born as a mark of success of the yajna, it was Santha who was equally responsible for it.

There is also a story associated with the great sage Viswamitra. Viswamitra was actually none other than the emperor Kaushika. When he tried to take the divine cow Sabala to his kingdom by force, she issued forth an army that decimated Kaushika's own soldiers. His sons were also killed in the subsequent battle. Realizing the futility of the material strength before that of the spirit, he renounced his riches and kingdom and became an ascetic. As he progressed, he became intimately acquainted with these four inner friends: Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujatha. He was also quick to realize how much they actually helped him.

When Rama and Lakshmana were told that Rama would marry Sita because he had broken the holy bow, they politely replied that unless their father gave his permission and blessed them, they would not agree to the marriage. Viswamitra, who was himself a king once, knew Rama's honourable character and directed that Dasaratha be sent for. The clan of Ikshvaku, of which Rama was a scion, stood by two important vows. One was they would always obey their father's command. The second vow was that they would never turn back on their promise. Breaking any of these vows was as good as inviting death upon themselves. Viswamitra therefore honoured Rama's request to obtain His father's permission.

The episode of Parasurama is introduced after the wedding ceremony of the brothers. Parasurama knew fully well the divinity and purpose of Rama's incarnation. Rama had only twelve of the sixteen divine attributes. Two more were distributed among the remaining three brothers. Parasurama was to hand over to Rama the last two divine attributes and then leave the scene. From a worldly point of view, he challenged that whoever could wield his mighty axe would inherit those two attributes. He was fully aware that it was only another incarnation that could succeed in accepting the challenge; and so it proved to be. Rama not only wielded the powerful axe of Parasurama, but also won him over with his sweet words and all-encompassing love. Parasurama handed over to Rama the two remaining divine aspects and departed the scene. Rama was now in possession of all the 16 attributes of Divinity and set out to Ayodhya.

Long before Rama was born, the Gods, demi-gods, men, rishis, sages, and yogis prayed to Lord Vishnu to relieve them off the burden of Ravana's atrocities. Vishnu, who knew about the fatal flaw in the boons Ravana asked, assured that he would incarnate as a human being and vanquish Ravana. This was heard by Lankini, the guardian deity of Lanka. Brahma told her that the day she would be beaten in battle by a monkey, Lanka's doom would descend and all the demons would face redemption from their misguided ways. Hence, when Hanuman defeated her, she could clearly see the impending destruction of Lanka and Ravana.

The four brothers were very close to each other. While Lakshmana went to the forests along with Rama, Bharatha spent the 14 years in Nandi Grama, about 12 miles from Ayodhya, dressed exactly like Rama and living exactly like him - shunning all royal comforts. It was said that the four sons of Dasaratha were the very embodiments of the four Vedas. Rama was the embodiment of Yajur Veda. Since Lakshmana would always stay close to Rama, he was the embodiment of the Rig Veda. Since Bharatha spent his days singing Rama's glory, he was the personification of the Sama Veda. Satrugna, of immense strength, destroyed all the enemies of his brothers and kept them safe and secure. He was hence the embodiment of the Atharvana Veda.

It was also said that at the end of the 14 years in exile, when all the four brothers and sisters got together, people were astonished to see that Bharatha looked exactly like Rama. This significant fact points to the twin truths:

Yad bhavam tat bhavathi

Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavathi

The more seriously you contemplate on a name and form, the more of its attributes you begin to acquire.

The role of women in the Ramayana is especially laudable. People mistake them for weaklings. In truth, they embody seven kinds of strengths in them, while men have only three. If India retains its purity and piety today, it is because there are still such women in India who are chaste and pure.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

47. Summer Course 2002

Date: 18 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

As long as one has ego, one will not be loved.
As long as one has anger, one will cease to discriminate.
With excessive desires, one's mind will never be under one's control.
The moment one rids himself of greed, one will gain happiness

Rama and Laxmana sought Viswamitra's permission to see the beautiful city of Mithila. As they went walking, all eyes were drawn to them as if a powerful magnet was at work! Everybody wondered who these divinely handsome young boys were. A young housewife from Ayodhya, who had married into a house of Mithila, explained that these boys were King Dasaratha's sons and extolled their virtues.

Several ladies tried to attract the attention of the two boys toward them and dropped flowers and waved arathi lamps. Rama and Laxmana continued walking without being perturbed. Such was the sacred ideal of those times. The youth would not allow their vision to stray. They maintained the sacredness of their vision. Staring at ladies was unheard of.

After Rama and Laxmana had arrived to the great hall where the bow was displayed, they saw that all had failed to lift the sacred bow. As Rama opened the box to lift the bow, Laxmana was seen to tightly press down on the earth! When Viswamitra sought an explanation, Laxmana replied that he had to do that because when Rama would lift the bow of Siva, turbulence was certain, since the stability of the earth would be disturbed. He said that this was the least he could do to help his brother! Such was the affection among the brothers that they appeared to live for each other.

Once, Bharatha came crying to mother Kausalya and complained that despite

his best efforts, Rama deliberately kept losing in games so that his younger brothers could win. Rama knew and believed that his own happiness lay in the prosperity of his younger brothers. He did not mind suffering in the process. The sacred ideals exemplified by the youth of those days were indeed landable.

The four brothers Rama, Laxmana, Bharatha, and Satrughna were to be married to the four sisters Sita, Urmila, Mandavi, and Srutikeerti respectively. As they sat on the dais, they would not rise their eyes look around or even look at each other. They attentively followed and obeyed the priest's directions but kept their eyes lowered in modesty and dignity. Even when Janaka offered Rama Sita's hand with his benedictions, Rama did not look at her. This is because Sita would become his wife only after he tied the sacred thread - the mangalasutra - around her neck. Such was the strict discipline and control exercised in those days.

At the time of the garlanding ceremony, the brothers waited to garland their brides until Rama garlanded Sita. Similarly, the sisters waited till Sita garlanded Rama. But Rama, the broad-shouldered and tall her, would not bend to enable Sita to garland him. He was a valorous and strong prince, full of dignity. He had amply demonstrated it by lifting and breaking it in full view of all. He was not about to lower his honour and dignity by now baring his head! Finally, Rama signed silently to Laxmana who came to the rescue and broke the deadlock. He abruptly ran, fell at Rama's feet, and would not get up! Rama bent down to raise him and, grabbing the chance, Sita at once garlanded him! Such were the intricate ways in which the brothers interacted with each other.

The four sisters were not far behind their husbands when it came to setting model standards in honour and dignity. When Kausalya asked Rama to take her also to the forest with him, Rama advised her thus, "Your husband is your God. Father is now old, shattered and ill. It is your responsibility to serve him, give him courage and support. It is your duty to remain with your husband". However, when Sita wished to accompany Rama to the forest, he prohibited her. Sita then gently reminded Rama the advice he had given his mother. She

said that she also considered her husband to be her God and could hence not be separated from him.

Laxmana went to Urmila and told her that he was going to the forest to serve Rama and Sita. Unlike Sita, Urmila did not demand to come with him. On the contrary, she wisely decided to stay back so that under no circumstances would Laxmana be distracted from his service. She even extracted a promise from her husband that he would cease to think or worry about her and instead concentrate on looking after the welfare of Rama and Sita. Hence, she gave the courage to her husband and sent him with her full support. She live up to her role of being a dharmapathni by helping her husband tread the path of righteousness.

Sumitra's laudable character also bears attention. She had a noble heart. When Kausalya grieved at Rama's departure, she consoled her by saying, "Sister! Rama is going to the forest for the emancipation of humanity. My son Laxmana will always be with Rama and Sita and will look after their welfare. This is all God's master plan and is bound to unfold. What is happening is essential for the upkeep of dharma and welfare of the world. If you cry when your sons leave, it will prove to be inauspicious". Thus, she consoled Kausalya and gave her support to bear her grief.

Laxmana stayed with Rama and Sita for 14 long years in the forest. Yet, never once did he look at Sita's face. When the bundle containing Sita's jewel was displayed before him, he could identify only her anklet! Rama asked him how he identified it; Laxmana replied that every day after his bath, he would respectfully touch Rama's and Sita's feet, considering them to be his father and mother. In the process, he would regularly see the anklets! Such was the steadfastness of his character. This is *lavanya*, which in Sanskrit means a steady and strong character.

When Rama and Laxmana accompanied Viswamitra to his hermitage, they came to the lovely land of Anga. Its king was Manmatha. He was extremely handsome and, due to Siva's grace, did not have a physical form - anga. Hence the kingdom was called Anga, a gift of lord Siva. The citizens of this

kingdom welcomed the princes and the sage with open arms, lavishly hosted them, and then gave them a warm sendoff. Rama and Laxmana reached a fearful forest where the Sarayu river merges with the Ganges, setting up a mighty roar. This forest was the realms of the demoness Surpanakha. Strangely, Laxmana started abruptly grumbling and bemoaning his fate. He criticized the injustice heaped on Rama and wondered why Laxmana had to suffer with him! Rama merely smiled and led him by his hand out of the forest. At once, Laxmana felt thoroughly ashamed of his outburst. Rama consoled him and explained that the forest was the domain of the evil Surpanakha and other demons. It was their bad vibrations that had got the better of Laxmana and forced him to behave thus. "*Sthala prabhava* (the effect of the place)" is demonstrated here.

Rama, Laxmana, and the sage then arrived at Siddhashram, Viswamitra's heritage. This was the place where Varaha was born. It was said that Lord Siva once resided here. At the time of Viswamitra's yagna (ritual), Rama and Laxmana sincerely guarded the site of the yagna without any rest or food. They wholeheartedly dedicated themselves to the service of the great sage. At the conclusion of the yagna, Viswamitra received an invitation from Janaka, the king of Mithila, to attend the function where the sacred bow of Siva was to be displayed. Vishwamithra extolled the qualities of the divine bow and asked Rama and Laxmana to come with him. However, the brothers gently refused by saying that their father's orders were merely to guard the yagna. Viswamitra reminded them that they were also asked to obey the sage's command. In this way, all the three went to Mithila. The Ramayana has several secrets and ideals to share with humanity. There are absolutely no contradictions in this epic - it is only the distortions introduced by various scholars. It is all Truth (*Sathya*), Eternal (*Nithya*) and, Pure and without any blemish (*Nirmala*).

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

48. Summer Course 2002

Date: 17 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course

Today, it is rare to find children who revere their fathers or fathers who care for their children. The teacher-student relation is deplorable and tainted without any respect being exchanged. Parents at home don't know how to set ideals for their children. Brothers don't care to stay united, and children don't bother to maintain the family's honour. Husbands and wives lack understanding and are unable to set examples to the society in which they stay. Honour and respect are ignored and too much freedom is given to all.

The problem begins at the home, which is the first school of a child. The parents are the first teachers. They should teach their children how to respect elders, speak the truth, follow righteousness, respect the teachers, and interact with other children at the school. The discipline of the school must be followed. Only such an exercise can generate ideal students.

In the days of yore, students would arise as the cock crowed at dawn. After their ablutions bath, meals consisting of nourishing and palatable items would be taken in limited quantity. Loitering about in dirty and unhealthy locations was never done. Willing participation in sports and games was common. It was these set of practices that ensured good health. Good health is essential for a sound education.

Basic courtesies and ideals, absent in the modern age, are demonstrated in ample measure in the holy text of Ramayana. The way that Dasaratha received the sage Vishwamitra with courtesy demonstrated the honour and regard with which a guest was treated. Sage Viswamitra came to the court of Dasaratha to seek his help in destroying the demons that kept defiling and troubling the *yagna* (ritual) the great sage was performing for the welfare of the world. When Dasaratha put himself along with his army at the sage's disposal, Vishwamitra instead asked for Rama. Afraid that the tender-aged Rama would come to harm, Dasaratha hesitated; but sage Vasista explained to him Rama's divinity. He told him that his sons were like the lightning bolts

that would destroy the demons.

Hence pacified, Dasaratha summoned Rama and Laxmana to his presence. Viswamitra, who knew their divinity, was lost in their splendour and kept offering his prayers to them in his heart. The sons of Dasaratha had some unique habits. While Laxmana always stayed with Rama, Shathrugna shadowed Bharatha! The secret to this bond can be traced to the divine *payasam* (a rice pudding) that Dasaratha presented to his queens. Sumitra's share was whisked away by an eagle. The three queens lived in great harmony and loved each other dearly.

Hence, Kaikeyi and Kausalya each gave Sumitra one half of their share. They then took sage Vasista's blessing and drank the sacred payasam. However, when the children were born, it was discovered that Sumitra's twins - Laxmana and Sathrugna - set up a constant wailing! They would neither sleep nor eat. Sage Vasista saw the reason with his divine vision. He explained that since Laxmana was born from Kausalya's share of the rice pudding and Sathrugna from Kaikeyi's share, the twins craved to return to their origin! When Laxmana was placed next to Rama and Sathrugna next to Bharatha, they finally calmed down and started playing happily! In truth, all four brothers lived as one.

The ladies in the royal family were equally noble. Sita and Urmila were daughters of Janaka, while Manadavi and Shrutakeerti were daughters of Janaka's brother. All the four were ideal daughters-in-law to the queens. Hence, the family stayed united, strong and peaceful. Kaikeyi is depicted as having succumbed to the evil promptings of Manthara and demanding the two unjust boons. She was a lady of strong character and was too noble for such petty things to overcome her. She knew that unless Rama was sent to the forest, the annihilation of the demonic hordes would not occur. She loved Rama more dearly than her own son Bharatha. She knew that unless she asked for the boons, the destruction of Ravana was impossible.

Ravana had acquired a boon that his death could not be caused by the Gods, gandharvas, kinnaras, demons or kimpurushas. Thinking men to be

insignificant, he had not included them in the list! Thus, one should be extremely careful about what one asks from God and how one asks it! It was also prophesized that the day a monkey would defeat the guardian of the city - Lankini - Lanka would face its doom.

This may be the modern age. But truth must still be spoken, and humility and obedience must be incorporated in our behaviour. Man is born to set and live by ideals. Children must know that the entire humanity is one family living in the huge mansion of this world. Unity must be fostered. For example, all the organs of the human body have their specific allotted tasks. Yet each is vital in contributing to the total human body. Also in the past, parents would also not weep with sorrow when their daughters married and went to their new homes.

On the contrary, they felt proud that their daughter was to assume new responsibilities. Real tears must be tears of joy and not sorrow. 'Nayana' means eyes and 'Nara' means water. Scholars depict Kausalya to have been extremely sorrowful at the exiling of Rama. On the contrary, she blessed him wholeheartedly and sent him. She told him, "By giving birth to you, I have discharged my responsibility. You are now earning great fortune by discharging your responsibility. Ayodhya without you will henceforth be a forest. The forest in which you dwell shall become Ayodhya." She hence sent him so graciously.

Rama firmly believed in the dictum, "All are one, be alike to everyone." The nature of Avatars is inscrutable and worthy of emulation. Dasaratha means one who controls his ten senses. To such a person, a noble son like Rama will be born. I was speaking about *lavanya* (beauty) the other day. This causes eternal youth and can be got only by perfect sense control. Krishna and Rama are never seen or depicted as old men! Age never goes with the years.

This body is 76 years old; but I can still walk at a rapid pace. No Avatar was ever bothered by problems of old age. My eyes are as radiant as bulbs, and I can clearly see distant objects. There is no problem of cataract either. My ears are of sound hearing, and I have unlimited strength and energy in this

body. Sometimes speed breakers are set up to control the car's speed. That does not indicate a defect in the car. Similarly, I Myself exercise control and regulate the flow of energy through My body. In days to come, you will see more evidence of this Divinity. I do not deal at the physical level. I am beyond all such issues.

Rama and Krishna both left their bodies by their own will and were not slain in battles or by old age, as is stated in the texts. The bodies of the Avatars cannot be touched by anything evil. You are blinded by ignorance because I talk, walk, and move amongst you. This ignorance hides and masks your wisdom. Some ladies have been complaining that I am afflicted by some kind of knee pain. I walk slowly because I have to see that My feet do not get entangled in the folds of my long robe and the dhoti. My gait is always gentle, soft, tender, and delicate. There is not an iota of roughness in Me - it is all softness and sweetness.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

49. Summer Course 2002

Date: 16 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

One can regain or recover lost money, friends, lands and prosperity by the dint of one's efforts. A man may also get remarried if he has lost a wife. However, the human body, once lost, cannot be regained. It cannot be protected eternally. Hence, one must attain and experience life's goals while the body lasts.

India is a land that is the birthplace of all ideals, sciences, and arts. Numerology, grammar, arts, literature - they all had their origins in India. In fact,

That which is not available in India is not available elsewhere
(Yenna Bharathe, thanna Bharata).

It is a land that gave birth to noble souls like Savitri, who, by her spiritual powers, could even get her dead husband back alive; Sita, who made even the fire bend before her purity; and Damayanti, who burnt to death the evil hunter who misbehaved with her. Sadly, there is an exodus from this land today.

What is lacking here is not the wealth or knowledge; it is determination. If only one is determined, one can achieve anything in India itself. Ancient India was home to several outstanding universities. Each was highly specialised in a particular field. For example, the University at Kasi specialised in teaching grammar - Vyakarna Sastra. Kashmir University has masters in the science of decoration and beautification - alankarana. The one at Ujjain imparted unparalleled knowledge in the field of Law - nyayashastra. The great king Bharatha had Panini in his court, whose treatise on grammar (Panini Grammar) remains a masterpiece to date. There was Charaka, who

contributed much to the medical sciences.

There were several such universities imparting knowledge to many students. They were not buildings with large infrastructure. The residence of the teacher itself was a university college. The student strength was limited; however, the quality of teaching was exceptional. The class would be held under a tree; in that cool environment, the students absorbed the soft words of the teacher immediately. The outstanding feature of the education in those days was reliance on the power of sound. Lessons dropped from the lips of the teacher and directly reached the ears of the students. There were no slates or notebooks to aid the learning process. High standards of learning were thus achieved. There were no rigid timetable or curricula. The teacher taught whenever he felt the need to and wherever he wanted. He always taught that which the students wanted and what he knew would be good for the students. The students in turn opened their hearts, and the teacher filled these hearts with knowledge.

No fees were ever charged for education. The society took upon itself the responsibility of maintaining and looking after the welfare of the teacher. The students would get up early in the morning, perform their ablutions and prayers, and then go from house to house to collect alms. Every house would give whatever they could spare. These were all then collected, and the teacher first took whatever was necessary for him. The students partook of the rest as sanctified food. The students resided in caves like those of Ajantha and Ellora; where they lived and dined. The education process was closely linked to spirituality.

Charaka was a very famous physician. He never used modern gadgetry. Instead, he would combine his medical knowledge with prayers to God, which caused perfect healing. Hence, every disease had a certain cure because the process relied on God's grace. Charaka proved that God's grace could rid man of any difficulty. He demonstrated that God is within, around, above, and below man at all times.

When Bhagawan was very small, He composed a poem that spoke of Russia

under Stalin invading and causing Hitler's ruin. People sometimes wonder how Sai Baba knows all this!! Let me tell you that there is nothing I do not know. I merely pretend to ask you questions to give you the joy of conversing with Me. Don't doubt Me based on what I ask you or speak to you. I had also composed poems that mocked modern items and the craze for these items. My poems were also used to correct people who went astray.

Karnam Subbamma once prayed for Me to help bring her husband to the right path. I wrote a very hard-hitting poem that highlighted his immoral ways. This shamed him in public, and he changed for the better. The grateful Karnam Subbamma fell at Swami's feet and advised Venkappa Raju that I was Divinity itself and that they must not develop bodily attachments with Me.

I would also compose poems and teach people how to explain and interpret the scriptures properly. By starting the Pandari Bhajan group, I would cause the villagers to rise in a holy atmosphere by 5 am itself. When Kote Subbanna, thrilled with My poems, complimented Me on My capability, I told him that whatever I speak was always poetry! He offered Me a basket of laddus as a mark of his appreciation. But I had it distributed to everyone. I have never taken sweets because I am full of the sweetest of all sweets: LOVE. I am always distributing it and making people happy.

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50. Summer Course 2002

Date: 16 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

Indian culture is eternal. It is unshakeable by time, untarnished by history. The youth, in particular the students, have forgotten this great culture today and are hence being subjected to all kinds of agitations and turbulences in life. They have lost their peace and are unable to experience bliss; in contrast, ancient Indians were steeped in our culture and therefore lived in bliss by sharing their joy among themselves.

There are several examples of people who understood the importance of culture in moulding their lives. Abraham Lincoln, the late president of America, is one such. His childhood was spent in poverty, as a consequence of which he was often subjected to ridicule. Many a time he would be miserable at his sorry state, but his mother always gave him courage. She once told him that though they had very little by way of material opulence, they had abundance of self-confidence and self-respect. Riches are bound to melt away, but these two attributes are one's own and none can steal them. Hence, Lincoln believed firmly that the SELF was his true wealth. He thereafter strove to live with self-confidence and self-respect. This firm belief paid dividends because Lincoln's name and fame as an honest, courageous, and sincere person spread far and wide. He was never known to utter or encourage a lie. Rising from such a poor background, he went on to become the president of his country. He still remained humble, since he always believed what his mother told him. She advised him to be thankful for these gifts of God that had brought him to such a position. Abraham Lincoln set a shining example that was emulated by his countrymen. It is said,

The sun lends illumination during the day.
The moon lights up the night sky.
The three worlds are illuminated by dharma.
A good son lends splendour to the entire family.

Students should all become good sons - *suputras* . They will then succeed in changing the state of this country. Give up communal feelings and follow the dictum

ekoham bahusyanam
(it is the same atma in all).

What is culture? It is a process of refinement. It is to shed away all the evil and unwanted and extract the pure substance. An example is the dehusking of paddy. Once the husk is removed, the rice can then be boiled and consumed. It is this pure cultured state that gives good health to the body and mind. The body and mind are very closely interlinked and are vital to man's evolution. One must purify the mind and foster the body. Food by itself can give nourishment and wealth can give comfort, but both food and wealth still cannot obtain for you the bliss you seek. A complete man is he who has both a pure mind and a healthy body. Only he experiences bliss.

You must not think that it is *kalimi* (wealth), *balimi* (strength), and *chelimi* (friendship) that give you peace. *Gunamu* (character) supercedes all and can alone guarantee peace and bliss. One's actions should not be artificial.

"Art is outside; Heart is inside."

When one says, "brothers and sisters," or "brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God," one should put their entire heart into the statement. When you offer *namaskaram* to others, you must actually feel what the term conveys. Namaskaram is the whole-hearted offering of the five organs of cognisence (*jnanendriyas*) and the five organs of sense perception (

karmendriyas) from the Atma in a person to the Atma in the other. This is the significance of combining the five fingers of each palm and placing it on the heart. It has an underlying principle of unity in it.

Students today don't even know what Atma is. It is not localized. It is in all and envelops all. It is like the air that cannot be seen or caught and survival is impossible without it. Atma is *prana* (life force) itself - helping one to breathe and survive. The key to understanding the nature of the creator is to understand the creation.

The great Buddha realized this and hence first understood the inner significance of the five elements. He then understood and mastered his five senses. For example, $2+2=4$: the number four forms only when 2 is combined with 2. Hence, 2 is hence the building block. Similarly, the key to understand God is to first comprehend nature. But understanding of nature cannot be developed by body attachment.

The body must certainly be fostered and protected, but no attachment must be developed towards it. The Atma within the body is more fundamental. While the body will perish sometime, the Atma within is eternal. A healthy body enables one to control one's senses. A healthy body and a pure mind in turn combine to give *lavanya* (beauty). True beauty is that of the character and not of the body. It is this *lavanya* that gives one an eternal youthful countenance and bliss. Eat in a limited way. Don't give scope for tensions and worries.

Follow Bhagwan's message, "MY LIFE IS MY MESSAGE." I don't eat much or worry at all. That is why my body retains its youthful appearance despite being 76 years of age!

Students!

After the sessions everyday, don't waste time in gossip. Ponder over what good things have been taught and imprint the substance on your heart. The *gopikas* (cowherd maids) once told Uddhava that since Krishna was imprinted

on their hearts, it was impossible to separate Krishna from them. In the same way, these lofty ideals must be imprinted on your hearts. They will then become a part of you.

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52. The Ideals Of Education In Ancient India

Date: 16 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

One may lose one's wealth; but it can still be earned back; One may lose friends; but better ones can be befriended later; One may lose one's spouse; but remarriage is still possible; One may lose land and estates; but these also can be regained; These are all those that can be recovered somehow or the other; But the body that is lost can never be regained.

All the happiness that needs to be enjoyed, pleasures and comforts that need to be experienced in this life should be experienced while the body lasts. Our ancients underwent severe problems and faced trying times while safeguarding their bodies. Yet, they failed in being able to retain their bodies eternally. Though the body is not permanent, every effort can be made to obtain those items that give us bliss.

India is a land that has been the birthplace of all knowledge and branches of education. The science of numerology has its origin in India. Grammar, music, and fine arts were all born in India. That which is not found in India cannot be found anywhere else. It is therefore said Yenna Bharathe, thanna Bharatha.

India also gave birth to people with outstanding character. The great lady Savithri prayed to the lord and succeeded in bringing back to life her dead husband by the power of her devotion. By the power of her adherence to truth, the Queen Chandramathi could extinguish a raging fire; Sita could successfully pass through fire as a testimony to her chastity. Damayanthi could instantly burn to ashes the evil and wicked hunter who tried to misbehave with her. Are these ladies not the shining examples of noble souls of India? If this country has had prosperity, peace, and bountiful harvest, it is because of these noble souls. They have enabled India to stand as a teacher

to the rest of the world.

However, today there are some ignorant people who think that they can obtain certain things in foreign countries that they are not able to find here, so they emigrate out of Bharath. What is it that you cannot obtain in this sacred land? It is the storehouse of all knowledge and action - the land that confers deservedness on each and everyone. If you are determined and make sincere efforts, there is nothing that you cannot achieve or obtain in Bharath.

Indians faced several obstacles while experimenting and inventing new methods in education. Each university had its area of specialization. At Kasi, there were masters who were authorities in grammar - vyakarana sastra. The land of Kashmir specialized in rhetoric - alankara. Ujjaini University imparted knowledge in the specialized area of law - nyayasashtra. In this way, each university specialized and taught one particular subject and popularised it. In Emperor Bharatha's kingdom, enormous emphasis was laid on health sciences and medicine. Charaka, a master physician, established a center of advanced learning in this area. All these universities belonged to ancient India and cannot be seen in this age. There were several such reputed universities in ancient Bharath.

The universities of yore did not have huge buildings and infrastructure. The residence of the teacher himself was the university. The students were few in number. However, the capacity to impart knowledge was immense. The teacher could teach in such lucid and simple terms that even tiny tots could easily understand the higher sciences and subjects. The tree under which they sat was the classroom. As the cool breeze blew, the soft words of the teacher wafted over like waves and were imprinted in the minds of the students. Such educational institutions thrived in ancient Bharath. About 400-500 years back, the Britishers attempted to investigate the cause for the stupendous success of ancient Indian Universities. However, they failed in their endeavour.

The true basis for the high standard of learning of ancient Indians was the sense of sound and not the written word. The education process was entirely

based on sound. There was no practice at all of writing on slates or notebooks. There was an excellent synthesis of the spoken word leaving the teacher's mouth and reaching the ears of the students straight away. The entire process of communication was only verbal.

There was no rigid timetable, or even curricula and syllabi. The teachers would teach the student any science or subject that he was keen to learn. There was no Government control, rules or regulations. The learning process was therefore entirely heart-to-heart . The students would keep their hearts open. The teachers made every effort to readily fill these open hearts. The time of day or night never mattered. Lessons were taught at any time. There were no fees of any sort charged for education. The hearts of the teachers were highly pure and sacred. It was this heart-to-heart learning that enabled India to propagate wisdom and knowledge throughout the world.

Thus, the educational system of India was highly valuable and infused joy. Today, the Indians are losing these latent and blissful educational secrets. Once lost, it will prove extremely difficult to regain them. Therefore, this kind of education must not be lost. We must always be prepared to keep the heart pure and sacred.

The upkeep and maintenance of the gurus was the responsibility of the society. Depending on their capacity and capability, the citizens would contribute for the livelihood of the teachers. But never was any fee collected from the students.

What was the main duty of the students in those days? They would rise early in the morning, perform their ablutions and prayers, and then set out to beg for alms from house to house. The food collected was handed over to the teacher. The teacher would then eat whatever was required for him, and the rest would be partaken by the students as sanctified food. It was in such a sacred atmosphere that in ancient Bharath, sciences, art ,and literature were taught and propagated.

Indian education was sacred, highly valuable, and deeply profound in its

content. Such nectarine knowledge is today being discarded as waste. The university of Ujjaini taught law. The science of law was taught and preserved in a pristine and pure form there. Today's laws are distorted into illegalities. On the other hand, at Ujjaini, even matters that could not be legally interpreted elsewhere could be effectively dealt with. No scope was given for anything that was unlawful to enter its portals. Bharath was famous for propagating and teaching such lofty ideals and for its dedicated teachers and students.

What were the residential arrangements in those days? The caves like Ajanta and Ellora were the places where they lived and dined. The teachers were highly dedicated and selfless. Every nectarine thought and word that originated in their heart was transferred to the students in a loving way. The day education was made into a commercial activity, the minds of students too started to turn crooked. In those days, food or education was never sold.

Education was made available free of cost. Goddess Saraswathi was not bound by anybody. Such a Goddess has been imprisoned by the shackles of commerce and trade. Education is being subjected to all kinds of perversions. Goddess Saraswathi is also called Mahabharathi. She resided and imparted unparalleled knowledge to the Indians and allowed them to grow in wisdom and to prosper. She was also extolled and worshipped by grateful teachers and students for her grace. Saraswathi, Bhagawathi, Bharathi, Poornendubimbanana - these were her various names. It is now prohibited by governments, laws, and regulations to even utter the name of such a Goddess! Prayers invoking the Goddesses enabled her to lend purity and sweetness to the words of ancient Indians. She also protected the country with her grace. Goddess Lakshmi, also called Indira, was worshipped and revered. Indira, Lokathatama, Ramamangaladevata, Bhargavi, Lokajanani, Ksheera sagara kanyaka - she was thus extolled by her various names.

It is in such a sacred land that God has repeatedly taken human form. Divinity is not some incomprehensible figure or entity. Divinity is actually most easily visible and experienced. Divinity incarnates in the human form. Today, however, man is not ready to accept this reality. In all the three paths of karma (action), jnana (spiritual knowledge) and upasana (extolling) that man

undertakes to achieve realization, he offers several prayers to God and extols Divinity in several ways.

In all the states of ancient India, education was offered free of cost. Food was got from the houses of the rich and wealthy. This food was equally shared among all students. The students would also treat the food as the very nectar itself and then attend to their studies. There were no divisions based on the caste, community, race, or religion. All were treated equally. Music, literature, dance, and fine arts were all encouraged and fostered. Carpentry, pottery, and various branches of smithy were also given priority and taught with enthusiasm. The aim was to cause the emancipation of the students through proper education. The teacher taught every form of education. Without the teacher, there can be no scope for students to learn anything. The teacher must be one who can set the aim of student on the correct goal.

Charaka was a highly learned scholar. He contributed much toward the medical sciences and took upon himself to propagate it. His was a very well known name in the field of medical sciences. Today, to perform a heart surgery, the heart-lung machine and several other complicated and sophisticated equipment is required. No such gadgetry was ever employed in those days. Charaka would utter hymns in the praise of God, place his hand on the heart of the patient, and be lost in a trance of bliss. The heart diseases would subsequently vanish without a trace. For that matter, every disease had a suitable melodious hymn invoking God's grace. In this way, God's grace invariably cured all physical, mental, psychic, and even spiritual ailments.

Embodiments of Love!

It is impossible to take even a single step without the grace of God. Sadly, today, man's every step is steeped in unlawfulness and unrighteousness. All his thoughts are selfish and evil. His vision is tainted with lack of any warmth of love. Progress toward reaching high standards has stagnated. Every man needs to ingrain and grow in his heart the tender feeling of love. Charaka expounded this very philosophy. God is not in some distant land but resides in your very heart. He is with you, within you, above you, below you, and also

around you. Discarding such an easy path and accepting other torturous routes, man is subjecting himself to needless agony and suffering. On the other hand, people in ancient days would instantly get rid of any suffering - all by chanting the sacred name of the Lord.

In the Kali age (the present age), there can be no better panacea for our suffering than namasmarana (chanting the Lord's name). No greater or more potent weapon can even be there to help man surmount his obstacles. Chanting the Lord's name once can enable man to experience enormous bliss. No one is making efforts to understand the power of the Lord's name. In the kritha yuga (the first age), meditation was practiced. In the thretha yuga (the second age), yajnas (sacred rituals and rites) were conducted. Worship was prescribed in the dwapara yuga (the third age). But in the kali yuga, namasmarana is considered ideal to win God's grace. In this way, in all four yugas, God's name was extolled and propagated.

Students, if you really comprehend the truth, you will see that there can be no strength or power that lies outside you. The tremendous power of magnetism resides in man alone. All the powers of this world have originated from man. Though man is such a powerful entity, today, he is deluding himself to be a weakling and is suffering. You are all divine. There is no God separate from you. He resides in your heart. Close your eyes, and you will have a blissful glimpse of Him. It is because you do not have this faith that you are unable to see Him.

Ujjaini, Kasi and Kashmir - these were all seats of enormous power, strengthened by the sanctity of Indian thought and wisdom. Navadweepapura was another center of learning for law. Tenets of law that could not be interpreted elsewhere were easily explained and assimilated here. Sadly, today we are discounting the great wealth and power of knowledge in India and are instead traveling abroad to seek strength and wisdom. This is a highly mean and mistaken outlook. Such ignorance should be driven away. The illumination of wisdom and awareness must be lit in us. Only then can we experience the divine and sacred bliss.

Embodiments of Love!

I shall explain to you in the coming days the influence of educational institutions. What you need to know today is that all strengths and powers are here in India. All knowledge and sciences had their birth in India. It is the ancient Indians who discovered the fine arts like music, literature, and poetry. Why are we then neglecting such a holy land? This is the mark of ignorance of a high degree. Students cannot recognize this truth and are today striving to earn worldly pleasures. These will never be obtained. Even if obtained, they will not last long. Hence, we should realize that in this puppet called the human body lie all forms of strengths.

At one time, during the Second World War, there was a danger that external forces would invade India. A communist leader approached me and said, "Boy! I understand that you can compose excellent poems. Will you compose one on our leader and sing it?" I then asked him to fetch a cradle and composed a song on the spot. It sounded like a lullaby.

Do not cry, O' infant, do not cry my child; If you cry you will not be called a valiant son of Bharat. Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep. Did you get scared that the terrible Hitler has invaded the invincible Russia and cry? Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep. Do not cry my child, for the red army is marching under the heroic Stalin; They will put an end to atrocities of Hitler. Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep. All the countrymen shall unite and fight to win freedom; Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.

I would compose several such songs with deep meaning and cause joy to the villagers by having them sung. Many of them wondered how this tiny tot Sathyanarayana Raju had come to know of Hitler and Stalin. These names were unknown to most of the people in that region. Know that there is nothing that Sai does not know. Yet ,I pretend as if I am not aware. I ask some people, "When did you come?" They may bemoan that Sai Baba is even

unaware of when they have arrived! I do know. But I still ask the question to give you the happiness of having spoken with Me. My only intention in asking such questions is to make you happy. I do not entertain the thought that you may doubt me. I do not allow such assumptions to prevent Me from giving you this joy.

People used to address me as Satya. Some students came to me and requested that I versify into a poem an entire drama that they were planning to enact. I agreed and I asked for two students. I taught them the song and sent them out to sing it:

What are these times that have descended on us, O' folks! What are these times that have descended on us! The talcum powder has formed a cheap substitute for the turmeric powder; O' folks! What are - - - ! Healthy brass bracelets have given way to cheap trinkets and chains; O' folks! What are - - - !

In this way, I used to propagate to the public lessons that needed to be taught.

People hang a silver disc from a leather strap on their left wrists - and call it fashion! Grotesque appearances are made that cannot be seen by the eyes - and they call it fashion! Long moustaches have been cut to small blips - and they call it fashion!

I would compose such songs that poked fun at some of these modern fads and try to draw public attention, particularly the youth, toward ancient customs and traditions.

Karnam Subbamma was a noble and pious lady. She loved Me a lot. I was

then just seven years old. It was not habitual to go to her house as soon as she called Me to! She would keep asking Me, "Child! Why don't you come to my house?"

I would respond, " I am not a beggar to keep visiting others' houses. I shall come only if invited, and not otherwise".

She then prayed, "Son! My husband is taking to immoral ways and ruining himself. Can you help me in correcting him?"

Bhagawan replied, "I shall take a very strong action on him. You need not have any fear or trouble on this account."

I then taught some small boys to sing in front of him. Karnam Subbamma was worried that he would get angry. I comforted her saying, "A person's anger is his own enemy. It cannot harm Me." I would then train the small boys and leave them to sing in such a way that he learnt a very good lesson. This was a task that could not be achieved by mild and soft words. Only hard-hitting words would prick him and make him feel guilty. The children were scared. I gave them strength by saying that I would be with them.

The Karnam was called Narayana Rao. I wrote a poem specially to correct him, passages of which ran as follows:

You will become an outcaste among your own community ; Your relatives will not entertain you and will drive you out ; Your friends will beat you with their slippers if they see you!

I used such harsh words and advised him to give up his misdirected ways. The bolt hit home! The Karnam learnt a good lesson and gave up his vices. Subbamma was thrilled. Though I was a small boy, she ran and fell at My feet and thanked Me profusely. I told her to stop it since I was much younger to

her. She brushed my objections aside and said, "Your physical stature may be small, but in that is hidden an enormous Divine power. There is none else who can be so daringly forceful and set right so powerful a figure as the Karnam!"

She then turned to Pedda Venkappa Raju and said, "Venkappa! You consider this small boy as your son. You are deceiving yourself. He is very powerful. He will set ideals for the whole world to emulate in future. You must stop developing the feeling that He is your son. Send Him to my house."

Pedda Venkappa Raju replied, "It is not in our family to give out children for adoption. Whatever be our limited capacity, we shall look after Him ourselves. I cannot send Him to another house."

In this way, I did not allow Myself to be caught by anybody. I lived a life of solitude with courage. It was a free life because I had no defects or shortcomings, so what did I have to fear? I went forward cheerfully and fearlessly.

I had also written some dramas. It is raining today, and that is why I am narrating these stories to you. Otherwise, I would never tell them! I had several small plays staged by the small children. One such drama was entitled, "Cheppinattu Chestara (Do they act as they speak?)" The central characters were the mother and father at home and the teacher. The mother in the drama would conduct a satsang in the evening for a few ladies in which she would expound the inner meanings of the holy texts. Her name was Kameshwari. This character was based on the wife Panchangamu Ramappa's wife. Whenever she discoursed, I would sit there. She would read the highly philosophical Vedantic texts. She would actually find it difficult to understand these and even had the handicap of not knowing the alphabets properly. She would still try to somehow go on. She used to explain the various attributes of God and describe Him as highly righteous and as the Embodiment of Truth. I then wrote a song that ended with the words "Tarakamu sootiga Erukavalenanna". She would struggle to explain its meaning verbatim! I would then take a suitable opportunity to go and explain to her that it would be better if she could explain the verses rather than simply read them out.

Women were hardly educated in those days. They would assemble near such erudite ladies and spend their time listening to sacred hymns and stories about the Divine. Hence, I was organising such groups right from those days. I used to encourage the effects of good company. I had assembled the little children and organised the Pandari bhajan group. They would wear anklets that tinkled and cymbals that clanged and would enthusiastically sing and dance along the streets, waking up slumbering villagers. Earlier, these people would not rise till 7.00 a.m. But when I started organising the bhajans with the children, they would be up by 5.00 A.M., have their baths and offer prayers to God.

Taking cymbals in the hand, Tying them up firmly to the hand, Clanging them together to beat out desire and anger from within, Let us take the path to Shirdi, Let us sing 'Jai Jai Ranga' Let us sing 'Jai Jai Sai' Let us sing 'Jai Jai' and hurry toward the Lord.

Thus began the idea of nagarsankirthana - waking up the villagers with sacred songs. I started nagarsankirthana when this body was only 7 years! Subbamma would quietly join the group as well, enthusiastically beating the cymbals but worried as to what I would have to say to her!

This body, right from birth, has always engaged in imparting and discriminating knowledge and passing on the sacred teachings. The Pandari bhajan group was so popular that villagers would rush in even from the neighbouring villages to participate. They would all be lost in bliss. Subbamma would feel very happy. For Rs. 2, a sackful of sweets could be got. She would arrange to have it distributed as prasadam to all.

It is essential to develop such sacred feelings right from childhood.

I was sent to Kamalapuram for the sake of education. Kamalapuram lies between Cuddapah and Tadipatri towns. There, Kote Subbanna discovered My

capability to write poems and came running to Me with a request. He said, "Raju! I hear that You compose excellent poems."

I told him, "It is not that I compose poems. Whatever I utter is itself poetry!"

He said, "I shall get a pair of shirt and trousers stitched for you."

I told him at once that he must not approach me with such cheap bartering offers. "I am not waiting for you to donate alms to Me. There is no need to talk to you if you do this!" I hence admonished him.

He then explained that he had stocked a brand new medicine in his shop. He wrote down and gave me a detailed list of the prowess of the new medicine. It was called "Bala Bhaskara". He rasked Me to compose a song on the "Bala Bhaskara". He pleaded with me to teach it to a group of children and make them go round the streets singing the song. I told him to come back in an hour! The classes were going on and Kondappa was an extremely strict teacher, but Mehboob Khan was very kind. I did not want to give up my responsibilities. I hence told Kote Subbanna to come an hour later, after the classes, and collect his poem. I then set the tune and composed the song. It ran as follows:

There it is! There it is! O', children! Come, come! There is the medicine Bala Bhaskara; Be it an upset stomach or a swollen leg; Be it a joint pain or flatulence; Be it any ailment, known or unknown; Take this Bala Bhaskara for an instant cure! If you wish to know where it is available: There is the shop of Kote Subbanna; It is in that shop that you can pick it up. Come here boys! Come here! It is an excellent tonic Prepared by the famous Gopalachari himself Come here boys! Come here!

Kote Subanna's joys knew no bounds when he heard the song. He brought a big basket of laddoos and deposited it with Me in gratitude. I directed that

they be distributed to everyone present there. I never took sweets right from My birth. Why do I need to when I have all the sweetness within Me? My mind is sweet, My love is sweet. Why then do I need these sweets?

In this way, my only primary task was to help everybody, ease their suffering, and give them joy. I showed them the right path and encouraged them to be happy.

Embodiments of Love!

Our Vice-Chancellor has prayed that I should speak about the sacred source of joy: the Ramayana. I am not satisfied with the present educational scenario. People are studying as much as they wish. But what is the use of this education? They are hankering after wealth and not after character. Wealth is no doubt essential, but it is not critical. Character is also equally important. All educational achievements will be forgotten at some point in time. What is needed is spiritual education. It is said: "Adhyatmika vidya vidyanam (spiritual knowledge is the highest form of knowledge)". It is this knowledge that needs to be taught to the heart. This sacred knowledge is available in the sacred Ramayana. The Ramayana is an ancient text. It has survived the vicissitudes of time, vacillations of history, and several other turbulences and still stands tall as an ideal. There are several secrets in the Ramayana that are not understood by many. I shall extract these tiny fragments, expound and grow them as huge trees, and, making you sit under their cool shades, I shall try to make you relax and rest. This shall be My effort from tomorrow onward.

Alternative Link to Discourse:
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html>

53. True Wealth

Date: 27 May 2002 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2002

Wealth, opulence and indulgence cannot give man an iota of satisfaction. It is only when he realizes the nature of Atma that man attains contentment and peace.

Health is wealth. Without a healthy body, man cannot execute any of his thoughts, however good they may be. A healthy body leads to a healthy mind. Several civilizations have treated various limbs and organs of the body as specialized individual entities that contribute to the body as a whole. The people of France maintained strict control on their eating habits and contents and maintained good health. The body is a temple of God. It may be temporary like a water bubble; but unless the house is safe, how can the inhabitants residing inside be safe?

You can do much good with a healthy body. The youth today neglect this aspect and suffer from deteriorating health. Several scholars and intellectuals have attempted to control, if not eradicate, ill health. The Romans were front-runners in this aspect. They maintained healthy and strong bodies and kept each limb and organ of the body in as near perfect and strong condition as possible. They did this by watching the three main aspects: conduct, character, and sensitivity. They remained self-sufficient as far as bodily needs were concerned and did not like depending on their fellow men to help them move about for their daily needs.

Today, a sixteen-year-old boy looks like a sixty-year-old man! Bad habits are the main reason for this premature ageing. In the first instance, as soon as you arise from bed, brush your teeth well and clean your tongue. The mouth is the main entry point to the entire body. There is always the danger of germs entering the body from an unclean mouth. In each limb and organ of

the body resides Divinity. He is therefore called *Angeerasa*: the vital force in each organ of the body.

Maintaining such good health was common in ancient India. Bheeshma was 115 years old when he assumed the command of the Kaurava army! Bheeshma, Arjuna, and Krishna all had healthy, active and strong bodies and hence were always happy. They were those men and women who set ideals to the society. Their good health was caused by correct diet and sleep at the right time and in right quantity. Some helpful hints to maintain good health would be:

Wake up at the crack of dawn, when the cock crows;
Finish your ablutions and bath;
Never move about in slushy areas and places where garbage is dumped;
Participate in games and sports with Joy.

Today, people get up at 8 / 9 AM! This is because the entire night is wasted away in watching TV or listening to the radio. What the entertainment media has to give today is complete trash - filled with vulgar, obscene and dirty features. The government is the chief culprit, since it has no control on these. They even import junk and show it! What is needed is to use the media to show good ideals and thought provoking features.

Apart from the government, the teachers, parents, and elders are equally responsible. They dare not correct the youth because they themselves have the same bad habits! Some parents even encourage their children to make up for the time they have lost watching TV! Such attitudes cause the youth to pick up bad thoughts, which end up in bad actions and dirty feelings. Money is the other culprit in this degradation. Money leads to arrogance. Arrogance leads to bad habits. Stop wasting money.

In this aspect, Bhagawan is very strict and does not show mercy. Several

people rush abroad with the single-minded purpose of earning money there. Even if you earn, what are you managing to save? You struggle to earn more by taking up jobs like washing dishes in restaurants and delivering newspaper! Do you need to go abroad to do that? If you do want to bring back something from abroad, bring back good ideals. But know this:

The ideals that you cannot find in India you will not find anywhere else
(Yenna Bharata thanna Bharata)!

Though there is a mad rush to go abroad, Bhagawan is telling you now, in 5-6 years time, every one will start coming back. The situation is worsening day by day. No foreign land can ever match the security and safety your motherland can offer you. Go abroad if you must. But earn and come back. Foster your parents as a form of gratitude for all that they have done to make you what you are now. Be proud to declare that you are an Indian. If you are not proud to declare your roots and culture, you are as good as a dead person.

India is called BHA + RATHI: that sacred land that spreads the effulgence of wisdom. It is a land of sacredness, sacrifice, service, and prosperity of all types. It is the teacher to the world of spiritual lore and wealth. All Avatars were born here; Truth and Righteousness were treated as the two eyes of man in this country. I do not want to praise, but students of our Sathya Sai Colleges and Schools stand as ideals today. None can match them when it comes to setting ideals.

What a pity it is today that a father shudders to correct his own son! Why should such sons live at all? Students must develop good thoughts and good behaviour and foster unity in the country. India is one large joint family. Do not divide yourself on the basis of language, region and religion. Unfortunately, today's multi-party political scenario is doing just that!

Students!

Never divide the country. Do not succumb to the promptings of the older generation if they try to do this. It is rather unfortunate that there is none to guide the youth on ideal lines today. On the other hand, they will criticize Sai Baba for doing this! But I do not care for that; I am convinced that what I say is true. Students must foster unity by setting ideals. Brush aside individual differences and work and live as one - as brothers and sisters. It is only then that you will get devotion, emancipation, and liberation. True devotion is to see unity in diversity.

What you should learn from the Summer Course is to set these ideals. Smile and spread cheer. Your face assumes contorted shapes only if there are bad thoughts in you. Why is Sai Baba always cheerful? It is because there is no bad thought in him anywhere! You must follow me in this regard. Never harm others. Follow the principle,

"Help Ever; Hurt Never".

The essence of Indian culture is:

"Merit lies in helping others. There is no bigger sin than hurting others."

Students!

I want to have your assurance that you will foster good thoughts, actions, and feelings. That is all that I need from you all this day. In the first instance, give up all bad habits; you will automatically gain good health, which will confer a strong body on you. You can then set ideals and earn some merit. This alone will give you happiness and bliss.

Eat on time and relish what you eat; your parents have given you this food after struggling with their sweat. Eat with love - that will give you good health.

Do not indulge in criticizing others. You are bound to get it back manifold as the Reflection, Reaction, and Resound of your action. Speak pleasantly and do not hurt others with your words.

Do good to others.

I need no more *ananda* (bliss) from you. I can sacrifice anything for you then. I have spent crores on you, setting up this infrastructure and facilities that are the best - all without taking a paisa from you. On the other hand, I even give scholarship to deserving students! All I expect is that you give up all bad thoughts, actions, and habits. Develop good thoughts and actions instead. Set ideals. All you need to earn in this world is health and happiness (*arogyam* and *anandam*). Hankering to earn wealth (*dhana*) without virtue (*guna*) is an exercise in futility. There is no harm in telling even your parents that they are contributing to your *kshama* (destruction or barrenness) and not *kshemam* (welfare) if they try to misguide you. Always do good to others.

Alternative	Link	to	Discourse:
	http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/2002/titles2002.html		