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1. Look Within and Experience God

Date: 16 March 2010 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ugadi

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It is taken from the following website and edited slightly: http://sssbpt.org/Pages/Archivals/Divine_Discourses.htm.

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)

Turn your vision inward and see God within

A woman who follows only her husband and experiences happiness in serving him is called a chaste woman (pativrata). It was by the power of her chastity that Savitri could bring her dead husband, Satyavan, back to life.

Harishchandra's strict adherence to truth

Chandramati extended full cooperation in every way to her husband Harishchandra, who gave away his entire kingdom to Sage Viswamitra in charity and became a pauper without having even a single paisa with him. When Sage Viswamitra asked Harishchandra to give him money offerings (dakshina) after getting his kingdom in charity, Harishchandra prayed to him

to give him some time to pay the money offerings.

Leaving his kingdom, Harishchandra went to Kasi along with his wife and son Lohitasva to earn money to pay the offering to the sage. Finding no other way to pay the offering, he sold his wife and son to a Brahmin.

Being a queen, Chandramati had never done any household work, but she was asked to do menial work of washing the dishes and cleaning the house by the Brahmin. Harishchandra himself took up the job of a caretaker of a cremation ground. The owner of the cremation ground assigned him the work of collecting tax from those who came to the cremation ground to cremate dead bodies.

One day, the Brahmin sent Lohitasva along with other children to the forest to collect grass (darbha), to be used in worship. There, he was bitten by a snake and died. The other children brought his dead body to Chandramati. Since she had to finish the household work before taking the dead body of her son to the cremation ground, it was night when she reached the cremation ground with her son's dead body.

When the caretaker of the cremation ground, who was none other than her husband, Harishchandra, asked her to pay the tax for cremating her son's body, she told him that she had no money to pay the tax. Seeing her wedding necklace (mangalsutra) around her neck, Harishchandra said, "How do you say you have no money? I see the wedding necklace you are wearing".

On hearing this, she thought to herself, "Only my husband can see my wedding necklace, no one else". She asked him, "Aren't you my husband, Harishchandra"?

Harishchandra replied in the affirmative; he was grief-stricken on coming to know about the death of their only son. However, he told her that he could allow her to cremate the dead body of their son only when she paid the tax.

Since she had no money to give, she took out her wedding necklace to give it

to him. At that very moment, Lord Siva manifested there. He praised Harishchandra for his strict adherence to truth and told him that all this was a divine play to show to the people of the world that there were still some highly exalted persons in the world who followed truth scrupulously. He also brought their dead son, Lohitasva, back to life.

Meanwhile, Viswamitra also came there. He returned the kingdom of Harishchandra to him and told him that he had done all this to test his commitment to truth. Thus, Harishchandra demonstrated the divine quality of truth. Truth is God.

God permeates every atom of the universe

People search for God and ask, "Where is God? Where is God?"

God is everywhere. With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati). God has no beginning and no end; He has no birth and no death. The human body is temporary and ephemeral like a water bubble. But it is the abode of God who is eternal. God is not outside, He is within you. The same Atma is immanent in all beings including birds, beasts, and insects.

God has no particular form. Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara are not different from each other. God manifests in the form His devotees contemplate upon. If a woman considers her husband as God, she can realise God in him. With whatever feelings you think of God, God will appear before you in the same way.

God is in the form of a human being (Daivam manusha rupena). All are the embodiments of God. So, the answer to the question, "Where is God?" is, "God is everywhere."

The Atma that is present in you in the form of consciousness is present in all. You cannot say that consciousness is here and not there; it is everywhere.

God is omnipresent. There is no need to search for God, who is present everywhere, in all, at all places. Therefore, it is very easy to know God. Try to understand that everything in the universe is permeated by God.

The objective of all your education is to experience God, who is present everywhere and in every being. To attain this ideal should be the goal of your life.

Close your eyes and contemplate on the form of God that you like. On whatever form of God you contemplate upon, God will manifest before you in that very form. Never think that God is somewhere at a distant place or that He is present only at one particular place and not at another. He is present everywhere and permeates every atom of the universe.

See God in all

Today is Ugadi, the first day of the first month of Indian calendar (Chaitra Masa). It denotes the commencement of New Year. In fact, Ugadi means the beginning of a new era.

But Ugadi is not the real beginning of a new era; the real new era commences when a person has new and noble thoughts. Therefore, look within and experience God, who is present in your heart. That is the real celebration of Ugadi.

Realise that God is present everywhere. God is one, though people worship Him by many names. There can be many sweets like gulab jamun, Mysore Pak, and jilebi, but sugar in all of them is the same. There may be differences in the names and forms of people, but the Divinity that is immanent in all is the same. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti).

You see the picture of Krishna wearing a crown with a peacock feather or that of Siva with a third eye. But these are mere pictures of God. God has no form. He is beyond all names and forms. Therefore, do not limit God to any name

and form. Do not have the false notion that God is present only at this place or that place.

Contemplate on God, who is present in your heart, and earn His grace. Right from this sacred day of Ugadi, see God in everyone. Whomsoever you come across, offer your salutations to them, considering them as the embodiment of God. This is true meditation.

God is in you; you yourself are God. Then where will you go in search of God? Does anyone go out somewhere in search of themselves? When you yourself are God, how can there be one more God? Turn your vision inward and see God within you.

When you say, "this is my body," then who is that "my"? Clearly, the body is separate and you are separate. Realise this truth. That is real devotion.

(Bhagavan called one of the boys and asked him, "Where do you come from?" When the boy told Bhagavan that he had come from Mumbai, Bhagavan said,)

Your body has, in fact, come from Mumbai, not you. Realise the truth, "I am I." When you say, I am so and so, what does it convey? Your name was given to you by your parents. You were not born with this name. Do not think that your body is permanent. The physical body lasts only for a limited period of time. Ultimately, it has to go.

(Swami called another boy and asked him,)

"What do you want"?

The boy said, "Swami, I want You, I want Your love. Be always with us, Swami".

Then Swami said, I am always with you. All of you belong to Me. Whenever you contemplate upon Me in your heart, I will manifest before you.

Today is New Year day. Be happy.

2. Chastity is the Hallmark of a Woman

Date: 18 May 2010 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Realize that you and I are one

Everybody is afraid of Yama, god of death. He goes about in every corner of the world and takes away the life principle of those whose life sojourn on earth comes to an end.

Chastity endows women with immense power

When Yama took the life of Savitri's husband Satyavan, Savitri was full of grief and prayed to him to bring her husband back to life. She said, "You either give back my husband's life or take my life also. I cannot live without my husband; we are one".

When Yama wanted to go away after taking the life of her husband, Savitri blocked his way and did not allow him to move. Yama had no choice but to listen to her prayer. He asked her, "Mother! What do you want"?

"Give my husband back to me because it is not possible for me to live without him," said Savitri. Ultimately, Yama had to yield to her prayer and revive Satyavan. Yama not only brought Satyavan back to life but granted many boons also to both Savitri and Satyavan, happy as he was with the chastity and determination of Savitri. It was because of her power of chastity that Savitri could bring her dead husband back to life.

Chandramati was another great woman of the sacred land of Bharat (India) who set a shining example of chastity in the world. When she, along with her husband Harischandra and son, was crossing a forest, it was suddenly engulfed in wild fire, which threatened their life. Then Chandramati prayed, "If I am truly a chaste woman and have been adhering to dharma all my life, let this wild fire be extinguished". And lo and behold, the fire was extinguished in a trice, and the entire forest became calm and serene. So great is the power

of penance and chastity of a chaste woman!

But she was always humble and expressed gratitude to God, saying, "It is by the grace of God that I have been able to uphold the dharma of a chaste woman." She always followed her husband and could never bear separation from him even for a moment. That is the hallmark of a chaste woman. Both husband and wife should live together in harmony whole of their life.

(Here Bhagavan narrated the story of King Harischandra and his chaste wife Chandramati, who, in spite of undergoing untold sufferings, upheld the virtues of truth and righteousness and set a shining example of virtuous life.)

This land of Bharat (India) has given birth to many noble women, like
Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of
her chastity, and
Sita, who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed.
(Telugu Poem)

Life finds fulfillment when husband and wife live in unity

When Sita was put to the fire test, the fire god himself manifested out of it and told Rama, "Sita is a woman of great chastity." There were many women of chastity in the sacred land of Bharat, like Sita, Chandramati, Damayanti, and Savitri. People are afraid of Yama, the god of death, but Yama is afraid of the women of chastity. Just as Savitri could bring her dead husband back to life by the power of her chastity, Sita could also come out of blazing fire unscathed by the power of her chastity.

All these examples of chaste women of Bharat set the ideal that for a woman her husband is God. These ideals set by such chaste women made India a teacher of the world and leader of all nations. Except in Bharat, in which country of the world do you find examples of women who brought their dead husbands back to life? Even if you search the entire world, you cannot find such chaste women. Such is the sacredness of this land of Bharat. That is why God loves to incarnate in Bharat.

Just as women should observe dharma for a chaste woman (pativrata dharma), men should also adhere to dharma for an ideal husband (sativrata dharma). A woman must be a chaste woman, so also her husband, an ideal husband.

The wife should never go against the command of her husband; similarly, the husband should conduct himself according to the wishes of his wife and should look after her with great love.

But, unfortunately, only a few men today observe dharma for an ideal husband, though a large number of women adhere to dharma for a chaste woman. God is pleased with those women who observe dharma for a chaste woman.

When there is unity between husband and wife, they can achieve anything and find fulfillment in life. Draupadi had five husbands, and she considered them as her five life-breaths. Women today should observe chastity like Sita, Savitri, Draupadi, and Damayanti. It is the sacred land of Bharat where you find such a large number of chaste women and nowhere else. People who leave such a sacred land and go to other countries waste their life.

You say, my body, my handkerchief, so on and so forth. But who is this 'my'? That is the Self or I. I means Atma. Without realising the Atma, all spiritual practices like rituals and sacrifices are of no use. You say, this is mine and that is thine. What is the use of doing any spiritual practice unless you give up the feelings of mine and thine? Get rid of the narrow feelings of mine and thine and realise that you and I are one.

3. Benedictory Address XXIX Convocation of the SSSIHL

Date: 22 November 2010 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 29

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It is taken from the following website and edited slightly: http://sssbpt.org/Pages/Archivals/Divine_Discourses.htm.

Students, Embodiments of Love!

All of you want Swami to say at least a few words. You feel, "How nice it would be if Swami would speak for a few minutes"! However, I don't want to say anything about the present system of education.

This land of Bharat (India) 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 virtue by coming out of blazing fire unscathed, and Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her virtue.(Telugu Poem)

At first, Chandramati was fear-stricken by the raging forest fire. She and her husband and son were surrounded by flames of wild fire. Nobody could say how they were all of a sudden surrounded by the raging flames. This, in fact, was a divine play. Ultimately, when Chandramati utilised her power of truth and virtue, the fire was extinguished in a trice.

As Chandramati prayed, there was a heavy downpour. On one side there was a raging fire and on the other side started a heavy rain, and ultimately the fire was completely extinguished.

Savitri was also endowed with great power of penance and virtue. She could even stop Yama (Lord of Death) from taking her husband's life. She argued with Yama and told him, "The life of a wife depends upon her husband and that of the husband on his wife. One cannot live without the other. So, if you want to take my husband's life, take my life also. Or else, spare his life. We are not separate from each other. It is my primary duty to safeguard my husband's life." Ultimately, Lord Yama had to revive Savitri's husband. Is there any country or region in this world where one can find a woman like Savitri, who could bring her dead husband back to life? Such divine power is latent in every human being. One should draw this power from within oneself, which can be utilised not only for oneself but also for others. During those times, a wife considered her husband as her very life and vice-versa. But, unfortunately, the situation is not the same today. This sacred land of Bharat is surrounded by the seven seas. In this land, many women like Damayanti and Savitri performed intense penance. They are all women of great virtue. But, today, we do not find such women of great virtue.

A virtuous woman (pativrata) is one who considers her husband (pati) as her very life and depends entirely on him. A virtuous woman does not talk back to her husband. There will not be even a little defect in her. She does not have any selfish desires. All that she does is for the sake of her husband. She would not even look at any male other than her husband. Only such a woman can be called a true virtuous woman.

But modern ladies do not follow their husbands. They do not listen to what their husbands say. When the wife follows her husband and the husband follows the wife and both lead a life of harmony, the entire country will attain peace and prosperity. It is due to the differences between the husband and wife and disunity in the family that the country is subjected to one trouble after the other. Both husband and wife should understand each other and adjust to each other.

A virtuous woman (pativrata) who strictly obeys the command of her husband can do anything. If she prepares food for her husband with saline water of the ocean, it will be changed into sweet water. When the wife obeys

the command of her husband and the husband fulfills the desires of his wife, the future of the family will be safe and secure. If they act contrary to this, the family will be subjected to great suffering.

Both husband and wife may conduct themselves in a decent manner when they are in their house. But as soon as they step out of the house, they indulge in all sorts of evils. If there is no unity and harmony between wife and husband, there is no use undertaking spiritual practices like chanting and meditation.

When the wife follows her husband and the husband follows his wife, there is great happiness in the family. Strive to achieve such unity and harmony in your family. Then, your entire life will become happy and peaceful without any worries whatsoever.

All your worries are of your own making. They are not given by God. God is not at a distant place. He is immanent in humanity. You should have unwavering faith in this truth. Then there will be happiness not only in the individual but also in society. A pure heart is the temple of God. Therefore, develop love in your heart. You will attain everything in life.

There will be peace and happiness in the family when both husband and wife share the same views. A virtuous woman (pativrata) is one who has no other thought of anybody or anything except that of her husband. A woman who leads her life with such unflinching faith in her husband can achieve everything in her life. When both follow different paths, there can be no peace and happiness in the family.

Do not allow your mind to waver this way and that way. Focus it totally on God. Contemplation of God is the basis to achieve unity and harmony in the family. When the wife prays to God, the husband will become a good person.

Virtuous women of yore, like Sita and Damayanti, had single-minded devotion toward their husbands. Sita was held captive in Lanka for ten months, but not even once did she look at the face of a male person. She spent all her time in

the contemplation of Rama, sitting under a tree in Ashoka forest. She did not move out at all. Since she was such a great virtuous woman, she could prove her purity through the fire test (Agni Pariksha).

God is only one, not two. He is the indweller of your heart. If you constantly contemplate on Him, you will also become God. Whomsoever you come across, consider them as the embodiments of Divinity. That is the principle of Divinity.

On the other hand, if you follow the vagaries of your mind and move about arbitrarily here and there, how can you become God? When you go to your college, why should you look here and there and indulge in vain gossip? Focus your mind on the purpose for which you came. Do your work without developing unnecessary contacts. Look after your family. There is nothing wrong in this. Nobody tells you to give up performing your worldly duties. Live in the world and perform your duties. But always have divine feelings.

Many people go to places of pilgrimage like Badrinath, Amarnath, Kedarnath, Bhadrachalam, and Tirupati in search of God. They think that they can find God at such places.

Oh foolish one! God is not somewhere else. In fact, you yourself are God. God is present in all. God is only one, and He is present wherever you look for Him. He is in you, with you, above you, below you. God is beyond birth and death and dwells in every being in the form of Atma. He is present in all human beings right from a child to an old person. The same God is present in an ant, a mosquito, and all birds, beasts, and animals. Therefore, do not go in search of God here and there and trouble yourself.

Wherever you look, God is present there. Whomsoever you see, there is God in them. God has no different form. All forms are His. That is why the Veda declared,

The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes and feet

Sahasra seersha purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad

When you sit for meditation, your mind wanders here and there. Do not allow the mind to waver; keep it always steady. When you go to a seashore, you will hear the waves making the sound of Om! When you concentrate on that sound, you will forget everything. Since you are all young, I wish to emphasise this point: Do not develop opposition or differences among you. Controversies give rise to many troubles. These days, some people marry not once, not twice, not thrice, but even four times. This is not a good practice. Be single-minded. Even if somebody makes you angry, do not fight with them. Understand that by fighting with others, you actually harm yourself. Control your thoughts. This is the quality of a truly educated person. This is called educare.

Along with education, you should also have educare. When you have educare, you will have everything - health, happiness, peace, and prosperity. This is what I want you to understand.

Everything will become good to you if you make your heart pure. At least from today onward, take to the right path. If somebody tries to put you on the wrong path, do not pay any heed to them. Even if such a person comes to you and tries to start a conversation with you, do not even look at their face. Just ignore them and go away.

Students should live with unity in all matters. But today unity has disappeared altogether. On the other hand, enmity is on the rise. When one student in the class secures high marks, other students start feeling jealous. This should not be there. Because jealousy gives rise to hatred. There will be further divisions if politics enter the educational institutions. Therefore, all students should live with unity and solidarity.

You should achieve unity. There is no unity in the youth today. First and foremost, the youth should come forward to help each other. The end of education is character. If your character is good, then you can achieve anything in life. You may think you have won gold medals, acquired high degrees, and achieved name and fame, but if you lack character, these degrees are merely a piece of papers. It is most essential for you to safeguard your character. Only such a person is a truly learned one.

When Ravana was taking Sita away to Lanka, she dropped all her ornaments in a bundle, which fell on a mountain. Rama and Lakshmana, while going in search of Sita, were shown this bundle by Sugriva. Rama asked Lakshmana to see the ornaments and identify if they belonged to Sita. Then Lakshmana replied, "Brother! I never looked at Sita's face, so I don't know whether these ornaments belong to her. I can recognise only the anklets, since I have seen them while offering my obeisances to her feet everyday".

Sita, Rama, and Lakshmana lived together in the forest for almost fourteen years. But not even once did Lakshmana look at the face of Sita. What a pure-hearted person Lakshmana was! Whenever he had to talk to Sita, he talked to her with his head bent down. Since he was such a noble person, he could enjoy the wealth of proximity of Rama.

When Lakshmana fell unconscious in the battlefield, Rama said, "If I search, I may get a wife like Sita but not a brother like Lakshmana. I can bear separation from Sita, but not from Lakshmana". Such was the strong bond of love between Rama and Lakshmana.

Students also should develop such unity, considering all their brothers and sisters. All are human beings. All are the children of God. Therefore, live with unity without giving room to any differences.

This is My message for you today.