

SATHYA SAI SPEAKS

VOLUME - 35

Discourses of

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
Delivered during 2002

PRASANTHI NILAYAM

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Publisher's Note

It is a fact well known to the devotees of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba that no celebrations, festivals or special functions will be considered complete without the blessings of Bhagawan in the form of His Discourses. Such discourses cover a wide variety of subjects centering around Man and his spiritual progress which alone can confer peace and joy on him eternally. This shower of nectar sweetens every subject discussed because of its natural qualities of unique presentation and universal appeal. Even a high philosophical point is made simple, understandable, enjoyable and fit for consumption by the layman. Examples and anecdotes are drawn from every day happenings and familiar but meaningful stories related to the great epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In short it is a grand feast serving all kinds of delicacies contributing to the health and well-being of heart and mind alike.

The present volume, 35 in the series is a compilation of 23 such scintillating discourses during the year 2002. The discourses relating to Summer course and Dussera of the relevant year are not included in this volume as they are bunched and published in a separate volume.

Paragraph headings and a bigger font continue to be adopted here to suit easy reading by elderly persons.

The Book Trust prayerfully presents this volume at the Lotus Feet of Bhagawan for the benefit and enjoyment of the millions, who adore Him.

Jai Sai Ram

Convener

Sri Satya Sai Books & Publications Trust
Prasanthi Nilayam

Live In Atmic Consciousness

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 heaven.

(Telugu Poem)

It Is Not All Work, But Play Too

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 lower classes as well as from postgraduate courses like M.B.A., M.Tech., M.Sc., etc. 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.

It Is Faith That Pays

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 San-kalpa (Will) is based on your feelings.* Ultimately, the boy rose to the occasion and performed the feat admirably.

Mind And Matter

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 *mahaneeya* (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 *vijnana* (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 these 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; which is beyond time and which cannot be comprehended by worldly education."

It is the unseen atma which 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.* So 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 Nature Of The Mind

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 the reason 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 of 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, kitchen, etc. 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 which 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, 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 is Ramaiyya, somebody will get up and say ‘I’; if you ask who is Anil Kumar, the person standing here will say ‘I’. In this manner, the prin-

ciple 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 illuminates all bulbs. Each being is like a bulb and God is like the generator.

Mind Is An Aspect Of The Self

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 courageous before the wicked."

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. Enquire, 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 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 left leg and spiritual education is like 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 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.

Recognise The Principle Of The Atma

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 out the bitter rind. Even the monkey peels out 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 per cent 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 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, *Paropakaraya 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 are living their lives

like dogs and foxes. One should strive to live like a devotee to earn Divine grace.

Cultivate Morality

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 travelling 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.

Unity Is Divinity

All the teachers worked hard to make this Sports Meet a grand success. In spite of their advanced age, Radhasamy 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* everyday. 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 cer-

tainly 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 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 whole-heartedly for the welfare of humanity – *Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu* (may all 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.

Makar Sankranthi 14.1.2002, Prasanthi Nilayam

2

Light The Lamp Of Morality In Your Hearts

*“One may master all forms of knowledge,
One may vanquish one’s adversaries in debate,
One may fight with valour 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 may be 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. 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 higher 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 to this country? The Bharatiyas 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)

Embodiments of Love!

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 honour of a nation depends upon the morality of its people. Lack of morality will certainly put a nation to disrepute. True human race is that which upholds morality. Listen to this truth, O valourous sons of Bharat!”

(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 recognise the truth that human life is meant to uphold morality.

Strive For Unity, Purity And 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 yet to attain unity. We find only diversity. Some people think that Swami has established this Super Speciality 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 visualise 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 moolamutthamam*. 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 visualise unity in diversity. If you do not understand the principle of unity and attain bliss, all the 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 for 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.**

Treat Patients With Love

Our hospital is not a business centre. Most of the hospitals have become business centres. 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. 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 realise 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 will 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 as 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.**

Pure Drinking Water

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 to succeed. If one takes up a sacred task, one need not be concerned about the resources. There is no dearth of resources in our country Bharat. 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* 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 Godavari and Krishna are being drained into the sea without being properly utilised. 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.

Make Proper Use Of Your Senses

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. *Jan-thunam narajanma durlabham* (out of all the living beings, the human birth is the rarest). Help others. Only then can your life find fulfilment. 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 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 utilised. 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 realised 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;
Think no evil, think what is good;*

*Do no evil, do what is good;
This is the way to God.*

In order to sanctify your senses, you should utilise 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, 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 talks harsh words which hurt the feelings of others. He puts his senses to misuse; then, 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, 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 utilise 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 has gone up these days.

Sacrifice Confers Immortality

It is ten years since we constructed the Super Speciality 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 hundreds 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 amrutatthwamanasu* (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 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. ***Paropakaraya 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.

Spreading Untruth Is A Sin

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 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 publicising 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, people write what they feel like in 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 publicise it in a sensational manner only to make money.

Be it good or bad, report the incidents as they happened. Do not spread false news. What had happened day before yesterday was only a fraction of what has been magnified and reported by the print media and the television. Even the television does not 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 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 publicise 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 day before yesterday was nothing. I went till the last row of the Hall, went near even those who were sitting outside, collected letters from them, 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

journalist 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 do not have hatred towards anybody. All love Me and I love all. Love is the intimate relationship that exists between you and Me. The newspapers made a mountain of a molehill and caused anxiety to many. What a sin they have committed! There should be a limit to their jealousy. Devotees from various countries like America, Japan, Germany, England, etc., 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.

*First Anniversary of SSSIHMS, 19.1.2002,
Whitefield, Bangalore)*

3

Sanctify 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 sunlight. 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 *daivabhimanam* (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 naam* (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 *prajnana* (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 your- self. Similarly, hurting others amounts to hurting your own self. *Sarva jeeva namaskaram kesavam pratigachchhati* (whom-

soever you salute, it reaches God) and *Sarva jeeva tira-skaram kesavam pratigach-chhati* (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 (*sarvabhuwanaratma*). 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 Namo 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 chapimaam 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, Enumula-palli, 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 earn 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 *aartha* (one in distress), an *artharthyi* (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.

Discourse on 24th February 2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.

4

Idols Are Pointers To Divinity

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 were not successful in recognising the reality. Hence, they started worshipping *Prakriti* (Nature). Thereafter, the *Bharat-iyas* took to *murthi aradhana* (idol-worship). 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 to 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 wherein people gave up their lives for the sake of money. Money 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 flag, which are also lifeless. Man's beliefs are based on his likes and dislikes.

Names Of Gods Have Deep Inner Meaning

Isavasyam Idam Jagat (the entire world is permeated by God). Every being is an embodiment of Easwara. It is also said, *Easwara sarva bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). He is present in all beings in the form of Consciousness. Easwara is the master of six forms of wealth – dharma (righteousness), *aiswarya* (wealth), *yashas* (fame), *shakti* (power), *jnana* (wisdom) and *vairagya* (detachment). Easwara has another name, *San(m)kara*.

‘*sam*’ refers to *chidanandam* (eternal bliss) and *atmanandam* (bliss of the Self). ‘*Kara*’ means one who be-stows. 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*’, ‘*Aa*’ 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, as it has nei-ther beginning nor end. Divinity is immanent in the heart (*hridaya*) of every man. *Hridaya* means that which is suf-fused 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 towards 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*’, that takes place in every man. This is referred to as *Hamsa Gayatri*. ‘(*A*) *Ham*’ refers to ‘*I*’ and ‘*So*’ means ‘*That*’ (God). This mes-sage of ‘I am God’ is conveyed through this breathing pro-cess—21,600 times a day. Such teachings have been propa-gated 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 *chaitanya* 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. Man is unable to perceive this *chaitanya* principle because of two defects:

1. He overlooks his innumerable mistakes; and
2. He magnifies the minutest mistake of others.

One can attain divinity only when he stops hiding his 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 who aspire to be peaceful should eradicate all their defects. Only then can you realize *Sivatwa* (divinity).

Use Your Power Of Discrimination

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, *Easwara 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 his feelings not by his 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 man to use his power of discrimination and act accordingly. Man should be conscious of his duties always. Otherwise, he has 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 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 Easwara 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 as 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 Easwara 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.

Develop Positive Tendencies

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 knowledge that will make you immortal.”

(Telugu Poem)

Paropakaraya 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 18 *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” 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 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 embodiments of the atma. However, in 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 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 Poem) 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.” Then 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. 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 hu-

manness. 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, *That hastu, That hastu!* (so be it!). As you wish, so will it happen. From evil intentions evil, results. If you are always filled with good intention, they are equally blessed by God. The consequences of all your actions will result in reactions. May be not immediately, but definitely sooner or later. Therefore, we 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.

Study Positive Things, Worship God And Nature

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, atleast by a few marks on the wall. But the

washerman does not need any such devices. He 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 in 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. As people have stopped worshipping God, we find chaos all over the world. People are plunged in sorrow as 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 Easwara? He is all-pervasive. Just as the wind blows freely everywhere, so do we find the principle of Easwara pervasive. Share your love with all and propagate the Divine Name to the entire world.

Sivarathri, 12.3.2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.

5

Realise The Magnetic Power Within

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, etc., everything is endowed with magnetic power. The rivers flow

on earth because of magnetic power. The magnetic power is all-pervasive.

Temples Reflect One's Own Magnetic Power

People with *bhakti* and *prapatti* (devotion and faith) visit temples, which have magnetic power. The flowers and fruits that people offer with devotion in temples also have this magnetic power. Since thousands of devotees gather here, our *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 as 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 man does not realise his innate potential and visits 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, Rishikesh, etc. *The power that is present in pilgrimage centres is only due to the power of devotion and faith that pilgrims carry in their hearts.*

God is the embodiment of all forms of opulence and so is man. *Sampada* (wealth) *aiswarya* (authority/control),

yashas (fame), *shakti* (power), *jnana* (wisdom) and *ananda* (bliss) — all these are the gifts of God. They are latent in every man, but he is losing them, as he is unable to put them to proper use. Divinity shines resplendently in man when he makes proper use of these *shadasiswaryas* (six forms of wealth). There is divine effulgence on the face of every man.

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 man. But man is not directing his attention on them. He identifies himself with the body, but in reality he is not the body. Otherwise, why would he say, 'this is my body'? When you say, 'this is my body', you are different from it. Man is deluded by thinking that he is the body. He is losing his divine effulgence because of his mistaken identity.

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). Man is immersed in ignorance as he identifies himself with something from which he is totally different.

Radiation is divine and that is man's true nature. This is the magnetic power which is latent in every man. It is the

same divine power that is present in temples, which attracts all. Magnetism is the nature of all temples.

Lingodbhava Is A Bodha For You

There is gold in every man. Iron and various other metals are also present in him. 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 *rasa* (essence) 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) Bhagawan 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 gamyatthe ithi lingaha*. It is the basis of everything. The golden *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 in 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 *badha* (suffering) 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 do not 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 great pain and suffering. In order to facilitate the formation of these *lingas*, My body had turned into a magnet. It is for this reason that I was finding it difficult to walk for the last three days, as 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 man has such a divine magnet in him. 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, water, 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* (God is governed by Truth). 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? He is one of peace, love and compassion. *Utthamo paradevata* (such noble souls are verily the supreme divine).

Human Body Is Like A Magnetic Car

Man goes on pilgrimages in search of God, as he is ignorant of his 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 got 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. The one who drives a car should also have the ability to control it. If he has no control over the vehicle he is driving, he is sure to meet with accident. Our body can be compared to a magnetic car. The eyes are the headlights, mouth is the horn, mind is the steering and the stomach, the petrol tank. The four objectives of human life – *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *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. The water that we drink should also be pure and unpolluted. Only then will the ‘car’ be in good condition and will take us to the destination. Man’s life will be redeemed only when he understands the principle of his 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 *japa* and *dhyana* confer only mental satisfaction. They cannot reveal the magnetic power. There are nine paths of devotion. 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). *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 *ayaskantha mandiras* (centres of magnetic power). Whatever power you experience in a temple is only due 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 the reason why people are attracted to temples.

Creation Is Divine, Refinement Is Human

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., is but the effect 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 man is not able to understand this because of his 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 the 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, man is the combination of materialisation, vibration and radiation. With the help of radiation (atma) and vibration (life-force), man is able to carry out his life using materialisation (body) as the instrument. Body is the basis for performing action. It symbolises *karma yoga*. Vibration helps man to think. 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 *jagrat* (waking), *swapna* (dream) and *sushupti* (deep sleep). 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, Easwara, etc., depending on the feelings of devotees. All 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 assumes the shape of the vessel into which it is poured. Likewise, air is formless, but assumes the form of a balloon or a football when it is filled in them. 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.

Never Forget God

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 got 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) "As you all can see, the size of 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, ears hear. There are thousands of taste buds in our tongue and lakhs of light rays in the eyes. The eyes, 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 *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? 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. Man attains fulfilment only when he 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* (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? Is it 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.

Sivarathri, 13-3-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.

6

Celebrate Ugadi By Purifying Your Heart

Man should enquire how the sun rises and sets with utmost regularity every day and how the stars which glitter in the sky at night though they are not visible during the day. (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

WE have been experiencing the bliss of celebrating *Ugadi* (Telugu New Year) for the past many ages and generations. The *Bharatiyas* have been spreading peace and security to all the nations of the world with their strength of spirituality. Since time immemorial the prayer of the *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.

Desirelessness Leads To Bliss

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. We will be celebrating Ugadi in its true spirit only when we give up our narrow-mindedness and selfishness.

On *Ugadi* 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 evil 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 heart. 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 any effort to live like a true human being. Today he has become a bundle of desires. He is spending all his time and effort in fulfilling his desires. 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 him to ultimate bliss. True happiness lies in the state of desirelessness.

Unity Is The Essence Of Human Life

Embodiments of Love!

Ages have gone by and the world has undergone many changes; but there is no transformation in the human heart. Some people say that education is bringing about a change in man. No doubt, there has been a change. But what type of change is it? It is a peculiar change that is leading to perversion of human mind instead of transforming his heart. In fact, modern education has added to the confusion of man. Man is not learning what he is supposed to. He is wasting his life by cultivating bestial qualities and by indulging in demonic deeds. The culture of Bharat 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 we are following what is contrary to our ancient culture. So, there is a rise today in the number of the so-called educated and intellectuals who fragment unity into diversity, but 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! Oh sacred souls of Bharat! Try to understand fully the value of *Bharatiya* culture. You are endowed with unlimited potentialities. But you are unaware of your mighty strength. The way of life of ancient *Bharatiyas* was such that they evinced great concern for everyone's welfare. They found fulfilment in giving happiness to others. But man today lacks such broad-mindedness. He is not able to realise and experience his innate noble qualities.

Time is highly sacred and valuable. Each one has to introspect whether he is making proper use of time. Time once lost is lost for ever. Future is not in your hands. So, man should make proper use of the present. This is the teaching of *Bharatiya* 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). God dwells in all. He has thousands of heads, eyes and feet. Our ancients realised this unity in diversity and recognised the innate divinity of man. They sanctified their lives with such noble feelings and exemplary behaviour. Our ancient sages and seers stressed the need for unity and cooperation among human beings. They prayed, "*Let us move together, let us grow together, let us grow in intelligence together, let us live in harmony with each other without giving room for conflicts.*" (Telugu Poem) This is the main principle of *Bharatiya* culture. 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. One can attain the goal of human life only by putting this principle of unity into practice. This divine principle of unity is being forgotten today.

Faith In God Is The Basis Of Bliss

Every man aspires for bliss. 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 confers 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 bliss sheath in him, he is unable to experience bliss. 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 wealth and property, comforts and conveniences can bestow unlimited joy on him. 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 the heart. The heart is the dwelling place of God. To experience true happiness, man should develop firm faith in God. 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 is the source and 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. A person without *viswasa* (faith) is verily without *swasa* (breath). A faithless man is virtually a living corpse. Our ancient sages and seers therefore emphasised the need for faith. But man today has become virtually blind having lost his faith. What are the two eyes of man? The two eyes of man are *sashtra* (scriptures) and

dharma (righteousness). But today even the Brahmins who are supposed to study the scriptures are neglecting them. All sections of society, whichever caste or community they may belong to, should perform their duty with devotion and dedication. Instead of discharging his duty, man is wasting his life in mean pursuits. Consequently, he is unable to enjoy even a fraction of the unlimited peace and happiness he is endowed with.

Gratitude is the most fundamental virtue of man. People, while performing *Suryanamaskara* (offering salutations to the sun), praise the sun god in various ways. One of them is *Kritagnagnaya namah* (salutations to the one who punishes the ungrateful). The light of the sun god is present in our eyes in a subtle form. *Chandrama manaso jatah chaksho suryo ajayatah* (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 light from the eyes of the ungrateful. One without the sense of gratitude can be called a blind person. Whoever he 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. He is all the time engaged in selfish pursuits. How can such a foolish person be called a human being? What is *adhyatmikata* (spirituality)? It is not just contemplating on the *adhi atma* (primordial spirit). True spirituality lies in destroying one's bestial nature and rising to the level of the divine. But instead of ascending to divin-

ity, man is degenerating to animality. He has forgotten the principles of spirituality. He celebrates festivals by merely partaking of sweets and wastes his time in pomposity. One should ponder over the inner significance of each festival and celebrate it in a meaningful manner. Man should have total faith that he is not just a human being but there is God within. Only then will the animal nature in him be subdued. As man has forgotten his true nature, he has become bestial. You may belong to any country, religion, race, caste or sex, but you should firmly hold on to humanness. Do not waste your time keeping selfish goals in your mind.

Who Is A True Devotee Of God?

Once Lord Narayana wanted Narada to search for a true devotee who spent his time in a sacred way. Then Narada asked the Lord for the qualifications of a true devotee. The Lord said, “A true devotee is one whose heart is pure and who chants the Divine Name wholeheartedly at all times. He may involve himself in worldly activities, but he should not be attached to them. His mind should be constantly focused on God.” Then 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?” To consider oneself as the greatest devotee is a sign of ego. 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. True devotion is that which finds expression in every thought, word and deed of man. 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, your speech will become sacred, and you will listen only to sacred words. 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 and 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 Droupadi.” Narada was startled to hear this. “Don’t you know that Droupadi was constantly chanting the Name of Lord Krishna? Pleased with her devotion

and surrender, Krishna came to her rescue and protected her honour when 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 Krishna while He was having His food. Immediately, my Lord left His food and rushed to her rescue. As 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 over 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 over by elephants. As 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 Giridhar Naagar. As a result, all the persecutions inflicted on her had to be borne by the Lord Himself. It amounted to hurting God. So, she should be killed." Narada asked, "Then who is the fourth one?" "There is a person called Narada, who carries a *Tanpura* and keeps chanting the name of Narayana. His is only *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 got frightened and did not want to prolong this conversation. He realised that it was his ego that was

responsible for this predicament. Narada went to Vaikuntha and told Lord Narayana about his encounter with the hunter, “Swami, I have investigated that even those who chant Your name continuously are guilty of causing suffering to You.” 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. Only the one who always 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 history of Bharat contains many such sacred stories in order to spread the message of the Lord to mankind.

You should never cause inconvenience to God in the name of devotion. If you earn the displeasure of God, it will reflect on you. Consider that God’s happiness is your happiness and your happiness is God’s happiness. Imbibe this spirit of oneness. “God and I are one.” Today most of the devotees are selfish. They have only *swartha bhakti*. They are concerned with their own happiness and not that of Gods. God is the embodiment of love. Such divine love is present in all. You should see to it that your love is always pure. Share your love with everyone. This is what God expects from you.

God Resides In Every Heart

Since ancient times, the *Bharatiyas* have been sharing their sacred culture with the rest of the world. They considered God as one and never nurtured the feeling of difference between man and man. They believed in the Vedic statement: *Sahasra seersha purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad* (God has a thousand heads, eyes and feet). It does not mean that there is someone with thousand heads, eyes and feet. It only means that all heads, eyes and feet are His. God is present in everyone. He resides in every heart. So, do not confine God to a temple, a mosque or a church. Where man is, there God is. *Daivam manusha rupena* (God takes the form of man). As you do not realise this, you indulge in criticism of others. Whom are you criticising? Whom do you adore? Enquire yourself. God is present in all. So, when you criticise others, it amounts to criticising yourself. When you love others, you love yourself. If you criticise others, you criticise God. *Sarva jeeva namaskaram Kesavam pratigachchati* (whomever you salute, it reaches God) and *sarva jeeva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati* (whomever you denigrate, it also reaches God).

Embodiments of Love!

Today is *Ugadi*, the beginning of the New Year. Since ancient times, people have celebrated many *Ugadis*, but they are yet to give up bad qualities. True *Ugadi* is the day when you give up bad qualities, fill your heart with love

and take to the path of sacrifice. Do not limit the celebration of *Ugadi* to merely putting on new clothes and partaking of delicious food 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 tomorrow's waste paper. 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, and you have gone through varied experiences of pleasure and pain. Enough is enough. Do not ask for another birth as you would not like to read yesterday's newspaper. You should pray, "Oh God! You have given me this life and I have gone through all the experiences of pleasure and pain. I do not want to have another birth."

Adi Sankara said,

*"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.) 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 Ganga with his disciples, he noticed a person sitting under

a tree and trying to learn the rules of Panini's grammar by rote. He was repeating "Dukrun Karane, 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 moodha 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.)

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 main teaching. Even today there are many people who do *namasmarana*, but they are not experiencing its essence. What is the purpose of life? Is it to be born again and again?

Man is performing various tasks and undergoing many experiences in this world. But what is the use of all that he does if he is unable to enjoy 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 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.

True Significance Of Celebrating Ugadi

On this day of *Ugadi*, take a firm resolve to purify your heart. 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. Future is not certain. What is the guarantee that you will be alive until tomorrow? So, do not worry about your future. Live in the present. It is not ordinary present. It is omnipresent, meaning the results of past and seeds of 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 for the people of Andhra Pradesh. Tomorrow happens to be the Tamil New Year day and also *Vishu*, the New Year Day for the people of Kerala. There are many festivals in a year. You should celebrate them by understanding and experiencing their true significance. Right from this moment, embark on a new life giving up bad thoughts and bad qualities. 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 significance of celebrating *Ugadi*.

Tomorrow is the New Year day for the people of Tamil Nadu. Hence, many of them have come from Madras (Chennai) and other places of Tamil Nadu. Madras is not new. Since long it has been an important centre for the *Bharatiyas*. Later on, due to political considerations different States were formed and Madras was bifurcated. But I do not observe any difference between one region and the other. I adhere to the principle of unity. All are one, be alike to everyone. This is My ideal. At present, the people of Chennai are suffering from 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 a happy and healthy life. In this connection, Chakravarthi (Secretary, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust), V. Srinivasan from Chennai (President, All India Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations) and Indulal Shah from Mumbai (Chairman, Sri Sathya Sai World Council) met the World Bank authorities yesterday and explained to them about the selfless service activities that we have undertaken. They told the World Bank authorities that all our activities were purely service-oriented and we did not expect anything in return. They repeated what Swami had told them to convey.

The World Bank people were very much impressed. They said they had never heard about or seen such stupendous service activities undertaken by a charitable organisation anywhere else in the world. (*loud applause*)

They were happy that Sathya Sai Baba was providing drinking water to a distant place like Chennai. They have agreed to provide funds for 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 meet all your requirements." With broadmindedness, 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 of this ideal. There is no trace of selfishness in whatever task I undertake. Whatever I do is for the benefit of humanity. Many people do not try to understand this and think that it is done with some expectation. But I do not expect anything from anybody nor do I get any benefit out of it. I derive only one benefit, i.e., I feel happy when everybody is happy. As 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 earn a good name. You do not need to wait even for a fraction of a second. Whatever Sai says is bound to happen. 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. Respect even those who hate you. Hatred is a bad quality. It will ruin you. Hence, get rid of this evil. Love everyone.

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). This is the main principle of *Bharatiya* culture. 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.

Ugadi, 13th April, 2002, Brindavan, Bangalore

REDEEM YOUR LIFE BY NAMASMARANA

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

(Sanskrit Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

TIME is infinite. You undergo varied experiences in the infinity of time. 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 others. At some stage in life,

people get married and enter *grihastha ashrama* (stage of a householder). But neither the husband nor the wife is permanent. If the wife passes away, man can remarry 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 forever.

Man's Desires Are Responsible For His Suffering

It is through the medium of this body that you experience happiness at worldly and spiritual levels. Man acquires wealth and property, experiences pleasure and pain through this body. What is the cause of all the suffering of man? His desires are responsible for this. These are: *Dhaneshana*, *Dareshana* and *putreshana* (desire for money, wife and progeny). This *ishanatraya* (triad of desires) is responsible for man's misery.

Kings in the past acquired wealth and property. Could they retain them forever? Wealth is not permanent. It can never redeem man. Wealth can never provide permanent happiness. Spiritual wealth is the true wealth. Man is not able to enjoy true happiness due to his greed for money. Yet he craves for money. No doubt, money is necessary but it should be under certain limits. The second is *dareshana*. 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

bring happiness to him. There is nothing wrong in aspiring to have a son but the happiness that results is only temporary. King Dhritarashtra had 100 sons, but did he enjoy happiness through his sons? No. He, in fact, had to undergo a lot of suffering and was put to disrepute because of his sons. They brought his vast kingdom to ruin. “*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)

It is a mistake to think that a person having many sons will enjoy happiness and one without a son will suffer. It is but an illusion to think that money, wife and children will give happiness. In fact, *dhaneshana*, *dareshana* and *putreshana* act as a binding for man and subject him to suffering. What is the use of having many sons who are wicked? It is enough if you have one son who is noble and ideal.

Sumitra Was The Embodiment Of Selflessness And Sacrifice

Take *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. Among the three wives of Dasaratha, not much has been said about the second wife Sumitra anywhere in history. Kausalya attained a good name 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 desired that her son Bharata should be made the crown prince. But Sumitra had absolutely no desire whatsoever. She was the epitome of all virtues. She was *mitha bhashini* and *hitha bhashini* (one who talks less in a pleasing manner). Her conduct was appropriate to her name *Su-mitra* (good friend).

She had two sons, Lakshmana and Satrughna. 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 the 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 the 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 this divine path. When you carefully go through the sacred story of Lord Rama, you will be able to understand and appreciate the noble and ideal character of mother Sumitra.

When Lord Rama was leaving for the forest, mother Kausalya wept inconsolably. It was only Sumitra who did not shed tears. She tried to pacify Kausalya and instil courage in her, saying, "Dear sister, my son Lakshmana would accompany Rama to the forest to look after his needs. He will make sure that Rama is put to no difficulty under any circumstances. Just as eyelids protect the eyes, Lakshmana

will take full care of Rama with devotion. 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 two promises extracted by Kaikeyi from Dasaratha, only Rama was obliged to go to forest. 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." These were her feelings. 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 as he knew it was his duty to serve him. In the history of Bharat, there are many noble mothers like Sumitra who encouraged their sons to take to the path of service.

Urmila's Nobility And Piety

While Sita felt extremely sad at the thought of separation from Rama and accompanied him to the forest,

Urmila showed exemplary spirit of sacrifice and felt happy that her husband Lakshmana got the rare opportunity of serving Sita and Rama in the forest for 14 years. But Urmila does not find a place of prominence in the *Ramayana*. Both Sumitra and Urmila were highly pious and virtuous. They led a life of sacrifice.

Lakshmana conveyed his decision to Urmila to accompany Rama to the forest. Will any wife keep quiet when she comes to know that her husband is going to the forest for 14 years? Urmila could have asked many questions: "Why should you follow Rama? You are under no obligation to go to the forest. Only Rama is ordered to go. So, you need not go with him." Any ordinary woman 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." She asked 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 do not waste even a minute. Go with them at once and be in their service."

She wanted Lakshmana to give her a promise before going to the forest. She said, "You are going to live in the forest without me for 14 years. It is possible that you may think of me and mention my name at some time or the other. So, I want you to promise that you would 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 the words of Urmila, Lakshmana was surprised and elated. “Can one find such a noble and devoted wife anywhere in the world?” he thought to himself. He took leave of her and left the place immediately.

Bharat Is The Land Of Unity And Divinity

In this land of Bharat, 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, the Himalayan mountains are the boundary. This land is sanctified by the perennial rivers of Ganga, Ya-muna 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 dharma* (nonviolence is highest dharma).

The syllable ‘*Bha*’ stands for light, radiance and effulgence. So, *Bharatiyas* 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 been propagating the sacred message of divinity and has been radiating peace and security to the other nations of the world.

Embodiments of Love!

Neither any individual nor wealth can give you eternal bliss. Bliss originates from your heart. So, turn your vision inward. *Antarbahischa tatsarvam vyapya Narayana sthita* (That all-pervasive God is present within and without). When you develop inner vision, you will automatically experience eternal bliss. Man is *ananda pipasi* (one who thirsts for 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 the *Bharatiyas* today. People are deluded by the worldly, physical and ephemeral things. Are they able to derive any happiness out of these? Nothing whatsoever. The darkness of ignorance is

the root cause of man's delusion. How can you understand the *sathwic* (pious) principle when you are immersed in *thamo guna* (ignorance)?

Embodiments of Love!

To be born in Bharat 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*. This is in itself the greatest 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.

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? Today people remember the names of Kaikeyi and Manthara but not that of Urmila. Urmila demonstrated sacred ideals and set an example of ideal life before the world. She remained in the same room for 14 long years where Lakshmana had left her while going to the forest. She did not stir out till the return of Lakshmana. She never had any worldly desires. Being the daughter of King

Janaka, she had no 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 *Bharatiyas* themselves are not making any effort to understand them. Once a person, after listening to many discourses on *Ramayana*, was asked to tell the name of Rama's consort. He replied, "Mrs. Rama", as he did not remember her name. Such is the sorry state of affairs. *Bharatiyas* are leading a life of ignorance. They ignore their 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 should study this sacred text. Do not spoil your mind by reading meaningless novels. He who has purified his heart alone can inculcate sacred feelings.

Imbibe Noble And Divine Feelings In The New Year

Today you are celebrating the commencement of the New Year. But, in fact, you should treat every moment as the beginning of a New Year. Many people are worried as to what changes would the New Year bring in the social, political and economic fields. 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 worried about these things. You should be worried that there is no transformation in your heart though years have rolled by. You have to get rid of your evil thoughts, words and deeds. You should celebrate the arrival of New Year by inculcating noble and divine feelings. You should experience bliss by visualising the unmanifest atmic principle in this manifest world.

From this New Year day onwards, contemplate on the sacred ideals demonstrated by the great men and women of the *Ramayana*. Follow in their footsteps. Attain happiness and share it with others. Uphold the glory of Bharat. Develop the feeling of nationality. Never forget your motherland. If someone were to ask you who you are, you need not say, I am Ramayya, Krishnayya, etc. You should proudly proclaim that you are a *Bharatiya*. Ramayya, Krishnayya are *pettinna perlu* (names given to the body), whereas *Bharatiya* is your *puttina peru* (name acquired by birth). Who is a *Bharatiya*? ‘*Bha*’ means effulgence, light and divinity. Hence, *Bharatiya* is one who basks in the light of divinity. Bharat is the centre of peace and security. That which is not present in Bharat is not present anywhere else in the world. Bharat has attained the highest reputation in the world. 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 given by Sage Vasishtha has immense inner significance. 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.

(Here Bhagawan sang the Bhajan, *Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin* ... After this, Bhagawan added):

Drive Out Your Wicked Qualities By Namasmarana *Embodiments of Love!*

Yesterday happened to be the Telugu New Year, *Ugadi*. Today we are celebrating Tamil New Year and also the Malayalam New Year, *Vishu*. Names are different but the inner significance is one and the same. When we understand the inner meaning of these celebrations, everything will appear to be new to you. 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. Only when you understand their inner significance can you say that you have celebrated the festivals in their true sense.

“That is the place encircled by the sacred river Chitravathi which meanders its way in its pristine beauty. That is the place around which there are

beautiful mango groves symbolising auspiciousness. Standing on guard on four sides are the deities Parvati and Parameswara protecting the place. Nearby is the town of Bukkapatnam which speaks of the glory of Bukkaraya. There stands Puttapuram (Puttapparthy) in its divine majesty, spreading its grandeur and glory all over the world.

(Telugu Poem)

What is the meaning of the name Puttapparthy? *Parthi* means effulgence. So, Puttapparthy is the place of effulgence. It is the beacon of light. Earlier it was called *Puttavardhini*. *Putta* means anthill. There used to be anthills and snakes everywhere. The *Ramayana* has a close relationship with anthills in the sense that anthills grew over its composer, Sage Valmiki. He was completely covered by anthills, and snakes were moving in and out of them. There are many snakes of wicked qualities in the anthill of your heart. When you do *namasmarana* (remembering the divine name), all the ‘snakes’ of bad qualities will come out. *Namasmarana* is like *nadaswaram* which attracts snakes and brings them out of anthills. This *nadaswaram* is your *jeevanaswaram* and *pranaswaram* (breath of life). One has to repeat God’s name in order to get rid of evil qualities.

Today there are many who 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 the singing of divine glory. Let each and every cell of your body be filled with divine name. Nothing else can give you the bliss, courage and strength that you derive from *namasmarana*. Even if some people make fun of you, do not bother about it. People may say, "He is an I.A.S. officer. How is it that he is also doing *namasmarana*?" Whoever has a heart has the right to do *namasmarana*. Heart is the same in everyone. What is wrong if an I.A.S. officer does *nama-smarana*? Be he young or old, rich or poor, everybody has to do *namasmarana*. Only fools make fun of people doing *namasmarana*. Do *namasmarana* with full mind and total dedication.

Do not be afraid of anyone. Sing the glory of God wholeheartedly without any inhibition. Only then can you experience divinebliss. Begin this sacred *nama-smarana* right from this moment on this New Year day. You may not have any musical instruments for this. It is enough if it emerges from the core of your heart. Play on the veena of your heart and sing the glory of God. Take care that you do not have evil thoughts as they will produce discordant notes. Only then will you become the recipient of divine grace and energy.

Today the people of Kerala are celebrating their New Year, *Vishu*. On this auspicious occasion, I bless you all to enjoy peace, happiness and prosperity. This also happens to be the New Year day for the people of Tamil Nadu. May

you all sanctify your lives by leading an ideal life 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 can you lead the life of a true human being. Having been born in this sacred land, lead your lives in a befitting manner. Very soon all countries of the world will follow Bharat. Bharat should become the leader of world in the field of spirituality. This is what I desire.

*Vishu and Tamil New Year, 14th April, 2002,
Brindavan, Bangalore.*

Imprint Rama's Name On Your Heart

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Rama. Constant repetition of this sweet Name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself. Therefore, one should contemplate on the Name of Rama incessantly.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

AYODHYA was the capital of the kingdom of Kosala. It was built in such a way that no enemy could enter it. Hence, it was named Ayodhya (a place secure from enemies). It was built by Emperor Manu on the bank of the river Sarayu. Sarayu was a part of Manasarovar created by the Will of Brahma. Emperor Dasaratha ruled over this sacred place.

The Vedas Incarnated As Dasaratha's Sons

In spite of having all the wealth and comforts, Dasaratha's life was devoid of happiness as he had no chil-

dren. Dasaratha had a minister by name Sumantra who was sacred-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 *Aswamedha yajna*. There is another sacred ritual called *Putrakameshti yajna*, by performing which you are sure to beget children." Dasaratha was happy with the advice. After seeking the approval of Sage Vasishtha, he commanded Sumantra to make necessary arrangements for the performance of the *yajnas*. Sumantra requested Dasaratha to invite Sage Rishyasrunga as the chief priest to preside over the *yajnas* as he was well-versed with these type of rituals.

At that time, King Romapada was ruling over the kingdom of Anga. He had pleased Sage Rishyasrunga who saved his kingdom from severe famine. One day King Dasaratha, Sumantra and Romapada together went to the hermitage of Rishyasrunga. As per the request of Dasaratha, Rishyasrunga came over to Ayodhya and performed the *yajnas*. As the *Putrakameshti yajna* was in progress, there emerged an effulgent being from the flames with a vessel containing *payasam* (sweet rice pudding). He handed over the vessel to Sage Vasishtha, who in turn gave it to Dasaratha and told him to distribute it equally between his three wives. The composers of the *Ramayana* like Kamban, Valmiki, Tulasidas, etc., gave different versions of the proportion in which the *payasam* was distributed between them. 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 Rishya-srunga's blessings before partaking of the *payasam*.

The queens accordingly took a sacred bath and sought the blessings of Sage Rishyasrunga. Sumitra however went to the terrace to dry her hair in the sun. She had kept the *payasam* cup by her side. In the meantime, a servant-maid came running to her and informed 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 afraid that her husband Dasaratha and Sage Vasishtha would get annoyed with her. She shuddered at the thought of being cursed by Sage Rishyasrunga. So, 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." Both Kausalya and Kaikeyi sympathised with her. Immediately, Kausalya brought a similar cup from inside and poured half of her share of *payasam* into it. Kaikeyi followed suit. Sumitra was happy at their consideration and cooperation. All this happened in a natural manner. The three queens went to the Puja room and partook of their share of *payasam*. Nine months passed. On an auspicious day, Kausalya gave birth to Rama. That was the time when the five elements were in harmony with each other. While Sumitra gave birth to two sons,

Lakshmana and Satrughna, Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharata. The four sons of Dasaratha were the very personification of the four Vedas.

Unshakable Bond Of Love Between Four Brothers

The birth of four sons of Dasaratha brought happiness in the royal household. There were rejoicings in the entire kingdom. But Sumitra faced a peculiar problem. The sons of Sumitra were restless and cried non-stop right from their birth. They neither would drink milk nor would go to sleep. Seeing the pathetic condition of her sons, Sumitra was grief-stricken. 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 continue crying right from their birth.” Vasishtha closed his eyes to contemplate on 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* (equanimity). As your name suggests, you are a good friend of all. You don’t need to be worried at all. With the permission of Kausalya, put Lakshmana in the cradle of Rama. Likewise, seek Kaikeyi’s permission and put Satrughna by the side of Bharata in the same cradle. Then, they will stop crying and behave in a normal way.”

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 grow together?" Sumitra did as per the advice of Sage Vasishtha. No sooner did she put Lakshmana by the side of Rama in the cradle than he stopped crying. The same was the case with Satrughna too. He stopped crying as soon as he was put by the side of Bharata. 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 in a blissful manner. Watching her sons enjoying themselves thus, Sumitra felt greatly relieved.

After a few days, Sumitra approached Sage Vasishtha again and requested him to explain the strange behaviour of her sons. She wanted to know why Lakshmana and Satrughna were crying continuously till they were placed by the side of Rama and Bharata, respectively. Sage Vasishtha started explaining in this manner: "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 bore two sons. Lakshmana is born from Kausalya's share of *payasam* and Satrughna is born from that of Kaikeyi. It means Lakshmana is an *amsa* (aspect) of Rama and Satrughna is an *amsa* of Bharata. So, it is natural that Lakshmana is blissful

in the company of Rama and so too is Satrughna in the company of Bharata.” Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavadgita*, *Mamaivamsho jeevaloke jeevabhuta sanathana* (the eternal atma in all beings is a part of My Being). Lakshmana, being an aspect of Rama, was in his company always. Likewise, Satrughna and Bharata were always together.

Rama And Lakshmana Protect The Yajna Of Viswamitra

Years rolled by and the four brothers grew up as young men. Dasaratha thought of performing their marriages. One day when he was thinking on these lines, a messenger entered and informed him about 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 the marriages of my sons. So, I am extremely happy and indeed blessed to have you with us today. Please tell me what I can do for you. I will certainly fulfil your desire.” Viswamitra said that he had come to take Rama with him to protect his *yajna* from demons. Viswamitra’s words were like a bomb blast for Dasaratha. He thought to himself, “I begot these children as a result of performing several rituals and sacrifices over a number of years. Moreover, Rama has never en-

tered a forest or seen a demon. He has no hatred towards anybody. He is full of love and forbearance. How can I send tender-hearted Rama to the forest to fight the demons who are very cruel?" Thinking thus, Dasaratha felt very sad.

He said to Viswamitra, "Oh venerable sage, my son is very young. How can I send him to forest?" Viswamitra said, "Oh king! You promised that you would fulfil my desire. Now you are going back on your words. Kings belonging to Ikshvaku clan never failed to keep up their promise. If you go against your promise, you will bring disrepute to your clan. So, decide as to whether you want to put your clan to disrepute or send your son 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. No danger can ever befall them. So, uphold your promise given to Sage Viswamitra."

Here is an important point worthy of note. Viswamitra had come to take only Rama with him. Rama was prepared to go with him. Rama did not ask Lakshmana to accompany him. Neither Viswamitra nor Dasaratha asked him to follow Rama. Lakshmana followed Rama of his own accord because he was an *amsa* of Rama. Just as shadow follows an object, Lakshmana followed Rama. Seeing this, Viswamitra thought to himself, "Everything happens ac-

cording to the Divine Will.” Prior to his departure, Viswamitra 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 bank of 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 the side of Rama. Viswamitra said, “My dear ones, I am taking you to *Siddhashram* where *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 *Siddhashram*. When the *yajna* was in progress, there 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 mountains. It is the voice of demonness Thataki. She makes everyone tremble with her ferocity. 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 do not need to observe any difference between a man and a woman. Your main duty is to drive away all demons who come to disrupt it." As this 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. We do not need to go into its details. Maricha and Subahu also came with their army of demons to disrupt the *yajna* but Rama killed Subahu with one arrow and with another threw away Maricha at a long distance. Thereafter, peace prevailed in *Siddhashram*. There were rejoicings all around. Even gods of heaven showered flowers from the sky. 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 on the journey to Mithila. Being a *sanyasi*, 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, "Swami, my father has 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 a Shiva *dhanus* (bow of Shiva) which ordinary mortals cannot lift. It is very difficult to move it even an inch. One day it so happened that Sita, the daughter of Janaka, lifted the bow. That day Janaka decided to give his daughter Sita in marriage to a man of valour who could tie the string to the bow. This *yajna* is arranged in this connection."

Divine Plan Of The Marriage Of Dasaratha's Sons

Viswamitra persuaded Rama and Lakshmana to accompany him to Mithila. Huge crowds had assembled there. Kings belonging to various countries had also arrived. Ravana was one among them. He was very powerful and had a fearsome personality. He was the first one to come forward to lift the bow. As he was proceeding towards 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 Ravana is terrifying. How can Janaka give his daughter in marriage to him? Anyway, let us see what is going to happen." Ravana in the first instance 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 became the object of ridicule. One with ego is bound to face humiliation. He cannot receive respect and honour in society. Ego leads to ruin. Seeing the mighty Ravana fall down in such a manner, all the kings were surprised. They said to themselves, "If Ravana cannot lift it, nobody else can do it." They were afraid even to come forward to try lifting the bow.

At that moment, Viswamitra gave a meaningful look to Rama. Rama understood its implication and got up. He was only fifteen years old. 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 and behold! The mighty bow was lifted up in a flash of a moment. But the bow had to be bent to tie the string. As Rama 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 enquired, "Rama, are You ready for the marriage?" Rama said, "Swami, My father sent Me to *Siddhashram* to safeguard your *yajna*. I did not have his permission even to come here. I am unable to accept this proposal without his consent." Viswamitra whispered this into

the ear of Janaka. He also supported Rama's view as he was well-versed in *Rajaneeti* (royal protocol). Immediately, he sent his messengers to King Dasaratha to bring him and his family to Mithila with royal honours. King Dasaratha, his family and their entire entourage reached Mithila in three days. Rama and Lakshmana did not move out of their room during this period. The four brothers were extremely happy to meet each other. The holy wedding took place on the fourth day. I have described this event in great detail many a time. Sita was born of mother earth and Urmila was Janaka's real daughter. Sita was to wed Rama and Urmila was to marry Lakshmana. Janaka's brother had two daughters Mandavi and Sruthakeerti. Their wedding was fixed with Bharata and Satrughna, respectively. It looked as though they were perfect divine couples.

During the wedding, Sita had to garland Rama. Sita being short in stature could not do so as Rama was *ajanubahu* (tall personality). 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. Women in those days did not look into the face of men. Hence, Sita was looking down holding the garland in her hand. Lakshmana was the incarnation of Adisesha who carried 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 as to why Rama was not bending his head so as to enable Sita to 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 did not get up for a long time. Rama bent down to pick up Lakshmana. Seizing this opportunity, Sita garlanded Rama.

Saint Thyagaraja sang a song extolling the mighty power of Rama: *“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 was celebrated in a glorious manner. All of them reached Ayodhya safely in spite of a minor clash with Parasurama on the way. As the saying goes, *“Pleasure is an interval between two pains”*.

Unparalleled Spirit Of Sacrifice Of Sumitra And Urmila

People of Ayodhya rejoiced to see the royal couples. One day at three o’clock in the morning, Dasaratha had a dream. It was his belief that whatever one saw in a dream in the early hours would come true. He had dreamt that he had

become very old and that his hands and legs were shaking. He woke up in a disturbed state of mind considering this as a bad omen. Dasaratha felt that he might not live long, so 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 Vasishtha and obtained his permission. When Dasaratha told Rama that He was to be made the crown prince the following day, Rama remained silent. Rama was omniscient and knew what was going to happen. But being an obedient son, He did not want to say anything against His father's wish.

People go through *Ramayana*. They have books on *Ramayana* as big as pillows. They learn the slokas 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. Though Kaikeyi was the youngest queen, nobody could go against her wish as she exercised great influence over Dasaratha. Dasaratha could not deny any of her wishes. But Sumitra was not given much importance in spite of her numerous noble qualities. In fact, the qualities of Sumitra and her sons cannot be described in words.

The coronation of Rama did not take place. According to the wish of Kaikeyi, Rama was 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, everyone in the *antahpura* (inner chambers) was in tears. When Lakshmana went to mother Sumitra and sought her blessings, she said, "My dear one, do not think that you are going to the forest. In fact, this Ayodhya is like an *aranya* (forest) without Sita and Rama. The forest where Sita and Rama live is verily Ayodhya. 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? She would have argued, "As per the boon granted to Kaikeyi, only Rama is supposed to go to the forest. You don't need to go with Him." Any other mother would have stopped him from going to the forest. But Sumitra, a noble mother, did not think on those lines. She had all the virtues of an ideal mother.

Then Lakshmana went to his wife Urmila to inform her about his decision to go with Rama. Urmila was highly virtuous. Her spirit of sacrifice and generosity was unparalleled. Being unaware of the happenings, she was painting a picture of Rama's coronation. She wanted to send it to her father Janaka. As she was deeply engrossed in her work, 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 the paint on the picture she was painting. She felt sad for having spoiled the picture. Then Lakshmana said, "Rama's coronation is stalled because of Kaikeyi, and the picture of 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. She was happy with his decision. She entreated him to serve Sita and Rama with utmost devotion. 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 has to serve Bharata. So, discharge your duties. But at no point of time should you remember me during your stay for fourteen years in the forest. If you think of me even for a moment, you will not be able to serve Sita and Rama wholeheartedly."

She did not pressurise him to allow her to accompany him. She entreated him to serve Sita and Rama with utmost devotion. She said, "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 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." It is difficult to find many examples of nobility and sacrifice set before the world by Sumitra and Urmila.

During the war between Rama and Ravana, Lakshmana fell unconscious one day. Seeing His dear brother

in such condition, Rama was very sad. He shed tears, saying, "If I search in this world, I may be able to find a wife like Sita but not a brother like Lakshmana. How can I live without him?" The physician present there said, "Lakshmana can be revived with the help of a herb called *Sanjivini* which is available on a particular mountain." Hanuman at once flew to the mountain. As 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 physician there wanted *Sanjivini* herb to be brought in order to revive Lakshmana. As I could not locate the exact herb, I carried 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 for one lady. She was none other than Sumitra, the mother of Lakshmana. "Lakshmana can never be put to any harm. He constantly chants Rama's name. Every cell of his body is filled with Rama's divine name. So, nothing untoward can happen to him." With such conviction, she was composed.

Bharata took Hanuman to Urmila and introduced him. She never stepped out of her room. Wherever she was at the time of Lakshmana's departure to the forest, she remained in the same room for fourteen long years until his return. Such was her determination. She asked Hanuman as to where he was coming from. Hanuman narrated to her in detail whatever happened right from the time Lakshmana fainted in the battlefield. On listening to Hanuman's narration, 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 have not been given any place of prominence in the *Ramayana*. They were the embodiments of truth, righteousness and sacrifice. Their ideals are the beacons of ideal life for the 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 *Ramayana* has not diminished a 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 has extolled the greatness of Rama's power and his name.

(Bhagavan sang the bhajan, *Rama Kodanda Rama ...*
Then He continued the discourse.)

Always Chant The Divine Name

Embodiments of Love!

There is no *amruta* (ambrosia) greater than Rama's name. Today people have forgotten *nama chinthana* (contemplation on the divine name). They repeat only film songs. That is why the country is facing hardships. The educated, intellectuals and scientists do not think of God at all. They deem it below their dignity to apply *vibhuti* on their foreheads. Some of them have it on their foreheads when they are at home and rub it off the moment they step outside. This type of conduct is responsible for degeneration in society. 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, Narayana, Shiva, Vishnu, etc. As people have forgotten the divine name, every home is in turmoil. There are conflicts even among brothers. Since there is no purity within, unsacred feelings have crept in. People are running after money and high position. Can money and position give you protection? You find so many in this world who have plenty of money and are occupying positions of authority. Are they able to enjoy peace and happiness? No. Only the divine name can grant peace and happiness. Those who neglect God's name bring about their own ruin.

There is an inner significance of the word Rama. The letter 'Ma' is the life-force of the *panchakshari* mantra, "Om

Namah Sivaya.” If ‘Ma’ is removed, it reads as ‘Na Sivaya’, which connotes inauspiciousness. Likewise, the letter ‘Ra’ is the life-force of the *ashta-kshari Mantra*, “*Om Namo Narayanaya*,” without which it loses its meaning. The life-force of the *pancha-kshari mantra* ‘Ma’, and that of the *ashtakshari mantra* ‘Ra’ together form the divine name RAMA.

Students! Devotees!

Chanting of the divine name alone can protect you. Money and high position are like passing clouds. You should not clamour for them. One may join politics and attain some position of authority, but how long can one remain in power? Any moment one may be dislodged from power. One should not get carried away by politics. Instead one should take refuge in the divine name. He alone is truly blessed whose heart is filled with the divine name. People who do not relish the divine name may make fun of you. Somebody may tell you there is no God. What should be your reply? “God may not exist for you but He exists for me. Who are you to deny the existence of my God?” No one has any right to deny God. Never forget the divine name wherever you are and under any circumstances. *Sarvada sarva kaleshu sarvatra Hari chintanam* (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God). Imprint the divine name on your heart firmly and permanently.

*Sri Rama Navami, 21st April 2002,
Brindavan, Bangalore.*

9

Mother Is Your First God

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). (Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Love!

YAD Drishyam Thannashyam (all that we see with our physical eyes is bound to perish). It is not only man who 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 called a human being. It is therefore essential that man should turn his vision inward and try to recognise the atmic principle. We can experience the atmic principle only when we turn our vision inward. With our outward vision, we perceive only transient, ephemeral phenomena.

Imprint The Teachings Of Your Mother On Your Heart

In the land of Bharat, the ideal of motherhood has been held in high esteem. Every individual has a mother. But today reverence and love for the mother is on the decline. People do not try to make their mothers happy. There is no love greater than that of the mother in the whole phenomenal world.

Rama's divinity blossomed under Kausalya's loving care;

*Because of the tender feelings and austerity of Sita,
Lava and Kusha achieved name and fame;*

*The loving care of Jijabai made Shivaji a great
warrior. (Telugu Poem)*

Similarly, many eminent persons in the world achieved greatness in life due to the loving care of their mothers. It is therefore important for every individual to respect his or her mother. The ideal conduct of children is based on the ideals set by their mothers. The sacredness of motherhood is unparalleled all over the world irrespective

of country or time. Material wealth or high levels of scholarship are not necessary for this. Character is the basis for this ideal. Every mother aspires for the welfare of her children. There may be bad children but there can never be a bad mother in this world. There is an urgent need for ideal children who obey the instructions of their mothers and follow the ideals set by them. They should imprint the teachings of their mothers on their hearts.

Bharatiya culture declares: *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava* (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God). But the highest place has been given to the mother. She is truly your first god. How many are there today who give due respect and love to this embodiment of divinity? Let alone giving love or respect to their mother, how many behave in a proper manner so as to deserve the love of their mother? A true son or daughter is one who acts in a way that earns him or her the love of his or her mother. One can never hope for peace or happiness in life if one hurts the feelings of one's mother. It is the duty of every child to respect and love his mother; he should never cause her any distress. Be one a great scholar or an officer having high authority, one is but a child to one's mother. But due to the influence of *Kali* Age, modern boys and girls are forgetting their duty toward their mother. This is a grave error. Those who forget their duty toward their mother are sure to lose themselves in wilderness. You are but a reflection of your mother. Therefore, first of all you should carry out your

duty toward your mother and make her happy.

Fulfil Your Mother's Wishes

The mother of this body Easwaramma looked upon all children with great love and tenderness. Whenever she saw little children, she caressed them with great affection without observing any difference whatsoever. As Karanam Subbamma had no children, she requested Easwaramma to send her children to her house once in a while. Thus, Subbamma took Me to her house and looked after Me with great love. Once when I was in Subbamma's house, Easwaramma came in a hurry. I asked her, "What is the hurry? What has happened?" She replied, "Swami, near our house there is a young mother whose little daughter is sick. She is helpless and in great distress. Even a dispensary does not exist in this desolate village. 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 sign of true 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. Do not 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 all the time. Mother’s wish had to be fulfilled, be it small or big. Any task to help others is My responsibility and 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 do

not 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 do not 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 renders true service to society.

Ideal Motherhood Exemplified By Mother Easwaramma

Easwaramma breathed her last in this very Mandir. 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 the classes. She used to say, "I am not interested in these studies. I come here to see how the students of Swami con-

duct themselves, how they obey His commands and how they react to Swami's advice and teachings:" The parents take great pains in bringing their children with 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; tomorrow you will be men. If your children cause you worry how will you feel? Will you be happy? No not at all. All that happens to you in 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 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. What for is man born in this world? Is it merely to roam around and indulge in the pleasures of the world? 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. Is he going on the right path? Is he working for the welfare of society? Is society approving his conduct? Is he 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 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, their talents are encouraged, but what for? To earn money? Even a beggar earns money. Money is not the goal of life.

When you have a visitor to your house, you should greet him 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 on 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 there are few such people 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 anyone, 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 thousands of students. Education in Sai institutions is free up to 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 Easwaramma taught. When somebody came to see her, she would tell him, "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.

Ever be grateful even for a small help. Do not be a *kritaghna* (ungrateful). Ingratitude is utter cruelty. There is a mantra in *Suryanamaskara*, "*Kritaghnaghna-ya 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 those persons 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

You should always help the aged and distressed. At the time 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 as 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 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 of 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: *Paropakaraya 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?

There are many foreigners who 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 him food, not money. Simi-

larly, if he is in need of clothes, give him 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)? *Mohakshaya* 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 di-

vine 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 towards you. This is the characteristic of Sai. There are many who are hostile towards 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. Therefore, 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 Sacred End

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 *paan* (betel leaf). In fact, I Myself used to like *paan* 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. "*Punarapijananam puna-rapi 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 requested 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 cancelled. 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 and so the classes must go on:" Gokak was amazed. He announced that the classes would be held. Everyday 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 there. He replied, "Swami, I have something to tell You." I told him to wait until I finished the interview. But he said, it was an urgent matter. So, I 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 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.

Good people have a good death. What sort of death? *Anayasa maranam* (peaceful death). How was that possible for the parents of this body? They shared My sacredness and led a sacred life. I Myself chose My parents. My selection is always correct. That is why My parents had such a blissful life. Every person must serve his parents. When they fall sick, you should serve them with total dedication. Service leads to liberation. *“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.

*Easwaramma Day, 6th May 2002,
Brindavan, Bangalore*

10

Service Activities For Unity In Society

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 man supposed to do? What is the foundation on which the mansion of life is to be built? Every man aspires for peace and happiness. How can one lead a peaceful life? It is possible only when he puts human values into practice. Human values need not be acquired from outside, they are latent in every man. If such values are forgotten how can man progress in life? In the first instance, man should enquire into the purpose of his birth.

You Are Not Serving Others

Human life is based on *samata* (equality), *samaikyata* (unity), *saubhratrutvam* (fraternity) and *saujanyam* (nobility). They constitute the very foundation of the mansion of life. Life will be meaningless even if one of them is absent. Everyone must cultivate and safeguard these four virtues. First of all, man 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 jivi* (individual), he is a *samashti jivi* (part and parcel of society). *Vyashti* relates to *jivudu* (individual), *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) that 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.

Give Up Body Attachment

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. So long as there is *dehaabhimanam*, man cannot develop *daivaabhimanam* (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 his 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!

Practise Human Values

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 bruyaath, Priyam bhruyaath, Na bhruyaath 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 to-

gether 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 non-violence.

We call the human values as *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Santhi*, *Prema* and *Ahimsa* (Truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence). 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. Hence, all your efforts should be directed to safeguard 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, the world will 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, study any number of sacred texts, 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 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 bhaavam* (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 many supporting pillars. 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.

Truth Is The Basis Of Every Culture

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)

Greatness Lies In Practice, Not Preaching

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 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 worried about conducting this conference, when Swami was undergoing so much pain. As 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.

International Seva Conferences Inaugural Address, 21-7-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam

11

Shun Desires And Attain Divine Proximity

Embodiments of Love!

THE one who realises that it is the same atma that dwells in him and 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. As 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.

The Message Of SAI

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 man follows the reverse order; he holds his individual interest above 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 which cannot give you everlasting bliss? Hiranyaksha and Hiranya-kasipu filled their hearts with negative feelings. They entertained worldly desires which were ephemeral and negative in nature. The modern scientists have reached the moon, but Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha could reach even 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: *Uthishtha, 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 *prajnana*. Get rid of *thamasic* 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 into 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*. 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.

Unflinching Faith Of Prahlada

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. If there is water content in the butter, it will emit some unpleasant smell as you heat it. The smell will gradually diminish as you continue to heat it. So long as there is water in the butter, you cannot escape from the unpleasant smell. The water has to completely evaporate. Butter represents the individual nature. The evil tendencies in you can be compared to unpleasant smell. When you make efforts to melt 'butter' completely, the 'unpleasant smell' will gradually subside. When man performs *sadhana* the disagreeable 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 (Will). 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. *So long as there are worldly de-*

sires 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 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 for 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 is it that 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 punishments 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 the 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 his 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?

Fill Your Heart With Virtues

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 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. Firstly, 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 *sraaddha* (steadfastness) and *bhakti* (devotion) in you. *Sraddhavan Labhate Jnanam* (with faith, wisdom is won).

Embodiments of Love!

What is the *sadhana* 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 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 Bhakti? Today people are wearing the mask of Bhakti 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.

Do Not Misuse The Name of Sai

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 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.

There are some people who 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. Unfortunately, such activity is on the increase. In many villages, we find people misusing Sai's name for their selfish gains. This is happening even in many other countries like America, England, Japan, Germany, Singapore, 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 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 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 Institute 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 which will please Swami. He is looking after our Hospital at Bangalore. He said, "Nowhere else, education and medical care of such high standards are 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 would have sanctified their lives. In Chennai 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 do they allow the youngsters to act on their own. Swami does not require any shrines. Swami is not interested in real estate. All that Swami wants is you should serve the 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. Swami 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. Swami is not interested in such activities. When Swami 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; Swami receives a lot of such information. I feel all this as nuisance. This is not the kind of information that Swami wants to hear. What Swami desires most is to hear that all are well and are enjoying happiness and bliss. Marketing with Swami'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. Swami never solicits donations from anybody nor He has agents for propagating His Message. I do not have any association whatsoever with these deceitful persons. Swami needs no material wealth. The only need of Swami 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 per cent of the so-called devotees are, in fact, deceitful. Earlier, it was quite different; devotees were few, but they were genuine. Nowadays, there are too many self-seeking cheats masquerading as devotees. First thing in the morning, they adorn their forehead with *vibhuti*, 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!

Your Heart Only Need Be My Temple

Embodiments of Love!

Develop love in you. Swami needs no temples or rest houses. The temple of your heart is more than enough. Swami 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. As 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*. Earlier, I have been travelling 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. 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.

My Love Made Me Speak So

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 so 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.

Suffering Dissolves In My Love

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 have suffered 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.

*International Seva Conference, 22-7-2002,
Prasanthi Nilayam*

12

Keep Spirituality As First Goal

*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 will beckon you. Since ancient times, several great rishis 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 sukhaath 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.

Acquire The Wealth Of Love

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 be the texts studied and *sadhanas* undertaken by man, everything goes 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, education, or the various *sadhanas* we

undertake; it is only by offering pure, unconditional and unselfish love for love's sake 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 makes no 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. It is only then, you would 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. 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.

Contemplation On Soham Is Real Sadhana

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 Organi-sation are undertaking several types of *sadhana*. But are they real *sadhanas* or illusory? No, no; they are not real *sadhanas*. They appear to be real for some time and later on they are given up. You start doing *japa* as a *sadhana* and continue it for some time. Later, you give up *japa* and enter into *dhyana*. 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. “*Sarvadaa sarvakaaleshu sarvathra Harichinthanam*”. We must always, at all times and under at all circumstances spend our time in constant contemplation of God. This should become the very breath of our life and as natural as we inhale and exhale. This is “*soham that-thwa*”. This constant contemplation on the soham that-thwa is the real *sadhana*. Wherfrom does this “*soham*” come? It comes from the enquiry “*koham*” (who am I?)

The result of this enquiry is “soham”. It is only when you realise this eternal truth, your *sadhana* will 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:

“*Maa kuru dhana jana yavvana garvam
Harathi nimeshaat kaalassarvam*”

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

God Is In You, With You

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. We must, therefore, 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 these 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?

Man, today, 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, society becomes nearer. When you reach the goal of society, then the enquiry should begin "Who am I?" It is only when you recognise who you are, you will 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.

Food Must Contribute To Spiritual Development

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, meat, etc. 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*. 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 “*Thripho bhavathi, Maththo bhavathi*” (become completely fulfilled, ecstatic, etc.). We must immerse 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. Keep away from such things. Even if they are medicines, we should not take. Under no circumstances should you consume intoxicating food and medicines.

Embodiments of Love!

You are undertaking a lot of *sadhana*. 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 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 in 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, it is only 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 we are the true and eternal *atma thatthwa*. It is only when you attain that stage in *dhyana*, it becomes 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.

To Get Rooted In Atma Tattwa Is Dhyana

Embodiments of Love!

Knowingly or unknowingly you are doing *sadhana* based on what you think to be correct. If you desire to know what is *dhyana* in the real sense, ask Me. I will explain to you. In fact, you do not need any *sadhana*. Do as I say; 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 the plight and enquired why he was wandering here and there. Then, suddenly Buddha realised that he was all the while following his *manasika thatthwa* (mental impulses), which is impermanent and momentary. He, therefore, 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.

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? Hence, you must forget the *deha bhranthi* (the illusion of body). Merge in divinity with *atma-bhimana* (attachment to the *atma*). That is the real *dhyanam*. 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 bhruyaath, Priyam bhruyaath, Na bhruyaath 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? It is 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.

Guru Purnima

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.

*International Seva Conference, Valedictory Address,
23-7-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.*

13

Develop Broadmindedness To Experience Divinity

“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.

Atom Is The Fundamental Basis Of Creation

Kaanaada 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). Kaanaada 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 Kaanaada. 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 *paramaanu* (minutest atom). There is nothing other than atom in this creation. “How can one understand and realise this?” This was the enquiry of Kaanaada. 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 Kaanaada. 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 as mere stories and ridicules them. He does not have the ability and capacity to understand the sacredness of ancient *Bharatiya* 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 Kaanaada belong? Twenty thousand years ago, people were all praise for Kaanaada and his teachings. Kaanaada recognised the principles of Hydrogen and Oxygen. The scientists observed that hydrogen represented the water principle, while oxygen represented the fire principle. Today people attach great value to the observations made by scientists, but fail to understand and appreciate the great truths taught by our rishis out of their experience.

How can one understand 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, drinks atoms, he is unable to understand their mystery. He thinks that only scientists can investigate 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 Kaanaada. But today nobody is conducting a proper enquiry to experience the atomic process. People are leading their lives with materialistic outlook.

The Lesson Taught By Shivaji

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 feet of the monk. 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 was one who 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 informed 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 minis-

ter, 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 Mystery Behind The Atom

The body will be respected so long as there is *soham* (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. None can create it. This truth was propagated by Kaanaada. 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 since long. *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 this phenomenon? Nobody can explain this. As earth rotates on its axis, we have day and night. As 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 masterplan 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, God is present in microcosm as well as 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 will understand everything else, **for atom is God**. The life principle present in the atom is present all over the universe. Kaanaada said that proper understanding of the principle of atom will lead to understanding of divinity. When you close your fist, you catch 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.

The Efficacy Of Prayer

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 that I should 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 was 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.*

Atom Is Verily Divine

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. Kaanaada 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. So long as there is selfishness in man, he will not be able to understand the divine principle of atom. One may do *japa*, *dhyan*a 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.

Significance Of Guru Purnima

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

Embodiment 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*. When you are in office, do office work only; 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 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 Hiranya-kasipu were great scientists. The modern scientists have travelled only up to moon, but Hiranyakasipu travelled 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 minded-ness in order to experience Divinity.

Man has death but the mind has no death. Whatever he does during his lifetime are imprinted on his mind and get carried over to the next birth. None 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.

Believe In The Omnipresence Of God

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.” So 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. The rich man 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; 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, do not 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, people did not suffer this much. In those days, the conflict was between the whites and the coloured, whereas today the non-whites are quarrelling amongst themselves in factions. This is not what is expected of people today. Shun evil qualities and develop noble feelings.

Difficulties Bring Happiness

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 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 mate-

realistic life. This is also necessary to a certain extent. Remember that there is the transcendental principle even in this secular life.

You Are The Embodiment Of The Trinity

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 nor be elated by happiness. Develop equanimity and strive to attain Divinity.*

Here Bhagawan sang, “*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 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 he 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 worshipping 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*. 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 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.

Guru Purnima, 24-7-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.

14

The ‘I’ (Aham) Is Brahman

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 *paramahamsa* (realised soul) uses the word ‘I’ while referring to himself. 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.

Spiritual Practices Are To Steady The Mind

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 our *sadhana* 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*.

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 never do they 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*. All the spiritual practices are meant to control the mind.

God Has No Specific Name

Sravanam (listening), *kirtanam* (singing), *vishnu-smaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *padaseva-nam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *vandanam* (salutation), *archanam* (worship), *dasyam* (servitude), *sneham* (friendship), *atma-*

nivedanam (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 hand kerchief 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. He is *nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathanam, niketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala 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, 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 and 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.

Kerala Is The Land Of Sacrifice And Devotion

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 *Pakshivahana* (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 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 the 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 too 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 thishthati* (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) He 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.

Love And Be Loved

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. Irrespective of the shape, each doll is priced 2 annas. 'Cat' moulds attract some children and 'deer' moulds fascinate some others. 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* or a 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 picturised 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*.

Let Heart Be The Custodian Of Virtues

Nobody keeps valuables within the reach of a thief. But we are keeping the precious jewelry like compassion, forbearance, love, under the custody of the mind, which can

be compared to a thief. When you leave precious jewelry in the hands of a thief, how can you get them back? It is impossible. The precious jewelry 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 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 keeps them under the care of 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.

Kerala Is Dear To God Also

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 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 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. As 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.

Onam Discourse, 21-8-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.

Divine Leelas Reflect The Glory Of Avatars

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* na-

ture 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 Sathya Sai Baba. People told him that 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 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 Easwaramma 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 Easwaramma 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 allright 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 cow-herds to bring some food from the *Yajnashala* as He and His brother Balarama were very hungry. When the cow-herds requested the Brahmins for food, they turned them

away saying, “Do you think it is a *chowltry* 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, Easwaramma 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. Easwaramma 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 *prajnana*. 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.

Krishnashtami, 31-8-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.

16

Significance Of Vinayaka Worship

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 unto 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* 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:

“*Sarvadharman Parityaja Maamekam Saranam
Vraja,*
*Aham Twa 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.)

The Individual Must Identify Himself With Society

So 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 (jiva) whereas *samashti* stands for God (deva). There is not much difference between the individual soul and the Cosmic Spirit. So long as *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 *vijnana* (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 Vinayaka*" meaning, He is a master unto Himself. In this world Vinayaka is worshipped by many. However, Vinayaka does not worship anyone as He has no master above Him. Even Easwara, the father, worships His son Vinayaka, but it does not happen the other way.

Control Of The Mind Is True Spiritual Practice

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 the 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.

All Offerings To Vinayaka Have Significance

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, which 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 as 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 and *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, 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, consequently, the functioning of the 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 towards 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.

Subdue Hatred And Anger

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 which ruins man.

“One with anger will not be successful in any of his endeavours. He will commit sins and be ridiculed by one and all.”

(Telugu Poem)

“Anger is one’s enemy, peace is the protective shield, compassion is true relation, happiness is verily heaven and misery is hell.”

(Telugu Poem)

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 Needs A Strong Foundation

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. *Brahma-charya* is the foundation; if the foundation is strong, the other three stages will be automatically taken care of. But the modern youth are ruining three-fourth of their lives because they do not have a strong foundation of *Brahmacharya*. When elders advise them to sit for prayers 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 *Brahma-charya*. Merely remaining a bachelor is not

Brahmachar-ya; constant contemplation on Brahma is true *Brahma-charya*. 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 do not 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 to make it look attractive. But the foundation which 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 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 requested 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, Savyasaachi, Dhanunjaya, etc. On hearing the request of Bhishma, Arjuna with all his might shot an arrow 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 *Amma* means mother. *Malli* means jasmine flower. Mallikarjuna symbolises a pure and white jasmine flower. Just as a bee sucks honey from a flower, likewise, Bhramaramba enjoys the company of Mallikarjuna.

Arjuna The Pure

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 requested 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 to merely 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. 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 have taken 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 the modern youth do not pay any attention to our history. They waste their time in 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 the 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*, even the people of other countries, worship Vinayaka.

Three Fruitful Decades Of The Central Trust

At 2 o'clock in the 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. There are a few elders who 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 Book Trust, or in 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 ex-

tremely happy that these boys have come up well in life. They are highly intelligent. When asked a question, they give a suitable and 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 they are 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.

*Vinayaka Chaturthi, 10-9-2002,
Prasanthi Nilayam.*

Reminiscence Of The Divine

On October 20, 1940, which happened to be a Sunday, Swami lost the collar pin and with that the veil of Maya 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 Sathya to Bellary. At the same time, his wife also had a dream in which she was directed to accompany her husband and bring Sathya with them. They thought Sathya would be a great and famous personality. Now My height is a little above five feet. I was much shorter 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 asked 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 the reason for 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.

Sathya As Virupaksha

The Commissioner and his wife played host to us for three days. They took us to the Virupaksha temple in the nearby Hampi Kshetra (Temple). Seshama Raju and his wife told Me to remain outside the temple and keep a watch over their belongings as they would go inside to have darshan of the deity. I readily agreed and remained outside. As soon as they entered the temple, to their utter astonish-

ment, 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 circum-

stances, 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.

The Veil Of Maya Goes

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. I said I would not. Never before I had talked to him that way. It was not My nature to talk back to elders. Hence, Seshama Raju was surprised. "How could Sathya get such courage", he wondered. He could see brilliant effulgence around My smiling face. Immediately, he wanted to send a telegram to Puttaparthi. In those days, it took a minimum of one week for a telegram to reach Puttaparthi from Uravakonda. Hence, he sent a school boy with a message that the parents of this body Easwaramma and Pedda Venkama Raju should go to Uravakonda at once. 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 cancelled. 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.

God Can Do Anything For The Devotee

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 min-

utes. 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.

Death Could Not Separate Them

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. As there were no proper roads to Puttaparthi, she alighted from the car at Karnatakanagepalli and walked the rest of the distance to Old Mandir. 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 acci-

dent. 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 told there should be a place for another *samadhi*. As 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 and 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 Easwaramma 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. This is why I have constructed many buildings in the Ashram for the comfort and convenience of devotees.

The Birth Of Prasanthi Nilayam

When I made it clear that I would not leave Puttaparthi, Sakamma and the maternal uncle of Mysore Maharaja decided to build a Mandir, 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 an officer of the Forest Department 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. As all of them joined hands, the Mandir was constructed in a very short period. As 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 devotees. Whatever I do is for the happiness of 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 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.

Sisters' Seva Remembered

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. So long as they were alive, they served Swami by bringing food everyday, 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 (younger brother of Swami's physical body) 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 everyday. I do not 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 has not taken birth in the ordinary mortal way.

Promise To Subbamma Fulfilled

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 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. As 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. This is how I keep up My promise under any circumstances. In this manner, I never go back on My promise. Words are inadequate to describe Subbamma's service. During the Krishna Avatar, mother Yashoda could love and serve Krishna more than mother Devaki.

Peaceful End Of Chosen Parents

In those days, Easwaramma 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 speaking terms. But Easwaramma 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.

Easwaramma 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. Easwaramma too had her breakfast. Venkamma, who used to look after her needs, was by her side at that time. Easwaramma 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 as they were selected by Swami.

Help Ever Hurt Never

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.

Annunciation Message, 20-10-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.

18

Unity In Diversity - The Fundamental Truth

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* (social 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* and thereby subjects himself to suffering.

Give Up Negative Qualities

The main principle of the culture of Bharat is to understand and experience unity in diversity. But, man today 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 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, as their mind was filled with negative thoughts. The demon Narakasura belonged to the same category. He had 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 doesn't 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)

Chaitanya's Message To Mankind

Once Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sought his mother's permission to go and pursue his studies. Then 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)

(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 shall it be). 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.”

The Significance Of Deepavali

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. As 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 as Rama. But unlike Rama, he joined bad com-

pany, 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 as they are not interested in seeing your auspicious form. In spite of having ears, people have become deaf as 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. So 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, so 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) 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 demons only through love. Therefore, realise the *atma tathwa* 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. It is 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, “*Jan-thunam narajanma durlabham* (out of all the living beings, 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.

Faith Should Be Consistent

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 was not having 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. So 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 counselling. As far as possible, you should not give room for doubts; for, so long as 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 *vyakti* (individual) is one who is pure in thought, word and deed and who maintains perfect harmony between these three. Who is a *vyakti*? One who has manifested his latent *sakti* (power) in all aspects. You must develop such a *sakti*. 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.

Cultivate Love

Dear Students!

First and foremost, develop love. It is easier to cultivate love than all other qualities. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu prayed to Lord Krishna, "I do not want Vaikuntha or Kailasa. I want only your *prema*. 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 which 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 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 human beings will 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; it 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 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.

Deepavali, 4-11-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.

Responsibility Of Women: Character Building

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 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* made intense efforts to establish these values upon the earth.

The Glory That Is Bharat

There is no country equal to the land of Bharat in proclaiming and propagating Truth. There are many in

Bharat who have made great progress in the field of spirituality. This is the sacred land which 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 Non-violence, 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 the 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 financial problems but
how will it resolve domestic problems?*

*It seems unalloyed happiness is not the lot of
womanhood.*

(Telugu poem)

Home Is Women's Primary Responsibility

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? As the mother is not at home to guide them properly, the children go astray. If both the 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 as 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, 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 also would 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 have helped 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 did 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 set an ideal. The same can be said of Damayan-ti. She was one of virtues. With her strong determination, she helped her husband regain his kingdom. In this manner, women of those days earned a name for themselves with their sterling character and ideal motherhood. Today's women should make them role models.

Earn The Wealth Of Virtues

The happiness that one derives from virtues is far superior to the happiness that one gets 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 strove to uphold the honour of their husbands. The strength of an individual lies in his character, not in the wealth he 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 that knowledge which 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 as *karma 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.

Time Is Verily God

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, Kalani-yamitaya 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, *Karmanyeva-dhikarasthe 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, karma becomes sanctified and the work will be transformed into worship. Life becomes meaningful only when you make proper use of time. *Kaaya* (body) has been given to perform *karma* (action). Every karma is associ-

ated with a *karana* (cause) and *kala* (time). It is the primary duty of man to understand the principles of *kala*, *karma*, *karana*, *karthavya* (duty) and act accordingly. This is the main teaching of *Bharatiya* culture. It is its pristine culture which 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 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.

Develop Self-Confidence, Maintain Self-Respect

Embodiments of Love!

This day (19th 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 at you and ridicule you but never be perturbed. Always keep up your self-respect." Lincoln followed her teachings implicitly. He studied under streetlights as 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* 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. It is said, *The proper study of mankind is man*. Today nobody knows what man has in his mind as 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 *deshabhiman* (love for the country) nor *dharmabhiman* (love for righteousness). Instead they are developing *dehabhiman* (love for the body). Body is like a water bubble. How long can you protect it? It will burst sooner or later. Hence, develop *atmabhiman* (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 *atmabhiman* is a true human being. If one does not have *atmabhiman*, one's life is wasted.

Embodiments of Love!

This day (November 19th) 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 came 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 and 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 put to disrepute. One should talk softly and sweetly. Never hurt others’ feelings with harsh talk.

Lead An Exemplary Life

Embodiments of Love!

Primarily, women should keep their tongue under check. As 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 the 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 danam* (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*? *Adrishtam* means 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*. Many things that follow you 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* means 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 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 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 *sujnana*, *vijnana* 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 19th 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 store-house of knowledge. The Vedas contain mantras like *Purusha Suktam*, *Sri Suktam*, etc. 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.

*Ladies' Day, 19-11-2002,
Prasanthi Nilayam*

20

Character - End Of True Education

*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!

EDUCA~~TION~~ is increasing day by day, but there is no commensurate transformation in human behaviour as a result. What is the kind of education do we need? Today, academic excellence in education has increased, but its salutary effect in human behaviour is decreasing.

A Harmonious Blend Of Secular And Spiritual Education Is The Need Of The Hour

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 establishing it as an ideal to the whole world. Modern education ends with mere bookish knowledge. It 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 which teaches human values like truth, righteous conduct, love, etc., 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 and the other is 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 there 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:

Manasyeka Vachasyekam Karmanyakam

Mahatmanam

Manasyanyat Vachasyanyath Karmanyakanyath

Duratmanam

(those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in complete harmony are noble ones; those with whom they are at variance are wicked ones).

Villages Foster Love And Kinship

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 are setting examples to others. For instance, those who are educated and 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 the villages. They are leading a very simple, happy and contented life. Today, you will find that several schools, colleges and universities are 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 do not 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 do not 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.”

Education Sans Good Behaviour Is Useless

A small example. Once, an Indian and a foreigner were travelling 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 and 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 have bought the cigarette and I will smoke freely. I am at liberty to smoke and puff the smoke as I please.” Thus, he began quarrelling 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. 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 re-

plied that it had 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 degenerated behaviour. Therefore, you must acquire high education, but lead a simple

life. That is true education. Once, Mahatma Gandhi was shedding tears while holding a book. He had read that book and found it to be trash. Meanwhile, a Britisher came there and asked Gandhiji why he was shedding tears. Gandhi replied that the book he was holding did not promote character building, which he believed was the heart of education. 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 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 shall 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 opinion, "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 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, he would ultimately become a black sheep in society.

Keep A Watch On Your Words

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:

- W - Watch your Words
- A - Watch your Actions
- T - Watch your Thoughts
- C - Watch your Character
- H - Watch your Heart

The real watch is when you keep a watch on your words, actions, thoughts, character, and heart; not the one you tie to your wrist. The wrist-watch may go 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.)

Rise To The Level Beyond The Senses

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, East Africa, etc., 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.

Follow The Principle Of Simple Living And High Thinking

“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 towards

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 spend 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 of 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.

*Discourse on 20-11-2002,
Prasanthi Nilayam.*

21

The Best Way To Love God Is To Love All And Serve All

*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)

Dear 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 towards 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 righteous conduct alone are protecting the universe. But, unfortunately, man is unable to recognise this fact and is leading a miserable life.

Education Is For Achieving The Goal Of Love!

Embodiments of Love!

Education is not an exercise. Nor 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. But, you are unable to recognise the underlying philosophy for which this sacred country stands. 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. Nature, in turn, is associated with the *Paramatma* (supreme being). Thus, *prakriti* (nature) is an *anga* (part) of the *Paramatma* (supreme being). It is only when man recognises the nature of these parts and sub-parts (*anganga*) and conducts himself accordingly, he will 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 even for 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 comes first 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 right and rain to 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, *Adhyatma vidya vidyanam* (among various branches of knowledge, spiritual knowledge is the best) and “*Saa vidya yaa 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 towards you. In Indian culture, first place has been given to the mother

and father by proclaiming *Matrudevo bhava* (revere your mother as God) and *Pitrudevo 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 which 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 these students are 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. They, therefore, undertake some menial jobs to supplement their income. The question is, why not they do the same service in their own country, Bharat. Today, the educated people are not serving their motherland. They do not 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 rendering 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?

Serve Your Motherland

Dear Students!

Give up the idea of going to foreign countries for higher education or jobs. Even if you are not able to get any employment in your country, remain here and serve the country. You serve the society. Bring honour and glory to your motherland, Bharat. Attain the glory that "this student is a hero in action and *sadhana*." 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 which is already not here? It is said, *Yanna Bharate, thanna Bharata*, meaning that which is not here in Bharat is not there in other countries. All the power and all 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 shining 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 behove 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, it is only when you destroy your ego and lose your identity, the real fruit of your actions comes out. Therefore, remove your *dehabhimana* (attachment to the 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?

Develop Self-Respect, Cultivate Human Values

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*. 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 must be extended to others first. Only then there will be reaction, reflection and resound. You must 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* (non-violence). How can you call yourself a human being, without cultivating human values? It is only because of the human values, 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!

“Love” is a quality permeating 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.

Realise The Principle Of Unity

Embodiments 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.

Emulate The Self-Confidence Of Abraham Lincoln

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 Abraham 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 bazaar and read. He used to borrow books from his classmates and read them during night times 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 the 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 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 will continue to be your companion throughout your life. Therefore, cultivate the divine quality of self-respect,. 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. As 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 book. 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. He, therefore, 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.” Then 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 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 had happened sometime ago. 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 night, since the charges for electricity were 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 enquired from him why he did not 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 enquired from 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 Department people to restore the power supply immediately. Do not reveal to the students anything of what transpired between you and Me." Thus, I always look to the convenience and welfare of the students.

Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanoddarana Pathakam

Today, I have given a cheque for sixty lakh rupees to Paramahamsa, 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 as 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 being 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 were carried away by untruth. When truth was conveyed to them, they were not prepared to believe it.

The children are being looked after very well. Paramahamsa 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 even the Vedic mantras. 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. As 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."

The reason why I am telling you all this, is 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 the 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. People outside 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 being 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 during his tenure.

*Benedictory Address to 21st Convocation,
22-11-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.*

Listen To The Master Of The Universe And Transform Yourselves Into Ideal Human Beings

“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 man, every living being, aspires to attain place 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 he will not give up till he realises the goal. Ordinary mortals will not make any efforts in this direction as 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.

Experience Of Non-Dualism Is Wisdom

People pursue various paths to experience 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*, respectively. The body symbolises *mahattattwam* and the tail, *yoga*. What is *ritham*? *Trikalabadyam 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*, *sathyam*, *ritham*, *yogam* and *mahattattwam*. *Jnana* 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 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 *sannyasa* 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 *sannyasa* 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.

Wisdom Enters When Ego Exits

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.

*Manasyeka 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 sometime, a thin layer of soot gets accumulated

over the glass. Consequently, light becomes dim. It is only when you clean the glass, 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 sannyasi 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 Sannyasi overheard their conversation and became angry. When Ubhaya Bharati and her disciples were coming back from 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: *ahamkara* (ego). How can one with *ahamkara* and *abhimana* be a *Jnani* (one of wisdom)?” It was an eye-opener for the Sannyasi.

Women Are Embodiments Of Virtues

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 *Kali* 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 a 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*, 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*. *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 Stands For Renunciation

Siva symbolises complete sacrifice and renunciation. In this world everyone has *dehabhimana* (body attachment) However, Siva has absolutely no body attachment. He has only *atmabhiman* (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, 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*. You have to get rid of this animal quality, develop humanness in you and rise to the level of the divine.

Food decides Your Actions

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 by their wives only. The reason being, housewives wish for the well-being of the entire family and prepare food. On the other hand, if you employ

cooks, God alone 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 sannyasi 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 sannyasi 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. So, he went to his Guru by name Satchidanandam and explained his predicament: "Swami, why am I getting such unsacred visions?" The 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 sannyasi as he had partaken of the food prepared as part of her obituary rites. From that day, the sannyasi 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 were 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, “Is *buddhi* (intellect) or *medhas* (intelligence) greater?” The participants said that *medhas* was greater. But Vikramaditya did not subscribe to their viewpoint. He said that *buddhi* was greater because it was very sacred as it contained the knowledge of the Self. *Buddhigrahyam 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. But they confer only temporary satisfaction. On the other hand, when you have purity of thought, word and deed, you experience eternal happiness.

Never Stray Away From The Path Of Truth

Embodiments of Love!

Ritham is that which is changeless in the three peri-

ods 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 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 as 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*. 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.

I Am The Embodiment Of Eternal Bliss

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 which 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*, eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intel-

lect, beyond all mental conditions and the three *gunas* of *sattwa*, *rajas* and *thamas*).

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 Vinasyati* (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*. 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, i.e., 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.

*Divine Birthday, 23-11-2002,
Prasanthi Nilayam.*

23

Love And Morality — The Need Of The Hour

*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 *deeksha* (determination) and *dakshata* (dexterity). One who makes use of these virtues for noble causes alone is a true human being.

Man's True Nature Is Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam

The cosmic power lies in the navel of God. Hence, He is known as *Hiranyagarbha*. As He is full of divine effulgence and radiance, He is said to be the very personification of beauty and splendour (*soundarya-vanthudu* 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* as 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 the other name 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, sasthras, 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, qualified non-dualism, etc. 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, sustenance and dissolution. 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.

Early Days Of Jesus Christ

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 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 hilltop. 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 enquired from 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. Hence, 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.*

Sacred Teachings Of Jesus

Jesus could instill such great faith in those people. One of those fishermen was named by Jesus as Peter. He developed intense love and faith towards Jesus. From then on, the fishermen 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, so do not waste your thought on these ephemeral things. The indweller (*dehi*) 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's 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 and, therefore, 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. Humaneness 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.

Shun Jealousy, Develop Noble Qualities

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* (hated). Their members who are working in overseas countries are leading exemplary lives. Today you have 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, will the organisation 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 *asthras* he had mastered could come to his rescue. Therefore, all your education will be of little use if your mind is not channelled 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 hearts, 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 *daya* (compassion). You deserve to be called a *manava* only when your heart is filled with love and compassion.

Emulate The Noble Qualities Of Jesus

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 *hiranya-garbha*. 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 towards 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.

Acquire Goodness Along With Greatness

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. 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.

Pray For The Welfare Of Others

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*. 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.

Purify Your Hearts With Selfless Love

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 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 one 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 his 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.

*Christmas, 25-12-2002,
Prasanthi Nilayam*