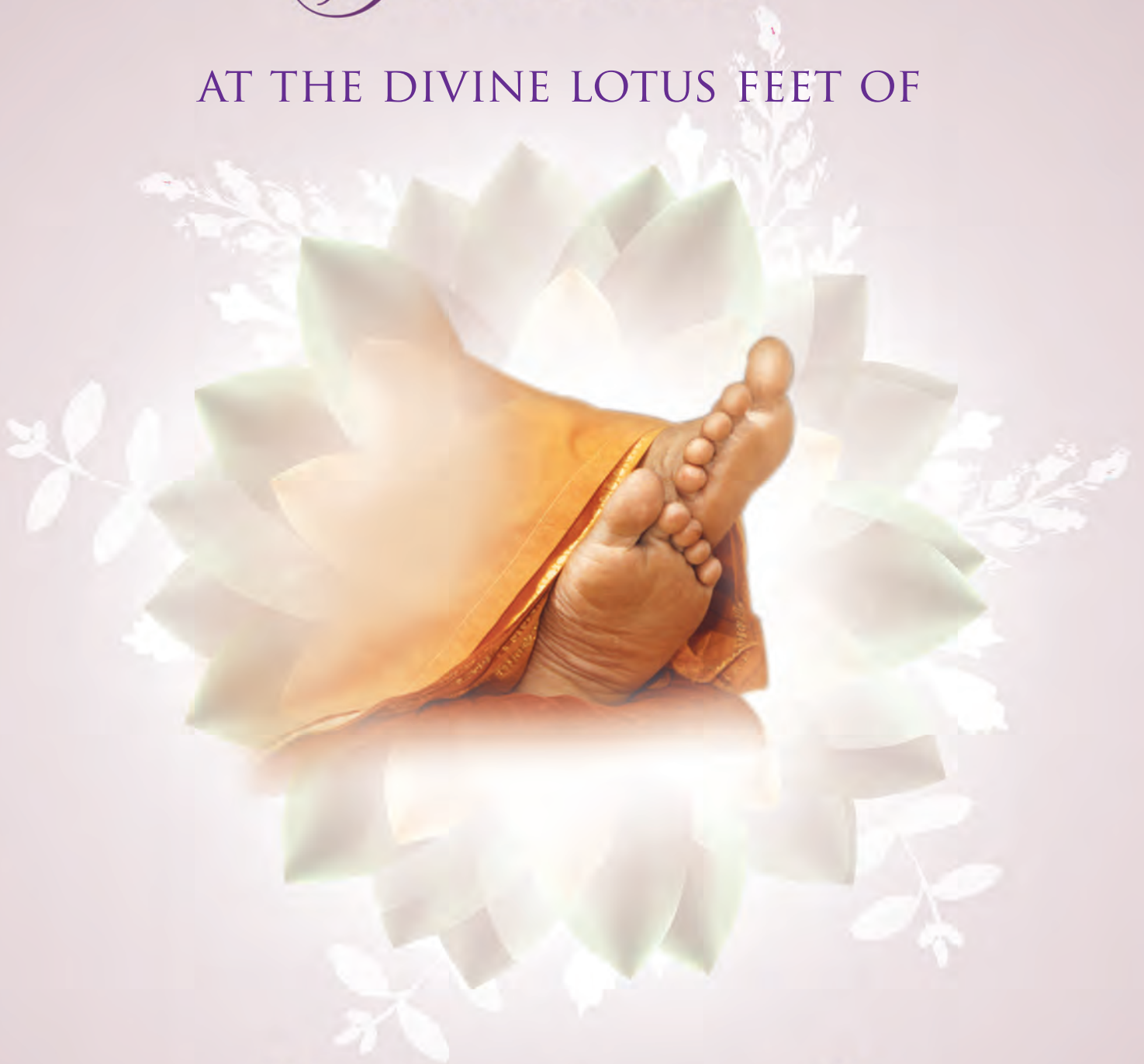
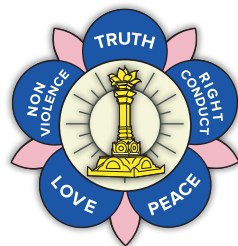


Dedicated

AT THE DIVINE LOTUS FEET OF



BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



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sathyasai.org

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FOREWORD

Om Sri Sai Ram.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the *Jagat Guru*, *Sad Guru*, and *Guru Naam Guru*. He is the universal teacher, Divine teacher, true teacher, and teacher of teachers. His message is universal and eternal and transcends the limitations of space, time, race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and religion. His life is His message, and His message is love.

His every word is a *mantra*, His every sentence is a *sutra* (aphorism), His every conversation is a *Gita*, and His every discourse is a *Veda*. His teachings are the essence of all scriptures. Swami's unique and magnanimous teachings given through His discourses, writings, and conversations, as well as His exemplary life, are unparalleled in human history, both with respect to their content and their efficacy in transforming countless lives for the better. Loving Lord Sai is indeed the Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent Lord of the universe, come down in human form for the redemption of humanity.

Diving deep into His teachings and practising them in our daily lives, our lives will be redeemed and we will reach the *summum bonum* of life.

On the auspicious and historic occasion of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 90th Birthday celebrations, we offer at His Divine Lotus Feet a garland of Divine discourses in which He has expounded on various aspects of human life and addressed them in detail. In His infinite compassion, He revealed His Divinity and His Divine mission in these discourses. He also emphasised the harmony of religions and the universality of faiths. These discourses also dwell upon His message to the Sathya Sai Organisation that bears His name and His message for women, youth, health care professionals, educators, leaders, and spiritual seekers in general. We pray to Bhagawan that the readers may drink the Divine nectar of His words, enjoy Divine bliss, and redeem their lives by practising His teachings.

Jai Sai Ram.

Narendranath Reddy, MD

Chairman, Prasanthi Council



*A*ll service should be regarded as an offering to God and every opportunity to serve should be welcomed as a gift from God. When service is done in this spirit, it will lead in due course to self-realisation.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
November 19, 1987



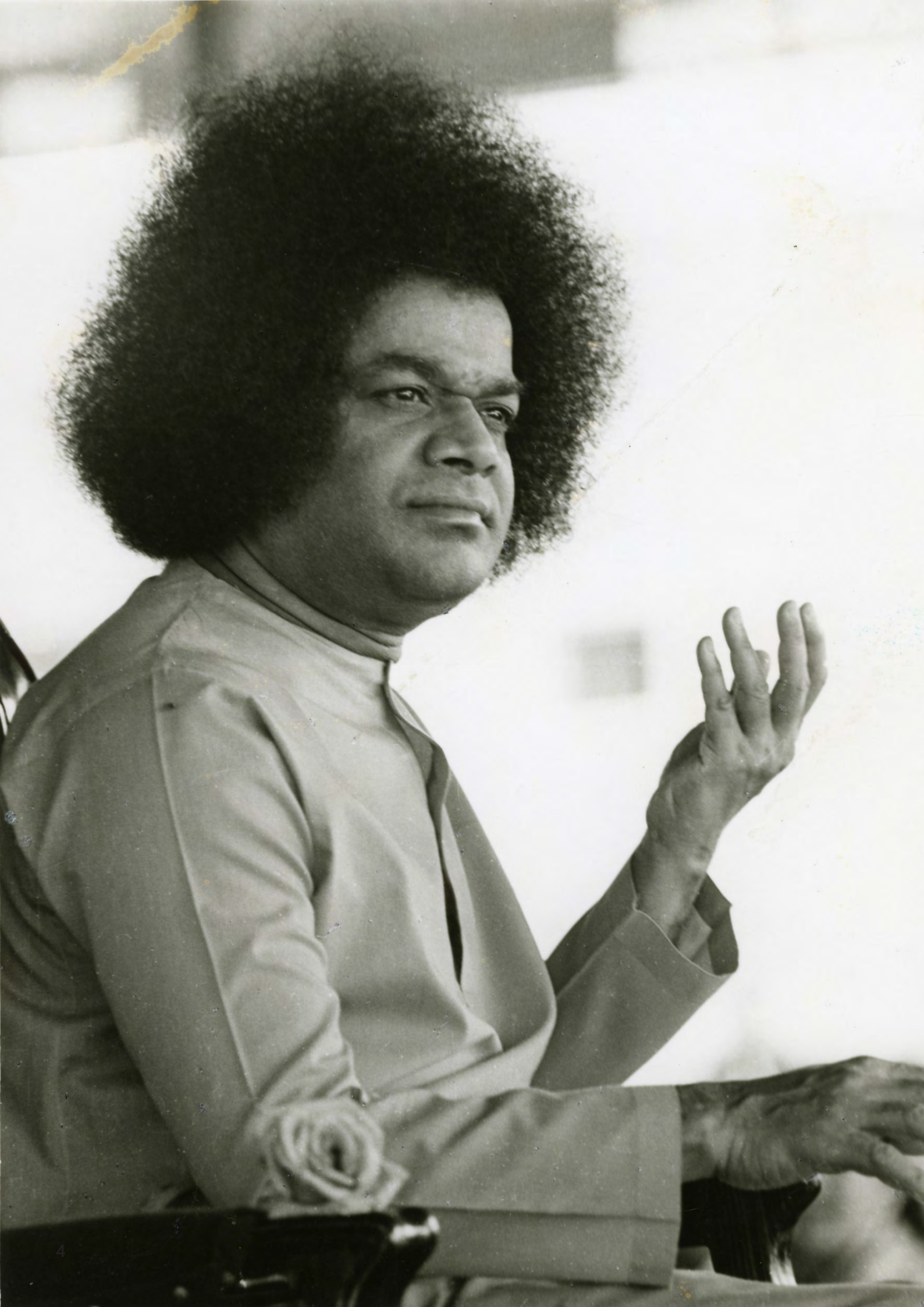


CHAPTER

One

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA —
REVELATION OF HIS DIVINITY AND
HIS DIVINE MISSION





THE REVELATION

You are engaged in discovering solutions to problems, arguments to overcome doubts and means to prevent new problems and fresh doubts from arising; such exercises, which all conferences relish, cannot help successful navigation across the sea of spiritual endeavour.

These are but frail contrivances, these discussions, resolutions, speeches, and regulations. The world is much too stormy and agitated to be quietened by these. This is the time for cool calm contemplation, not quick passionate speculation and hasty decision.

You need to contemplate once again on the eternal lessons laid down by the sages of India's past, lessons that have been neglected and cynically forgotten in recent years. The suggestions and solutions that come out of the discussions today are all good, so far as they go, but how can a person who cannot himself swim teach others the art? How can one whose granary is empty pour out in charity?

Acquire the wealth of devotion, fortitude, and peace before venturing to advise others how to acquire them. *Bharat* (India) has suffered slights and disregard as a result of a spate of teachers who have not cared to practise what they teach. I know you have the enthusiasm to carry My message among the people of this country and other countries. Let Me remind you that the best and the only successful way in which you can do it is to translate the message into your own lives. Your thoughts, words, and deeds must be satu-

rated with the message. Then they will spread effortlessly and efficiently, and the face of the world will be transformed.

***Namasmarana*, the Only Hope for Man in This Age**

The Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Secretaries of Sathya Sai Organisations from all over the world are here. You are officers of the Sai Army. How can you lead soldiers into the fray when you are not aware of the intricacies of warfare, when you are yourselves inefficient instruments?

You can attempt to lead others only after practising the disciplines to perfection. This is true of all fields of human activity. *Ananda* (bliss) and *prasanthi* (supreme peace) have to be acquired first by you and then can be communicated to others.

Teachers in schools have themselves to be examples of what they require the pupils to be. Men in authority who exhort others to follow the paths of love and co-operation have themselves to practise those virtues. The people are now not willing to be led; the leaders have no capacity to lead. Progress is the result of mutual trust between the leaders and the led.

The unrest that is rampant now in all sections of the people everywhere is due to the irresponsibility of parents, teachers, administrators and leaders, as well as of those who hunger to benefit from them.

Namasmarana is one of the basic disciplines to which this Conference is paying great attention.

The scriptures say that in this age of materialism it is the one hope for man. So you should not brush aside the Name as a piece of glass or as a pebble.

Man Is Using a Gem to Play Marbles on the Road

There was once a boy who picked up a precious gem, bright and round, and used it for playing marbles on the road with his comrades. A merchant dealing in precious stones chanced to pass along that road, and his discerning eye fell on the gem. He approached the boy, took him aside, and offered to pay him fifty rupees in exchange. If the boy could know the value of fifty rupees, he would have known the value of the gem! He went to his mother and told her that a stranger had tempted him with fifty rupees in return for the marble he played with. She was surprised that it was so costly, and she said, "Do not go out of the compound with it; play in the garden with your friend." When the value was revealed, limits were set.

The merchant had no sleep that night; he was planning to secure the gem from those simple folk so that he could sell it at huge profit to some millionaire or *Maharaja*. He discovered the house of the boy and he moved up and down that road hoping to see the boy. When he saw the boy play with it as if it was as cheap as a marble, his heart was wrung in agony. The boy threw it on the floor just at the moment his mother emerged from the inner apartments and it struck her foot and fell under a bush. He spoke to the boy, asking for the gem in exchange for a hundred rupees, and again for 500 rupees! The son ran into the house in tears, complaining about the stranger who will not let him alone. The mother came out into the garden and begged the merchant to go away.

The merchant grasped the chance; he told the mother that he was ready to give a thousand rupees on the spot, if the marble was placed in his hand! On hearing this, she forbade the child to play with it outside the house; he could play

only within the rooms. The merchant could not be shooed off like that; he appeared the next day in front of the house and held out 10,000 rupees as his offer for the marble. The mother refused to part with it but kept it now in an iron safe, under lock and key! When the merchant came the next day with 50,000 rupees, she took it to a bank and deposited it in their safety vaults.

You Are Unaware of the Value of the Name of God

You are also playing marbles with the Name of God, unaware of its value. Once you realise its worth, you will keep it in your heart of hearts as the most precious treasure. Know that the Divine Name is the key to success in your search for consolation, confidence, courage, illumination and liberation.

Another illustration can be given from the ancient texts. On one occasion, a competition was arranged among the gods for the purpose of selecting the leader of the *ganas* (troops of demi-gods who are the attendants of Shiva). Participants had to go round the world quickly and come back to the Feet of Lord Shiva.

The gods started off on their own vehicles; the younger son of Shiva also enthusiastically entered the competition. He had an elephantine head but his vehicle was a mouse! Therefore, his progress was severely handicapped. He had not proceeded far when Narada appeared before him and asked him, "Whither are you bound?" The son was very much annoyed and he fell into a rage, for, what happened was a bad omen, doubly unpropitious for those going on a journey.

It is inauspicious if the first person you come across when you are on a journey is a lone Brahmin. Though the foremost among the Brahmins (he was the son of *Brahma* Himself), Narada was a bad omen! Again it is a bad omen if someone asks you, "Whither are you bound?" when you are going somewhere. Narada put him that very

question! Nevertheless, Narada was able to assuage his anger.

The Name from Which the Universe Has Emanated

Narada drew forth from Shiva's son the sadness of his predicament and his desire to win. Narada consoled him, exhorted him not to yield to despair, and advised him thus: "Rama – the Name – is the seed from which the gigantic tree called the universe has emanated. So, write the Name on the ground, go round it once, and hurry back to Shiva, claiming the prize." He did so and returned to his Father.

When asked how he returned so soon, he related the story of Narada and his advice. Shiva appreciated the validity of Narada's counsel; the prize was awarded to the son, who was acclaimed as *Ganapathi* (Master of the *ganas*) and *Vinayaka* (Leader of All).

The Name undoubtedly brings in the grace of God. Meerabai, the Queen of Rajasthan, gave up status and riches, fortune and family, and dedicated herself to the adoration of the Lord, *Giridhara Gopala*. Her husband brought a chalice of poison and she was ordered to drink it. She uttered the Name of Krishna while she drank it; it was transformed into nectar by the grace the Divine Name evoked!

Keertan is the word used for the recital or singing of the Name and Glory of God. *Sankeertan* means reciting or singing well or aloud and with joy or in ecstasy. We can distinguish four different forms of *Namasankeertan*. *Bhava* (mood-filled) *Namasankeertan*, *Guna* (divine quality-oriented) *Namasankeertan*, *Leela* (divine miracle-related) *Namasankeertan*, and sheer *Namasankeertan*; *Bhava Namasankeertan* is the name given to recitals where the Name is sung with one or the other *bhava* (emotion or mental attitude) towards the Lord.

Different Attitudes One Can Show towards God

It can be *Madhurabhava* (sweet emotion), just as Radha was over-powered with. She saw, heard, tasted, sought and gained only that sweetness at all times and all places. *Raso vai sah* (Divine sweetness is He). She made no distinction between Nature and Nature's God; it was all God, all Krishna. She felt, experienced, and knew that Krishna was ever present in the waking, dreaming, and deep sleep stages. She realised the truth of the *Bhagavad Gita* declaration of Krishna that His hands and feet, His eyes, face and head were everywhere. Her adoration of God is the supreme example of *Madhura Bhava Namasankeertan*.

Then we have the *Vathsalya-bhava* (parental feeling) *Namasankeertan*. Yashoda, the foster mother of Krishna, can be taken as the ideal for this type of *bhava*. Though she had a series of experiences of Krishna being Divine, she preferred to serve him as mother and to adore Him as her son.

Anuraga-bhava (lover-beloved feeling) *Namasankeertan* is exemplified best and in the purest form in the *Gopis*. They installed the Lord in their hearts, rid themselves of all earthly attachments, and lived only in His contemplation, with all thoughts, deeds, and words dedicated to Him. Then there is the *Sakhya-bhava* (comrade-feeling) *Namasankeertan*, as found in Arjuna, who believed in Krishna as his most intimate friend and brother-in-law (for he married Krishna's sister), and confided in Him as a comrade. This too is an attitude that will attach you to Divinity and sublimate the lower impulses.

Dhasya-bhava (servant-master attitude) *Namasankeertan* is another type. Serve the Lord as His faithful unquestioning servant – this is the path of Hanuman in the *Ramayana*. He had no will or wish of his own. His prayer was to be a fit instrument for the purposes of the Master.

The Name Has the Capacity to Redeem, Cure, and Save

The last attitude is *Shantha-bhava* (attitude of unruffled equanimity) *Namasankeertan* – praising the Lord whatever may happen, unaffected by ups and downs, bearing all the vagaries of fortune as His play. In the *Mahabharata* you will find Bhishma saturated with this attitude; he adored Krishna, even when Krishna was advancing towards him to kill him.

Another method of *Namasankeertan* is to remind oneself of the various exploits and sports, and the various acts of grace and compassion, which the Lord has manifested in the world, while reciting His Name. This is called *leela* (divine play-oriented) *Namasankeertan*. Chaithanya and Thyagaraja realised the Lord through this path.

Others recollect more of the majesty, the glory, the might, the mystery, the magnificence, the munificence and the love with which God has clothed Himself, while reciting His Name. This attitude is spoken of as *Guna* (attributes, characteristics) *Namasankeertan*. Most of the saints gratefully honoured in many lands are of this category.

Another category is denoted by seekers who attach value to the syllables and sound of the Name as such, irrespective of the meaning thereof. When the Name is pronounced, they say it draws towards the aspirant God and His grace – whatever may be the *bhava* and whether the *leela* or *guna* is associated with the *sankeertan* or not. The Name has strength, a power, and a capacity to redeem, cure and save, alone and unaided.

The Rama Principle Is the Atma, Source of All Joy

The Name Rama was once indicated by Rama Himself (the son of Dasharatha, hero of the *Ramayana*, the incarnation of the Lord in the Thretha Yuga) as a potent liberator. When Rama was passing through the forests with Sita and Lakshmana, the hermits who recognised Him as

Divine gathered around Him with a prayer that they be initiated by Him and be given some *mantra* (sacred formula) that they could repeat for spiritual uplift and victory. Rama replied that He was a prince in exile wandering in the forests and so He could not presume any authority to initiate hermits into a spiritual path. He moved on along the jungle tracks.

Watching Him walking fast, with Sita immediately behind Him and Lakshmana following behind, an aged hermit exclaimed, “Friends! See! Rama is initiating us! He is awarding us the *mantra*! God is leading. Nature (His constant companion, His shadow) is following; the *jeevi* (individual), part of the Lord, the wave of the ocean, is in the rear; he can see the Lord only if the deluding Nature is propitiated or by-passed. This is indeed a silent lesson in *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). *Ra* is God; *ma* is the individual, who has fallen behind. *Aa* is *Prakrithi* (Nature); Rama, Rama is the *mantra* He is vouchsafing so graciously. Take it and save yourselves. For me, there is no other course.”

I am emphasising *Rama-Nama* (the name Rama) because the Rama principle is the *Atma*. Rama means that which is pleasant and which pleases. Now, the *Atma* is the source of all joy; its nature is bliss. Moreover, as Thyagaraja discovered, Rama is the Name that worshippers of both Narayana (Vishnu) and Shiva can adopt. The syllable *Ra* is the key syllable of the *Narayana mantra* (*Om Namo Narayanaya*) and the syllable *ma* is the key syllable of the *Shiva mantra* (*Om Namashivaya*).

God Is the Harmony of All the Names and Forms

The prejudices and factions among the worshippers of Narayana form of God and Shiva form are meaningless because both represent the One ultimate Universal. They are distinguishable, it may be said, by the different Divine equipment.

They are *shanka* (conch) and *chakra* (discus) in the case of Narayana and *damaru* (small drum)

and *thrishula* (three-pronged spear-trident) in the case of Shiva. But the conch and the drum both symbolise God's accessibility through audible praise and song; the discus and trident symbolise God's being the maker and master of time – discus representing the wheel of time and the three prongs of the trident represent the past, the present, and the future.

Narayana is referred to as *Hari* and Shiva as *Hara*. Both these Names are derived from the same root, *Har*, which means to destroy, to remove, to captivate, to attract and to harmonise – functions that God has clothed Himself with.

Man's duty is to sanctify his days and nights with the unbroken *smarana* (recollection) of the Name. Recollect with joy, with yearning. If you do so, God is bound to appear before you in the form and with the name you have allotted Him as most beautiful and most appropriate!

God is all names and all forms, the integration of all these in harmonious charm! Gods designated in different faiths and adored by different human communities are all limbs of the One God that really is. Just as the body is the harmonious blending of the senses and the limbs, God is the harmony of all the forms and names that man gives Him!

Do Not Make Distinction between Different Names

Only those who are ignorant of the glory of God will insist on one name and one form for His adoration and, what is worse, condemn the use by others of other names and forms! Since you are

all associated with Sathya Sai Organisations, I must warn you against such silly obduracy. Do not go about proclaiming that you are a sect distinct and separate from those who adore God in other forms and names. Thereby, you are limiting the very God whom you are extolling.

Do not proclaim in your enthusiasm, "We want only Sai; we are not concerned with the rest." You must convince yourselves that all forms are Sai's; all names are Sai's. There is no "rest"; all are He.

You must have noticed that I do not speak about Sai in My discourses, nor do I sing of Sai during the *bhajan* with which I usually conclude My discourses. And you must have wondered why. Let me tell you the reason.



I do not want the impression to gain ground that I desire this name and this form to be publicised. I have not come to set afoot a new cult; I do not want people to be misled on this point.

I affirm that this Sai form is the form of all the various names that man uses for the adoration of the Divine. So, I am teaching that no distinction should be made between the names Rama, Krishna, Ishwara and Sai – for they are all My names.

When I know that I am the current that illumines all the various bulbs, I am indifferent to the bulbs that you consider so important. When you pay attention to the bulbs, factions arise and sects are born. Sathya Sai *Seva Samithis* should not encourage discord and distinctions; they must

adore the One, appearing as many, the basic Divine, which illumines all the bulbs.

Be Conscious of God's Presence as the Motivator

I have not the slightest intention of utilising the *Seva Samithis* (Service Organisations) for propagating My Name or canvassing homage for My Name. No! I am content only when spiritual endeavours and disciplines to elevate and purify man are progressing everywhere. It is only through these that My universal reality will be revealed. So, do not limit Me to the boundaries of any one name and form. Your aim should be to see the self-same God in all the forms that are worshipped, to picture Him in all the names, nay, to be conscious of His presence as the inner motivator of every living being, in every particle of matter.

Do not fall into the error of considering some to be men worthy of reverence and some unworthy. Sai is in everyone, so all deserve your reverence and service. Propagate this truth; that is the function I assign to the *Seva Samithis*.

You can observe Me and My activities. Note how I adhere to righteousness, moral order, truth and universal compassion. That is what I desire you to learn from Me. Many of you plead for a message from Me to take to the *Samithi* of which you are members. Well, My life is My message. You will be adhering to My message if you live so that your lives are evidence of the dispassionate quiet, the courage, the confidence and the eagerness to serve those who are in distress that My life inspires you with.

God is immanent in the world. So, treat the world lovingly as you will treat your Master. Krishna served the Pandavas and He drove the chariot of Arjuna. So, though He was not a King, He became much more: a King-Maker! Serve, whatever the obstacle and whatever the cynical ridicule you may attract. Such reactions are inevitable when

one is engaged in doing good. Take My example. Praise and calumny have accompanied Me throughout the ages. Opposition and obstacles only tend to highlight the good and strengthen resolve.

Do Not Exaggerate the Significance of Miracles

The torture that Prahlada's father inflicted on him to turn his mind away from God helped to bring out his unflinching devotion. The wickedness of Ravana served to reveal the might of Rama's bow. Traducers like Sishupala, Dantavakra, Ravana, and Kamsa are inevitable accessories of every incarnation. This Sai Rama, too, has that age-old accompaniment. Now too, their brood is evident. On one side, adoration and homage are piling high into a peak; on the other, abjuration and slander are also peak high. Standing between them, I bless them both with lifted hands for I am not elated by one or depressed by the other. For the traducers will be rewarded with the crown they deserve; I will be crowned with My own glory.

Of what avail is it if you simply worship My Name and form without attempting to cultivate the *samathwa* (equal love for all) that I have, My *santhi* (unruffled equanimity), My *prema* (love), My *sahana* (patience and fortitude) and My *ananda* (ever-blissful nature)?

You elaborate in your lectures the unique powers of Sai, the incidents that are described as "miracles" in books written on Me by some persons. But, I request you not to attach importance to these. Do not exaggerate their significance; the most significant and important power is, let Me tell you, My *prema* (love). I may turn the sky into earth, or earth into sky, but that is not the sign of Divine might. It is the *prema* and the *sahana* that is effective universally; ever-present, that is the unique sign.

A Unique World Conference Held for the First Time

When you attempt to cultivate and propagate this love and this fortitude, trouble and travail will dog your steps. You must welcome them, for without them the best in you cannot be drawn out. If gold was as plentiful as dust, or diamonds as easily available as pebbles, no one would care for them. They are won after enormous exertion and expense and, therefore, they are eagerly sought after.

Since those who have devotion are gathered here and people of all nations have come, I cannot but tell you one fact. World conferences dedicated to religion or spiritual problems have, no doubt, been held before, as have conferences of followers of particular faiths. But these have been held only after the demise of the founders and Divine inspirers. This is the very first time that a world conference is being held of devoted persons while the incarnation is present before everyone, with the body assumed for the purpose bearing the Name that is chosen for It by Itself.

I must tell you this fact because ninety-nine persons out of a hundred among you do not know My Reality. You have come here drawn by diverse needs: a taste for spiritual matters, eagerness to develop the institutions to which you are attached, admiration or affection, love or reverence, or a spurt of enthusiasm to join others and share with others your own exultation.

Don't Allow Doubt to Distract You from My Divinity

In truth, you cannot understand the nature of My Reality, either today or even after a thousand years of steady austerity or ardent inquiry, even if all mankind joins in that effort. But, in a short time you will become cognisant of the bliss showered by the Divine Principle, which has taken upon itself this sacred body and this sacred name.

Your good fortune that will provide you this chance is greater than what was available for anchorites, monks, sages, saints and even personalities embodying facets of Divine glory!

Since I move about with you, eat like you, and talk with you, you are deluded into believing that this is but an instance of common humanity. Be warned against this mistake. I am also deluding you by My singing with you, talking with you, and engaging Myself in activities with you. But, any moment My Divinity may be revealed to you and so you have to be ready, prepared for the moment. Since Divinity is enveloped by humanness you must endeavour to overcome the *maya* (delusion) that hides it from your eyes.

This is a human form in which every Divine entity, every Divine Principle, that is to say, all the names and forms ascribed by man to God, are manifest – “*Sarvadevataswaroopalanu dharin-china manavakaram ee akaram.*” Do not allow doubt to distract you; if you only install steady faith in My Divinity in the altar of your heart, you can win a vision of My Reality.

Instead, if you swing like the pendulum of a clock, one moment devotion, another moment disbelief, you can never succeed in comprehending the truth and win that bliss. You are very fortunate that you have a chance to experience the bliss of the vision of the *sarvadaivatwa swarupam* (the form, which is all forms of all Gods) now, in this life itself.

Let Me draw your attention to another fact. On previous occasions when God incarnated on earth, the bliss of recognising Him in the incarnation was vouchsafed only after the physical embodiment had left the world, in spite of the abundance of clear evidence of His grace. And the loyalty and devotion they commanded from men arose through fear and awe of their superhuman powers and skills, or at their imperial and penal authority.

But, ponder for a moment on this Sathya Sai Manifestation. In this age of rampant materialism, aggressive disbelief, and irreverence, what is it that brings to It the adoration of millions from all over the world? You will be convinced that the basic reason for this is the fact that this is the Supra-worldly Divinity in human form.

Revival of Vedic Dharma is Sai Sankalpa

Again, how fortunate you are that you can witness all the countries of the world paying homage to *Bharat*; you can hear adoration to Sathya Sai's Name reverberating throughout the world, even while this body is existing – not at some future date, but when it is with you, before you. And again, you can witness very soon the restoration of *Sanathana Dharma* to its genuine and natural status, the *Dharma* laid down in the *Vedas* for the good of all the peoples of the world.

The revival of *Vedic Dharma* is the *Sai Sankalpa* (the resolve that Sai has) is not only drawing


people towards Me, it is also attracting them by the manifestation of My *shakthi* (power), and *saamarthya* (capability). This is not a *bhrama tatwam* (phenomenon of delusion). This *tatwam* (phenomenon) will sustain truth, it will uproot untruth, and in that victory make all of you exult in ecstasy. This is the *Sai Sankalpam*.

So utilise the chance of association with Me as much as possible, and endeavour as quickly and as best as you can to follow the directions that I have been giving. Obeying My instructions is enough; for it will benefit you more than the most rigorous asceticism. Practise *Sathya* (truth), *Dharma* (righteousness), *Santhi* (peace), and *Prema* (love), which are dear to Me. Resolve to keep those ideals before you, ever in all your thoughts, words, and deeds. That can confer on you the *summum bonum* of mergence in the Supreme Substance of Divinity.

**Divine Discourse at the World Conference of
Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations
on May 17, 1968**



BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA'S LETTER TO HIS BROTHER ON MAY 25, 1947

 On May 25, 1947, at the age of 20, in response to a letter from his brother, who was concerned with what He was doing, Sri Sathya Sai Baba wrote the following letter. This letter disclosed His mission.

My dear one! I received the communication that you wrote and sent. I found in it the surging floods of your devotion and affection, with the undercurrents of doubts and anxiety. Let Me tell you that it is impossible to plumb the hearts and discover the natures of *jnanis*, *yogis*, ascetics, saints, sages and the like.

People are endowed with a variety of characteristics and mental attitudes, so each one judges according to his own angle, talks and argues in the light of his own nature. But we have to stick to our own right path, our own wisdom and our own resolution without getting affected by popular appraisal. As the proverb says, it is only the fruit-laden tree that receives the shower of stones from passers-by. The good always provoke the bad into calumny; the bad always provoke the good into derision. That is the nature of this world. One must be surprised if such things do not happen.

The people have to be pitied rather than condemned. They do not know. They have no patience to judge aright. They are too full of lust, anger and conceit to see clearly and know fully.

So, they write all manner of things. If they only knew, they would not talk or write like that. We, too, should not attach any value to such comments and take them to heart, as you seem to do. Truth will certainly triumph someday. Untruth can never win. Untruth might appear to overpower truth but its victory will fade away and truth will establish itself.

It is not the way of the great to swell when people offer worship and to shrink when people scoff. As a matter of fact, no sacred text lays down rules to regulate the lives of the great, prescribing habits and attitudes that they must adopt. They themselves know the path they must tread; their wisdom regulates and makes their acts holy. Self-reliance and beneficial activity – these two are their special marks. They may also be engaged in the promotion of the welfare of devotees and in allotting them the fruits of their actions. Why should you be affected by tangle and worry as long as I am adhering to these two? After all, praise and blame of the populace do not touch the *Atma*, the reality; they can touch only the outer physical frame.

I have a 'task': to foster all mankind and ensure for all of them lives full of bliss (*ananda*). I have a 'vow': to lead all who stray away from the straight path again into goodness and save them. I am attached to a 'work' that I love: to remove the sufferings of the poor and grant them what they

lack. I have a 'reason to be proud,' for I rescue all who worship and adore me, aright. I have my definition of the 'devotion': I expect those devoted to me have to treat joy and grief, gain and loss, with equal fortitude. This means that I will never give up those who attach themselves to me.

When I am thus engaged in my beneficial task, how can my name be tarnished, as you apprehend? I would advise you not to heed such absurd talk. *Mahatmas* do not acquire greatness through someone calling them so; they do not become small when someone calls them small. Only those low ones who revel in opium and marijuana but claim to be unexcelled *yogis*, only those who quote scriptural texts to justify their gourmandism and pride, only those who are dry-as-dust scholars exulting in their casuistry and argumentative skill – only those will be moved by praise or blame.

You must have read life stories of saints and divine personages. In those books, you must have read of even worse falsehoods and more heinous imputations cast against them. This is the lot of *mahatmas* everywhere, at all times. Why then do you take these things so much to heart? Have you not heard of dogs that howl at the stars? How long can they go on? Authenticity will win.

I will not give up my mission or my determination. I know I will carry them out. I treat the honour and dishonour, the praise and blame that may be the consequence, with equal equanimity. Internally, I am unconcerned. I act but in the outer world; I talk and move about for the sake of the outer world and for announcing my coming to the people. Else, I have no concern even with these.

I do not belong to any place. I am not attached to any name. I have no "mine" or "thine." I answer whatever the name you use. I go wherever I am taken. This is My very first vow. I have not disclosed this to anyone so far. For me, the world is something afar, apart. I act and move only for the sake of mankind. No one can comprehend my glory, whoever he is, whatever his method of inquiry, however long his attempt.

You can yourself see the full glory in the coming years. Devotees must have patience and forbearance.

I am not concerned nor am I anxious that these facts should be known. I have no need to write these words; I wrote them because I felt you would be pained if I do not reply.

Thus, your Baba

*T*here is no strength more effective than purity, no bliss more satisfying than love, no joy more restoring than devotion, no triumph more praiseworthy than surrender.

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
February 23, 1971

THE MESSAGE I BRING

Our reality is the *Atma*, a wave of the *Paramatma* (Supreme Self). The one object of this human existence is to visualise that reality, that *Atma*, that relationship between the wave and the sea. All other activities are trivial since you share them with birds and beasts. But this is the unique privilege of Man as he has clambered through all the levels of animality and all the steps in the ladder of evolution in order to inherit this high destiny.

If all the years between birth and death are frittered away in seeking food and shelter, comfort and pleasure, as animals do, then man is condemning himself to a further life sentence.

Man is endowed with two special gifts: *viveka* (the faculty of reasoning) and *vijnana* (the faculty of analysis and synthesis). Use these gifts for discovering the truth of yourself, which is the truth of everyone else, of everything else.

All countries are borne and sustained by this earth, all are warmed by the same sun, and all "bodies" are inspired by the same Divine Principle. All are urged by the same inner motivator.

The *Vedas* are the earliest testaments to the victory of man over himself, his discovery of the underlying Unity in all creation and his pulsating contact with the truth that unifies. They declare God is *Sarvabhuta antaratma* (God is the inner Reality of all beings), *Ishavasyamidam sarvam* (All this is enveloped by God), and *Vasudevah sarvamidam* (All this is God, Vasudeva).

Man Should Have Desire Only for Liberation

The Divine Principle that is in everyone is like the electric current that illuminates the bulbs before Me here, which are of different colours and different candle powers. The same God shines in and through everyone, whatever be the creed, colour, tribe or territory. The current animates and activates all bulbs; the Divine animates and activates all. Those who see difference are deluded as they are befogged by prejudice, egoism, hatred or malice. Love sees all as one Divine family.

How does this *Atma Principle* express itself in man? As *prema* (love)! Love is the basic nature that sustains him and strengthens his resolve to march ahead. Without love man is blind and the world for him will be a dark and fearsome jungle. Love is the light that guides the feet of man in the wilderness.

The *Vedas* laid down four goals before man, two pairs of goals, rather: *dharma-artha* (morality-wealth), the earning of the wherewithal for living through moral means, and *kama-moksha* (desire-liberation), the attainment of liberation from the twin experience of pain and pleasure, and the desire for that liberation and for nothing less than that supreme treasure.

All these goals are attainable through the practice of love, love regulated by *sathya* (truth), *dharma* (righteousness) and *santhi* (equanimity). The *Vedas* teach that man must earn wealth through the path of *dharma* but today that is not taken to

heart and wealth is accumulated by any means! The *Vedas* teach that man should have only one *kama* (desire), namely, for *moksha* (liberation) but this too is not respected.

Man is drowning himself in the maelstrom of desire but the fulfilment of that desire can never quench his deeper thirsts. How can a prisoner have any other desire than liberation? The widespread anxiety, fear and unrest evident all over the world are the consequences of this mistaken course.

Pursue Nobler Ends, Have Grander Ideals

The human body, which is so filled with skills and so capable of great adventures, is a gift from God to each of you. It has to be used as a raft on which you can cross this never-calm sea of *samsara* (change) that lies between birth and death, bondage and liberation. Awaken to this primal duty even when your physical and mental faculties are keen; awaken even while your power of discrimination is sharp.

Do not postpone the launching of the raft, for it may become unserviceable soon. It may be burdened with illness so that all your attention will have to be spent on its upkeep. Think of the incomparable joy that will surge within you when you approach the shore of liberation!

Ride safely on the raging waters of *samsara* (worldly life). Be a witness, do not crave the fruit of action and leave the consequences of all acts to God's Will. He is the doer, you are but the instrument. Pursue nobler ends and have grander ideals. Sensory pleasures are trinkets and trivialities. The sages have discovered the disciplines that will keep you unaffected by defeat or victory, loss or gain. Learn them and practise them, and establish yourself in unruffled peace.

In homes and schools, training of the minds of the young on these lines has to be taken up ear-

nestly by teachers and parents; of course, they must equip themselves for this work by steady practice in meditation and *namasmarana* (recital of the Name of God). In every home, a certain length of time must be fixed every day in the morning as well as evening for readings from spiritual books and *namasmarana*.

Sharing Prema Is the Best of All Communions

Parents and children must join in singing the glory of God. In fact, all of one's time must be dedicated to God. As a first step, a few minutes may be devoted to the adoration of His glory or the gauging of the depth of that glory. Gradually, when the sweetness of the habit heartens you, you will devote more and more time and feel more and more content.

The purpose of "living" is to achieve "living in God." Everyone is entitled to that consecration and consummation. You are the Truth, do not lose faith and do not belittle yourselves. You are Divine even if you slide from humanity to animality or even lower.

Cultivate love and share that love with all. How can you give one person less and another more when they are both the same as you? If you forget the basic Divinity, hatred sprouts and envy raises its hood. See the *Atma* in all then love sprouts and peace descends like dew. You are *prema-swarupa* (embodiments of love).

You have been sitting here for hours, in the open, putting up with great discomfort, awaiting Me, eager to hear Me and see Me. I am speaking to you from this dais only to satisfy that yearning. When I sense your *prema*, I feel I must share it and allow you to share My *prema*: that is the best of all communications and communions. The mediation of words is then unnecessary.

I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with add-

ed lustre. I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular *dharma* (righteousness), like the *Hindu dharma*. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause; nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this Universal unitary faith, this *Atmic* principle, this path of love, this *dharma* of *prema*, this duty of love, this obligation to love.

All Faiths Glorify the One and Only God

All religions teach one basic discipline: the removal from the mind of the blemish of egoism, of running after little joy. Every religion teaches man to fill his being with the glory of God and evict the pettiness of conceit. It trains him in methods of detachment and discrimination so that he may aim high and attain liberation.

Believe that all hearts are motivated by the One and Only God, that all faiths glorify the One and Only God, that all names in all languages and all forms man can conceive, denote the One and Only God. His adoration is best done by means of love. Cultivate that *Eka-bhava* (attitude of Oneness) between men of all creeds, all countries and all continents. That is the message of love I bring. That is the message I wish you to take to heart.

Foster love, live in love and spread love – that is the spiritual exercise that will yield the maximum benefit. When you recite the Name of God, remembering all the while His majesty, His compassion, His glory, His splendour and His presence – love will grow within you, its roots will go deeper and deeper and its branches will spread wider and wider, giving cool shelter to friend and foe, to fellow national and foreigner.

God has a million names. Sages and saints have seen Him in a million forms, they have seen Him with eyes closed and eyes opened. They have

extolled Him in all the languages and dialects of man, and yet, His glory is not exhausted.

Carry on the Quest of Your Own Reality

Select any name of His, any name that appeals to you, select any form of His. Every day when you awaken to the call of the brightening east, recite the name and meditate on the form. Have the name and the form as your companion, guide and guardian throughout the toils of the waking hours. When you retire for the night, offer grateful homage to God in that form and with that name, for being with you, by you, beside you, before you and behind you all day long. If you stick to this discipline, you cannot falter or fail.

I must give you one more piece of advice: Endeavour always to promote the joy and happiness of your fellow countrymen in this continent and share in their joy and happiness. *Bharat* is so called because the people of that country have *rathi* (great attachment) to *Bha* (*Bhagawan*, that is God). They are devoted to God and so to all the children of God. They are afraid of sin and they are eager to acquire *jnana* (spiritual knowledge).

Resolve to carry on the quest of your own reality. Resolve to live in the inspiration of the constant remembrance of God. Cultivate love and share love.

I bless that you achieve success in this endeavour and derive great joy therefrom.

**Divine Discourse in Nairobi, Kenya
on July 4, 1968**

*L*ove must be manifested as *seva* (selfless service). *Seva* must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, consolation for the sick and the suffering. Jesus wore Himself out in such *seva*. The heart full of compassion is the temple of God. Develop compassion. Live in love. Be good, do good and see good. This is the way to God.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
December 25, 1981



CHAPTER

Two

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
ON THE SATHYA SAI ORGANISATION





THE HEART OF THE ORGANISATION

I find from the reports and recommendations presented to Me by the District Presidents and as a result of the deliberations of the representatives from each district that you have recorded therein your own hopes and aspirations, and such ideas as will make you happy. The main aim of all the activities in which you are now engaged and which you will take up in the future is, let Me tell you, cleansing the mind.

You may note the various items of clothing that you hand over to the *dhobi*, such as pants, bush coats, towel and *dhoti*, but the purpose for which you pass them on to him and the operation for which he is engaged is just cleansing. So too, whether it is meditation that you are encouraging, or a discourse that you are arranging, or *bhajans* that you are organising, or clothes that you are offering to the poor or worship that you are conducting, the object is just cleansing the mind of the taint of egoism, greed, hatred, malice, lust and envy. The one quality that you must acquire as a result of all this is “mutual love.” That is the sign of the Sai devotee, of devotees of all the forms of God.

Men are born, they die; in the interval, they grow and fade. The sign of growth is this mutual love, expressed through *seva* (service). The rich and the high-placed have many to serve them. You must serve those who have no one to serve them. Serve those who manage to live by serving others. There are thousands of organisations

already working with such aims, but what is the special need for an organisation bearing My Name? You must realise Me in all, and serve all in a spirit of worshipful dedication.

Spirit of Surrender Must Animate Every Act

On a dry leaf, floating on the waves of the sea, an ant desperately struggled to cling. A dove noticed it, flew over, and claspings the leaf in its beak it transferred it to dry ground. The ant too is Divinity encased in that infinitesimal sheath. It is as important in God's eyes as many a monstrous denizen of the jungle or the sea. God weighs the love that prompts you to save, the compassion that urges you to alleviate pain. Sathya Sai Organisations must take up *seva* (service) as *sadhana* (spiritual discipline), the members must see Me as *Sarvantharyami* (indweller of all) and do *seva* as *puja*.

The District President and the President of each Unit must practise *sadhana*. They must have complete faith in God, and that faith must be evident in each word, thought and deed of theirs. The spirit of surrender must be animating every act of theirs. The Presidents must initiate such items of work as will enthuse the members. If the organisation must succeed, they should have firm faith in this name and form.

Once, when Garuda was sent by Krishna to bring Hanuman to Dwaraka, a regular fight ensued because Hanuman would obey the behest of no

one except Rama. Krishna had to mollify him by sending Garuda again, with a request to come and meet “Rama” (and not Krishna)!

Do not seek to exercise authority over others. Seek rather to discover chances to be useful to them. When one neglects his duties, the positions of authority start causing headaches. Be a servant, a servant of God, then all strength and joy will be added unto you. Feel that you are an instrument in His hand, let Him shape you and use you as He knows best.

***Upeksha* Alone Can Save Man from Entanglement**

I find that after these units have started working, the cordiality that prevailed previously has disappeared! Differences of opinion are being exaggerated, tempers are getting frayed, and misunderstandings and factions are raising their heads. Men who were together are drifting apart. *Tat* and *Twam* (that and this) are the same, but you are forgetting it and becoming distant from That. When you approach the senses, the spirit is far; when you approach the spirit, the senses will be afar. Attach yourselves to the sensory and the worldly – that is to say, develop *apeksha* – and you bind yourselves with the chain of likes and dislikes.

Detach yourselves from the craving for fame and comfort – that is to say, develop *upeksha* – and you are free! *Upeksha* alone can save you from entanglement and reveal the ultimate truth. Man must not shape himself into an animal or an ogre. He must turn into God. Like a boulder carved by a visionary into a charming idol of Krishna with the flute, man too must use every blow of fate as the stroke of an artist’s chisel.

I was perusing the reports you gave Me on the points I had placed for your consideration. I must say that your suggestions regarding the raising of funds were uniformly bad. On this point, all of you are of one mind and that is not satisfactory

to Me. Money is fundamentally *rajo guna* (quality of passion), fraught with danger and harm. Like the bees that collect and store honey for a future day, man too stores and collects money. But, alas, the bees are smoked out and the honey is stolen. I do not agree with any of your ideas to collect and store money. I do not like your going about collecting funds or raising donations.

Costly Paraphernalia Are Superfluous Impediments

I assure you that funds will come, provided you sincerely pray for every worthy cause. Have that faith, and watch the funds flow in. The sages of ancient times celebrated many *yajnas* with no resources other than faith and sincerity. Now you are moved more by pride, by anxiety and by want of confidence. So you are not following My suggestion of the box-with-the-slit to be filled secretly by members only.

Moreover, I must tell you that not much money is needed for many of the items of work. Yearning in the heart and Name on the tongue – these are enough for *bhajan* and *nagara sankeertan*. The *gopis* (milkmaids of Brindavan) sang the name of God when they churned the pots for butter in the early morning hours. The bangles on their wrists jingled the time, the whirl of the rods in the pots provided the background tune and the fragrant morning breeze carried the song into every neighbouring ear. You need not collect an impressive crowd and you need no costly paraphernalia for they are superfluous impediments.

Do not spend much on lecturers and speakers. If any crave monetary rewards or showy receptions, keep such at arm’s length. A chair and a table will be quite ample; loudspeakers are a luxury for most of your meetings. They have become more status symbols than necessities. Set yourselves as examples to organisations round about you, in the careful husbanding of resources and in avoiding wasteful expenditure. Have only as many gatherings as you can afford; do not call

them together because you must! People must look forward to them and not feel they are too many.

Give Least Importance to Money for *Samithi* Work

The fifteen or twenty who constitute a *samithi* or *sangha* must be able to put together, without any fuss or fanfare, the money needed for all these activities. You should not draw in anyone as a member of the *samithi* for the sake of the money that he may have; *gunas* are more valuable than *annas* (money). You need not have any special function in the village, except when I visit it.

You criticise others who collect by devious means vast sums of money for mammoth gatherings and waste the funds so collected in shady channels. You should therefore avoid such mistakes yourselves.

Uphold by means of your self-esteem the unique distinction that you now have; you have a Master who does not ask anyone or take from anyone, who only gives, gives in plenty to all who ask. I go

into strange lands and among strange peoples with the gift of love. *Upeksha* is my strength. I know no distinction between man and man, on any score. So all love me equally. Money is the root cause of all misunderstandings and factions. Keep it in the background; give it the least importance. Have love, humility, detachment and service as your funds.

There is an underlying channel of love that connects the eye and the foot. When the eye sees a thorn on the path, the foot moves away - the welfare of the body is safeguarded thus. So too, the District President and the Unit President must act as the eyes, look out for thorns and take the feet from harm.

As regards the World Conference, I feel it is to be held only once in three years. The All-India Conference is best held in the heart of the organisation, Prasanthi Nilayam itself.

**Divine Discourse
on November 21, 1968**





The service attitude is most beneficial to the person rendering it as well as to others. Service is the best use to which the body can be put. In fact, you are not doing service to others. You are doing it always to yourself, to the God in you, the God who is equally present in others.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
November 21, 1981



SATHYA SAI SEVA

The *Vedas* are inspired by the holy spirit of Divine Mercy; they seek to transmit to humanity the secrets of a happy life here and of liberation forever. They reveal the essence of the Divine Glory. They are the source of spiritual knowledge over the millennia for all mankind. The *Vedas* and the intellect, which man is endowed with as a gift from God to separate good from evil, are the means by which the culture of this land is to be preserved and promoted.

When the *Vedic* treasure house is explored with intelligence, the *Atma-tatwa* (essential nature of the Self) becomes clear, and when that is recognised man becomes eternally happy and full of peace. This treasure was slighted and neglected as a result of the fascination for outlandish ways of life, but for some years the feeling of reverence and the readiness to repent have appeared among the people.

This conference is itself a sign of revival. You are allotted the task of bringing once again to the homes of the people the message of *Atmic* strength and *Atmic* unity. Transmuting “man” into “God” and experiencing that *ananda* (bliss) is the one and only achievement to which life is to be devoted. The efforts you make in your own places are directed to bring this goal into the awareness of each person.

Of course, there are in existence many organisations and societies engaged in distributing various cures for the “spiritual ills” of their constituents, and therefore a question may arise about the need for this additional institution. The need

has arisen to emphasise the basic and essential discipline which is practical and universal, as prescribed for ages for the revelation of the Divine in man.

***Bharatiya* Culture Has to Be Fostered First**

The entire universe is pictured as but the body of Vishnu by the *Vedas*. And *Bharat* (India) is as the eye of the universe, the reason being that she has the most correct vision of the cosmos in the context of time. The mother desires that the son should uphold the honour of the family; the son should uphold the fair name of the mother and father. So, every Indian has to learn and practise the spiritual science that the sages of this land have explored and discovered.

However, due to hostile forces, evil company, and ignorant fascination, Indians have neglected this foremost duty. The infection has come and it is well settled in the organism. Now it has to be cast out. This conference and the organisations you represent are attempts to cure that illness. The purpose is the same, whatever the name – *Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha*, *Sathya Sai Seva Samithi*, *Sathya Sai Seva Dal* or *Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali*.

The first aim is to foster and cultivate *Bharatiya* culture. Let its validity be examined through actual living and one’s own discovery of its values, and communicated to others by those who have experienced the peace and joy derivable from it. I do not want the extolling of the drug by persons who have not been themselves cured by it.

Today, in the very land where this culture grew and flourished, immorality and corruption have destroyed happiness and contentment. Many condemn these things but those are the very persons who commit the wrongs they deplore. Those who profess to lead the people are themselves led astray by the temptation to fall. So, the very first ideal you must keep in mind when you start and run these organisations is do not crave status or authority or position, do not allow any pomp or show and do not compete for publicity or recognition or praise.

Unity Consciousness Is the Heartbeat of India

Duty is God. Do it and be content. You may have yearnings towards self-aggrandisement and plans to fulfil them; I know that some people have already devised plans for getting into official positions. But, you must subdue and destroy those desires. Following My instructions without demur is the best plan. While engaged in service (*seva*), it is wrong to yield to lower cravings or to follow one's own impetuosity. The *Vedas* declare that it is only by *thyaga* – renunciation, surrender and submission that immortality can be acquired.

In the history of India, you must have noticed that all the great movements and empires were motivated by spiritual undercurrents, not by political or economic stresses. It is only after the advent of the East India Company that politics and the struggle for political power predominated. You must make politics subservient to the need to promote and perfect the fundamentals of Indian (*Bharatiya*) culture.

The universe is the body of God; in the body, the Unity Consciousness is *Bharat*, the *Eka-bhaava* (feeling of Oneness). "*Ekam Sath*" (The Reality Is One), the *Vedas* declared aeons ago! That is the heartbeat of *Bharat* today. This is the reason why sages, saints, Divine personages and incarnations of God appear here and proclaim their mes-

sage to mankind from this land. The precious message is now being exported but very little is used inside the country. That is the tragedy.

Sai Organisations Must Promote Faith in God

For the influence available from positions of authority and for acquiring and accumulating power, individuals talk ill of others and breed hate. From dawn till dusk and dusk till dawn, the chief occupation of people today is finding fault with others, trying to publicise the faults in others. This state of things is an insult cast on the face of our ancient culture. It springs from the craving for cheap popularity and temporary fame.

Your organisations must endeavour to promote faith in God. If that base is absent, then worship, *bhajan*, *puja* and good works all become meaningless automatic rituals done under social compulsion. Inner transformation, which is the fruit, can be acquired only when these are done with faith. Faith can grow only from the root of inquiry. Faith is made firmer by inquiry. You must encourage inquiry by the members whom you contact and welcome their efforts to gain first-hand experience.

Man strives to provide himself with food, clothing and housing for the sake of the body but he must also provide himself with some things to keep the mind healthy and happy. It is the mind that conditions even the body. The mind is the instrument, the flywheel, and the thickest comrade of man. Through it, one can either ruin oneself or save oneself. Regulated and controlled, and channelled properly, it can liberate, but wayward and let loose, it can entangle and bind fast.

Try to find out when exactly man is having peace, full-undisturbed peace. You will see that he is at peace only during *sushupti* (deep sleep). For, at that time, the senses are inactive, the mind is inert and unattached to the senses or their targets. So, when senses are made ineffec-

tive to drag the mind out, man can attain peace. That is the real *sadhana*, the basic *sadhana*: the withdrawal of the senses from the objective world (*Nivrithimarga*).

Two Fangs That Make the Individual Poisonous

Train the mind to dwell on the inner equipment rather than the outer attractions. Use the mind to cleanse the feelings, impulses, attitudes, tendencies and levels of consciousness. Let it not accumulate dirt from the outer world and deposit the dirt within itself. If it is attached to work (*Pravrithimarga*), the consequences of work get attached to it. Unattached work is the purest; it does not encumber the mind with elation or disappointment. "I did it" and "This is mine" are the two fangs that make the individual poisonous. Pull out the fangs and the snake can be handled and played with as a pet.

These organisations must be vigilant to see that egoism and the sense of personal possession, pride, or achievement do not invade them. That is the goal to be kept in view.

When an organisation is started, it has to lay down for itself certain rules and regulations. But our rules are of a different nature altogether. Our rules emphasise that members must first prac-

tise what they stand for. Whatever you desire others to do, you must first put into daily practice sincerely and with steadfastness. You must do *bhajan* regularly and systematically before you advise others about the efficacy of *bhajans*. When you want to be honoured by others, you must learn to honour them first.

Bhagawan Is the Medicine for *Bhava-roga*

Service has become a word of common currency, but its value is very much reduced by the hypocrisy of the users. Really speaking, only those who are afflicted with agony, equal agony, at the sight of pain and suffering, distress, or disease have the right to offer service, for they are not serving others, they are serving themselves, serving to remove, as fast and as intelligently as they can, their own agony.

Service to others is the medicine one needs to alleviate the distress that fills one at the sight of distress in another being. Feel that you are serving yourself, that you are curbing your own ego. Otherwise, service heightens your self-esteem and develops a sense of superiority, which are both harmful spiritually.

Food is the medicine for the illness of hunger and drink for the illness of thirst. For the dis-



Hill View Stadium

ease of *bhava-roga* (birth-death cycle), *Bhagawan* is the medicine. For the disease of desire, *jnana* is the specific. For the disease of doubt, despair, and hesitation, which are the occupational diseases of *sadhakas*, the most effective remedy is *paropakara* (doing good to others). For the major infection of *asaanthi* (anxiety), the course of treatment is *bhajan*. It is to provide these remedies to the sufferers that the organisation has to dedicate itself.

A spiritual organisation is really above all rules and regulations; the realm of the *Atma* is beyond the limits of regulations. In this sense, rules are either meaningless or superfluous in Sathya Sai Organisations. But at least to satisfy the law of the land dealing with associations of this kind, some rules have to be adopted.

For example, who can be members of these organisations and what are their qualifications? Of course, firstly, they must be eager aspirants for spiritual progress. Secondly, they must have full faith in the Name that the organisation bears and in spreading that Name, in the manner suited to its message and majesty. And, finally, the member must have won recognition as a good person. That is all the qualification needed, nothing else counts. There is no need to have money or land, scholarship, influence, authority or official position.

An Oath Must Be Taken from the Very Depths of the Heart

If you have the three qualifications mentioned, I assure you, even if you have no place in any organisation bearing My Name, you will have a place here (Baba indicated His Heart as the place where they will be accepted). The organisations must be such that members find them congenial places to deepen their *sadhana*, to cultivate their virtues and to overcome their ego by contact with workers who are free from the least trace of that deadly poison. If this is achieved, their success is certain.

Secondly, what are the duties of members and office-bearers? You know that the State requires you to take a solemn oath when you take up an office or enter upon an assignment. Similarly, each member and office-bearer must take an oath from the very depths of the heart before engaging themselves in the activities. "Swami, save me from any act of commission or omission which will affect adversely the three qualifications You have laid down. Bless me with the skill, intelligence, and enthusiasm necessary for the task I am dedicating myself to carry out for my own uplift. Guide me along the correct path; shower on me Your grace so that I may earn a fair name in this attempt; guard me from temptation and wrong steps."

When you rise from bed at dawn, pray thus. At night, when you go to bed, ponder over your activities during the day, examining whether you went against any of the conditions of membership, and if any wrong was committed unconsciously, pray that it may not happen again. Decide to dedicate yourself in this manner, with these ideals for the work ahead.

Do Not Develop Fanaticism in Sai Activities

Another point I want to emphasise is this: There are many other organisations with spiritual objectives in this land that are run under different names and attached to other names and forms of God, like Rama or Krishna. You know that Indian culture insists that you should offer reverence to all the names and forms of the One Godhead.

In your organisations, there may be some who insist that only *Sai Bhajans* should be sung, only the name and form of Sathya Sai be used. This is a great mistake. You are thereby dishonouring Sai. If you attach yourself to Sai and detach yourself from Krishna, you get a *plus* there and a *minus* here – the resultant gain is zero. In this matter, do not develop fanaticism or sectarian-

ism. Others may have these but that is no reason why you should meet them with the same failings. Try your best to avoid such infection. When the other organisations require help, go and help them. This will make them realise the loving universal nature of your attitude.

Again, do not encourage differences based on region, language, religion or any such flimsy grounds. For example, people who exaggerate these differences argue in Madras that only Tamil songs should be sung or in Andhra Pradesh that only Telugu songs should be sung. If such ideas are entertained, they will undermine the *Adhyatmik* (spiritual) outlook, the attitude of unity and oneness that is the keynote of the spirit. This is a field where inner joy, inner satisfaction and internal purity are more important than outer expression.

I do not like collection of funds. But, since some expense has to be incurred, I have to allow it under very stringent conditions. Each organisation has as members (of the *Samithi*) about ten or fifteen persons. Whatever expense they decide to incur for the work of the *Samithi* (Organisation), they have to collect among themselves without seeking help from those outside the circle. They have, of course, to contribute according to their capacity and limit the work to the resources they can pool among themselves.

A Word of Warning on Collecting Funds and Spending

Do not plan beyond your capacity and move about with lists from person to person to get funds. By this, the institution gets a bad name, and you too will not be spared. You may say, "But, when Swami comes to our place, we must spend a lot on reception arrangements." No, I do not need grand decorations, huge *pandals*, arches, flags and such paraphernalia. I require only a microphone to communicate My advice to the people. Even a chair is superfluous! I can talk standing. Spend sparingly for the minimum

needs and do not involve yourselves in expensive luxury. I would like you to spend any extra money that you have for the feeding of the poor or for any similar beneficial object.

Attempts are being made in many places to build Sathya Sai *Mandirs* (halls of worship). But Sathya Sai will be happy if He is installed in your hearts; that is the *Mandir* I like, not those. When you seek to build that other *Mandir*, you have to go about seeking donations. Religion has declined in this land due to this donation seeking and donation giving. Really speaking, the most precious donation is a pure mind; give that to the organisation and it will shine.

I shall tell you a method by which the extra funds you may need for any undertaking the *Samithi* has in view are to be collected. Estimate beforehand what the expense will be. Suppose it comes to a thousand rupees, give that information to the fifteen members and fix a day when they shall all meet. That day, keep a locked box with a slit in the lid in an inner room and let everyone go alone into the room and deposit in the box whatever he feels he can. He can come away without depositing anything; he has the freedom to do so, there is no compulsion.

If funds are collected with the knowledge of the rest, a person who is unable to give as much as another may feel humiliated and so this is the best method. When all have finished their turn, let the box be opened and the amount counted. If it falls short of the estimate, divide the shortfall among all members equally and collect the share from each. If there is some surplus, keep it for the next occasion.

Fund Collection Campaign Will Lead to Calumny

Do not have lists, appeals, receipt books and all the cumbrous complex of fund collection campaigns. That way will lead you to stratagems, falsehoods, competition and calumny. Do it in

this quiet and sacred manner, suited to the holy objectives you have.

Some delegates suggested that sub-committees be formed and recognised. But that will increase the number and so give room for more mistakes. Let the responsibility be on a few dedicated persons. The District President must see that small associations in the villages are given proper guidance and help to carry out the task undertaken by them. He must send to those villages, exponents of *Vedic* culture in order to instruct and inspire them. Attempts should also be made to spread spiritual knowledge and instil the yearning for spiritual *sadhana* among students and youth.

Do Not Set Limits on Celebrations of Holy Days

Sathya Sai Seva Samithis have to bear in mind the word 'Seva' and take up *Seva* work enthusiastically. *Seva* must be directed towards the removal of physical distress, the alleviation of mental agony and the fulfilment of spiritual yearning. Some regions are affected by floods, some by drought, and so the *Samithi* must make efforts to bring relief to the sufferers from these and other natural calamities.

The *Bhajan Mandalis*, *Satsangs* and *Bhakta Mandalis* that are now established must spread the message of *Namasmarana*, *Bhajana*, and *Namasankeerthana* at all times and in all places. Jayadeva, Gouranga, Thyagaraja, all of them moved through the bazaars and streets singing *bhajans* and songs about the glory of God, and their ecstasy filled *lakhs* and *lakhs* of people with Divine fervour.

Yesterday, someone read out a list of Holy Days that the associations were to celebrate. That list mentioned *Shivaratri*, *Navaratri*, Swami's Birthday and *Guru Poornima*. But you must also celebrate the birthdays of the *Mahatmas* who led man to the God within him, and also all days held holy

by your brothers. Do not set limits on these celebrations and these days. Make every day a Holy Day and fill it with the recollection of God and His Messengers.

Establish unity among yourselves first and do not seek faults in others or excellence in your own selves. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man – have full faith in this and fill every act of yours with that reverence and love. Meet together once a week or once a fortnight or at least once a month. Have someone discourse to you, or engage in *bhajan* or study or *dhyana* and experience the thrill of spiritual comradeship. Every member of the association must have some item of work allotted to him and he must be present whenever such meetings are held, unless of course it becomes physically difficult.

I must tell you about another point also. Wherever you are, whatever work you do, do it as an act of worship, an act of dedication and an act for the glorification of God, who is the inspirer, the witness and the Master. Do not divide your activities as "These are for my sake" and "These are for the sake of God." Even if you divide zero by zero, you get one.

When you work, there should be no remainder; nothing should remain over. See all work as one. You should not, the *Shastras* say, leave any remainder or balance in debts, in disease, in vengeance against enemies or in the cycle of birth-death. Finish all, down to the last. They should not recur again. If you offer all activities at the feet of the Lord and free them from any trace of egoistic attachment, the consequence will not bind you – you are free, you are liberated and you have *Moksha*.

**Divine Discourse at the
First All India Conference of
Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations
on April 21, 1967**



CHAPTER

Three

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA'S
MESSAGE TO WOMEN





WHEN WOMEN ARE HONOURED

Asthiram Jeevanam loke
(Life in this phenomenal world is impermanent)

Yaddhrishyam tannashyam
(Whatever is perceived is bound to pass away some time or other)

Asthiram yauvanam dhanam
(Youth and wealth are transient)

Asthiram dhaara puthraadih
(Wife and children will pass away)

Sathyam Keerthi dhvayam sthiram
(Only Truth and Fame endure)

Lembodiments of Love! In this infinite universe, among the myriads of living beings humanity is eminent. Among human beings, it is a privilege to be born as a woman. There are many examples to demonstrate the pre-eminence of women. Was not Rama born as a Divine incarnation in Kausalya's womb? Did Lava and Kusha (the twins) not become great because they were born to Sita? Was it not Jeejeebai's loving care that made Shivaji great? Was it not Putlibai's piety that made Gandhi a *Mahatma*?

All the greater sages, saints, heroes, and warriors were born to women who made them great. Woman is the Goddess of Nature. *Gayatri*, which enshrines the essence of the *Vedas*, is a goddess venerated as *Veda Mata* (the mother of the *Vedas*).

It is obvious that feminine birth is estimable, adorable and sublime. The *Veda* also adores the feminine principle in various ways. *Vedic* rituals and practices accord a high place to women.

Feminine Aspect of Divinity

The woman is adored under different names as *Sathyavathi*, *Angavathi*, *Anyavathi* and *Nidana-vathi*. *Sathyavathi* proclaims the truth that the Divine pervades the cosmos and that God is not separate from *Prakriti* (Nature). Nature is a form of the Divine. The *Vedas* testify to the omnipresence of the Divine, like the presence of butter in every drop of milk.

Next is *Angavathi*. The five elements are present everywhere in the universe: earth, water, fire, air and ether. These elements vary in subtlety in a progressive order. The *Veda* declares that even the five elements are manifestations of the Divine. This aspect of Nature is called *Angavathi*.

The *Anyavathi* principle points out which deity is responsible for what function and describes the deity's special characteristics. Ishwara is described as *Trishula-dhari* (the bearer of the trident) and *Trinetra-dhari* (the deity with three eyes). Vishnu is described as the bearer of the

conch, the discus and the mace. Krishna is described as one having the peacock's feather (on his head). Rama is described as the wielder of the bow. The *Anyavathi* ritual worships the different deities with their distinctive features.

The *Nidanavathi* ritual lays down nine different ways in which the Divine can be worshipped, such as listening, chanting the name, etc. All forms of worship are presided over by these four feminine deities. Though the names are different, the goal is one.

Women Should Be Revered

From ancient times, the feminine aspect of the Divine has been worshipped in various ways. The *Vedas* declare that where women are honoured and esteemed, there Divinity is present with all its potency.

Unfortunately, today men consider it demeaning to honour women. This is utterly wrong and is a sign of ignorance.

Sthree (woman) is *Grihalakshmi* (the Goddess of Prosperity for the home). She is hailed as *Dharmapatni* (the virtuous spouse). She is called *Illalu* (the mistress of the house) and *Ardhangi* (the better half). People gloat over petty titles conferred on them. But women have been conferred the highest titles, which are valid for all time. A home without a woman is a jungle.

Men should realise the high status of women and honour and respect them accordingly. They should not make women weep and shed tears. A home where the woman sheds tears will be ruined. Men should give an honourable place for women and lead a respectable life.

The archetypal woman is described as *Adishakti* (the primal source of all energy) having a whole array of powers. She is hailed as the mother of the *Amritasyaputrah* (children of immortality).

The Trigunas in the Word "Sthree"

The word *Sthree* is made up of three consonants, "Sa," "Tha," and "Ra." "Sa" signifies the *Satwic* nature of women. It represents also the triple aspects of experiencing Divinity: *Salokyam* (vision of the Divine), *Samepyam* (proximity), and *Sayujyam* (mergence). "Tha" signifies the *Thamasic* quality. But this *Thamasic* quality is not indolence and slothfulness. It includes qualities like humility, kindness, and modesty.

This means that women begin with qualities like meekness and modesty so that they may serve the family and society in the right spirit. There is a saying in Andhra Pradesh: "Judge a house by its mistress."

"Ra" represents the *Rajoguna*. This does not mean forcefulness and argumentativeness. This quality signifies the preparedness of women, where necessary, even to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their honour and the honour of their family. *Bharat's* history is full of examples of women who fought valiantly and gave up their lives to protect their husbands and their honour.

Sthree thus represents the combination of the three *gunas*. Woman, who should be highly honoured for these qualities, is being treated as an *Abala* (weaker vessel) and assigned an inferior status.

There are several organisations that are being run by women with great dedication and zeal for the benefit of the people. Valmiki extolled the sweetness of womanhood. What is the cause of this sweetness? The spirit of sacrifice is the cause, according to Valmiki.

Spirit of Sacrifice Is Found Only in Women

A mother is ready to sacrifice everything, even her life, for the sake of her child. Such a spirit is to be found only among women. If a child is grievously ill, the father may say that the child

may as well die. But the mother will try to save the child at any cost. It is for this reason that woman is described as *Thyagamurti*, the embodiment of sacrifice. Men do not have the same spirit of sacrifice as women. Men may present a heroic pose but do not have the determination and perseverance to carry on the struggle to the end.

Valmiki described woman as the *Bhakti svarupini* (embodiment of devotion). Man was described as *Jnanaswarupa*. The *Jnani* has limited access to the Divine mansion but the woman devotee has access to innermost apartments.

The pre-eminent status accorded to women will be evident from all the ancient scriptures. In this context the role of women as mothers should be understood. The great hero, Shivaji, was moulded entirely by the teachings of his mother. Rama was taught by his mother Kausalya to follow the sacred path of *Dharma*. The lives of the great show to what extent they were the products of their mothers.

Gandhiji became a staunch adherent of truth after a lesson he learnt from his mother, who could not bear her son telling a lie even to make her break her fast. It is the mothers who make their children take the right path, not so much the fathers. Today, we find the fathers teaching the children to utter lies. For instance, when the telephone rings in the house, the father, who is in the house, tells his son to inform the caller that the father is not at home.

The practice of fathers allowing the sons to go astray has a long ancestry. It started in the *Dwapara Yuga* with Dhritarashtra, father of Duryodhana. Whatever evil deeds his son did, Dhritarashtra said he was a good man. Fathers who allow their sons to go astray are not real fathers at all. Prahlada observed, "Only he is a father who advises the son to seek God. Only he is a true *guru* who instructs the pupil about God."

The Mother Is the First Preceptor for the Child

Mothers in ancient days used to teach the children about right conduct, morality and devotion. The first preceptor for a child is the mother. For this reason, *Bharatiya* culture gave the first place to the mother among the four persons to be revered as divine: mother, father, *guru* and guest. The mother gets the first place because she bears the child in the womb for nine months and nourishes him with her own blood.

Even in mentioning the names of deities, the first place is given to the goddess, as in Sita-Rama, Parvathi-Parameshwara and Lakshmi-Narayana, and the reason for the feminine name getting priority is she is *Prakrithi svarupini* – the embodiment of *Prakriti* (nature). The implication in this usage is that you should realise God through the propitiation of *Prakriti*.

Earn the Blessings of the Mother

In this world, all things are transient. Only righteousness and good name endure. How is one to acquire a good name? By revering the mother. Never go against the wishes of the mother. The son who causes pain to the mother can never be happy. Hence, earn the blessing of the mother.

In this context, it should be noted that Russians observe December 8th as Ladies Day. On that day the women have free time. The men have to do the cooking. The women go out to do service in hospitals and other places.

Men and women have to understand each other so that they can live in harmony in the family. Today, people want to live happily but not to lead ideal lives. Parents, for instance, do not set a good example to the children. In the modern age, the father does not instruct the children properly and the children do not pay heed to the words of the mother. The vast majority of fathers today behave like Dhritarashtra. Where there are some good children, leading a pious life, the fathers re-

buke them, saying, "Have you gone crazy? Don't take part in *bhajans* or social service."

Parents who behave in this manner are like Hiranyakashipu, who could not tolerate his son worshipping Hari. Today, we have many parents like Dhritarashtra and Hiranyakashipu, but few who encourage their children to adhere to righteousness.

Children today do not relish edifying works like the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavatam*. They waste their time on reading trash. Parents should see that children do not read bad books.

Now, for a few words of advice to women. It is found that women are given to excessive talking. From today, you have to take a pledge not to indulge in talking. Women are found talking not only in the auditorium but even in the *bhajan mandir*. Men are fond of strolling around as they please. They observe no restraints as to where they should not go and what places they should avoid. If women observe restraint in speech and men control their movements, it will be good for both.

Ladies Day Should Be Observed Every Year

If the nation is to prosper, improvement must start with the parents. Without peace and harmony at home, there can be no peace in the nation. This message should be propagated throughout the country on every November 19th by observing it as Ladies Day. You should teach people how to run their homes well and how to bring up children in the right way. You must deal calmly and tactfully with the men, if they are not co-operating.

Though Ravana was evil minded, his noble wife, Mandodari, tried to correct him as much as possible. She advised him strongly not to keep Sita in Lanka, but to restore her to Rama.

From today learn to see the good in others and examine your own defects. Thereby you will benefit both ways. Those who go about finding faults in others are like dogs that go after cast-off shoes.

Call to Women

Embodiments of Love! Mistakes may sometimes be committed in the organisation. See that they do not recur. Buddha learnt the proper lesson through a single experience of seeing an old man, a sick man and a corpse. He understood the entire nature of human existence from this. People today have similar experiences over and over again. But their minds remain unchanged.

Every experience should bring out a change. For years you have listened to Swami's discourses. How many have changed? How many have developed good qualities? Very few indeed. Develop pure thoughts wherever you may be. Only then your visit to Prasanthi Nilayam at great expense would have served a purpose.

As today is a sacred day dedicated to women, they should change themselves and help to change the men and the children. They should develop the qualities of sympathy, compassion, love and sacrifice. Study the lives of our great women who were models of patience, fortitude, compassion and sacrifice. I desire that you should take up the reins of leadership and bring peace and prosperity to the nation by leading ideal lives.

**Divine Discourse
on November 19, 1995**

ROLE OF THE MOTHER

*Wife and children come and go; Truth alone is permanent.
Pleasures of kingdom come and go; Truth alone is permanent.
Brothers and relatives come and go; Truth alone is permanent.
Status and power come and go; Truth alone is permanent.
The path of Truth bestows all the prosperity and auspiciousness.
In this world there is no prosperity greater than Truth.*

(Telugu poem)

This day of 19th November is celebrated as Ladies Day in order to delve into the sacred qualities of women and disseminate them. Women are the repositories of truth and culture. Though earth is one, the plants vary depending on the seeds sown. The womb of the mother symbolises Mother Earth. As is the seed of thought sown in it, so is the fruit it yields. You cannot expect mangoes by sowing a *neem* seed. So the mother's womb should be filled with good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Only then can she bear virtuous children. Today, we find many children with bad character and bad behaviour. The reason for this can be attributed to the bad thoughts of their mothers.

Some Noble and Virtuous Mothers

Aryamba was a woman of virtues of noble character. She spent all her time in the contemplation of God and undertaking noble deeds. As a result, Jagadguru Sankaracharya was born in her sacred womb. Noble souls like Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa could attain exalted positions in their lives only due to the sacred feelings of their mothers.

You must have heard about Putlibai, the mother of Mahatma Gandhi, who spent her life in the contemplation of God. She used to observe a vow wherein she would not partake of food unless she heard the singing of a cuckoo. One day, it so happened that the song of a cuckoo was not heard. Seeing his mother sticking to her vow and not taking food, Gandhi, who was a small boy then, went behind the house and mimicked the singing of a cuckoo. He came inside and told his mother that she could have her food as she heard the song of a cuckoo. Mother Putlibai felt very sad as she knew that her son was uttering a lie. She cried, "O God! What sin have I committed to give birth to a son who speaks untruth?"

Realising that he had caused immense grief to his mother by uttering a lie, Gandhi took a vow that he would never indulge in falsehood thenceforth. So, it is imperative that the mother gives training in moral values to her children right from their childhood. She should not overlook the mistakes of her children. She should punish her children whenever they stray away from the right path and reward them for their good deeds. It is

because of the feelings of the mother that the children change either for the good or the bad.

Story of a Noble Son and a Noble Mother

Here is a small example. After the conclusion of the Rangoon War, one mother and her son somehow managed to reach Madras, having lost their near and dear ones. They had no shelter over their heads, or food to eat. The mother went from house to house asking for alms, giving most of it to her son and partaking of a little for herself. Whenever she did not receive much, she would give everything to her son and would starve herself. She put herself to many difficulties for the sake of the well-being of her son. Consequently, she became emaciated day by day.

One day, the son, unable to see her suffering, told her, "Mother, it is not proper on your part to feed me and starve yourself. From today, you take rest and I will fetch food for both of us." But the mother said she could not bear the sight of her son begging for alms.

One day, the son went for alms as the mother was too weak even to walk. He stood in front of the house of an officer and cried, "O sir, I am hungry, I am hungry." The officer, who was relaxing on an easy chair in the veranda, brought food on a leaf and told him to sit and partake of it. But the boy said that he would take it home. The officer said, "I don't think you are really hungry; otherwise, why should you take it home?" When the officer was uttering these harsh words, the boy felt giddy and fell down. He was trying to say something but could not say it loudly, as he was very weak. The officer went close to the boy and tried to hear what he was saying. "Sir, I would like to give to my mother first, only then I will eat. First to my mother, to my mother...." Saying so, he breathed his last.

Can we find such noble sons today? We cannot find such mothers and sons today. It is not mere-

ly the effect of *Kali* Age, but also the result of the modern educational system. Today's educational system is meant only for earning a livelihood. The educated do not think of the welfare of the society and the country at large.

Gandhi's mother was a strict disciplinarian and pure hearted. As the saying goes, "*Yatha Raja, Thatha Praja*" (As is the king, so are the subjects). She had a maidservant named Rambha, who used to look after the children with love and care. One day, Gandhi came running to her and told that he was haunted by fear. Rambha told him, "My dear one, where is the need to fear when the all-protecting Ramachandra is with us always. Recite the name of Rama, whenever you are fear-stricken." From then onwards, Gandhi chanted the name of Rama till his last breath. Can we ever find such noble-hearted women today? It is because of such mothers that the children took to the path of righteousness.

Great Merit Lies in Fulfilling Your Mother's Wishes

You all know the story of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. He was living with his mother in a village near Calcutta. They were very poor. She used to feed her son with whatever she could earn every day and did not care much about herself. Her son's well-being was uppermost in her mind. She wanted him to lead a peaceful and sacred life. Being a hard-working student, Vidyasagar used to study under streetlights. He completed post-graduation and took a job.

Initially his salary was very little, just enough to take care of his mother and himself. Gradually, he attained a good position. Once, a fair was put up in the village and Vidyasagar's mother wanted to pay a visit to it. She wore an old sari and visited the fair. Seeing this, Vidyasagar felt very sad and immediately bought a few good saris.

One evening, during the course of their conversation, Vidyasagar asked his mother if she had

any desires. She said, "Son, the people of our village are facing hardships due to the lack of drinking water. I feel pained to see them trekking long distances to fetch water. I will be happy if you can get a bore well dug in our village." Vidyasagar immediately got a bore well dug and fulfilled his mother's desire. Her joy knew no bounds. She said, "Son, water is life-sustainer. You have quenched the thirst of the villagers. I am extremely happy that I have given birth to a noble son like you."

On some other day, Vidyasagar asked his mother if she had any more desires. She said, "Son, the children of our village are going to the neighbouring village to attend school. I am unable to bear children walking such long distances every day. So please construct a small school in our village." Accordingly, Vidyasagar established a school in the village, giving immense joy to his mother. She said, "Son, you have set an ideal not merely to our village but to the entire nation. Your life is sanctified."

After a few days, one evening, when Vidyasagar returned home from his office, he found his mother in a pensive mood. On being asked for the reason, she said, "Son, you have given water to the village and also established a school for the children. But it is the lack of medical facilities in our village that is troubling my mind. Please build a small hospital here." As per her wish, he constructed a hospital.

The reason for My telling you all this is only to emphasise that the feelings of mothers are noble. Each one has to resolve to fulfil the sacred desires of his mother. One should never act in such a way as to cause pain to his mother.

Sacred Desires of Swami's Mother

That which happened in the case of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar happened in the case of this body also. One day, while I was having My food upstairs, the *Griham Ammayi* (mother of Swami's

physical body) came to Me. I asked, "Mother, what is the reason for your coming here?" She said, "You finish your food first, then I will tell you." After I completed my meal, she said, "Swami, ours is a very small village. Here people are put to a lot of suffering due to the absence of medical facilities. They have to run to Bukkapatnam for every small problem." Then I assured her that I would build a hospital in the village. As promised, I got a small hospital built immediately.

On some other day, she again came upstairs and said, "Swami, please don't think otherwise, I have one more desire." I chided her, saying that she should not give scope for desires. She said, "Swami, you are fulfilling the desires of thousands of people who are coming to you. Why can't you fulfil my desire?" Then I said, "Tell me your desire." She said, "Swami, the wells of our village have dried up. Please get a well dug in our village." As per her wish, I got a well dug in our *mandir* itself. All the people of the village used to take water from this well.

She said she was extremely happy but added that she had one more desire. She said; "Swami, the children of our village are going to Bukkapatnam for their studies. Poor children, they don't have the strength even to walk such a long distance. Please construct a school here." I fulfilled that desire also. She felt very happy and said that she had no more desires left.

Just as a small seed becomes a huge tree, the small school I established then has become a big university now. The small hospital that I constructed then has become a Super-Specialty Hospital now.

The small well that I got dug here in the village has assumed the gigantic proportions of a water project for the entire district. If the feelings of the mother are sacred, so too will be the feelings of the children.



Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His Noble Mother

If the thoughts are sacred, they will certainly become a reality. One need not think that one does not have enough money and power. If you resolve to do something good, you are bound to succeed. The power of noble thought will give you the necessary strength.

Once Chaitanya went to a temple along with his mother, Sachidevi. He prayed, "O Lord, I don't have any worldly desires. You are the master of the world. You are the master of the body, life and soul. You can grant any wish that I ask for. But I don't have any worldly and physical desires. I do have one desire. You are the embodiment of love. Love is our life, so please grant me the strength to love You. I don't want anything else."

Mother Sachidevi said, "Son, you need food, shelter and raiment in order to carry on your livelihood. But you are saying that you do not want anything." Chaitanya replied, "Mother, though you are advanced in age, you have not understood even a fraction of Divine Principle. Once you become the recipient of God's love, all your needs

will be taken care of. We should not waste our life with petty desires."

Chaitanya used to go round the streets singing the glory of Krishna. Good and bad, auspiciousness and inauspiciousness co-exist. Where there is light, there is bound to be its shadow around. Likewise, good people are bound to face difficulties. But those difficulties will enhance the goodness in them.

"Pleasure and pain, good and bad co-exist, none can separate them.

You cannot find pleasure or pain, good or bad to the exclusion of the other.

Pleasures result when difficulties fructify."

(Telugu poem)

When Chaitanya was singing the glory of Krishna in the streets, some evil-minded people snatched away the cymbals from his hands. But he was least perturbed. He continued to sing the glory of Krishna with firm faith and devotion. Seeing Chaitanya, the children would get inspired, and they too would join him in singing the Divine name. Chaitanya used to make chil-

dren sit around him and impart sacred teachings to them.

Chaitanya became a noble soul because of the noble feelings of his mother. So the mother should have pure thoughts and good behaviour. Only then will she be blessed with ideal sons.

Service to Villagers is Dear to Swami

Since time immemorial, *Bharat* (India) has been the land of merit, the land of spirituality and the land of sacrifice. The greater the sacrifice you make, the greater will be the *Tejas* (Divine effulgence) around you. I am giving you a small example. I always have *Tejas* around me. But some people who came during the last fifteen days said, "Swami, Your *Tejas* is ever increasing." Right from the beginning, I have the welfare of the villagers in view. But as I got involved with education, health and water projects, I could not pay much attention to them.

A month ago, while I was sitting on a chair, I noticed a small piece of paper. When I picked it up, I found photographs of the dead bodies of a mother and her son. The mother could not bear the sight of her son suffering from hunger. Neither could she go for alms, as there were incessant rains. This incident took place just last month. As there was no possibility of the rain stopping, she felt very dejected and mixed rat poison in water, gave it to her son, and drank it herself. As a result, both of them died.

This was published in the newspaper. The newspapers ignore the good news and publish such bad news items. Their hands do not write and their intellects do not function when it comes to publishing good news. This is the effect of the sins accrued over their past lives. It hurt Me so much when I came to know that such an incident had taken place in this land of *Bharat* (India), which is known as *annapoorna* (provider of food). Immediately, I stopped all other activities and started a village service programme. Food

and clothes were distributed in various villages, giving encouragement and happiness to people.

My Bliss is Ever Increasing Day after Day

Our students are like gold. They worked hard right from morning till night with enthusiasm. They went to each and every house in the villages and distributed food. I felt very happy. The more one sacrifices, the greater will be one's *Tejas*.

Though I eat very little, My *Tejas* is ever increasing. Immediately after *bhajan* in the morning, I eat a little *ragi sankati* and *chutney* or curry made of leaves. This is what I used to eat before, and it is the same now also. There has been no change in it. The *Tejas* comes not because of food but because of the spirit of sacrifice.

When I walk slowly among devotees, some used to wonder if I have hurt My legs. Neither is there pain in My legs, nor do I have any disease. I walk slowly among the devotees only to give them *darshan* for a longer duration of time. I don't have any pain in My legs, nor do I have any disability. I am always blissful. My bliss is ever increasing day by day. Consider service to humanity as your very life-breath. Then you too will have Divine effulgence.

Make God's Name Your Pulse Beat

God is not separate from you. Do not be under the impression that God is present only in temples. *Deho Devalaya Prokto Jeevo Deva Sanathanaha* (Body is the temple and the indweller is God). So you do not need to go in search of God elsewhere. Turn your vision inward. Then you will find God, who is the embodiment of bliss. You are getting drowned in illusion on account of excessive attachment to the body.

Get rid of body attachment and develop attachment towards God. Then you will become God yourself. God and man are not separate from each other. They are like image and reflection.

God is in everybody. This temple of the body is able to move around because God is within. It is said, *Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma* (Truth, wisdom and infinite is Brahma). One has to tread along the path of truth in order to understand the principle of Brahma.

To know the principle of Brahma, you need not go here and there. Have total faith that the body is the temple of God. Only then will you get infinite bliss and tremendous strength. But it is not easy to acquire this strength. It is acquired as a result of meritorious deeds done in many past lives.

Consider every work as God's work. Some people may wonder how can going to an office be God's work. That is also God's work because God is all-pervasive. *Sarvatah Pani-padam Tat Sarvathoskshi Siromukham Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvama-vruthya Thishthati* (With hands, feet, eyes, heads, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe).

You may undertake any action but do it as an offering to God. Since ancient times, *Bharatiyas* (Indians) fostered such noble feelings. That is why the country *Bharat* has attained the exalted position of a teacher to the rest of the world.

Some Noble Women of Bharat

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.

It is because of such women of character that Bharat has attained the reputation of being the land of plenty, prosperity, and opulence. It is the teacher of all nations.

(Telugu poem)

There are many scholars, intellectuals, and educated people in this country. But all their learning and intelligence is proving futile because they are immersed in selfishness and self-interest.

Embodiments of Love! Foster love, speak the truth. Do not waste time in mere acquisition of bookish knowledge. One cannot be called educated in the true sense just because one acquires degrees. True education is that which confers good intellect and noble qualities, like adherence to truth, duty, devotion and discipline. Only then the ancient culture of *Bharat* will be revived.

Chant the name of God incessantly. It should be like your pulse beat. The body becomes lifeless if there is no pulse beat. Likewise, you will become a living corpse if you do not chant the Divine name. Consider whatever happens as good for you. When you foster such good thoughts, they will naturally turn into good actions, which will set an ideal to others.

Embodiments of Love! Today, people are prepared to undergo many difficulties in pursuit of Sri (wealth). But Chaitanya considered *Hari* (Lord Vishnu) as his only wealth. He gave up Sri and contemplated on *Hari*. That is why I often sing, *Hari Nama Bina Ananda Nahi* (One cannot have bliss without chanting the Divine name). So chant the Divine name and take to the service of society.

Do not make distinctions between your people and other people. Consider everybody as a member of the universal Divine family. Experience bliss by cultivating the spirit of unity. Do not give scope for any differences whatsoever. Treat each body as a temple and offer your salutations. Have the firm conviction that God is present in all. When you cultivate such noble thoughts, God will certainly become manifest to you.

**Divine Discourse
on November 19, 2000**



CHAPTER

Four

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA'S
MESSAGE TO YOUTH





ALWAYS BE HAPPY AND PEACEFUL

*The creation emerges from Truth and merges into Truth.
Is there a place in the cosmos where Truth does not exist?
Visualise this pure and unsullied Truth.*

(Telugu poem)

Every living being in this world, right from an ant to an insect, bird, beast or an animal, has emerged from Truth only! Those who realise this Truth are real *yogis*. Devoid of Truth, nothing will move in this universe. And that supreme Truth is embodied only in one person. He is *Sathyam*. (Here *Bhagawan* Sri Sathya Sai Baba materialised a *Lingam* and showed it to all.) Who else can manifest such pure consciousness?

Truth is omnipresent. When you think of it and contemplate on it, it can manifest in you also. Hence, constantly contemplate on Truth. Why was this body named Sathya Sai? Truth alone manifests from this Sai. Whoever contemplates on Truth, *Sathyam* is present in the heart of that person. Hence, one should never forget Truth. *Dharma* (righteousness) is the reaction, reflection, and resound of *Sathyam* (Truth). In fact, *Sathyanasti paro Dharma* (there is no *Dharma* greater than adherence to Truth).

Today, we teach several branches of knowledge in secular education. But this is not true education. True education relates to the Truth that emerges out of one's heart. It has no name and form. What could be the form of Truth? What is the form of *Dharma*? What is the form of *Santhi*

(peace)? *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Santhi*, *Prema* and *Ahimsa* (truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence) are all formless. One has to manifest these human values from out of one's heart. The kind of Divine energy that is not present in a human being is not to be found in any other living being either. Hence, a human being is verily God. He is God in human form.

Everything in This World Is Divine

You all consider a human being as a mere human being. That is the reason why you are committing so many mistakes. You are not merely a human being. You are God, verily. When you think that you are God, you will become God. *Yad bhavam tad bhavathi* (as are the feelings, so is the result). When you think of bad things, you will have only bad thoughts.

All people in this world love someone or the other. However, there are differences in such love. The students love their fellow students. The ladies love other ladies. God is present in this lady as well as the other lady. Both are embodiments of Divinity. The one God is present in all bodies. We must love every human being. Love all, Serve all, since God is present in all human beings. There is no place in this universe where God is not present. God is present in the sky, in the water, in the

sound, and in the light. Thus everything in this universe is the embodiment of Divinity.

We forsake such omnipresent Divinity and worship God in the form of some idol in a temple. No doubt, you can worship those idols. There is nothing wrong in that. But you must realise the truth that the same God in that idol is present in every human being, nay, in every living being. I don't say it is wrong to worship those idols. But you yourself are God. Consider yourself as God first and then begin to see the same God in every living being.

Your body is a temple. There is Divine energy in that temple. However, a little discrimination is to be exercised in this context. You have to inquire whether this energy is God. In fact, the body is also God. God is immanent in every atom and every cell of the human body. There is no place in this universe where God is not present. Hence, you do not entertain any doubt about the existence of God.

Do not forget God. In fact, if you forget yourself it amounts to forgetting God. Hence, do not forget yourself. It is for this reason that one is advised, "Always be careful". You must constantly inquire into yourself, "Am I forgetting God?" You must always be aware of your true nature and remind yourself, "I am I". If you are firmly established in that truth, there will be no scope at all to entertain any evil thoughts about others. Not realising one's own true nature, fools and ignoramuses think otherwise.

God is present in all human beings. All the heads of all human beings in this world are God's own heads, verily. That is the reason why God is described as *Virataswarupa* (embodiment of cosmic Divinity). His is the cosmic form. Each one in that cosmic form is having a different form.

However, God is immanent in every form. Krishna declared in the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Mamaivamso*

jivaloke jivabhuta sanathana (the eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of My Being). I alone am present in each one of you. You are not different from Me. Do not entertain any doubts or differences of opinion in this regard. Strengthen your love, that is the proper *sadhana*.

If only the fruit of love in your heart is ripened, the juice of that fruit can be shared with one and all. Hence, let that fruit of love ripen in your heart first. If only you fill your heart with pure love, that love can be shared with all. All people then will become embodiments of love. Then there will be no scope at all for hatred and violence in the world.

Today, wherever you look you will find hatred and differences of opinion among people. In fact, they are not differences in the real sense. They may appear to be differences in the secular life. But all are one from the spiritual angle. Strictly speaking, all are zeroes and only God is the hero. He alone is one. All others are zeroes standing next to Him. That is the reason why they acquire value. Remove that one, all will be reduced to mere zeroes! Hence, God is the only important entity in our life.

Consider the Mind Also as Divine

The mind alone is responsible for all the sorrows and difficulties, as well as happiness, of human beings. Several people consider mind as very bad and call it monkey mind. In My opinion, it is not monkey mind, it is mankind. It is always kind. It is the mind that gives you joy and happiness. It is also the mind that causes you worry and sorrow. If only you can keep the mind in a proper state, nothing can be bad. You consider the mind also as Divine. Then you will always be happy.

*Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam
Jnanamurtim, Dwandateetam,
Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam,
Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam,*

*Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam,
Trigunarahitam*

(Sanskrit sloka)

(The *Atma* is the embodiment of eternal bliss, wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the *Mahavakya Tatwamasī*, one without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three attributes of *Satwa, Rajas* and *Tamas*).

You call it *Atma* or mind or consciousness – all are one. We ascribe different names to the same principle, according to our convenience for reference. For example, this body has been given the name *Sathya*. This name is given to the body and not to Me. I am not the body. I am not the mind. I am not the intellect. I am not the *Chitta*. I am not imagination. *Bhagawan* is *Bhagawan*. You must develop such firm faith.

It is possible that the minds of some people are susceptible to some disturbances due to changes in food habits and recreation. It is also possible that they may be influenced by some friends in this regard. Frequently, I will be repeating the saying, “Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.” Hence, I advise you to join the company of noble souls.

*Satsangatwe nissangatwam,
Nissangatwe nirmohatwam,
Nirmohatwe nischalatattwam,
Nischalatattwe jivanmukti.*

(Sanskrit sloka)

(Good company leads to detachment; detachment makes one free from delusion. Freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind; steadiness of mind confers liberation.)

It is possible that everyone can attain *Mukti* (liberation). But when? The moment you establish yourself in the truth that I am *Atma*, you will at-

tain liberation. Always think “Swami is in me, I am in Swami.” However, it will be of no use if you simply repeat, “I am Swami, I am Swami” with a fickle mind. Develop firm faith, “I am Swami, I am God”.

It is only when you develop that firm conviction that you will attain Divinity, which is *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (God is attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). On the other hand, if your mind is polluted with bad thoughts, everything will turn out to be bad for you.

Nowadays, even water is polluted. The human body will be afflicted with several diseases on account of this water pollution. It is, therefore, necessary that the physical body is also protected to a certain extent. What do you think is the purpose for which this body is gifted to you by God? It is only to make you realise your own Self. But you forget this purpose and concentrate your mind on the physical body. After all, what is there in the physical body?

The body is like a water bubble.

The mind is like a mad monkey.

Don't follow the body.

Don't follow the mind.

Follow the conscience.

If only you learn this simple principle, your life will be sanctified. You need not pay heed to whatever people may say. Purity of consciousness is the fruition of knowledge. It is only when your consciousness is pure that you will attain wisdom.

Purity of the mind is of utmost importance. Keep your mind pure, free from all kinds of pollution. Whenever evil thoughts enter your mind, remind yourself, “This is not good; this is not mine; not mine,” and drive away those evil thoughts. Tell

yourself, "These are all not my property; my property is good thoughts and good ideas only."

Constantly remember the truth that love is God. Live in love. If you can cultivate such positive and noble thoughts, everything will turn out to be good for you. There are several people here who are deluded by ephemeral things. No doubt, you are pure at heart. You have only pure thoughts. But a certain amount of pollution sets in now and then. You must ensure that it does not happen. That is *sadhana* for you.

What is *sadhana*? Is it sitting in meditation and doing *japa* (recitation of God's Name)? No. This is not *sadhana*. What do you think is the meaning of meditation? You think it is sitting in a lonely place and contemplating on the Lord's Name. Not at all! Contemplate upon the pure thoughts in your mind. Contemplate on the Truth in you.

If you really wish to know the secret of *sadhana*, it can be explained through very simple methods. For example, make your mind steady and still for as short a period as eleven seconds. You can attain realisation even in such a short period. Realisation cannot be achieved by becoming restless like a clock. Just eleven seconds of stillness of mind would be enough. But you don't do even that.

You can achieve a lot during this period. Hence, do not trouble yourself unnecessarily. You are, at present, putting your body to a lot of trouble. You are wasting a lot of money too. Time waste is life waste. Money waste is an evil. Hence, do not waste money and time. Time is God and God is time. Hence, whenever you find time, think of Swami. I will certainly appear before you. Not only that, I will even talk to you. I have received several letters saying that Swami has appeared before them and talked to them. You can also do such *sadhana*. Develop such unflinching faith in Swami.

You will surely succeed in your *sadhana*. Several people have come here as devotees. They have, no doubt, deep devotion towards Swami. But what is devotion? What is the hallmark of a devotee? This has to be analysed first. First and foremost, you have to develop faith.

*Where there is faith, there is love;
Where there is love, there is truth;
Where there is truth; there God is.*

Truth is God. You do not have to make any special efforts to know Truth. In fact, eleven seconds are enough to realise Truth. You just contemplate in your mind for a period of eleven seconds on Truth and you will be able to have God's *darshan*. You are unnecessarily taxing your body by sitting for hours together in meditation. At the end, you are suffering from pain in your legs and hands and backache. Do not give scope for such painful joints. You ultimately land in a doctor's clinic, who will diagnose your trouble as rheumatic pains. They are not rheumatic pains at all. They are the result of misguided *sadhana*. Stick to the time schedule of eleven seconds and you will have no pain. In addition, you also have timely food.

With regard to food, you have to know certain subtle things and observe some restrictions. You should not consume non-vegetarian food like meat and fish. In fact, foreigners are used to non-vegetarian food only. This type of food causes diseases like cancer. Hence, give up such food, totally. Not only that. They also like cheese very much. The more you consume cheese, the weaker you become. You should not also take milk in excess quantity. Too much milk is very bad. It should be limited. The milk should be diluted with water in equal proportion. Same is the case with curd. It should not be thick. It should be semi-solid.

Thus, you have to control the food you eat daily. Proper food at the proper time is very much nec-

essary for contemplating on God. If you thus take proper food and observe discipline in your habits, you are sure to have God's *darshan* at that very moment. You do not need to undertake rigorous *sadhana* for months and years. You can always be blissful. Bliss is the form of God.

You desire to have bliss. But from where do you get bliss? From a shop in the market or by having a sumptuous meal in a hotel with a variety of dishes? No, not at all! Bliss has to come from within. You are, in fact, the embodiment of bliss. You were blissful at the time of your birth. But, once you started developing attachment to the world, you began crying. Hence, you have to reduce your worldly attachments.

At present, you have a lot of attachment to the world. Thereby you are weakening your body. Ultimately you will end up in sorrow. Worry is a very bad quality. Hurry, worry and curry – these three together make the heart very weak. Hence, keep them at a distance.

Whenever you are in difficulties, you just assure yourself that these are passing clouds and will move away, and therefore you will not be worried. Whatever comes has to go. They are momentary. The same is the case with the human body. Hence, you have to give importance to the body only to the extent required. The body has to be maintained within proper limits. Otherwise, it will decay. You have to be very careful.

Those who are engaged in *sadhana* and wish to have the *darshan*, *sparshan*, and *sambhashan* (vision, touch, and conversation) with God, must follow My advice in this regard. You are sure to have His *darshan* and can even talk to Him.

Devotion is not merely performing certain forms of worship or undertaking religious vows or doing *japa*. Real devotion presupposes unshakeable love towards God, devoid of delusion. You have to cultivate such steadfast love towards

God. Then you will certainly attain Divinity. Since people are at present attached to the world, demonic qualities are growing in them. Both *kama* (desire) and *krodha* (anger) are the worst enemies of a human being.

You must always be happy, smiling and loving. When you are smiling, love will automatically develop in you. There are, of course, some people who will put up a castor oil face. You must always be smiling and cheerful. God is always blissful. He does not at all worry for anything. Sorrow and worry are nowhere near God. When you observe Me I am always cheerful and smiling. I have no pain or suffering. I am revealing the truth.

Some time ago, I sustained an injury to My leg due to a mistake committed by the students. My hipbone suffered four cracks. The doctors examined Me and decided to put My leg in a bandage. I refused. I came to the balcony by walking and gave *darshan* to the devotees. Even now, one of My legs is shorter by two inches.

Several doctors, including Dr. Pillay and his son from Singapore, came and wanted to examine Me. They are specialists in the branch of orthopaedics. Also, several experts from America and other places came. They prayed, "Swami, please spare just five minutes for us to examine Your leg." I told them, "I will give you five hours for a spiritual purpose, if you wish. But I don't give this body even for five minutes for a clinical examination."

Even now, the students hold My body as I walk. I shout at them, saying, "I will not go, if you follow Me." Thus, I give strict instructions to the students accompanying Me. I am able to manage Myself. I have no pain or suffering in the least. I can walk in the normal way. I do not fumble while walking and can keep My normal pace.

I have maintained the same body weight for many years. My body weight then was 110

pounds. There was neither an increase nor a decrease in the body weight even to the extent of a half-pound. I am always hale and healthy. No one need to worry about My health. I will always be happy. When you look at Swami from an external angle, you will think that Swami is perhaps suffering from severe pain. Not at all! I have no pain whatsoever. Even if there is some pain, your love for Swami will remove that pain. It is enough if I look at you; all My pain is gone! I will be happy and cheerful. My pain, if there is some at all, has to be removed by your love for *Swami* and not by the doctors.

What could be the reason for people in such large numbers gathering here today? What does it connote? I am extremely happy that I am able to win the love of so many people. You also be happy, wherever you are. I am always happy. I am extremely happy to see you all here. This is your good fortune. This time, the people have all come here with intense love and devotion. That makes Me very happy and cheerful. I am very eager to

walk to the Sai Kulwant Hall tomorrow to give you *darshan*.

There is no medicine more efficacious than love. Your love is My medicine. That is the most powerful medicine. Equally, My love is a powerful medicine to all of you. Always be happy and peaceful. Live like members of the same family, with love and affection. Do not be weighed down by petty difficulties and suffering. Do not give scope to any worry. Even if your wife or children suffer from any disease, do not get perturbed. Go back to your places with firm faith that everything will turn out to be good. Lead a happy and peaceful life. (Here, *Swami*, showed the *Linga* He had created earlier to the audience and inquired) Did you see this *Linga*? It is heavy. A much bigger *Linga* will emerge from Swami's mouth. The *Shivaratri* festival is approaching.

**Divine Discourse at
the World Youth Conference
on July 28, 2007**



YOUTH SHOULD TRANSFORM THE WORLD

One who practises and propagates ideals such as goodness, morality and truth is a youth in the strict sense of the term. In fact, only such people are your best friends and My best friends too.
(Telugu poem)

Lmbodiments of Love! Goodness means good behaviour, good conduct, good discipline and good character. Truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence are verily the five life principles (*pancha pranas*) of man.

Human life is a journey from “I” to “We”. This journey is subtle and the goal is very near, but man takes many births to reach the destination. Why should he take such a long time, undergoing hardships to attain the goal, which is so near?

Modern youth are making every effort to know all that is happening in the world but are not making any effort to understand the fundamental truth of human life. No benefit accrues from acquiring such information, which does not lead you to the goal of life. There are thousands of intellectuals, scholars and eminent educationists in the world today. But all the worldly knowledge and skills will be a mere waste if one does not know oneself. The primary duty of man is to understand who he really is.

*In this world, if money is lost,
One need not be worried about it,
for one can earn it again.*

*If a friend is lost, one can have another.
If one's wife is lost, one may get married again.
If one loses one's piece of land,
one can purchase another.
All these can be acquired again.
But the body once lost is lost forever.*
(Sanskrit verse)

Faith in God Is Very Essential for Man

Man has achieved everything in life but has lost human values, which amounts to losing his five life principles. As a result, he has become a living corpse. Faith in God is very essential for man. You may question who God is and where God is. Truth is God. Truth is one and the same for everyone, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, language, nationality and ideology.

Sathyannasti paro dharma (There is no greater *dharma* than adherence to truth). This fundamental truth is God. Likewise, love is God. So, live in love. True love is related to the heart, not to the body. Divine love is “heart to heart, not body to body.” Body is like a water bubble; mind is like a mad monkey. Don't follow the body and don't follow the mind. Follow the conscience. Only then can you experience the truth.

Service Will Lead You to Devotion

You men and women! Your life is a long journey and your desires are the luggage. "Less luggage, more comfort makes travel a pleasure." So, reduce your desires. Human birth is gifted to serve others, not just to eat, drink, sleep and make merry. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Man's foremost duty is to serve his fellow men and make them happy. Your life will be redeemed only when you involve yourself in the service of society. The highest *sadhana* (spiritual practice) is to transform love into service. Service will lead you to devotion.

The Kerala boy who spoke earlier mentioned various diseases that affect the body. There are many instances in history wherein even mighty kings had to leave their mortal coil in spite of having access to the best medical facilities and the best doctors. Doctors by themselves cannot cure diseases. Divine grace is essential. There is no point in safeguarding your body if you do not uphold morality. For this, lead a life of truth and love. Modern youth do have love but their love is artificial. It is limited to saying "Hello, hello," and is in fact hollow within. So, their life has become artificial like a drama.

Man can rise to the level of the Divine only through the path of service. When man is not able to understand humanness, how can he understand Divinity? First, know thyself. Human life is noble, since it is essentially Divine. In fact, man and God are not two different entities; they are one and the same. "*Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti* (Truth is one, but scholars refer to it by many names)." Your life will be redeemed once you understand this truth.

The Divine power latent in man is not found in any other being. Since man is unable to understand his own Divine nature, he is undertaking various spiritual practices such as penance, meditation and *yoga*. Spiritual practices bereft of love are a mere waste of time. Love is most important in

life. Whatever you may say with love, it is bound to be true. Any work you undertake with love is *dharma*. So, in the first instance, develop love.

Lust, greed, hatred, jealousy, anger and pride are animal qualities. These qualities are the result of the impurities in the food man partakes of. These are of man's own making. Man is forgetting his Divine nature due to the effect of these evil qualities.

The Words Seva and Prema Possess Infinite Power

Man should make proper use of his *mathi* (mind), *gathi* (destination), *stithi* (situation) and *sampathi* (wealth). Wealth here does not mean worldly treasures. It refers to the power of the senses. This power should be utilised for service to society.

Neither by penance nor by undertaking pilgrimages nor by going through sacred texts nor by japa can one cross the ocean of samsara. Only through service of the noble can one redeem oneself.

(Sanskrit verse)

The words *seva* and *prema* may be very small, consisting of only two syllables, but they possess infinite power.

Embodiments of Love! Inquire and understand who you really are. Know yourself, and you will know all. Since many of you are newcomers, you have to understand simple things to begin with. When you say, "This is my handkerchief," it means the handkerchief is different from you. Similarly, when you say, "This is my body, my mind and my intellect," it means you are different from all these. Then the question naturally arises, "Who are you?" Inquire into this. Body, mind and intellect are mere instruments. Identifying yourself with these instruments is absurd. You are the master. Master the mind and be a mastermind. Never be a slave to your body, mind and senses. In fact, they should be under your control; they should not control you.

One of the speakers quoted Swami, "My life is My message." She also referred to the statement, "Your life is My message." You should understand the meaning of these statements clearly. Saying that your life is Swami's message and indulging in wicked activities and unrighteous deeds is treacherous. That constitutes "your" message, not My message. You can declare that your life is Swami's message only when you take to the path of truth and righteousness, install peace and love in your heart, and uphold non-violence.

No One Has the Right to Judge Others

All that you see outside is a reflection of the inner being. Good and bad do not exist outside; they are mere reflections of what is within you. No one has the right to judge others. Give up all that is bad in you and you will find goodness all around. As the colour of the glasses you put on, so is the colour of the world you visualise. The defect lies in your vision, not in the creation.

The heart is the dwelling place of God. So only noble feelings should emerge out of it. If there are any evil qualities like lust, greed and anger in it, then it ceases to be a human heart. It is verily the heart of an animal. If your conduct is devoid of humanness, then you are not a human being. Act in a manner that befits your human birth. When you are angry, remind yourself, "I am not a dog, I am man." When your mind wavers, tell yourself repeatedly, "I am not a monkey, I am man." Patiently think about your real nature.

Never act in haste. Haste makes waste; waste makes worry. So do not be in a hurry. Take time and think calmly. All these evil qualities can be eliminated by developing good thoughts and feelings. The remedy for all your mental ailments lies within you.

Undertake Service with Love

Only young men and women are capable of eradicating the evils prevailing in society. If we have virtuous youth, all ills of society can be removed.

Today the whole world is embroiled in wicked thoughts, wicked company and evil acts. Excessive desires are the main cause for the suffering of man. Keep a check on your desires. As a student, discharge your duties diligently. Study well and obtain good marks. Respect your parents and serve them. Keep in mind the welfare of the society and nation at large. Earn a good name in society.

Do not feel proud of your education. Your education is a mere waste if it is not utilised for the welfare of society. The education you have received from society must be dedicated to it by way of service. The essence of education does not lie in merely acquiring degrees, securing good jobs and amassing wealth. Service is the hallmark of the educated one. Morality is most essential for human life. No doubt money is essential but it should be under certain limits. Excessive money makes many wrongs. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows.

Students! Young men and women! First and foremost, make an effort to understand your true nature. The difference between God and man is very subtle. As long as you do not understand the truth, you remain a human being. Once you recognise it, you are God. Service is the best way to understand your innate Divinity.

Service should be for self-satisfaction, not for name and fame. Experience the bliss that you derive from selfless service. Share it with others. Before serving others, serve yourself by making your mind broad and pure. Get rid of the narrow feeling of "I" and "mine," and extend your love to one and all. Love is the binding force that brings together the entire world as one family. I wish that you develop love and live like brothers and sisters.

This body has been engaged in service right from birth. You should also spend your life in serving others. This is My message. I practise whatever I

preach. I love all and serve all, and exhort you to do the same. You are not able to understand My love as your feelings are narrow. That is your mistake, not Mine. Today, conflicts are on the rise as there is no proper understanding and adjustment among people. Adjustment will be possible only when there is proper understanding.

Develop Love and Uphold Truth

Embodiments of Love! Only love has been constantly with you right from birth. It is love that remains with you all the time, not your relatives or friends. This love is God. Enjoy the bliss of love and share it with others. Absence of love is the root cause for all the unrest in the world.

Develop love and uphold truth. Truth does not mean describing what you have seen, heard or done as it is. Truth is that which is changeless in all the three periods of time. The *Vedas* call this permanent truth *rutham*. Just as you change your dress, you have to change your body one day or the other. That is why it is said, "Death is the dress of life." Therefore you should have no fear of death.

Life is not permanent. It is like a passing cloud. As long as there is life in the body, use it for the service of others. Engage yourself in service till your last breath. Service to man is service to God. Have control over your senses, because loss of sense control engenders demonic qualities in man. Service without sense control is an exercise in futility.

Cultivate Noble Thoughts

All of you have gathered here without being extended any invitation. It is your love for Bhagawan and Bhagawan's love for you that has brought you here. If there is love in your heart, you will never be put to any hardship whatsoever. Your love should be extended to one and all; it should not be limited to your family and friends alone.

Today, we do not have ideal parents. There are no ideal teachers either. We do not have ideal friends and relatives too. Then how can we find fault with the youth? First of all, the parents should be good. The teachers should also do their job of teaching earnestly. Good company is very important. Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are. As is your company, so you become. How can one be good if one is always in the company of bad people?

Embodiments of Love! You are all virtuous and noble. Make every effort to enhance this goodness. Make the best use of your stay here. Run away from bad company and bad feelings. Cultivate noble thoughts and noble qualities. Develop the *Atmic* relationship with all, since all are your brothers and sisters. Lord Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "*Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathana*" (The eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of My Being). The sun is one but it has many reflections. All that you find in this world is the reflection, reaction and resound. Do not get carried away by them. Aspire to attain the reality. In order to experience the reality, give up body attachment and try to understand the Divinity within.

Help Ever, Hurt Never

Divinity is latent in everyone but you are not making any effort to realise it because you are deeply engrossed in worldly matters. You are the embodiment of pure, unsullied, true and eternal *Atma*. Experience this reality. Discharge your duties keeping this truth in view. Help ever, hurt never. This is the essence of the *Vedas* and sacred texts such as the Bible, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Quran. All these holy texts speak of the same fundamental truth.

It is a mistake to entertain differences based on religion. There is only one religion, the religion of love. There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one language, the language of the heart. Travel from "I" to "We" through the path

of service. I will tell you how to go about doing it in due course of time.

There are millions of people in this world but only you, the fortunate few, have the golden opportunity of coming here. Make the best use of this opportunity and share this joy with everybody. Serve the whole world. Understand the truth that you are born to serve society.

Do not lead a selfish life amassing wealth. Do not be satisfied by filling your own belly; understand that there are millions in the world who are hungry and suffering. Your life will be sanctified only when you help the poor, the sick and the down-trodden. That is true spirituality.

Spirituality is a way of life. It is not something separate from life. That should be your way of life. In order to acquire a worldly degree, you need to study various subjects. But in spirituality there is only one subject, and that is love. Undertake service activities in a spirit of love.

Being young, you may have a few doubts. I will clarify all of them. Do not give scope for hatred, jealousy and ostentation. Be a humble devotee and render humble service. That is the true human quality.

**Divine Discourse
at the Sri Sathya Sai Second
World Youth Conference
on November 18, 1999**



**Procession at World Youth
Conference 2007**



*H*uman values are in everyone. What we need are persons who will provide the stimulus and the encouragement to bring them out. If the feeling that the divinity that is present in everyone is one and the same, is promoted among all, human values will sprout naturally in every person.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
September 26, 1987



CHAPTER

Five

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA'S
MESSAGE TO EDUCATORS





SERVE THE CHILD

Men are proficient in various skills. They manufacture and operate diverse machines and master many fields of knowledge. However, they have not acquired the peace that is their due. They are carried along by the torrential flood of worldly life. Though endowed with human capabilities exercisable through a human body, men do not choose the straight path of truth. They wander about in false and fleeting pleasures and fritter their years, forgetting their innate Divine Reality. This is far from the fulfilment they should aspire to.

Mere skill, mere designing and manipulation of machines, hollow pomp, boasting and assertions about being a *jnani* (liberated person) – these do not reveal the secret of human nature. Has man solved this mystery that includes all mysteries? Has he found the answer that is the key to all problems? Has he earned the knowledge that can make him know all that he has to know?

The solution, the answer and the knowledge is one, and only one. Why pluck the leaves, break the branches and hew the trunk in order to destroy the tree? Cut the root and it is done! The *Vedic* seers and the sages who followed concentrated on the discovery of this key knowledge, the *Atma vidya* (knowledge of *Atma*). Seekers from overseas also became aware of this *vidya* and the modes of *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) it lays down and have acclaimed it enthusiastically the world over.

Our Forefathers Revered the Sacred Texts

But though this *vidya* permeated its native home and illumined it for ages, Indians were huddled within the dark circle of the lamp's shadow. This has been their miserable fate. Our fathers and great-grandfathers perused the pages of books depicting the sacred culture of our land, assimilated their message, practised the *sadhana* and taught and remembered their teachings with gratitude. And, as a result, they enjoyed unruffled peace.

They studied the great classics – the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavad Gita* – and the moral maxims propounded therein were imprinted indelibly on their hearts. They were guided throughout their lives by these sacred texts, which they placed in their shrines, offering them reverential adoration. Their hearts were purified and sanctified by these acts of worship and work, and they were prompted to render service to society as a consequence.

By some stroke of evil fortune, times changed. The “modern age” dawned and our people bowed slavishly before it. These holy books were neglected and even cast aside as containing “primitive” ideals. Western scholars and seekers, on the other hand, retrieved them, studied them scrupulously and analysed their precepts on subjects as diverse as medicine, armaments, mathematics and astronomy, and they in turn spoke of them to the very people who had pioneered in those fields! We welcome them with glee, as

a man prefers stale food in another's house to fresh dishes in his own!

Cultivate Virtue in the Hearts of Pupils

In blind admiration of Western ways of life, students in India belittle virtue and extol dry scholarship. They forget they are human beings engaged in the pilgrimage to God. Instead, they engross themselves in attempts to squeeze joy out of the material world. Therefore, the first task of teachers is the cultivation of virtue in the hearts of the pupils. This is much more vital than the promotion of learning.

The education system today does not recognise or encourage moral or spiritual values. Therefore, the student community has degenerated into a socially dangerous element. The students do not pay the least attention to promotion of the welfare of society, nor do they have any understanding of their social obligations. Unless the desire to do service is earnest and the skill to do service is cultivated, students will remain a burden on the community, behaving as parasites and exploiters.

A generous heart helps spread peace and joy. Little knowledge narrows the mind and limits one's concern for others. It bloats the ego and feeds selfishness. It makes man forget the delight derivable from virtue. Such students are unable to develop the prosperity of the nation or the progress of society. The thick veil of egoism blinds their sight and renders them callous to their own dignity and destiny.

Students should try their best to realise their heritage. A mind free from either

extreme attachment or detachment, a speech uncontaminated by falsehood and a body unpoluted by sin – these are what every student must strive to possess. Teachers must be vigilant to help and encourage them to avoid any trace of dishonesty in their actions and statements.

Gurus Must Practise What They Preach

Selfishness, envy and egoistic pride are the three tendencies and attitudes that should not take root in tender hearts. Therefore, prompt the children in your care to engage themselves in acts of service to others. What a shame it is for man to behave selfishly, while his life itself depends on the unselfish behaviour of the rest of creation. Whatever information, instruction or inspiration man has gained, or whatever wealth, riches or material possessions he has earned, he should share them with others in an unselfish manner. This is his primary duty. Teachers must be on the watch for chances to instil this ideal in the hearts of their pupils.

India has no shortage of rich persons, nor a shortage of great philosophers, academicians and scholars. In spite of this, the land has no peace

and the people are afflicted by anxiety and fear. What is the reason? The chief reason is the greed for self-aggrandisement and the absence of virtues like service and renunciation. The rich, the great, the learned and even the monastic heads of religious sects are caught in the coils of selfishness and are unable to manifest the Divine virtues latent in them.

The hearts of the young pupils have to be filled by you with noble yearning, so that they may be shaped into



strong and sturdy instruments for raising the India of the future to the glory that is her right.

Gurus (teachers/preceptors) have to be examples who can inspire the pupils. They must practise what they preach. As the teacher, so is the pupil. When the tap is turned, water flows down from the overhead tank. The quality of the tap water is the same as that of the water in the tank. When the heart of the *guru* is full of goodness, selflessness and love, the pupils will express these virtues in every act of theirs.

Teachers Should Not Form Rival Groups

There are, it is said, more than 5,000 *Bal Vikas gurus* in the land. If each one corrects and improves a hundred children, the nation would indeed be transformed. You must examine what exactly has been attained during the four years that have elapsed since the *Bal Vikas* came into being. This analytical study has to be made constantly. When the *gurus* cultivate a *satwic* (pure) nature, students too will grow into embodiments of that nature. The *gurus* should be alert so that the weeds of hatred, envy and similar vices do not take root in their own hearts. These weeds are rampant in the political field and they creep into other fields too.

Teachers should not form rival groups – some proud of their achievements, some envious of the praise others earn – that engage themselves in recrimination. See others as your own brothers and sisters, for all are One when viewed as *Atman*.

Somehow, somewhere and at intervals, you may be confronted by wrong traits. But remember that you have entered the circle of Sathya Sai *Bal Vikas gurus*. It may not be serious if these traits enslave teachers in other circles, but your mission is much more fundamental and the hope that you arouse much more heartening. These traits will hamper and pollute your efforts.

Be conscious of the sacred significance of the name, *guru*, by which you are known. “Gu” means “darkness” and “ru” means “removal.” So the *guru* has to illumine the intelligence of the child and remove the ignorance that is obstructing its full development. Diving deeper, we find that *guru* also has another meaning. “Gu” means “not limited by attributes” and “ru” means “not affected by appearances.” That is to say, the *guru* must be free from prejudice and must treat all pupils with equal love.

Remove the Primeval Ignorance

Pour out all your love on the children around you and instruct them gladly and sincerely. This attitude alone can justify association with the Sathya Sai *Bal Vikas*. Of course, Sai is not unaware that the *Bal Vikas gurus* are now heartily engaged in their sacred task and are contributing their best to the progress of the movement. But just as a battery has to be charged occasionally, I am now pointing out certain defects and dangers that might tarnish.

It is imperative that you should discover the right path and pursue it steadily with faith. Take, for example, the petromax lamp. It requires some quantity of kerosene and also pumping now and then. A pin has to be used sometimes to clear obstructions. The kerosene is faith, the pin is the love that urges you to do your duty, and pumping is the will that sustains you in your task. Besides these, the lamp needs a wick. The name of the Lord, which is your constant inspiration, is the wick. Endeavour, in the light of the *Atmic* unity of all, to remove the primeval ignorance from yourselves and from your pupils.

A Bad Teacher Can Ruin Thousands of Lives

Discuss and discover during this conference how far you have succeeded in this holy mission and, as a result of that discovery, lay down before yourselves the ways and means by which greater success can be achieved. Communicate your

experience to others and also your ideas on improving the curriculum, the method of teaching and the means of assessing the progress made. I would advise you to pay special attention to the activities and methods by which you can contribute, through the *Bal Vikas*, to the blossoming of talents latent in the children, the expansion of prosperity of the nation and the security and welfare of society.

A bad pupil causes harm only to himself but a bad teacher can ruin thousands of lives. Be steady and stable in your efforts. A guidepost that changes direction with every gust of wind only adds confusion for the confounded traveller. You have also to cultivate *prema* and expand your desire to do *seva*.

Most of all, fill your mind with God and transmit God to the children. Look forward to no remuneration or reward, except the joy on the faces of the children. Nowadays, teachers are more attached to their salaries than to their duties. They are centred more on their own lives than on their sacred task. Give up the mad rush in pursuit of degrees.

Pursue, rather, chances to serve others and to promote the prosperity of the nation. Indian culture has declined so far and so much because teachers, who are its guardians and promoters, are content merely to feed themselves and their families and to cultivate their own fame and fortune.

The *Vedas* tell us: *Na karmana* (not by acts), *na prajaya* (not by progeny), *na dhanena* (nor by riches), *thyagena ekena* (only by renunciation) *amritatwam anasuh* (can immortality be attained). So renounce, renounce! Serve and give your knowledge, your delight and your love gladly to the children. Serve thus the society and the people.

The Sathya Sai *Bal Vikas* gurus are doing this service wholeheartedly. I believe they will continue their efforts even more sincerely and gladly. The resolutions you will arrive at in this conference should not only be inscribed on paper, but also must be followed and practised in actual day-to-day teaching in the classes. I am sure each one of you is determined to do your best in the service of the children, the society, and the precious heritage of Indian culture.

**Divine Discourse at the
Fourth All India Conference of
Bal Vikas Gurus
on November 20, 1979**



“EDUCARE” IS TRUE EDUCATION

*No harm can ever befall a person whose heart is full of compassion,
whose words are adorned by truth,
and whose body is dedicated to the welfare of others.*

(Telugu poem)

E*mbodiments of Love!* First and foremost, we must investigate into “*panchatantra*,” or the five principal aspects of education. These are as follows:

1. What is education?
2. What type of education should we pursue?
3. What is the main aim of education?
4. What is the uniqueness of education?
5. What are we gaining from present-day education?

Only when we recognise the inner significance of these “*panchatantra*” can we know what true education is. What is education? It is of two types. The first type is collection of facts and knowledge about the external world, and sharing them with students. The second type is educate. Educate involves the deep understanding of the knowledge that springs from within and imparting it to students. But today’s education gives the students’ knowledge only about the external world.

Only culture or refinement can develop good personality and not this type of education. So both education and culture are important.

Today’s education is devoid of culture and is like a counterfeit coin. Even a beggar does not accept a counterfeit coin. Then how can experienced and intelligent people accept such education? So to satisfy everyone we must develop educate. Education without refinement is like a dark room. Only bats can live in dark rooms; such rooms are filthy. So, by pursuing such education devoid of culture, our hearts have become dark rooms and hence many animal qualities find their way into them.

Education without culture is like a kite with a broken string. No one knows where it will fall and what damage it will cause to others. Therefore, such education does not benefit anyone.

Proceed from Superficial to Practical Knowledge

Only if education is blended with culture will it shine forth as true education. What is culture? It is the cultivation of discrimination between good and evil, sin and merit, and truth and untruth that we experience in our daily life. It is also removal of one’s evil thoughts, feelings and qualities, and cultivation of good thoughts, feelings and qualities. Not only this, culture makes one broad-minded by getting rid of one’s narrow-mindedness.

This morning, a song “I and you are one!” was sung. Even this is also a kind of narrow-mindedness. It will be better to say, “All are one!” A celestial voice told Jesus, “All are one, my dear son, be alike to everyone!” Educare develops such broad-mindedness. Today’s education comprises only bookish knowledge. It is only superficial knowledge and it changes every moment. So we must add Educare to this bookish knowledge. *Educare is practical knowledge.*

There are a few steps between superficial knowledge and practical knowledge. From superficial knowledge we must proceed to general knowledge. After analysing this general knowledge one gains discrimination knowledge and knows the difference between good and evil. From this discrimination knowledge we proceed to practical knowledge. This practical knowledge is changeless.

True and eternal education never changes when the heart is filled with compassion; it becomes sacred and aspires for the welfare of one and all. An educated person should not have bad qualities and must not indulge in bad deeds. Today’s education imparts only bookish knowledge, which really degrades a person. How long will this bookish knowledge last? It lasts as long as we keep it in our mind. It is not possible to put bookish knowledge into practice. We fill our heads with bookish knowledge, go to the examination hall, fill our answer paper with it and return with empty heads! In effect, the head always remains empty.

To acquire discrimination knowledge one requires general knowledge, which consists of ordinary cleverness and intelligence. Discrimination knowledge also has in it common sense. Both are essential for life in this world.

Students and Teachers! What we need today is not bookish knowledge, though we require it to a certain extent to cope with life in this world.

But what is essential to us is the knowledge of the *Atma*. Spiritual education is the highest education, says the *Bhagavad Gita*. It starts with discrimination knowledge, which is like a perennial river. In perennial rivers the quantity of water may vary but not the quality. Thus, students should understand that quality of education is more important than its quantity. Degrees are not important, but the knowledge accomplished out of education is important.

What is the meaning of education? Education is not mere knowledge, it includes action too. Education that originates from within has a sound basis and is permanent. It is referred to as *sathyam*. A step higher than *sathyam* is *ritam*, as proclaimed in the *Vedas*. What we normally refer to as truth in daily life is merely a fact.

Education is for Life, Not for Living

People mistake bookish knowledge to be true education. No one today bothers about the aim of education. *Education is for life and not for living.*

Today’s education is aimed at merely eking out a livelihood. If mere living is the purpose, then how do birds and beasts live without any education? Even ants and mosquitoes, which do not have any education, live their lives. Is education for merely earning one’s bread? What is the essence of education? The essence of education is the concentration of the mind and not the collection of facts.

Mere collection of facts will not serve any purpose. For example, a washerman in a village goes from house to house collecting clothes for washing. In each household the number of clothes that are given for washing is noted down in a notebook. But the washerman does not have an account. By evening he returns the clothes to the respective houses. This is general knowledge. For acquiring this general knowledge education is not necessary. Even a washerman possesses it. Many educated men lack the acumen of even a washerman. General knowledge cannot be ac-

quired by mere study. It is learnt from the book of life.

What is the end of education? People answer this question by saying there is no end to education.

Definitely there is an end to what we study from books. *The end of education is character. Education without character is useless.* Earlier in *gurukulas* the sages took the students along with them wherever they went and taught them without conforming to any time schedule. This education was a continuous learning process. But today in schools and colleges education is limited to strict time schedules. Therefore, education has become limited.

But true education, which moulds character, has no limits. When we learn about that which is “limitless,” we attain the end of education. Our character is reflected in our words, behaviour and conduct in daily life. So we should speak pleasantly and not hurt others with our harsh words. It is true that we cannot always oblige, but we can speak obligingly.

While cooking, ladies select appropriate vessels according to the quantity of rice to be cooked. It does not make sense if a large vessel is chosen to cook a small quantity of rice. Discrimination should be used to select the vessel and the intensity of the flame required for cooking. In the same way, discrimination should be used to enrich one's character.

Fact, Truth, and Absolute Truth

When elderly guests visit the house, even if one cannot offer them anything to eat, one should at least welcome them inside, speak affectionate words and make them happy. Instead, if one asks them rudely, “Why have you come?” it is not good. Even when the father is at home, one tells them that he is not there. This is not proper education. Speak good words and tell the truth.

There are three types of truth. They are fact, truth and absolute truth. To say as it is what you have seen is a fact. Suppose I see you wearing a white dress and say, “You are wearing a white dress.” This becomes a fact. Later at home you might wear a blue shirt. Then what I had said earlier does not hold good anymore. Thus, a fact is subject to change.

Truth, on the other hand, does not change with time. A person may change any number of dresses but the person remains the same. Thus, truth is the same at all times. I often say that you are not one but three. The one you think you are: the physical body. The one others think you are: the mind. Mind is invisible. One's happiness or misery is based on one's actions.

Ritam (absolute truth) transcends both good and evil. This is the one you really are, the *Atma*. You are a combination of body, mind and *Atma*. Body is subject to change. It is *Atma* that is eternal. This is referred to as *ritam* in the *Vedas*. It is changeless and has no attributes. It is described as attributeless, pure, eternal highest abode, permanent and unsullied.

One may say that one has acquired three post-graduate degrees. But what are these degrees? These are mere certificates. Who is the one who has earned all these degrees? It is “I.”

This “I” is the absolute truth. Only when you are awake you travel physically, see many sights, eat many dishes and experience many things. But in the dream state you create yourself! You do your work and travel to far-off places like Delhi or America, without even purchasing a plane ticket. In the deep sleep state one does not go anywhere. It is a changeless and steady state, which remains a witness.

The same “I” experiences all these three states. In deep sleep you enjoy bliss. In the dream state you create various scenes and experience them.

But in the wakeful state you experience everything physically through the senses.

Adi Shankara has cautioned us about the truth of what we experience through the senses. Varieties of the mind are many. In order to control them, Shankara introduced a practice in his *ashram*. The disciples would walk from one end of the *ashram* to the other repeating, "Be careful! Be careful!" Once a feeling arose in Shankara's mind that he was the head of the *ashram* with a large income. At that moment he heard the sentinels cautioning, "Be careful! Be careful!" This alerted him and brought about a change in his feelings.

*Birth is a misery, old age is a misery,
family is a misery,
the last moments are full of sorrow,
so Be careful! Be careful!*

(Telugu poem)

One might consider oneself to be great. As of now, one might be enjoying name and fame. But what will happen when one is faced with misery towards the end of one's life? Shankara wondered who would come to one's rescue at the very end of one's life.

*Neither mother, nor father, nor relatives,
nor brothers, not even wealth or possessions
will come to your rescue in the last moments.
Hence be careful!*

(Telugu poem)

In earlier days, this was taught in the *gurukulas* to the students by the preceptors. This ancient educational system originated from absolute truth. This is what is "Educare." It is also reflected in the letters ABC as "Always Be Careful." Shankara preached the same principle.

So it is necessary to impart spiritual education along with secular education. General knowledge devoid of spiritual education is negative. General knowledge is like the bulb and spiritual knowledge is like the current flowing through it. Only

when positive and negative meet is darkness dispelled. So we must develop positive along with negative.

It would be enough if we have only positive aspects. The Divine power is latent in every being, which is positive. Man today accumulates negative aspects in excess. Birth, growth, sustenance, and death are all negative.

*He is the Eternal One with no birth and death,
He who is the Primordial One does not have
a beginning or an end,
He is neither born, nor does He die,
nor is He slain by anyone.
He is the Atma, which is the Eternal Witness.*

(Telugu poem)

Spiritual Knowledge is Foremost and Fundamental

Hence, the path of spirituality forms the basis for all forms of knowledge. The fundamental knowledge, which comprises spiritual knowledge, is greater than both practical knowledge and general knowledge. So this should be imparted along with the secular education. How long can we lead a truthful and ideal life in the world without trying to discover the Absolute Truth (*ritam*)?

We are making a mistake by identifying ourselves with the body. For example, a mother died leaving behind her fifteen-year-old son. The son was grief-stricken since there was no one to look after him. The body of the mother was right in front of him; then why was he sad? It was because life had left the body of his mother. So, mother is not the body but the life principle.

Life principle has no death. Body is like the dress; death is like a change of dress. Everything in this world undergoes change. But there is one thing that is changeless. That is the Fundamental Truth. We should learn that fundamental education. Once you have mastered it, it follows you wherever you go. Gradually you should get rid of attachment to the body and develop *Atmic* consciousness.

You are pursuing different types of education in different countries. But ultimately education should converge into educate. That can be achieved gradually. Therefore, mere acquaintance with books and what is written on the blackboard cannot constitute education. True education throws open the doors of the mind.

How can you enter a house with the doors closed? You desire many comforts and pleasures and also aspire for virtues. For that you have to open the doors of your mind first. Only then will absolute truth manifest in us. This absolute truth is all pervasive. In our organisation, we should not only wear a uniform dress, we should also develop a uniform mind. The basic thing to be achieved is purity of mind.

Embodiments of Love! There are many aspects in the modern educational system that we must understand. But we are not learning what we ought to. Instead, we are gathering irrelevant information. Mere learning of the contents of a book constitutes secular education. Education must be combined with educate. Only then will you experience the bliss.

What is the difference between “education” and “educare”? Education is like insipid water, whereas educate is like sugar. Merely adding sugar to water does not make it sweet. It is only on stirring that the sugar mixes with the water, making it sweet. The heart is the tumbler, Divinity is the sugar and secular education is tasteless water.



With intelligence as the spoon and inquiry as the process of stirring, we experience the all-pervasive Divinity. That is true wisdom, which enables us to recognise the unity of all creation.

This is a cloth. It is not just cloth. It is a bundle of threads, and more fundamentally it is cotton. The cotton, thread and cloth are one and the same. Without cotton, there is no thread, and without thread, there is no cloth. Recognition of the unity in multiplicity is the ultimate goal of education.

You should learn to face adversities boldly without blaming God. God would have planned to grant you some benefit through the hardship. You should accept both pain and pleasure as gifts of God and develop the attitude “whatever God does is for my own good!”

You will have many discussions in the conference. Let the discussions be filled with love and not with criticism. You should not criticise any religion, because it is the same God whom you worship, be it in a church, a temple or a mosque. A true devotee of God will not criticise anyone. Share your love equally with everyone. Tomorrow I shall answer any doubts or questions that may arise in your discussions today.


**Divine Discourse at the
First Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Schools
on November 20, 2001**

TRUE EDUCATION FOSTERS HUMAN VALUES

*Daivaadheenam Jagathsarvam Sathyaadheenamtu
Daivatham That Sathyam Uthamaadheenam Uthamo Paradevatha.*

(Sanskrit sloka)

(The whole world is under the control of God. God is subject to truth. Truth is subject to noble souls. Such noble people are the embodiments of Divinity.)

 *Students! Embodiments of Love! Teachers and promoters of education!* Today, people have not understood Divinity, they have not understood the meaning of God and are wasting their bodies, their time and all precious things in life.

Human values do not depend on education alone. They depend more on culture. What do you mean by culture? Culture means giving up one's bad conduct, bad behaviour and bad deeds, and cultivating good thinking and fostering good sentiments that lead to good actions.

The state of the whole world depends on human activity. When the actions of the people are noble, the country is equally noble. The people's behaviour and conduct depend on their thoughts. Thoughts depend on the mind. Good thoughts are the basis of human values.

Good Thoughts Yield Goodness

Because human values are not practised, the world is in a mess. The head and the heart are two important organs in every human being. Thoughts that arise in the head are worldly and fickle. They are influenced by external activi-

ties. Reading, writing, eating and earning are all outward activities. They are the products of the head.

All sacred feelings arise from the heart. Sacred qualities like compassion, love, sympathy, forbearance and truth emanate from the heart. They are all called inward qualities. The world is nothing but a combination of external and internal tendencies. Just as a sapling grows into a huge tree giving you flowers and fruits, likewise, thoughts that are sacred lead to actions that yield fruits of all goodness.

Man is a combination of three entities: the body, the mind and the *Atma* (Spirit). First comes the body. It is the instrument of action. The mind thinks. The conscience is the *Atma*, or Spirit that exists as consciousness. So human life is a combination of these three aspects: action, thinking and consciousness.

If the body functions independently without consulting the mind and the Spirit, the activity will be animal activity. If the mind acts independently without coordinating with the body and the Spirit, the activity is likely to be demonic. If the Spirit

acts independently, the actions will transcend the body and the mind.

The true mark of a human being is goodness. Goodness is not a product of academic education. Can bookish knowledge be called true education? Without spiritual knowledge and wisdom, can a person be called educated?

Every Student Must Cultivate Human Values

Education must inculcate respect for human values like truth, righteousness, love and peace. Education is for life. Life is for man. Man is there for society. Society is meant for spirituality. The spirituality is there for the nation. The nation is part of the world, and the world is for peace.

Today everyone wants peace. In fact, you can attain and acquire peace only out of human values. For peace and happiness, human values are most important. Bereft of human values, man can never be at peace.

Without understanding this principle, man tries to acquire education. Man today considers that receiving information is education. It is not information that confers human values. Modern education makes a man machine, a computer.

Greatness lies in becoming not a computer but a composer. You have to acquire education to make your life ideal.

Modern education tends to make men selfish. There should be a limit even for selfishness. Every student must necessarily cultivate human values. The government, by establishing educational institutions in every village and street, thinks that the education in the country has progressed.

What are the qualities of education? Virtues, good intellect, adherence to truth, devotion, discipline and duty are essential qualities. Educa-

tion must teach these values. Students have to learn these things.

What is the progress in modern education? In fact, they harm those who help them. They make fun of those who teach them. This is the progress in “modern” education. Students have to foster obedience, humility and human values and attain Divinity. This is true education.

Modern students do not understand what true education is. As a result, society is polluted. Truth and other human qualities have been distorted and perverted altogether. Sanctity and the sacred quality of human nature are fast disappearing. The practices of righteousness and compassion are viewed as bad practices. Do you call this “progress” in education? No. You should express human values by practising righteousness and cultivating compassion.

The True Meaning of Education

With a good education, you will have culture.

When you have culture that is true life.

If you have a good education, you will be happy.

When you are happy, you will be peaceful.

*When you have a good education,
you will be in good company.*

*When you are in good company,
you will have good qualities.*

*When you have a good education,
your life will find fulfilment.*

Thereby, you can attain liberation.

(Poem)

Students should adhere to the twin ideals of *sathya* and *dharma* (truth and righteousness). In this world, there is nothing greater than truth. You should become embodiments of truth. In your daily life you should follow the path of truth and realise the Divine.

You have to water a sapling to get fruit and seeds. Love, which is natural to human beings, should be watered with faith to sustain it. We should make an effort to attain peace in the true

sense of the word. The peace that we get today is momentary. We cannot call it peace anyway.

The History of *Bharat* Is One Long Saga of Sacrifice

In the modern world, *Bharat* stands for all that is sacred. Since ancient times, it has been a model and an ideal for the rest of the world. There is Truth in the air of *Bharat*. There is *dharma* in the dust of *Bharat*. There is love in the sands of *Bharat*. And there is compassion in the water of *Bharat*.

Forbearance is the core of *Bharatiya* (Indian) culture. In order to enjoy and experience these values, even foreigners have decided to come and settle down in *Bharat*. In ancient times, *Bharatiyas* were determined to follow the principle of sacrifice. They were dedicated to righteousness and truth.

Having been born in the sacred land of *Bharat*, you should not forget this important aspect. If you go through the history of this sacred land, you will certainly understand that *Bharat* never tried to invade or conquer any country. They had to resist foreign invaders. *Bharatiyas* stand for selflessness. They were never selfish at any point in time. *Bharatiyas* never coveted the lands of others. The history of *Bharat* is one long saga of sacrifice.

Emperor Harischandra was prepared to give up everything for the sake of Truth. Emperor Sibi sacrificed his own flesh and blood to save a dove. *Bharat* has given birth to men and women

who stood for sacrifice. Modern students are trying to change this land of sacrifice from a land of spiritual practices into a land of pleasure seekers. But all pleasure is transient. You should seek the bliss that is enduring by realising your inherent Divinity.

Yesterday an American boy came to Swami. Bhagawan asked him, "How old are you?" The boy said, "Seven years." Swami asked him, "How do you know?" He said, "My mother and father told me."

Swami said, "It is only one that has become seven. One plus one plus one... comes to seven." Without one, there cannot be seven. All numbers come out of one. Truth is one; scholars call it by many names. Names and forms differ, but Divinity is one and the same in all. First, have faith in yourself. Without self-confidence, you cannot have faith in yourself. Then how can you have faith in others? Let this *visvasa* (faith) become your *svasa* (life-breath). Let our education become true education. Education that is not practised is bookish knowledge.

You should have love for your country. Rama said, "Motherland is greater than heaven itself." That spirit of patriotism is very important.

**Divine Discourse at the
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on
August 10, 1998**



*H*ands that serve are holier than lips that pray.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
April 27, 1990





CHAPTER

Six

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA'S
MESSAGE TO HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS





DOCTORS, PATIENTS AND SOCIETY

*Charity is the ornament for the hand. Truth is the adornment for the tongue.
The scriptures are the ornaments for the ears. Of what avail are other ornaments?*

E*mbodiments of the Divine Practitioners of Modern Medicine!* It is charity that lends adornment to the hand. Only truth lends beauty to speech. The scriptures serve to adorn the ears. Man needs no more beautiful ornaments than these. The glory of Divinity consists in sanctifying human existence by these ornaments.

The human body is a thing of marvellous beauty. Men cannot easily comprehend the secret of God's creation. No one can explain how the eyes have acquired the power of seeing this phenomenal world. The beauty of all the organs in the human body is a secret of creation. Doctors try to find out how each sense organ and each limb functions. No one tries to find out why they are functioning in this manner. This secret can be grasped only through the *Atmic*, or Divine, Principle.

Human life is based on six constituents in the *pancha bhuthas* (five basic elements) and the *Atma*. To recognise this fact, three paths have to be pursued. One is to recognise within one's self the presence of Nature and the Divine. A second path is to recognise the cosmic creation and one's self in God. The third path is to see the presence of God and one's self in Nature. It is only when knowledge is acquired by these three paths that *Atma jnana* (knowledge of the Self) arises.

This threefold path is termed *prajna* (integrated awareness). Every man should try to understand this threefold path. This can be done at all times in all places. It has universal application. It has permanent validity everywhere but man gets involved in what is impermanent and ever-changing.

Treat the Patient, Not the Disease

There are in the world today highly intelligent and experienced doctors of great renown. They are, however, concerned only with the cure of diseases and not the redemption of the patient. It is more important to cure the mental condition of the patient than to relieve his physical illness. Doctors treat the disease and not the patient.

During the past two days, the doctors have been discussing how to cure diseases. They have presented statistics as to the number of cases handled, the number of cures effected and the incidence of mortality. The doctors have had some doubts about how all diseases are cured in our Sathya Sai Hospital. How does this happen? There is a good answer for this doubt. In regard to any action, if it is done with a pure heart and good intentions, it is bound to be successful.

Man today regards self-interest as a way of life. This has become the philosophy of the modern world. But, we should consider *tyaga* (sacrifice)

alone as the true philosophy for the world. When you approach the patient in a spirit of sacrifice, the patient's feelings get purified.

Vibrations of Light around the Body

Our body is surrounded by Divine vibrations. If you look at the thumb, there are vibrations of light around it. Few attempt to recognise this phenomenon. The body is surrounded by vibrations of light. When these vibrations of light from one person meet another's, several good things happen.

There are two important organs for man. One is the heart and the other is the hand. The head is preoccupied with enquiring into mundane phenomena. It is concerned with the external. Its focus is on objects outside. The heart looks at what is within. The concern with the external has been termed *pravriti marga* (the path of externals). All man's actions today, including the knowledge he acquires and the wealth he gets, are related to the *pravriti marga*. The six vices of *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *moha* (infatuation), *lobha* (greed), *madha* (pride), and *mathsarya* (jealousy) are related to the *pravriti marga*. These undergo constant changes. Because the body is associated with these qualities, it is also subject to change.

But the heart remains unchanging. It is associated with the *nivriti marga* (the inward path). What are the qualities associated with the heart? Truth, compassion, love, forbearance, sympathy and sacrifice. These human qualities emanate from the heart. So, in human life, the head and the heart play crucial roles. These two are kept in balance by the hand. Thus, the heart, the head and the hand are the three Hs that are important in studying the human predicament.

Close Nexus between the Mind and *Prana*

What are the causes of diseases of the heart? All diseases are a reflection of *pravriti*, the disposition of the mind. Hence, in worldly matters, man should follow the right path. In this context, two

elements among the five basic elements are important. "*Bhikshannam Deharakshartam, Vastram Seetha nivararanam*" (Food is essential for protecting the body; raiment is necessary for protection against cold). Associated with food is water. These two occupy pride of place in human life.

Life is the subtle form of the water consumed by man. The mind is the subtle form of the food taken by man. Hence, a close nexus should be established between the mind and *prana* (life force). As is the food, so is the head. Man's thoughts, desires, and aspirations are related to the kind of food he consumes. For instance, you may discern from practical experience how food affects the mind. The cyclic process that starts with the formation of clouds and ends in the harvest of grain determines the kind of food one can have.

Heat (or fire) is the basis of this process. This fire is present within man as *jatharagni*, the digestive fire, which accounts for the conversion of the food consumed by man into various forms of energy. This fire has to be in proper balance. When the balance is upset, you have illness. The state of man's body depends on the maintenance of this balance. Man's entire life depends on preserving this balance.

When is the balance upset? When there is no mental steadiness. Men today develop all kinds of intellectual abilities but they have not learnt how to keep the mind steady. When serenity of mind is achieved, there will be no disease. Illness will not approach you at all.

Importance of Food in Maintaining Health

There should be some regulations with regard to food. Many doctors emphasise the value of proteins and recommend meat, eggs, etc. But proteins obtained in this form serve only to build the body, but they do considerable harm to the mind. Doctors are primarily concerned with the gross physical body. They pay little attention to the

subtle form of the mental makeup. Most of the diseases that are prevalent in the world today are related to the mind. Mental illnesses seem to outnumber physical ailments. The *Vedanta* has declared that the mind is the cause of man's bondage or liberation. This means that the mind has to be used properly and turned Godward. Equally the mind is responsible for health or sickness.

In this context, food is all-important. Proteins are present in milk, curds and vegetables as much as in meat. If in the matter of diet the doctors give the right prescription, diseases can be averted.

Prevention Is Better Than Cure

In my view, instead of treating people after the onset of illness, it is better to ensure that they do not fall ill at all. Both doctors and the authorities should educate pregnant women about prenatal care of children in the womb. It is distressing to find that new-born babies suffer from congenital heart diseases. Dr. Iyer showed the picture of a smiling child that had grown up after a heart operation shortly after birth. While one rejoices at such a sight, it is frightening to think of the operation that had to be done on a ten-day-old infant.

In the case of congenital heart diseases, neither the parents nor the child can be happy. Nor can society be happy with such a situation. Something must be done to prevent heart troubles developing during pregnancy. There are medicines for preventing congenital heart ailments. For instance, if the mother is given various vitamins, the child's heart can be strengthened. The mother should be taught all about prenatal care and given the necessary medicines. Pregnant women should be periodically checked in the hospital. It is better to take all preventive measures before the birth of a child than to carry the burden of bringing up a weak and crippled child all his life.

Doctors alone cannot impart this message to all women. They can only advise those who come to them. But doctors can bring home to the authori-

ties their responsibility in the area of preventive measures. What is the use of spending crores on curative measures without promoting health? It is a waste of money. There are many hazards in the use of antibiotics in the treatment of certain diseases like tuberculosis and the use of pesticides in agriculture.

Doctors Should Be Grateful to Society

Doctors should realise what they owe to society, which has preserved and imparted to them their knowledge of the medical sciences. Medical knowledge has been enriched by the contributions of dedicated investigators over centuries. Doctors should be grateful to society for all the knowledge and skills they have acquired from the dedicated labours of others. They should realise their deep indebtedness to society for all they have received from it. Only then will they use their knowledge and skills in the right way.

People today think in terms of only their personal interests. They should develop a social consciousness, realising all they owe to society. Men today have become so utterly selfish that they behave in inhuman ways. They do not make proper use of their talents and resources in the service of their fellow men.

Doctors are embodiments of the Divine. As such, it is their duty to see that people do not shed tears of grief. They may doubt how far this is possible. Do as much as it lies within your power. What happens thereafter need not bother you. Treat duty as God and work as worship. If you carry on your work in this spirit, the world will be a happier place for all.

I have to give a word of advice to the doctors present here. There is a tendency to specialise in the treatment of heart diseases that has gone to absurd lengths. I would advise the doctors to treat the heart as a whole and not fragment every part of it for specialised treatment. Specialisation has grown to alarming proportions in the

world today. Doctors should be “generalists,” who know how to treat different ailments of a patient.

The heart teaches an important lesson to man. It appears to beat tirelessly without stopping. But, in fact, it is able to rest in brief intervals between one beat and another. The heart teaches you how to take rest even while at work. I often tell the students that “change of work is rest.” This is the way the heart functions when it pumps the blood from one chamber to the other.

Lessons from the Human Cell

Few can realise the limitless potentialities of each cell in the human body. It is one of the great secrets of creation. The cells teach man the lesson of *tyaga* (sacrifice). For the progress of human life, sacrifice is essential.

The scripture declares that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice. Immortality means the removal of immorality. The various cells in the body account for the performance of various functions by the senses and the limbs of the body. The power of the cells comes from the Divine. No one can explain it. Modern scientists term it as a “law of Nature.” But from where has this “law” emerged? There should be someone who has laid down the law? For every product, like this silver tumbler, there is a maker.

Silver is God’s creation. The tumbler has been made by a goldsmith. It has not come as a ready-made tumbler. You have on the earth water and clay. They are God’s creation. By mixing them both, the potter makes pots out of them. The creator of the pot is the potter. God is the Creator of the five elements – space, air, fire, water and earth. No one else can create these elements. But man makes use of these natural elements for making objects for his enjoyment. One man produces an aeroplane for flying and another makes a parachute for safety if something happens to the plane. Scientists should be concerned with producing things that ensure safety.

How the Divine Works

In this connection, I should like to tell you something. Whether you believe it or not, I do not have any worry. When I embarked on the construction of such a big hospital (the Super Specialty Hospital), Joga Rao used to say, “We are drawing up such gigantic plans. We don’t have enough money. How are we going to construct this hospital?” He was highly apprehensive. I told him, “What we are undertaking is good work for the welfare of others. There is no selfishness in Me. We are doing everything for the well-being of the world. Do not give room for these depressing thoughts. It is bound to come up. Have this confidence.”

When does such confidence arise? When you know you are engaged in a good cause. There is a difference between an optimist and a pessimist when they view a glass half-full of water. The optimist is glad that the tumbler is half-full, while the pessimist is sorry that the tumbler is half-empty. You should not give way to pessimism. You must feel content with whatever you have. With contentment, anything can be achieved.

Medical Education Should Lay Stress on Quality

The plight of doctors (in India) deserves sympathy. Many of them have to spend large sums to get seats in medical colleges and to complete their education. The doctor is worried how to recover the money that has been spent on his education. Something must be done to solve this problem. For instance, no one should be admitted to a medical college merely because he is able to pay a large capitation fee (of *lakhs*). Only those who have the talent and aptitude for medical studies should be admitted. Such students will immensely benefit from medical education and will be of use to society.

Today you must have either plenty of money or influential backing to get into a medical college. Students who get admitted this way take even twelve years to complete the five-year medical

course. Of what use are such men? The stress should be on quality and not quantity in the sphere of medical studies.

In earlier years, medical students used to work hard, spending even 18 hours a day. Without such hard work, no one would get his degree. Alas! Today, things are otherwise. Students pass without much study. Such ill-educated doctors are a calamity to the nation. Not all doctors are of this kind. There are quite a few competent doctors. It is the duty of the medical profession to rectify this situation. They should contact the authorities to bring about reforms. Only then will the nation progress.

We do not need many hospitals. Patients can be treated easily. In my view, there is no need for you to worry about money and resources. Treat your patients with love, Duty is God. This love should be mutual give-and-take. You may charge fees for your services, but do it with love. This is the right course for you. When you render service in this spirit, you will be successful in all cases. When you treat the patient with love, you will win the patient's love. Hence your motto should be "Start the day with love, fill the day with love, and end the day with love." This is the way to God.

Our American doctor, who addressed the valedictory session, said that doctors should speak sweetly to patients. Whatever you do should be filled with love. A patient feels reassured when he sees the smiling face of a doctor.

Tribute to Participants of the Medical Conference

Embodiments of Divine Love! You have come from long distances, undergoing many strains. Conferences and symposia of all kinds are held all over the world all the time. But none of the decisions arrived at these gatherings are implemented. Our symposium is different. You have all come in a spirit of dedication. The decisions taken here should be implemented. You came here to learn

from others as well as to share your experiences with others. You should return all the better for your visit. You should feel encouraged by your experiences here. Elated by this experience, you should be able to achieve many things. Return to your countries with joy in your hearts. You have had edifying experiences.

It is fortunate that highly experienced doctors have been able to participate in this symposium. They have also visited our hospital and given many useful suggestions for enlarging its usefulness in the years ahead. We shall try to give effect to these suggestions. We are making plans for developing the urology and neurology wings. Please convey your experience and suggestions from time to time, and encourage our doctors to do better.

We wish that you would also make occasional visits to our institute and hospital. You are always welcome. Do not have any hesitation. This is your hospital! Not mine. You are my property. Do not wait for invitations from here. There can be no objection to your coming to your own home.

Highly experienced professional men have come here. No conference could have taken place in such a peaceful atmosphere as here with such pure-hearted participants. In most conferences there are heated debates. Here everything was peaceful and calm. It was a sacred exercise. As Dr. Somaraju said, we have here a temple, where proper prayers should be offered. What should this prayer be? It is that all patients should get well. "*Lokah Samasthaa Sukhino Bhavanthu!*" (Let all people be happy).

I conclude my discourse with the benediction that in the years to come all people should lead healthy and ideal lives.

**Address at the
Cardiac Speciality Symposium
on February 7, 1993**



FOOD, THE HEART AND THE MIND

Embodiments of Divine Atma! It is essential to observe the principle of moderation in food habits, work and sleep. The Buddha preached the same principle of moderation to his disciples. "Be always moderate, never indulge in excess," proclaimed the Buddha. In fact, moderation is the royal road to happiness.

The modern man who flouts the principle of moderation in every aspect of life endangers his health and well-being. The food consumed by man should be proper, pure and wholesome. But nowadays people eat whatever they get and wherever they get it, and thereby spoil their health. Food plays a major role in the preservation of health. Care should be taken to see that the food consumed does not have much fat content, for fats consumed in large quantity are detrimental not only to one's physical health but also to one's mental health. Meat and alcoholic drinks take a heavy toll on man's health, causing many a disease in him.

The Efficacy of Cardiac Surgery

This international symposium has for its theme "The Heart and Its Ailments." Also on the agenda are discussions about the preventive aspects of diseases as well as the treatment and cure of heart diseases. Questions are raised about the efficacy of cardiac surgery and its related effects. The heart is a special organ in the human system. It is pulsating ceaselessly unlike the other organs. Heart surgery is a highly complex operation, as the surgery has to be performed without arresting the heartbeat. At the same

time, the functioning of the lungs also has to be kept up.

Medical men of genius invented the heart-lung machine in 1956 to carry on the activities of the heart as well as the lung during cardiac operations. The machine takes upon itself the function of the heart and the lung, ensuring purification of the blood and keeping up circulation of the blood. The details of the functioning of this heart-lung machine are well known to doctors. The tube that is fitted connecting the heart and the machine should be airtight and should be fixed with great care, for any lapse in the fitting of the tube may cause air bubbles that will endanger the patient's life. Unfailing power supply is most crucial for the success of the operation, as any interruption in power supply will stall the operation. Therefore, we have to depend on generators for ensuring uninterrupted power supply during the course of the operation.

Prevention Is Better Than Cure

Questions are posed whether heart surgery ensures a permanent cure. Cardiac surgery is helpful insofar as it enables the patient to carry on his daily activities and lead a normal life. But it is wrong to conclude that surgery is the only way of curing heart diseases. Some of the diseases can be cured even by medicine. In my opinion, it is the primary responsibility of every individual to prevent becoming a victim of heart disease by regulating his food and other habits. Prevention is better than cure. There will be little room for cardiac ailments if one's food habits are properly controlled and regulated.

Research has revealed that nonvegetarian and alcoholic addicts are more prone to heart ailments than vegetarians. If the vegetarian food that is consumed should be balanced and wholesome, it should contain liberal doses of vitamin C and vitamin E, which are available in vegetables like carrots. The presence of these vitamins prevents heart ailments in a large measure. Every effort should be made to keep the human body healthy. Health is wealth. A person with poor health cannot enjoy wealth. Health is more important because it gives physical and mental strength to a person.

Birds and beasts do not suffer from cardiac and digestive ailments to which man is prone. The cause can be traced to the natural food that the animals consume, unlike human beings who consume all sorts of fried and cooked items of food, being slaves to the palate. Modern man consumes many artificial foodstuffs and a variety of alcoholic drinks, which are injurious to health. Birds and beasts lead natural lives, while the artificial lifestyles of man today take a heavy toll on his health. When man observes moderation in diet, he can be saved from most diseases.

In the entire range of God's creation man alone is endowed with the faculty of discrimination. It is this faculty that sets him apart from animals. Man should exercise his discretion and discrimination in regard to food habits.

How to Bring about Mental Transformation?

The progress of the universe is bound up with the progress of man. Any amount of development in the areas of scientific, economic and social spheres will not be of much use without mental transformation. How can we bring about this transformation? It is by restraining passions and emotions. Since mental tension is most detrimental to man's health, man should learn the art of controlling his passions and emotions, which cause stresses and strains.

It is also essential to keep our mind serene and peaceful while eating food. We should not indulge in discussion of topics that will cause agitation and excitement, and disturb our mental peace while we are taking food. Mental tension is responsible for ill health. We should also avoid viewing TV, videos, etc., while eating food, as they may cause mental disturbances.

Today, there is pollution in everything, such as the air we breathe, the water we drink, the sounds that are jarring to the ears and the food we consume. Because of this all-round pollution, man's health is affected. Apart from this, man's mind is also polluted, making him susceptible to diseases. Man should make an earnest endeavour to lead a serene and pure life. He should realise the truth that troubles and turmoil are temporary, like passing clouds. There is no scope for agitations to arise if one realises this truth.

One who realises this truth will not allow his mind to be swayed by the passions of anger, cruelty, etc. Passions yield only temporary satisfaction but cause serious emotional disturbances. Hence, it is imperative on the part of man not to yield to any unbecoming passions while taking food. The observance of the three Ps, namely, purity, patience and perseverance, vouchsafes permanent happiness and good health free from diseases.

The Three Root Causes of Cardiac Ailments

It is not only unbridled passion that damages the health of man. Living on ill-gotten money also causes ill health to some extent. Living on earnings gotten by unjust means causes many unknown diseases to take root in us. It is said:

*As is the food, so is the mind;
As is the mind, so are the thoughts;
As are the thoughts, so is the conduct;
As is the conduct, so is the health.*

Man today is a victim of worry. What is the cause of this worry? Lack of contentment is the cause. The rich man is not contented in spite of the accumulation of wealth. Worry causes hurry, and both together bring about ill health. So, worry, hurry and curry (fatty foods) are the root causes of cardiac ailments.

The consumption of large quantities of fat is the cause of cardiovascular diseases. Doctors advise against the consumption of fatty food-stuffs, which cause an increase in weight, resulting in susceptibility to cardiac diseases. The presence of toxins also inflicts equal damage. So one should eat the right type of food in moderate quantity and avoid intoxicating drinks to safeguard his health. The intake of food should be gradually reduced after crossing 50 years.

Some people consume food indiscriminately, unmindful of the caloric content of the food taken. For example, people eat *pappads* (thin circular flour preparations) fried in oil, which have high calorie content. People also consume *ghee*, which is also a high-calorie food. A single *pappad* has 100 to 150 calories of energy. A single spoonful of *ghee* has 100 calories of energy. Even when the quantity of food intake is reduced, reduction in the calorie content is not ensured.

There are some doctors who advise their patients against smoking and addiction to alcohol, but they themselves smoke and drink! This gap between precept and practice raises doubts in the minds of patients about the value of the medical advice given by them. Such doctors, who do not observe harmony in speech and practice, mislead the patients.

Triple Qualities That a Doctor Should Reflect

Embodiments of Love! You have high degrees such as MD, FRCS, MRCP, etc., as a result of your sincere striving. But it is a mistake to think that these degrees are yours. In fact, these degrees

have been conferred on you for your study, skill, memory power and knowledge. These degrees will truly belong to you on the day you apply this knowledge in practice. Unfortunately, in this modern age all activities and professions are tainted by a commercial outlook and greed for earning money. Even the sacred profession of a doctor has degenerated into a business.

A doctor should reflect the triple qualities of sacrifice, love and compassion in treating his patients. But some doctors do not have these virtues at all! They misuse their Divine and sacred knowledge for the sake of money. Money is important but we must exercise discretion in this regard. You can charge the correct fees for the wealthy but be kind and considerate while dealing with the poor. Try to give free treatment to the poor. It is said, "*Vaidyo Naarayano Hari*" (the doctor is equal to God). As the Lord has love and compassion, doctors too should have these Divine virtues of the Lord. A doctor devoid of these virtues is not a doctor at all!

Doctors should win the hearts of the patients by talking to them with compassion and concern. Diseases are half cured when the doctors talk to the patients with love and consideration. The sick and the diseased respond favourably to your treatment once you start talking to them with love and with a smiling face. But, if you wear a grim expression, the patient loses heart. Doctors should administer the injection of courage and encouragement, as calcium is administered to the weak. It is essential that doctors should have the sterling virtues of love and compassion. Compassion is more important than money.

Swami's Example to Lead a Healthy Life

How to lead a healthy life? Let Me tell you about My own health. I am sixty-eight years old and, believe it or not, My weight since my fourteenth year of age has been constant at only 108 pounds. It never went up to 109 pounds nor came down to 107. You can lead a healthy life once you achieve

this kind of balance and moderation. I never eat even a little bit excess. I observe the principle of moderation whether I am invited for food by a millionaire or a pauper. Even though I am sixty-eight years, My body is in perfect trim! I do not suffer from aches and My heart is as sound as a rock. There is no one who can work like I do and exert himself as much as I do! The secret of My sound health is My regulated food habits. This is how one has to achieve the unity and harmony of food, head and God.

Spirit of Sacrifice of Some Doctors

The foremost quality of a doctor is the spirit of sacrifice. We have organised this symposium to explore ways and means of rendering help to the sick and the diseased. We have in India some doctors who lead lives of sacrifice, like Dr. Venugopal, Dr. Bhan and Dr. Sampath from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. These doctors, who are committed to the cause of service, come to our hospital without even charging their travelling expenses. Their sacrifice contributes to the sanctity of this Institute of Higher Medical Sciences.

There is an atmosphere of infective joy and good cheer that pervades our hospital. Everybody is in smiles – the patients, their relatives, the nurses, the doctors, everyone! They are all like flowers in full bloom. It is not the same with most other hospitals.

The essential mark of a hospital is its cleanliness. Clean toilets are an index of the cleanliness of a hospital. Our hospital is as clean as a mirror, as it is kept always clean by the team of dedicated *seva dhal* volunteers who relentlessly work hard with a spirit of service and sacrifice. It is not the service of one, but the service of many that has contributed to the rapid development of our hospital! A single flower cannot make a garland.

All the people – the patients, doctors and workers – work in a spirit of harmony and unity. It is this sense of unity that contributes to purity, and

this purity of heart secures Divinity. This hospital is a direct proof of the presence of purity, unity and Divinity. It is our fond hope that such purity, unity and Divinity should prevail in other hospitals as well! Unity is most essential in all fields of activity – moral, scientific and spiritual. Purity vanishes in the absence of unity. Divinity will be absent when there is no purity and unity. Humanity will be healthier if doctors resolve to offer two days of free treatment every week.

You Can Work Wonders with Purity of Heart

Some doctors wonder how we are able to give free treatment, free operations and free meals to our patients. To be frank, there should not be any room for wonder in this regard. You can work wonders with purity of heart. Any work that is started with purity of heart is bound to succeed. Money flows if your work is suffused with love and sacrifice. People will provide munificent funds to support any noble endeavour.

The land of *Bharat* (India) has been a *punya bhumi* (land of sanctity), *tyaga bhumi* (land of sacrifice), *yoga bhumi* (land of spiritual austerities) and *karma bhumi* (land of righteous action). In fact, there is no dearth of money in India.

Doctors should, first and foremost, have faith in spirituality. Faith in spirituality alone can bring about the transformation of humanity. Spirituality is not the celebration of festivals, not even the performance of rituals. True spirituality calls for earnest endeavour to eradicate all animal qualities. Today humanity has descended to such a degrading level that men see evil in good, without trying to see good in evil.

Doctors who are eminent experts in their fields have come to participate in the symposium here. Sincere efforts should be made to put your great talents and skill to good use. The climes and countries from which you have come may be dif-

ferent but all of you have one thing in common – noble feelings. These noble feelings are God’s gift to man and come by Divine grace.

Treat the patients as your own kith and kin. The help that you extend in good faith to your patients will be rewarded in the course of time. It is My wish and blessing that you will have useful discussions and come out with ways and means of helping mankind to be free from heart ailments.

**Divine Discourse at
the Second International Symposium on Cardio-vascular Diseases
on January 21, 1994**



**Sathya Sai International
Medical Conference**






*D*octors should infuse courage in the patients and speak soothingly, radiating compassion and love. While you are examining the patients, you should have smiling faces and talk to the patients sweetly.

-Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
February 6, 1993



SATHYA SAI IDEAL HEALTHCARE

 Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's vision of ideal healthcare is predicated on six principles. These principles are based on a strong commitment to universal state-of-the-art healthcare.

1 Universal Healthcare: Bhagawan has repeatedly emphasised that state-of-the-art healthcare should be available to all people and especially the poor. In keeping with this commitment, He has established a chain of super-specialty and general hospitals, delivering the best medical care to all. In addition, with His guidance and blessings, healthcare professionals provide free healthcare in over 30 countries.

"Doctors should serve the poor with a spirit of sacrifice. There is no greater service than this. As man is the embodiment of God, it is his primary duty to help the destitute and the forlorn. Medicine should not be commercialised. It is meant to promote a heart-to-heart and love-to-love relationship between doctor and patient. A true doctor is one who realises this truth and conducts himself accordingly."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 2003

2 Free Healthcare: Bhagawan has deemed that high-quality healthcare should be delivered free of cost to all patients so that no one is prevented from receiving the highest benefits of healthcare. Every Sri Sathya Sai Hospital and the international Sri Sathya Sai clinics and medical camps deliver such care free of cost to the patients.

"Welfare services should be free for all. There are numerous people who cannot afford the costs of medical treatment. Doctors should render free service to such persons."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1995

3 Loving Healthcare: Bhagawan has prescribed that healthcare workers should deliver this care with love and compassion, thereby elevating the healthcare worker to a healer.

"If the doctor is full of love and compassion, God works through him. Doctors therefore have to endeavour to become the receptacles of Divine Power during their healing process."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1980

4 Comprehensive Healthcare: Medical care is for the whole patient. Ideal healthcare encompasses treatment of the body, mind and Spirit.

"Man suffers from two types of ills, physical and mental. They are caused by disequilibrium of the three tempers and three gunas. Physical health is a prerequisite for mental health, and mental health ensures physical health."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1959

5 Preventive Healthcare: Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said that the duty of the physician is not only to treat with love and compassion but also to educate patients in healthy living and thus prevent frequent visits to the physician and hospitals.

"The current belief is that medicine is to be valued for its use during illness. But this point of view has to change. Medicine is used to see that one does not fall ill, just as the purpose of truth is to so live that one is not subjected to birth again."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1980

6 Immediate Healthcare: Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba emphasises that state of the art healthcare should be delivered with love and compassion promptly and immediately to serve the patients in distress.

"Sick people must be given immediate medical attention."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1967





CHAPTER

Seven

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
ON HARMONY OF RELIGIONS





EVERYONE IS A SON OF 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 Shiva.
Howsoever 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 Param-Atma.*

Embodiments of Love! Nature confers heat and cold, and joy and grief. In one season, cold is most welcome as a source of comfort. Another season, warmth is equally welcomed. Both give comfort to man when he needs it. Hence, both heat and cold have to be welcomed by man. Both contribute to man's comfort and contentment. Time, space and circumstance decide their use and their value. This attitude of accepting the inescapable fact is what is proclaimed and praised as serenity, equanimity, *Samathwam*, in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Bhagavad Gita* says, *Samathwam Yogam uchyaathe* (Equanimity, equal-mindedness and steadiness is known as *yoga*).

The *Bhagavad Gita* also declares, *Yogah Karmasu Kousalam* (*Yoga* is the quality of excellence that has to characterise every act). Happiness and misery, success and failure, obstacles and obstruction, defaming and denigration, and praise and criticism are all intertwined; they can never be experienced singly. But man is elated by gain and depressed by loss. When praised, he is

elated; when blamed, he droops. But man has to keep in mind that these are only phenomena like heat and cold.

Discrimination is the Distinct Feature of Man

That is the prescription for mental peace and social serenity. Consider the reality of things – mountain peaks are only heaps of rocks, the ground on which we dwell is only a mound of soil, the body we carry about with us is but flesh and bone, composites of the five main elements – space, air, fire, water and earth. New forms and names are assigned to distinct patterns of the same forces and things that demonstrate distinct characteristics. Over millennia, *Bharat* has been proclaiming and propagating this holistic spiritual truth and the consequential outlook of renunciation and serenity. “Through renunciation alone, can you attain immortality,” declare the *Veda*! This truth must be implanted in the mind by discriminating reason. That is why Sri Krishna says, “I am discrimination in the human being.” That is the distinct feature of man.

In the *Bhagavatha Purana* it is said each living being has to journey back to the source from where it sprang. Real joy is available only there. A man may travel on business through many lands and stay in several towns in great comfort, but he gets rest and peace only when he reaches home. The earthly career is but a stage in his long journey, where he has camped for a while. The camp is not to be confused with the home but many do and refuse to remember the home.

All that concerns the *Atma* is delight and all that concerns the self is misery. This is the *Upanishadic* declaration. Man loses himself in fights and factions, greed and gain, and ignores the source, the substance that he is.

Be Ever Watchful of Mind's Machinations

The trouble starts with his habit of fixing his thoughts on some thing or person. The thought becomes a thorn, a theme, a trap and, finally, an enslaving desire. When the desire meets with obstacles, anger wells up and emotions are aroused, which might even overwhelm the humanness of the individual. The person loses the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong and slides into sin itself.

How can the mind that leads us along the path of desire, anger, passion, prejudice and sin be kept under control? The senses that tempt and tarnish the mind have first to be monitored and mastered.

Cultivate the style of speech uncontaminated by falsehood, the bodily activity unpolluted by violence and the mental process unsullied by attachment or hatred. Also, direct the senses along the path towards God. The mind robs you of the precious treasure of spiritual wealth. Be ever watchful of its machinations.

In the Bible, it is said that God seeks His own. Ponder over this. God is everywhere at all times.

He need not be sought anywhere, anytime. But God has to seek those who seek Him and struggle to become aware of Him. Whom does God seek? He looks for a sincere, genuine, selfless and steady devotee.

Besides, He seeks an ideal son who can be held before mankind as an example and an inspiration. Such persons have become extremely rare nowadays. They style themselves devotees but they weep and wail when they really ought to be exulting; they exult when they have every reason to weep and wail! So, the Lord says:

*I am searching, I am searching, still searching.
I searched in the past, I search, and search now,
For the man knowing and observing
his Dharma true.*

Christ announced Himself as the Messenger of God. He identified His body as having been given to Him for alleviating human misery and serving the helpless and the homeless. He denied the demand of the flesh and devoted His skills and strength to relieving agony and pain. Then when the consciousness rose to the level of the mind, He became aware that He was the Son of God.

He strove hard to discover the distinction between appearance and reality, between truth and mental image, and He became aware of the higher level of consciousness that transcends the vagaries of the mind. From that peak of intelligence, He became aware that "I and My Father are one." And both are one single manifestation of the Divine Essence, the Holy Spirit.

Lessons that Jesus Taught and Symbolised

The birthday of every great person is celebrated by those who adore and follow him. This day being the birthday of Jesus is a holiday when offices and factories do not work. It is not sanctified as a holy day. People attend church and join the rituals but return home to revel, drink and dance.

The Cross is forgotten when the Christmas season is on. The day must be dedicated to the purification of one's passions and emotions through meditation on the virtues and values that Jesus taught.

Today, man runs after desires and he does not pursue ideals. He yearns for long life, not for a life lived in God. He does not recognise or follow the footprints of the great. Man has reduced himself to the position of a servant of the household who has no means of knowing where the master has treasured his most precious gems. If he is the master, he ought to know. But having failed to rise to that status, he is unaware of the treasure he can command.

Each one has to examine for himself whether he is clinging to trinkets or conserving gems. A lamp kept on a mound illumines the area; if kept in a pit, it is as if it were not. A virtue that is practised is a lamp that shines for all – good thoughts and good deeds have a way of influencing others.

The gems of wisdom, the light of intuitive experience, should not be kept away from fellow men. They have to be shared even at the cost of one's life. That was the lesson Jesus taught and symbolised.

Love Binds One Heart to Another

Derision and denunciation follow the footsteps of the great in all ages. They haunt them like the shadow that cannot be avoided. His own disciples turned against Jesus, even those who adored him and hung on his words. They did evil to him who did them good. But Jesus wished well for those who insulted and injured him.

This is a lesson badly needed today. No one should count the harm inflicted on him and plan revenge. He must on the other hand return love for hatred and fraternity for enmity. To behave otherwise is a sign of weakness, of want of courage and of lack of faith in human goodness. Jesus won in this holy struggle. On this day, we



Christmas Celebrations

must cultivate in ourselves that conviction and that courage.

Far more beneficial than honouring the great is the practice of loving them. Praise, glorification and eulogy raise them onto an unreachable pedestal. Love binds one heart to another. Gratitude for the inspiration and instruction received must bind the hearts in love. The celebration of Christmas should not conclude with some carols, tableaux, and made-up trees and Santa Claus. It must be soaked in the resolution to practise at least a few of the lessons Jesus taught us. The very first need is faith in God and in our own Divine Nature.

*Where there is Faith, there is Love,
Where there is Love, there is Peace,
Where there is Peace, there is Truth,
Where there is Truth, there is Bliss,
Where there is Bliss, there is God.*

The yearning for bliss is the best proof of our holy nature. Man is bliss and he seeks bliss; bliss is blessedness for him. Since God is bliss, happiness is union with God. Nothing else can award that joy, which is unaffected by whatever happens or does not happen.

The heart of Jesus was pure and calm. Hence, it is honoured as sacred. We must make our hearts sacred so that either we merge in Jesus or Jesus merges in us. When we merge, it is called *bhakti*; to have Jesus awakened in us is the path of *jnana*. Jesus was a messenger of God, but note this: all of you are also messengers of God. Jesus was not the only Son of God; you are all His children. Jesus and His Father are one. You and God are also one, and you can be aware of it.

You Are with God but Not Aware of the Fortune

Today, people from many lands have gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam. Having come from such long distances, undergone so much trouble on

the way, and stayed here, you have to take with you from here at least a few sublime, sustaining lessons for spiritual progress. Instead of going round India, as tourists do, and collecting impressions of places as thus and thus, imbibe the sacred and the holy, and transform your lives on more worthwhile lines.

You must pay attention to one slight fact. Indians are not eager to identify and benefit from the lessons of their Divine culture! Right under the lamp that is lit there is bound to be a patch of darkness. If one spends all twenty-four hours in an air-conditioned room, he cannot appreciate or evaluate its blessing. But if he has to walk through the hot sun for an hour, he will surely be grateful and gratified.

There are thousands in this Nilayam who keep on exclaiming, "Swami! Swami!" but who have not recognised the immense boon they have secured.

When a baby gulps down the first morsel of cooked rice that is ceremonially placed in its mouth, everyone is happy; the parents are pleased and the child is admired. When the child grows and consumes plates of rice, no one expresses wonder, pride or admiration. Why? The person is the same and the thing eaten is the same. The eating has become routine, repetitive, mechanical, a kind of compulsive habit.

You too, like everyone else, are with God, in God. But, you are not aware of that fortune. You are struck with strange wonder and joy when you see God during meditation; you are overcome with ecstasy. You have been looking at me for such a long time now here in front of you. Yet, believe me, when you go back to your rooms and when I give you *darshan* (audience) even for a second while you sit for meditation, you are beside yourself with joy: "O! Swami gave me *darshan*!"

The fact is that it is only something beyond the natural, above the ordinary, that arouses interest. So one must overcome this failing. Spiritual joy, wonder, appreciation, the *darshan* of God must become the life, the natural breath of life, the very *raison d'être* of existence in the body. This is what Jesus taught by precept and example to mankind, the *Atmic* Principle that is the eternal source of bliss.

Embodiments of Love! Whatever activity you may be engaged in, wherever you may be, however you may fare, be convinced that you are ever in God, that all is Divine, that all acts are offerings to the glory of God, and thus make your lives full and fruitful.

**Divine Discourse
on December 25, 1982**



*T*he hallmark of love is *tyaga* (selfless sacrifice). Love seeks nothing from anyone. It bears no ill-will towards anyone. It is utterly selfless and pure ... Love has to be cherished with feelings of selflessness and sacrifice. It raises the human being from animality to Divinity. It transforms gradually all forms of worldly love to Divine Love. To experience this Divine Love, people must be prepared to give up selfishness and self-interest. They must develop purity and steadfastness. With firm faith in the Divine, they must foster the love of God regardless of all obstacles and ordeals.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
June 20, 1996

ATTAIN ENLIGHTENMENT BY RENOUNCING DESIRE

*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! On this sacred day of *Buddha Poornima*, we talk about Buddha and *Poornima* (full moon). But we seldom inquire into Buddha's teachings, his virtues and the exemplary way in which he led his life.

King Siddhodhana and his wife, Mayadevi, performed many spiritual austerities such as *japa*, *tapa*, *vratas* and *yajnas* for years together with an aspiration to have a son. They also consulted many astrologers. Siddhodhana had no peace of mind as the worry of not having an heir to the throne haunted him day and night. At last, their prayers were answered when Mayadevi gave birth to a son at Lumbini. Unfortunately, Mayadevi died soon after giving birth to her son, who was named Siddhartha. Gautami, the second wife of Siddhodhana, brought up the child with loving care, like her own son. That is the reason he was also called Gautam.

The astrologers predicted that Siddhartha would not rule the kingdom — he would leave the kingdom and become a renunciant. The prediction of the astrologers was always ringing in the ears of Siddhodhana and caused him anxiety as he

watched his son grow. He took all precautions to see that his son did not step out of the palace and get into the company of others lest he should be influenced by them. Thus, he protected his son from the influence of others for twenty long years.

Siddhartha's Yearning for Ultimate Truth

One day, the parents of a girl came to Siddhodhana and expressed their wish to give their daughter in marriage to his son, Siddhartha. The name of the girl was Yashodhara. Siddhodhana accepted their proposal and performed the marriage of Siddhartha with Yashodhara. Owing to their loving insistence, Siddhartha continued to stay with his parents in the palace even after the marriage. One year after the marriage, they had a son, who was named Rahul. Both the husband and wife spent their time happily with their son.

In spite of all the comforts of the palace and a happy married life, Gautam's mind became restless when he saw people afflicted with old age, disease and death after he ventured out of the palace one day. One night, there was a sudden transformation in his mind. As his wife was fast

asleep, he got up at midnight, caressed his son and left for the forest. He had to undergo numerous hardships and difficulties in the forest. But he faced all ordeals with forbearance and determination. His parents were immersed in sorrow, unable to bear the pangs of separation from their son. Though Siddhartha was also undergoing a lot of anguish, he marched on his path of attaining self-realisation.

During the course of his journey, he once met a holy man. The holy man told him that the cause of his anguish was actually within him, and it was his anguish that was coming in the way of his self-realisation. So saying, he gave him a talisman for protection and asked him to wear it around his neck. (At this point in time, Bhagawan materialised that talisman and showed it to the congregation amidst thunderous applause). This was the talisman given by the sage to Siddhartha.

When Siddhartha put it around his neck, all his anguish disappeared instantaneously. Till the last moment of his earthly sojourn, Buddha had the talisman around his neck. When he shed his mortal coil, the talisman disappeared.

Siddhartha started doing intense penance, which went on for a long time. He kept questioning himself, "Who am I? Am I the body? Am I the mind? Am I the *buddhi* (intellect)? Am I the *chitta* (mind-stuff)?" He came to the conclusion that he was none of these. Ultimately, he experienced the truth, "I am I."

Recognise the Unity of All Creation

The *Vedas* declare, *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman) and *Tattwamasi* (That Thou Art). Even these two *Vedic* declarations state two things: I and Brahman; That and Thou. True wisdom lies in seeing oneness. *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* (experience of non-dualism is true wisdom). It is a sign of ignorance to see duality, ignoring the underlying unity. Duality is not the truth. In this manner, Buddha inquired deeply and ultimately

had the experience of "I am I." That is true realisation. You may do penance for many years, you may do meditation and perform many *yogic* practices, but all these spiritual practices give only temporary satisfaction, not everlasting bliss.

Some people talk about meditation. Even Buddha advocated the practice of meditation. What is it that you have to meditate upon? What is meant by meditation? Does it mean concentrating upon a particular object? No, no. That is not meditation at all. To contemplate on the principle of "I am I" is true meditation. No other *sadhana* (spiritual practice) can match this.

So long as you have the dualistic feeling of "you and I," you cannot experience unity. Buddha recognised the principle of unity and based his life on this truth. Under the direction of many *yogis*, he had performed various kinds of meditation and penance, but ultimately he found them to be a mere waste of time, as none of these could lead him to the ultimate experience of oneness. He regretted having wasted his time in such a manner. One should find fulfilment in life by making proper use of time. This is the primary duty of man.

Embodiments of Love! Many people perform different types of spiritual practices such as *japa* and *dhyana* without recognising the principle of unity. The tongue utters the name of Rama but there is a void in the heart. This is just a waste of time. Instead of wasting your time in such a manner, undertake social service, seeing God in everyone. That is true spiritual practice. Recognise the innate Divinity of all beings.

In creation, there appear to be two entities, you and I. But you and I are in reality one. *Vyashti* (individual) is a part of *samashti* (society), and *samashti* is a part of *srishti* (creation), which emerges from *Parameshti* (God). This *Parameshti* is *Parabrahma Tattwa* (principle of Brahman). That is the fundamental basis of the entire creation. In this way, you have to recognise the unity of all

creation. Only then can you attain *Parameshti*, or the principle of Brahman. Everyone has to repeatedly remind himself, "I am *Parameshti*, I am *Parameshti*."

All are the embodiments of the *Atma*, and all are sustained by the *Atma*. Buddha experienced the unity of all creation. There was a total transformation in him once he attained the vision of *ekatma* (oneness of the *Atma*). He realised that all worldly relations like mother, father, wife and children were false. He transcended body consciousness. That is why he earned the appellation Buddha (enlightened one). Man should use his *buddhi* (intelligence) to understand this principle of unity.

Buddhi is of two types. The *buddhi* that sees diversity in unity is worldly knowledge. Man should develop *adhyatmic buddhi* (spiritual knowledge) in order to realise the underlying unity of all creation. It gives you the experience of the *Atmic* principle, which is the same in the entire creation. Buddha attained the vision of the *Atma*. After this experience, he went on teaching that there existed only one Divine Principle in the world.

*Buddham Saranam Gachchhami,
Sangham Saranam Gachchhami,
Dhammam Saranam Gachchhami.*

Buddha taught that the principle of unity of the *Atma* was the only true principle in the world. One who realised it by using his spiritual intelligence was true Buddha, He said. Other than the *Atma* nothing existed in this world.

In this transient and ephemeral world, there is one thing that is true and eternal. That is Divinity. That is what everyone should aspire to attain. *Sathyam Saranam Gachchhami* (I take refuge in truth). *Ekam Saranam Gachchhami* (I take refuge in the principle of oneness). Everything is the manifestation of Divinity in this world — there is no second entity other than Divinity. It is the Divine Principle that governs the entire world.

Having realised this truth, Buddha, along with his disciples, went from village to village to propagate it. He never felt the need to take rest. He thought that it was his duty to share this supreme knowledge with his fellow men. Even his father Suddhodhana came to him. He also recognised this truth and was transformed.

What did Buddha teach? Buddha taught that everyone was endowed with the same principle of Divinity. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). The same message was conveyed by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* when He said that all beings were His own reflection, and no one was different from Him.

Buddha had to undergo great hardships to realise this truth. Many noble souls who were the contemporaries of Buddha acknowledged the greatness of Buddha. They said that Buddha had experienced the truth that they were unable to realise. As he gave up all desires, Buddha became an epitome of total renunciation. There was nothing in him except love. He considered love as his very life-breath. Bereft of love, the world would turn into a void.

Try to Understand the Profundity of Buddha's Teachings

When you offer your salutations to someone, understand that you are saluting your own self. That someone is none other than your own reflection. See others just as you see your own reflection in the mirror. This is the message conveyed by the *mahavakya* (profound statement), *Aham Brahmasmi*. Names and forms may be different but all beings are part and parcel of the same Divine Principle. You may call this a handkerchief. You may call this a robe. But both are made out of cotton. Likewise, Divinity is the underlying principle in the apparent multiplicity of this world.

Many so-called scholars are preaching only multiplicity today. They claim to have mastered the

scriptures and try to interpret them in their own way with their limited knowledge. Their interpretations do not correspond to the reality. They only add to the confusion.

Buddha taught that we should not have anger, we should not find others' faults and we should not harm others, because all are the embodiments of the pure, eternal principle of the *Atma*. Have compassion towards the poor and help them to the extent possible. You think those who do not have food to eat are poor people. You cannot call someone poor just because he does not have money or food to eat. Truly speaking, nobody is poor. All are rich, not poor. Those whom you consider as poor may not have money, but all are endowed with the wealth of *hridaya* (heart filled with compassion). Understand and respect this underlying principle of unity and Divinity in all, and experience bliss.

Do not have such narrow considerations as so-and-so is your friend, so-and-so is your enemy, so-and-so is your relation, etc. All are one, be

alike to everyone. That is your primary duty. This is the most important teaching of Buddha. But people do not inquire into the teachings of Buddha and do not understand the sacredness of his heart. They only talk about his story.

Truly speaking, Buddha is not just one individual. All of you are Buddhas. You will see unity everywhere once you understand this truth. There is unity in the apparent multiplicity. When you are surrounded by many mirrors, you see a number of your reflections. Reflections are many, but the person is one. Reactions, reflections and re-sounds are many, but the reality is one. When I am speaking here, My voice is heard through each and every loudspeaker in this hall. In the same manner, there exists the principle of unity in our hearts that we have to recognise.

Man's life finds fulfilment only when his mind experiences the principle of unity. There is no point in bringing about unity among people without uniting their minds. *Mana Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandhamokshayo* (Mind is the cause for



bondage and liberation of man). You see someone and say he is a bad person; you see another person and call him good. But, in reality, good and bad are present in your mind and not in the people around you.

You call this handkerchief white and this microphone black. The difference in colour is perceived by your eyes but essentially black and white are one and the same. Everyone should make efforts to visualise unity in diversity. Only then can one experience Divinity.

The principles taught by Buddha have profound significance but people are not trying to understand them. You might have observed that Buddha had curly hair on his head. One lock of hair was entwined with the other. There is an underlying message of unity in this. He had only one feeling in his heart, the feeling of love. He taught, *Dharmam Saranam Gachchhami* (I take refuge in righteousness) and *Premam Saranam Gachchhami* (I take refuge in love). Bereft of love, humanness has no existence. We should love all, irrespective of whether one is a pauper or a rich man.

Money should not be the criterion to share your love with your fellow men. Money is not important. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. Do not hurt others. Help ever, Hurt never. Only then can you attain the state of Buddha. There is little use in giving lengthy lectures if you do not realise the principle of unity in Divinity. You may call God by any name such as Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Sai, etc., but all of them embody the same Divine Principle.

Keep the flower of oneness in the altar of your heart and let its fragrance spread everywhere. Spiritual practices such as *japa* and *tapa* will not yield the desired result unless you recognise the principle of unity. Many people count the beads of the rosary. But what is the use of rotating the rosary if the mind also keeps going round the world?

Understand that the mind is most important. You should have a steady mind. Only then will your life be redeemed. What is the use if your mind hovers around on each and every object like flies that hover on dirt as well as *laddus* (sweets)?

Do not allow your mind to vacillate between good and bad, unity and multiplicity. Focus it on all that is good and realise the principle of unity. That is the royal road that will lead you to the experience of truth. On the other hand, if you allow your mind to follow the crooked path, it will not lead you anywhere.

Embodiments of Love! The same Divine Principle of love is present in all of you. When you take to the path of love, you will become Buddha yourself. Today is *Buddha Poornima*. *Poornima* means full moon. The underlying message of *Buddha Poornima* is that the mind should shine with total purity like the full moon. It should unite with its source, i.e., the *Atma*, which is pure and effulgent. There is no darkness on the full moon night. On this auspicious day of *Buddha Poornima*, we should attain full purity of the mind.

*Poornamada Poornamidam,
Poornat Poornamudachyate,
Poornasya Poornamadaya,
Poornamevavashishyate.*

(That is full, this is full. When the full is taken out of the full, what remains is again the full.)

We have to recognise this truth.

Embodiments of Love! It gives Me great joy to see that all of you have gathered here today. You are united with each other with the bond of love. Love is only one; it is not different in you, Me and others. You have unified your love with that of Swami. Love is one. Live in love.

**Divine Discourse
on May 13, 2006**





CHAPTER

Eight

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA'S MESSAGE
TO SADHAKAS (SPIRITUAL ASPIRANTS)





KSHAMA, THE GRANDEST AND NOBLEST VIRTUE

*Love being His form,
He is present everywhere as Love;
Become bonded to this Love
And strengthen your spirit;
For this will lead you to
The Pure Bliss of non-duality.*

L*embodiments of Love! Boys and Girls!*
True and selfless love manifests as sacrifice. Such love knows no hatred. It envelops the entire universe and is capable of drawing near even those who are seemingly far away. It is love that transforms the human into the Divine. It can transform *pasu* (a bestial person) into *Pasupathi* (Divinity).

In the phenomenal world, you come across many shades and derivatives of this primordial love. You love your father, mother, brother, sister, friends and so on. In all such cases, there is always a tinge of selfishness somewhere or the other. Divine love, on the other hand, is totally free of even the slightest trace of selfishness. You must surrender to such love, become completely submerged by it and experience the bliss it confers.

Kshama Is the Breath of Life

For acquiring such love, the quality of *kshama*, or forbearance, is a vital necessity. (*Kshama* is a word rich in meaning. Besides forbearance, it also implies extreme patience and an enormous

capacity to forget and also forgive. In view of this, the word *kshama* is directly used in most places in order not to dilute Bhagawan's emphasis.) Every individual must cultivate this noble quality.

Kshama is not achieved by reading books or learnt from an instructor. Nor can it be received as a gift from someone else. This prime virtue *kshama* can be acquired solely by self-effort, by facing squarely diverse problems, difficulties of various sorts, anxieties, and suffering, as well as sorrow. In the absence of *kshama*, man becomes susceptible to all kinds of evil tendencies. Hatred and jealousy easily take root in a person lacking this virtue.

Divinity is nothing but the combined manifestation of *prema* and *kshama*. At one stroke, *kshama* subsumes *sathya*, *dharma* and the entire *Vedas*. It is the greatest among *tapas* (penance). It is the grandest and the noblest among virtues. It is all encompassing. The *Mahabharata* and the *Srimad Bhagavatam* both contain many episodes that illustrate the disaster that befalls when *kshama* is lost.

Jealousy is the first bad quality that makes its entry when *kshama* makes its exit. The *Mahabharata* gives a graphic portrayal of how life that is otherwise smooth can be totally shattered by jealousy. The golden island Lanka was like the very heavens, but Ravana's jealousy reduced it to ruins. Whereas *kshama* can give complete protection, its absence can plunge one into distress and disaster.

Impatience breeds selfishness and promotes jealousy, which together spur infighting and divisive tendencies of various kinds. The troubles the country is currently passing through are largely due to the absence of this noble quality of *kshama*. Impatience has ruined even very great spiritual aspirants.

Likewise, kings have been reduced to beggars. Absence of *kshama* can make *yogulu* (*yogis*) into *rogulu* (sick persons). Without *kshama*, mankind becomes degraded and starts declining, but if it has this quality, then it can progress by leaps and bounds. *Kshama* is thus the very breath of life.

Can there be smoke without fire?

Can a car move without a driver?

Can a traffic light flash without a bulb?

How then can there be Creation without a Creator?

Everything must have a basis. For spiritual progress and advancement, *kshama* is the real basis or foundation. When *kshama* disappears, disturbance sets in and there is a decline.

Great countries have lost their glory, prestige and reputation for this reason. Therefore, patience is a vital virtue that must be assiduously cultivated if one is to successfully face troubles and tribulations. Without patience and the capacity for forbearance, one becomes spiritually weak. Such weakness leads to bad feelings, undesirable thoughts and unbecoming actions. When patience is gone, the greatest of men get reduced to utter fools.

The importance of *kshama* cannot be overstressed. This virtue is best cultivated under adverse circumstances and one must, therefore, gladly welcome troubles instead of regarding them as unwelcome. Difficulties help one to nurse and build the capacity for patience, as the example of the Pandavas clearly shows. When they were in power and authority, the Pandavas were somewhat deficient in *kshama*, but once they went into exile and had to face numerous hardships, *kshama* automatically began to develop in them.

Thus, times of distress offer the ideal opportunity for the development of patience and forbearance. In fact, pain and *kshama* go together, because *kshama* grows best in an environment of sorrow and misery. However, because of mental weakness as well as ignorance, we invariably shun painful experiences and distress. You should not be weak; be brave and welcome troubles. Let them come, the more the merrier. It is only with such a courageous attitude that you will be able to bring out the *kshama* hidden within you.

Can you get promoted to a higher class without passing an examination? It is only when you secure the prescribed marks and pass the examination that you are declared eligible to advance to the next higher class. While preparing for the examination you have to face stress and many difficulties, but how sweet is the promotion! So, welcome troubles as tests that prepare you for higher things. Some people may wonder, "If I develop *kshama* as Swami says and my life gets packed with troubles, how then will I survive?" Well, it all depends on what is meant by survival.

Kshama is the true breath of life. It is the greatest ornament that one can acquire. It is *kshama* that enables you to develop equanimity and go beyond duality. Going beyond duality is the real purpose of life, and this cannot be done without *kshama*. You must therefore be happy when

troubles descend on you because that is when *kshama* truly blossoms.

How Doubts Arise

Students! Often you are seized with doubts. You wonder, "We are happy here because we are close to Bhagawan and are able to have great devotion to Him. But the moment we leave from here, our devotion and love both diminish. Why?" This happens because one is deficient in *kshama*.

Doubts arise frequently in an impatient person. Such a person has no tolerance, and intolerance is a fertile breeding ground for doubts. An impatient person is drowned in doubts about God. Devotees with great faith too are sometimes gripped by doubts. Why? Because of lack of *kshama*. It is, therefore, important to continuously assess the state of your patience and your capacity for forbearance. You must constantly ask yourself, "Is my *kshama* getting strong or weak?" You must then say, "Patience is my very life breath and I cannot afford to let it slacken."

Kshama is no ordinary thing. It is the consolidation of *sathya*, *dharma*, *ahimsa* and all such values that the *Vedas* extol. It is the ultimate in happiness and also an incomparable treasure. It is the most valuable asset and property that one can acquire. When people abandon *kshama*, politics becomes degraded, criticisms and accusations are exchanged freely and there can even be turmoil. This is what happens when forbearance gets eclipsed.

When Kshama Is Absent, Jealousy Takes Root

The moment *kshama* makes its exit, *asuya* (jealousy or envy) makes its entry. The opposite of *asuya* is *anasuya*. These two qualities are like two sisters, but with diametrically opposite tendencies. In the scriptures, there is the story of a woman named Anasuya who had three sons. They were no ordinary sons for they were none other than Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara.

Swami has already told you that in the individual, Maheshwara represents a Pure Heart, Vishnu represents a Pure Mind and Brahma represents Pure Speech. Thus, if a person's nature is *anasuya*, then that person will have a pure heart and a pure mind; moreover, the speech of the person will be pure and sweet.

If *anasuya* has three sons, so has *asuya*: the three offspring are hatred, pomp and anger. Why is there such a huge difference between the two sisters? Because one is courageous, while the other is not. Anasuya is courageous; it is her courage that enables her to face all difficulties, and it is also her courage that is the fountainhead of *kshama*. One must always be courageous for this is the only way to acquire *kshama*.

Remember how mighty Ravana was? He possessed enormous physical strength, worldly intelligence and various related capabilities in an abundant measure. In spite of all this, because of the total absence of *kshama*, his heart became polluted with envy and hatred.

Now, love has the extraordinary capacity to draw near even those who are far to start with. Hatred, on the other hand, drives away even those who are near. Ravana had no love. He lacked *kshama* but was rich in *asuya*; as a result, he eventually had to pay a very heavy price.

Is it possible to have *kshama* if one's looks are bad, if one lends one's ear to foul words and if one's actions are rooted in evil? No! Man today is seeing what he ought not to, hearing what he should not and doing what is most undesirable. How can there be peace in such a polluted heart? Ravana's heart was completely polluted, which is why Hanuman, that great devotee of Rama, advised Ravana thus:

O Ravana, I shall teach you a lesson!

Lanka is no longer yours, O evil one!

Listen carefully and waste not this opportunity.

*Ignoring the intellect,
And becoming a slave to evil tendencies,
You have gotten yourself into the clutches of death!*

*Sita is the Mother of all beings;
She is your mother too.
By abducting her,
You have committed a terrible sin.
One arrow of Rama
Will remove all your ten heads!*

*O sinner!
I destroyed your minions holding Sita a prisoner,
And in retaliation you have set fire to my tail.
Now watch while I make Lanka burn,
Before putting out the fire in my tail.*

Hanuman said, “Ravana, your discrimination has been totally warped by jealousy.” Jealousy is the greatest enemy of man and it takes root when *kshama* is absent. If you possess the virtue of *kshama*, then none of these enemies can come anywhere near you. If the hearts of today’s students are polluted, it is because of the absence of *kshama*.

This is a quality that has to be painstakingly cultivated by self-effort and cannot be acquired as a gift from others; nor can it be obtained from books or even a teacher. It is only your own tenacity and firm determination that will help you cultivate this virtue. You must be resolute and ready to face any difficulty in the quest of your goal. Life is a challenge; meet it! In fact, it is a series of challenges and not just one or two. Face them squarely, resist the obstacles and firmly march forward. Such determination alone will take you to your goal.

If the heart is devoid of *kshama*, it becomes vulnerable to doubts. Man today does not even know what to doubt and what not to doubt! Caught in the whirlpool of doubts, modern man sometimes sinks to depths much lower than that of animals. In fact, at times he makes animals look better!

Animals behave within certain bounds and the dictates of season and reason. Man, on the other hand, knows no such bounds; for him, there is neither reason nor season. Absence of *kshama* is responsible for all this. Cultivation of *kshama* must, therefore, be an important priority.

No doubt you will face many difficulties on the path but they should not deter you. Knock them aside and bravely march on, taking courage from the fact that once you have *kshama* there is nothing that you cannot achieve.

Embodiments of Love! On occasion, you might fail in the class tests or in the examinations but that should not plunge you into depression. Realise that your failure is simply the result of lack of sufficient effort on your part. Tell yourself, “I did not work hard enough. Had I done so, I would certainly have passed. It is all my fault entirely.” Own up to your mistake, resolve to try again and be determined to succeed next time.

Do not try to cover up your lapses by seeking imaginary excuses as such excuses serve no purpose. Your failure was simply the result of your neglect, that is all. With firm determination, you can achieve anything in life. When difficulties come, do not hide; confront them bravely and squarely. Difficulties are inevitable and they will come in all shades – personal, financial, academic, professional and even spiritual. Face them all.

Students sometimes start earnestly on meditation but after a while they lose their seriousness. As a result, whatever progress was made initially is wiped out. Whose fault is it? Can you blame God? No! You alone are responsible for whatever has befallen you.

Instead of facing the impediments to your meditation, you become impatient, and once you become impatient, you start having doubts about the utility and the efficacy of meditation. After that

your interest starts slackening – all this because of the lack of patience. So, *kshama* is indispensable. *Kshama* is life itself and the very breath of life. Life bereft of *kshama* is meaningless and one who lives so is no better than a corpse. Therefore, acquire and protect *kshama* at all costs.

***Kshama* Must Be Cultivated When Young**

Students! The stage of life you presently are in is most important. This is when you can easily overcome all sorts of obstacles and tide over all difficulties. If you miss this chance to cultivate patience, when do you think you are going to do it? Is it after becoming old? Habits must be formed when one is young. You cannot acquire the habit of thinking about God in your old age.

*When the messengers of death
are at your doorstep,
When your relatives have given up hope
And are preparing for your last journey,
When your wife and children are lamenting about
your imminent departure,
Is it possible to acquire in that last moment
The habit of chanting God's Name?*

Impossible! Such a thing cannot be done. Good habits must be cultivated in the stage of life you are in now. This is when you should start stock-piling patience and accumulate a lot of it! This is the stage when *kshama* becomes the principal weapon of your life. If bad thoughts arise in you, resist and say, "These thoughts are coming because I am deficient in *kshama*. Let me counter the deficiency." Bad thoughts cannot penetrate one who possesses *kshama*. If the doors are slammed shut, can anyone enter? For aspirants on the spiritual path, *kshama* is indispensable.

Be Ever Ready for the Tests of God

In life, your capacity for forbearance will be constantly put to the test and you must, therefore, be very careful. In class, you are expected to be ever ready for surprise tests. You cannot excuse your-

self saying that you have not prepared and are not ready. The teacher will not accept that plea because you are always expected to be ready.

You know what photographers do before snapping a group photo. Just before clicking they say, "Ready." The Divine Cameraman, however, does not follow this practice. With Him, you have to be ever ready for no one can say when He will click the shutter. If you are not ready, the picture will not be good. So, in life you must always be ready for tests; achieving this preparedness is true *sadhana* (spiritual discipline).

Do not imagine that *sadhana* is a drill performed according to a set timetable. Time is not beholden to you and will, therefore, not oblige you. Time will not follow you, rather you must follow Time.

Determination Is a Must for Acquiring *Kshama*

The *Vedas* declare:

Uttisthata jagrata prapya varannibodhata.

(Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!)

Drowned in foolishness, you are sleeping soundly! Get up from this slumber of *ajnana* (ignorance), enter the realm of *prajnana* (consciousness) and experience *sujnana* (enlightenment). This really is the type of *sadhana* you ought to undertake.

People do not understand this and simply declare that they are doing *sadhana*. Everyone is trying; trying, trying all the time! What is all this business about trying? Meek and puny efforts cannot be called *sadhana*. To qualify for that name, the effort must be strong and made with firm determination. You must be firmly resolved to achieve the goal.

In life, actions must be accompanied by firm resolves. God too is firmly determined about the things He chooses to do. In the *Bhagavad Gita* He says:

*Paritranya Sadhunam Vinasaya Cha Dushkritam.
Dharmasamsthapanarthaya Sambhavami
Yuge Yuge.*

("For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the re-establishment of *dharma*, I am born from age to age.")

Next He says:

*Ananyaschintayantomam Ye Janah Paryupasate.
Tesham Nityabhiyuktanam Yogakshemam
Vahamyaham.*

"As for those who exclusively worship Me, who meditate on Me with no other thought and who are ever steadfast – I bear entirely the burden of their welfare.")

If God Himself can make resolutions, why not you? What are the spiritual goals you have resolved to attain in life? If you have not set any such goals for yourself, then your life will be empty and meaningless. Life must have goals and must be a brave journey involving the conquest of (spiritual) obstacles. Life's journey is full of bumps and jumps, without resolve and determination these bumps can produce confusion and depression. When confusion and depression march hand in hand, life becomes a total waste.

Students! In every one of your spiritual endeavours, you must make the resolution, "This I MUST achieve; this virtue I SHALL acquire." This is the way to *prema* and *kshama*. If you proceed in this manner with unshakeable faith and idealism, then without any doubt your life will be fully redeemed. All your actions and feelings must be dripping with *kshama*, *prema* and *daya* (compassion).

Love knows no hatred and is totally free from desires. Thus, God is said to be Love personified. *Kshama* will grow if you have unshakeable faith in God. Once you have learnt to be infinitely patient, Love will walk in almost immediately. *Prema* combined with *kshama* is the surest way to fulfilment.

Therefore, when you worship God make sure you repose total faith in Him. Without faith, what is the use of worship? Faith alone will take you beyond worries.

Kshama Leads to Bliss

Life is full of worries. They seem to come in an endless procession. What is it that does not cause anxiety?

*Birth is a worry, and so is existence itself;
Family life is a worry, death is a worry,
Childhood is a worry, old age is the same,
Living is a worry, working is a worry,
Pain causes worry, pleasure too causes worry,
Worry, worry, all the time!*

You are plagued by multiple worries all the time. In this world, troubles will come for sure but one must learn to rise above worry; this is possible only with *kshama*. Welcome troubles with a smile, saying, "Come my friend, you are the bearer of joy!" Truly speaking, it is not friends but enemies who give one bliss. Do you know how? Enemies put you on your guard and help you to develop *kshama*. When one is filled with *kshama*, one cannot help being blissful. That is why Swami is stressing so much the acquisition of this incomparable virtue.

Embodiments of Love! Along with love, also cultivate *kshama*. What is normally professed to be love is not real love because it invariably tends to be narrow, restricted and tinged with selfishness. Do not mistake this distorted feeling to be love. This so-called love is based on selfishness and self-interest. Liberate this shackled love from the various clutches, purify it and then direct it toward God. Once you have gone through this cleansing process, *kshama* will grow automatically.

The absence of *kshama* is responsible for most of the problems the world over and the decline in the innate humanness of man. Where virtues and values are concerned, man is able to achieve

hardly anything. When blades of grass stand all by themselves, they become a ready meal for cattle, but when stranded and plaited into a rope, even a mad elephant can be tied down – that is the power of unity. Therefore, you should always be united.

Unity promotes patience and strengthens it. What is the type of unity that Swami wants from you? Unity in matters relating to God and good activities. Such unity will develop purity and once purity is attained, Divinity becomes accessible.

***Kshama* Develops Courage**

Students! In matters spiritual, make sure that you get a firm grip on whatever it is that you are seeking. No matter what the obstacles or troubles, do not ever be afraid. Your steps must always be forward and never backward. But that is not what one finds amongst students of today. When will you start moving ahead? Go forward, trampling over difficulties.

To reach great heights, you must have courage. And how does one become courageous? When the heart is full of *kshama*, the spirit of courage will automatically make its appearance.

Vibhishana provides the classic example. It was through *kshama* that he acquired the courage to defy Ravana and cross over to the side of Rama. He arrived in Rama's camp chanting "Rama, Rama, Rama." Seeing Vibhishana in the distance, Rama immediately raised His hand as a gesture of grace and protection. However, the people around Rama said, "Lord, that person is a *rakshasa*, a demon. He is the brother of your enemy. You must, therefore, not grant him protection." Meanwhile, Vibhishana kept on telling Rama, "I am Yours, I am Yours."

Rama then said, "The moment a person tells Me 'I am Yours,' that person shall receive My protection, come what may." Such was Rama's determination. You too must have similar determination in every spiritual endeavour of yours.

One day during the Lanka War, there appeared a young man on the battlefield. Vibhishana drew the attention of Rama to this warrior, saying, "Rama, this person is mighty, powerful and valorous. He is stronger than most and You must slay him without fail." In response, Rama despatched an arrow felling the *rakshasa* warrior; the young man was dead. Vibhishana then went near the dead body and began weeping profusely. Rama gently lifted Vibhishana and said, "What is all this? Why are you crying over this man?" Vibhishana replied, "This is Neeludu, my only son. I urged You then to kill him since he was with the enemies, but now my emotion as a father is overwhelming me. I am unable to bear the sight of the death of my dear son right before my eyes. So, please grant me the power of patience and forbearance so that I can rise above such tragedies."

Notice how unique is Vibhishana's prayer. He said to Rama, "*Kshama* is my *sathya* and *dharma*; it is also Rama for me! *Kshama* is my God and I cannot ever afford to forget it." This episode reveals how even great men suffer pain if they lose their grip over *kshama*. On the other hand, with *kshama*, there are no limits to what can be achieved.

***Kshama* and Bad Company Do Not Go Together**

These days, it is not uncommon to see evildoers (seemingly) get away with it while good people suffer. It appears as if someone commits the crime and someone else gets punished. This is how things are in the world. Here is an example. You are sleeping in your room at night but mosquitoes disturb you. So, next day, you use a mosquito net but it still does not help because a few mosquitoes have sneaked into the net. You now resort to a drastic remedy, you spray Flit all over.

You cannot identify the specific mosquitoes that bit you but you are not bothered; you spray over all the mosquitoes you can see. Only one or two mosquitoes bit you but now hundreds are dying. Why is this so? Because of friendship. Even if you

are innocent, you have to suffer if you keep the company of evildoers.

It is to drive this home that Swami often says, “Tell Me your company, and I shall tell who you are.” Once bad thoughts get in, they multiply rapidly and soon drive out *kshama*, and *kshama* once lost is not easily regained. You must, therefore, protect this virtue at all costs and see that you never lose it, especially because with *kshama* you can achieve anything.

Embodiments of Love! Students! During the Summer Course, you will receive such advice from elders and from Swami. Treasure it in your hearts. However, it is not enough to merely place on record the advice heard, you must make every effort to put it into practice. It is no use locking it up all inside, its impact must be made manifest through good actions.

A villager was once walking, carrying a bundle of food on his head. After some time, he found the bundle to be a burden. So he made his way to the bank of a river, sat down there, opened the bundle and ate the food in it. In a few minutes, the burden disappeared and the food consumed gave him fresh energy. In the same way, it is only when you put into practice what you have learnt that you will gain experience and strength. In turn, this will lead you to success.

Embodiments of Love! Drive away bad thoughts and make room for good and noble ones. Through sacred thoughts, foster *kshama*. This will give you multiple capabilities, enabling you to transform your life into an ideal one. Study of books alone will not enhance your capability, they will merely provide you with superficial or bookish knowledge. This obviously is not enough.

Real capability and strength come by tapping the Inner Power latent in you. All that is outside is artificial. Real truth and power are both inside, in your heart. It is the heart that must be strengthened

but unaware of this fact people become furiously active in the external world, only to get lost there.

There are many types of food catering to the needs of the gross body but what about food for the heart? That food can be obtained only when you turn your head toward God. You must understand the subtle linkages here – food, head and God. Thus, along with the acquisition of worldly knowledge, you must also give importance to culture and refinement.

Earlier, the Vice Chancellor spoke about the culture of *Bharat*. He crisply summarised the essence of many ancient texts. *Bharatiya* (Indian) culture is timeless, sacred, deep, profound, full of inner strength and provides full protection. Today, we are losing our grip over such a great culture. Instead of ignoring and brushing it aside, we must do everything possible to nurse and foster it. Refinement accumulates and manifests as culture.

Here is a cloth (at this point, Swami showed His handkerchief). It has been woven from yarn. Where did the yarn come from? From cotton. By processing cotton, one gets yarn. By further processing yarn, one gets cloth. Likewise, this table has come from wood that has itself come from a tree. Refinement comes about only through processing and shaping.

Farmers grow paddy. Can you eat raw paddy? No. It has to be polished first and then cooked before it is eaten. In life too, refinement is necessary. And culture is nothing but accumulated refinement. *Bharatiya* culture is ideal in this respect and worthy of being followed by everyone at all times.

Therefore, with God’s Name on your lips and unshakeable faith in your heart, acquire *kshama*, allowing it to manifest as *daya*, or compassion.

**Divine Discourse in Brindavan
on May 25, 2000**

HOW TO BECOME DEAR TO THE LORD

*Anapeksha Suchir Dakshah Udaaseena Gatavyathah
Sarvarambha Parithyaagi Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyah
(He who is totally devoid of desires, absolutely pure, firm in
determination, completely detached, immune to the play of time, and
has renounced pomp and ostentation; such a one is dear to Me.)*

Bhagavad Gita (12:16)

Lembodiments of Love! God loves dearly those who possess the qualities enumerated in this *sloka* (verse) of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The Qualities Needed to Become Dear to the Lord

Anapeksha means that the devotee is beyond *apeksha*, i.e., desires or expectations. Is it ever possible for man, bound as he is by the body and the senses, to be without desires? Hardly. Some desire or the other will always be there. However, there must be control over the desires that one has. What sorts of desires are permitted? Recall what Krishna has to say about this matter. He says that all righteous actions are divine. Thus, among the permissible desires, the best is the desire for *tyaga* or sacrifice. The yearning for *dharma* also is important. The desire for God is mandatory.

Although what must truly be desired is very clear, people have widely different types of expectations and desires. While some consider being righteous as very important, others think that achieving

(worldly) greatness is the best. Some even try to combine these two objectives. Truly speaking, no one has the freedom or the authority to do as one likes. One must do exactly as the Lord says.

The Lord has stated very clearly that He wants you to attain the state of *anapeksha*. How does one do that? One does this by strictly confining oneself to righteous activities alone, performing such actions exclusively for the pleasure of the Lord, and by offering all such actions in their entirety to the Lord.

Actions performed in this spirit rise well above worldly desires and expectations. Thus the word *anapeksha* ought not to be interpreted in a very rigid sense. What it really means is having the irresistible urge to work only for the Lord and for His sole pleasure.

However, that does not mean one can do anything and everything. Our actions must be such that they please Him and would secure His approval. If a devotee conducts himself in this fashion, he becomes dear to the Lord.

The second quality that the devotee must possess is *suchi*, or cleanliness. What sort of cleanliness does the Lord expect from us? Is it outer cleanliness or inner cleanliness? Both are required. God loves cleanliness; cleanliness is Godliness. However, one cannot confine oneself to external cleanliness alone since inner purity also is very necessary. In fact, it is of prime importance. God is omnipresent. He is present both outside and inside. However, we must first try to recognise the Divine Principle within.

Here is an example. There is a brass vessel and you are using it to prepare soup. If the vessel is not tinned inside, the soup would get spoilt and even poisoned. Our heart is like the brass vessel. This vessel must be coated inside with *prema*. If this precaution is taken, the inside will be clean. Inner purity is essential for achieving external purity. What exactly is meant by external purity? It does not mean washing yourself with soap and water. It means performing selfless service to society and doing such action for the pleasure of God.

It is such service alone that produces external purity. If inner purity is lacking, the service rendered would inevitably be tinged with selfishness, thereby diminishing external purity.

The third quality that the devotee must have is *daksha*, or strong and unshakeable determination. What sort of determination must you have? You must say, "Come what may, I shall not rest till I accomplish this or achieve this." This is the sort of resolve you ought to have. Swami occasionally says:

*Having resolved what ought to be done,
Hold on till you succeed.*

This is determination.

*Having desired what ought to be,
Hold on till it is fulfilled.*

This is determination.

*Having asked what you want,
Hold on till you get it.*

This is what is meant by determination.

*Having thought what you wish to have,
Hold on till the thought is realised.*

Such is the quality of determination.

In the end, what should happen?

*Due to your perseverance,
the Lord must yield to your wishes!
Persevere, be tenacious, and never give up.
It is not the characteristic of a devotee to retreat,
Abandoning his resolve.*

What is meant by determination? It means having the firm resolve: "I should definitely see God, have God, and secure His Grace." God loves dearly the devotee who has such firm determination.

Next comes *udaasina*, which means detachment. You must be totally detached with respect to whatever you are doing. You can do any kind of work – you may, for example, be engaged in service activity – however, you should not have expectation of any type (including of the outcome) and also not seek any reward, praise, appreciation, etc., for what you are doing.

Especially while working for service organisations, you should be very careful – you must not have any craving for fame and name. You must not seek praise and respect. You should not lament, "I am working so hard and doing so much, but there is no mention of it whatsoever in the newspapers!" If you do your work with such cravings and expectations, then the good that you might be doing is nullified and the sanctity of the work is destroyed. Therefore, you must do service work sincerely, being immune to success and failure, praise as well as criticism.

After this is *gathavyathah*, this means being impervious to the ups and downs brought about by time. Acquisition of this particular virtue also calls for strong determination. You should nei-

ther brood over the past nor worry about the future. Why all this pointless contemplation? No matter how much you think, reflect and brood, the miseries of the past cannot be corrected nor set right. As regards the future, no one can say anything definite about it since it is so very uncertain. You are keen about achieving something tomorrow; is there any guarantee you would be alive then? Are you sure you would be alive? No one can speak with certainty on such matters. Therefore, what is the point in worrying about the future? The future is hidden in the womb of time, no one can see it. So why spend time imagining all sorts of future scenarios?

As for the past, it is gone and lies buried in the sands of time. The past cannot be revived, recovered or resurrected. The future belongs to time. Why, therefore, waste time reflecting about both the past and the future? If you do want to think, then do so about the present. Man cannot live without thinking. Waves of thought constantly assail you. Channel your thought to the present. Why? Because both the past and the future are contained in the present. The present is a seed that came from a tree called 'The Past'. This seed also contains the tree called 'The Future'. Thus the present is very important, being the embodiment of both the past and the future; therefore go by it.

*He who speaks and conducts himself,
Judging properly the situation and circumstance,
And without wounding or hurting others;
And without himself being hurt in the process
Such a one is wise and blessed.*

Don't worry about the future but concentrate on the present. If you take proper care of the present, the future is bound to be bright. Of that you can be sure.

Lastly, *sarvambha parithyagi*, which implies total renunciation. Who is a true renunciate? He who remains perfectly calm at all times and under all circumstances is the one who merits such

a description. Such a one is beyond pomp and ostentation. God distances Himself from the ostentatious type. In fact, exhibitionism is the first thing that one must renounce. Pomp is a sure sign of *rajo guna* (tendency to be pushing and aggressive). The craving for ostentation is the starting point for all desires. Seeking publicity is a reflection of worldly desires. Do not go after worldly goals for they represent the temporary and the evanescent. Shun pomp, show and publicity. Krishna declared that it was such a recluse that was dear to Him.

Today, everywhere it is a case of show and publicity. The person may spend just 5 rupees on charity, but he is prepared to invest 500 rupees on publicising his act in the newspapers. Is this not show? It is only the one who seeks fame that needs publicity; on the other hand, the one truly interested in service has no need for it. Never hanker after publicity. As long as you are after pomp, you would never be able to experience *Atmic Bliss*. How can one who is ignorant of the Self ever earn God's love? While seeking God's grace, one must be very patient in everything and in every aspect. Then alone can it be said that one is treading the spiritual path; then alone would one become eligible for God's attention.

Selfless Service Alone Begets God's Love

Embodiments of Love! If you wish to become eligible for God's love, then your actions must be consistent with love. It is impossible to secure God's love without appropriate and sacred actions. Can the one who is always hankering after rewards be ever truly happy? The only compensation you ought to seek is the pleasure and joy of doing your duty properly. The joy of service is the true reward. If you go against the command of God, then everything is bound to go wrong.

Yad bhavam tad bhavati.

As is the feeling, so is the result. If you desire God's love, then your actions must match and be compatible with your desire. If you do not want God's love, then you are at liberty to do as you please. However, if God's love is what you want, then you must act in an appropriate manner. In this world, you first have to pay the price before you acquire the authority to possess what you desire. You go to a shop to buy a towel. The shopkeeper quotes a price of twenty rupees. When you pay twenty rupees cash, the shopkeeper packs the towel and gives it to you. No cash, no towel! God also follows a similar "transaction" procedure. What kind of "business" does God do? Divine business! If you lovingly obey God's command, then you are sure to receive love. God's love has no limitations or stipulations. Only one condition: you give and then you receive. As Swami said earlier: *offer selfless service and receive love.*

Without offering selfless service, how can you expect to receive God's love? To receive God's love, you must be totally free from worldly desires and constantly engage in selfless service. The service must be of a pleasing nature. All actions must be performed exclusively for God's pleasure. For this, you do not have to give up anything. Just keep on doing your normal duty in the manner ordained by destiny. You wish to study; by all means do so. But in what manner should you study? You should do it for God's pleasure.

You are employed in some place. How should you do your work? Do it as if you are trying to please God. Tell yourself, "I am doing this job as an offering to Him." Install this feeling in your heart and do whatever you want to or have to. However, before rushing to adopt this course, pause, reflect and make sure that God would really be pleased with what you are trying to do and offer to Him! You cannot do all sorts of silly and stupid things, claiming that you are doing it for God's pleasure. If you act just according to your fancies, do you think that God will accept your actions as an offering?

Every action of yours must have the stamp of quality that is acceptable to God. Without that stamp, your action would be a counterfeit. God should acknowledge that your action is good. When you affix the proper postage stamp, your letter can go to far-off places. But, if there is only an address on the envelope and no stamp, it is of no use. An unstamped letter dropped into the mailbox would end up only in the dead-letter office. Therefore, if you really want your offering to reach God, then you must affix the stamp of *prema*. It is only when *prema* saturates every action of yours that God will shower His grace. He will do so in many forms too.

Nothing Comes without Perseverance

Slowly, but surely, you must develop all the qualities enumerated in the *Bhagavad Gita sloka*. Do not ever doubt that the acquisition of these virtues is possible.

*Go on rubbing two pieces of wood,
Fire is sure to emerge.
Go on churning curd,
Butter is sure to be formed.
Engage constantly in enquiry,
Wisdom would certainly blossom.*

Sparks of fire are produced when two pieces of wood are rubbed hard together. Butter is formed when curd is churned in a sustained manner. Similarly, in spirituality, sustained inquiry leads one to wisdom and Divinity. You realise the truth: *Tat Twam Asi* – That thou art. Is it possible to get fire without rubbing and butter without churning? The fire is latent in the wood and is not visible. You have to rub hard to make the fire emerge. Butter is latent in the curd and you have to churn hard to make it come out. In the same way, if you want God's love, you must constantly do good work, do it solely for God's pleasure and offer it all to God.

It is only when you work with such a spirit of surrender that you become eligible for God's love.

Surrender does not mean that you are vanquished and that the other one has emerged victorious. In spirituality, it means that the two merge into one – there is nothing like giving or receiving. Recognise the Cosmic Unity that pervades everywhere. Recognise that this substratum of unity is nothing but God. You will then automatically experience God.

Students! All this may sound very difficult to practise. Know the truth that happiness comes only after hard effort. Without difficulty, there cannot be joy.

Na sukhat labhyate sukham.

Happiness does not beget happiness; happiness is born only out of difficulties. If there are no difficulties to start with, how can you enjoy the sweetness of pleasure? So, you must struggle to some extent and face difficulties. Without darkness, does brightness have any value? Without hunger, does food have value? Similarly, you must discover the true taste and value of happiness.

In what way must you do this? Discover first the love within you, and then use it to receive God's love. Once you tap the pure and unpolluted love within you, you will become the recipient of God's love. God would even overlook and forgive your mistakes. However, do not take this for granted and commit mistakes endlessly! You have to safeguard all the treasures God has deposited in you.

God Is Everywhere but You Must Make an Effort to Recognise Him

The *gopikas* (cowherd maids) constantly worshipped Krishna. They became very depressed when Krishna went away to Mathura. They were so absorbed in the thought of Krishna that they constantly called out His name, no matter what task they were engaged in. Once, a *gopika* was carrying on her head pots containing milk, curd and butter. She was heading for the bazaar and her intention was to sell the dairy products there.

Normally the village vendor calls out loudly, "Milk! Butter! Curd!" etc., to announce the products available for sale. But, this particular *gopika* was so absorbed in the contemplation of Krishna that she completely forgot to call out the name of the products she had brought to sell. Instead, she wandered up and down the bazaar street crying out, "Govinda, Krishna, Madhava, ..." etc. She went on repeating the Lord's name. She completely forgot everything about vending and returned home without selling anything. Such was the intensity of devotion in those days.

A *gopika* once told Krishna, "O Krishna, in what way am I to see You? How am I to recognise You? It is not possible! You are in everything, and yet You are invisible! When we declare You to be invisible, then You suddenly manifest Yourself. And when we say You are present, you suddenly vanish!"

Krishna, can we ever know You?

Subtler than an atom,

Bigger than biggest,

*You are in every one of the eighty-four lakh species,
And You dwell in each and every living being of every species.*

Can we ever know such a One as You?

People in those days believed that there were 84 *lakh* living species. God is present as the Indweller in every living being belonging to each of these very large numbers of species. Why? Because He is the One who became many. When the forms of God are so numerous, in what particular form should we worship God? By what name should we call Him? Forms are the result of our physical perception and names are what we have given to these various forms. By Himself, God is just Truth.

Here is a flower, a pad and a cloth (Swami points to various objects on the table before Him). To the eye, they all appear quite different. The flower is a flower, the cloth is cloth, and the pad is a

pad. Despite the varying names and forms, there is common underlying factor – they all exist. This existence is the basic Truth. It is the unifying substratum behind the different names and forms. IT IS! It is the same with God.

God there certainly IS, and visible also He is! God IS, IS, IS! He exists!! You should have complete and total faith in His existence. If you have this faith, you can see Him everywhere. How is it that you have faith in your mother? Do you ever doubt whether she is your mother or not? Never! How come you have faith in your father? Do you ever have doubts about his being your father? You prefer to believe in all worldly things but are unwilling to accept spiritual truths. This is the biggest mistake and the weakness of modern man.

Bhrama – Brahma

The warden (of the Brindavan Campus, who spoke earlier) referred to the *Ramayana*. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna, representing the four *Vedas*, took birth as Emperor Dasaratha's sons. Rama was the embodiment of the *Rig Veda*, Lakshmana represented the *Sama Veda*, Bharata stood for the *Yajur Veda* and Shatrughna represented the *Atharvana Veda*. Thus, the four *Vedas* manifested as four royal princes.

Sage Viswamitra was performing a *yaga* (*Vedic* ritual). He knew very well that only Rama, Himself the embodiment of the *Vedas*, could protect the ritual he wished to perform. So, Viswamitra went to the palace of Dasaratha to seek the assistance of Rama. The emperor was very pleased to see the revered sage and said, "O sage, what brought you here?" Viswamitra replied by asking a question, "Will you do what I ask you to do?" Without taking even a second to think about it, Dasaratha replied, "Of course, without fail." Dasaratha thus committed himself and became bound to his word.

*One's action must match one's capacity,
Must be pre-determined,
Taking all aspects into account,
Both good and bad,
Must never be in haste,
And also be consistent with the goal.
Otherwise, it can prove deathly and dangerous.*

Before you give your word, you must think carefully. You should not glibly or blindly give your word and then regret as well as retract. Dasaratha gave a promise because of his immense faith in sage Viswamitra. The sage said, "O King, I want you to send your son Rama with me to the forest in order to protect the *yaga* I am performing there." Dasaratha was stunned. He thought, "This son Rama was born to me after countless prayers, after observing so many austerities and after performing so many *yajnas*. Is it possible to send such a dear and tender son to the forest to fight demons and protect the *yaga*? Rama is so young. He has never seen a demon. He may be frightened by those terrible creatures." Dasaratha's love for Rama produced in him a surge of such thoughts.

Viswamitra sensed Dasaratha's misgivings and severely reprimanded the emperor, "You have no idea who your son is. He is the very incarnation of God. Do not consider Him to be your tender son! It is your attachment that is blinding you to the Absolute Reality that Rama is. Give up this bodily attachment and replace it with devotion." Viswamitra sent for sage Vasishta (Dasaratha's resident preceptor). Vasishta said, "O Dasaratha, do you know why I am serving as a priest in your royal household? I am not here because I am enamoured by your wealth, fame and power. I knew that God was going to take birth here in human form. I wanted to sanctify my life by having the *darshan* of that Divine boy, spending time with Him and experiencing bliss. That is the reason why I am here, and not for any worldly gains. Why do you entertain doubts about Rama? Send Him immediately with Sage Viswamitra to the forest." With great reluctance, Dasaratha yielded to Vasishta's command.

Viswamitra was no ordinary sage. As his name implies, he was a friend to the whole world. How did he achieve this status? By giving humanity the priceless gift of the *Gayatri Mantra*. This great Viswamitra, widely reputed for his intense penance, who possessed extraordinary spiritual powers and who was the *guru* of so many, was now taking the young royal princes Rama and Lakshmana to the forest.

The party penetrated deep into the jungle and approached the river Sarayu. It was evening time, and the sage told the princes, "Offer your evening prayers now." After Rama and Lakshmana did so, Viswamitra pointed across the river and said, "We are going over there. That is where I shall be performing the *yaga*. It is becoming dark and You will see terrible demons there. To ensure that You do not get frightened, I shall teach You two *mantras*: *Bala* and *Athibala*. Come and sit near me and receive the instruction." The sage taught the two *mantras*. You see how illusion blankets clear thinking!

Here is the great sage who, in the court of Dasaratha, emphatically declared and hailed Rama as God Incarnate. But now in the forest, that feeling has gone. He is imagining Rama to be a tender young prince, likely to be frightened by demons. This shows that no matter how evolved, when one has bodily relations, doubts can and do arise about Incarnations. Such doubts are the result of delusion. *Bhrama* (delusion) can eclipse Brahman (God)!

Delusion is born of tendencies accumulated over many births. Divine feelings and the ability to recognise God in human form, on the other hand, is the result of sacred actions performed. What an ocean of difference separates *bhrama* and Brahman! Even a great sage like Viswamitra could come under the grip of *bhrama*!

God Can Be Bound Only with Love

You too occasionally have such delusory experiences. Questions like "What is Divine? How should one relate to Divinity? Who is human? What is a demon? What is an animal?" and so on arise. The answers to these are simple. Divinity is pure love. He who follows the path of righteousness is a human. Cruelty reflects demonic nature and the presence of animal qualities in a person brings that one down to the level of an animal. Divinity can be fully experienced only through love and no other way. God cannot be bought with money, as many foolishly imagine.

You all know the story of Sathyabhama (one of the consorts of Krishna). She wanted Krishna all for herself and did not want Him to go anywhere. She asked Sage Narada how she could achieve this. Narada is the one who offers instruction in spiritual knowledge. Recognising that Sathyabhama's ego was responsible for her unreasonable desire, he decided to teach her a lesson. For this purpose he devised a plan and asked Sathyabhama, "Do you have the wealth that can match the weight of Krishna?" She replied, "I have with me the magical Syamanthaka jewel. I can create wealth, and any amount of it. Therefore, do not entertain any doubts about my affluence. I will certainly be able to match Krishna's weight with gold, precious stones and jewels."

Narada then called for a large balance and sent word to Krishna to join him. When Krishna came, Narada asked the Lord to sit on one of the pans. He then asked Sathyabhama to pile her gold, etc., in the other pan. No matter how much gold was placed, the pan carrying Krishna remained down; it did not show any tendency to go up even a tiny bit. Sathyabhama became scared. She ordered all her wealth to be placed on the other pan but there was no effect. Finally, she placed even the treasured and magical Syamanthaka jewel. Even then the balance remained stuck.

She ran to Rukmini (the other consort), calling out loudly, "Sister! Sister!" Up to this time, she never cared for Rukmini or bothered to look at her face. It was Rukmini's birthday but the jealous Sathyabhama had prevented Krishna from visiting Rukmini even on that day. Rukmini is a compassionate one. She asked Sathyabhama, "Sister, why are you so agitated? What happened?" Sathyabhama narrated all that transpired and then said, "It is all the work of that Narada!"

Rukmini went worshipfully around the *tulsi* plant in her garden, plucked a leaf, kept it in her palm and came with Sathyabhama to where Krishna was. Narada was waiting for the two with a broad smile on his face. Krishna too was full of smiles. He said, "I am ready to offer Myself for sale, to whosoever is prepared to buy Me." Rukmini then said, "Narada, Krishna can be matched only by His glorious name and not by material wealth. I am therefore simply going to chant Krishna!"

Narada replied, "How can one balance the One with Form with a word that is formless? I cannot accept this kind of balancing. You must place some object on the empty pan and try to tilt the balance. Sathyabhama tried putting all her wealth, but it was of no use. What are you going to place on the pan?"

Rukmini then sang:

*O God Who is worshipped with leaf, flowers,
fruits, and water,*

If it be true that You submit Yourself

When You are offered Pure Love

instead of all these,

I pray that You be balanced by Your Name,

And then tilt the scale with this Tulsi leaf.

So saying, she chanted the name Krishna and then placed the *tulsi* leaf on the empty pan. The balance immediately tilted, with the pan carrying Krishna going up. Krishna had been more than

matched! Narada observed, "The name Krishna made the scale even and thereafter the *tulasi* leaf was enough to tilt the balance."

God yields only to love. Anything you offer to Him, no matter how inconsequential it might be in a material sense, is acceptable to Him, if the offering is accompanied by pure love. Even a single *tulsi* leaf is enough. God cannot be secured with wealth but only with love. There is in fact no wealth greater than love. So, offer love to God. If you offer Him pure love, then God will be very pleased and will always be with you. If you want to be worthy of God's love and the recipient of His grace, then you must obey His command.

What does He say?

*Anapeksah Suchir Daksah Udaasinaa Gatavyathah
Sarvarambha Parityagi Yo Madbhaktah Same Priyah*

He says, "If you have all these qualities, then you become dear to Me." God would readily claim you if you do what He says. You must understand fully what God wants of you and conduct yourself accordingly.

Embodiments of Love!

How to grasp God's teachings? How to develop and sustain faith in Him? Swami will speak to you on these topics tomorrow.

**Divine Discourse in Brindavan
on May 24, 2000**

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 inquired into the nature of Divinity through many paths but were not successful in recognising the reality. Hence, they started worshipping *Prakriti* (Nature). Thereafter, the *Bharatiyas* 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, such as 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 the ideals they stood for.

Take for instance a 100-rupee note with dimensions of 6 inches by 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 the flag, which are also lifeless. Man's beliefs are based on his likes and dislikes.

Names of Gods Have Deep Inner Meaning

Isavasyam Idam Jagatam (The entire world is permeated by God). Every being is an embodiment of Ishwara. It is also said, *Ishwara sarva bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). He is present in all beings in the form of Consciousness. Ishwara is the master of six forms of wealth — *dharma* (righteousness), *aiswarya* (wealth), *yashas* (fame), *shakti* (power), *jnana* (wisdom) and *vairagya* (detachment). Ishwara has another name, San(m)kara. "Sam" refers to *chidanandam* (eternal bliss) and *atmanandam* (bliss of the Self). "Kara" means one who bestows. Therefore, *Sankara* is one who confers eternal bliss.

Every word has a deep inner meaning. Take for instance the name Sathya Sai. “Sathya” stands for *Rig Veda*. “Sa,” “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 neither beginning nor end. Divinity is immanent in the heart (*hridaya*) of every man. *Hridaya* means that which is suffused with compassion. So Divinity is the embodiment of compassion.

Today people are unable to understand the principle of Divinity. Though the modes of worship vary, they all are directed towards different forms of the same God. You may call Him Rama, Krishna, Ishwara, 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 *Shivaratri*, meaning auspicious night. Shiva 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 message of “I am God” is conveyed through this breathing process — 21,600 times a day. Such teachings have been propagated and practised since ancient times.

It is the finger that points to a flower. Likewise, idols point to the Divinity. So idol worship cannot be considered foolish. Never disregard idols because they are inert. Even in inert objects, there is *chaitanya* (consciousness). *Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan* (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest). This *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 why, if *chaitanya* is all-pervasive, 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 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 realise *Sivatwa* (Divinity).

Use Your Power of Discrimination

Man is falling 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, *Ishwara 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 Ishwara 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 Ishwara 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 Ishwara manifested in His true form and declared, “Such *yukti* (tact) that 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 the hands. Non-violence is the life of the heart. *Shivaratri* 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 a 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 make others suffer. 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* (the human race). Develop morality and lead an honest life. Only then can you attain *Ishwaratwa*.

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.

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 *Adhy-*



atmikam 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, whereupon he 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 not ignorant. 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. *Mounam 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 the worlds 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 valu-

able 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. Only then will you realise humanness. Being born a man, don't turn mean. Cruelty is the nature of animals. By hurting others, you lose your humanness and become a beast. When you threaten others, you become a wild beast. If you are scared by somebody, you become an animal of prey.

You are neither a hunting beast nor an animal of prey. You are a human being. Never hurt anybody; cultivate an attitude of happiness in yourself. Then you will be doubly happy. The Lord is constantly saying, *Thathastu, Thathastu!* (So be it!). As you wish, so will it happen.

From evil intentions, evil results. If you are always filled with good intentions, they are equally blessed by God. The consequences of all your actions will result in reactions. Maybe not immediately, but definitely sooner or later. Therefore 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 receive 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, at least 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, that is, 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 Ishwara? He is all-pervasive. Just as the wind blows freely everywhere, so do we find the principle of Ishwara pervasive. Share your love with all and propagate the Divine Name to the entire world.

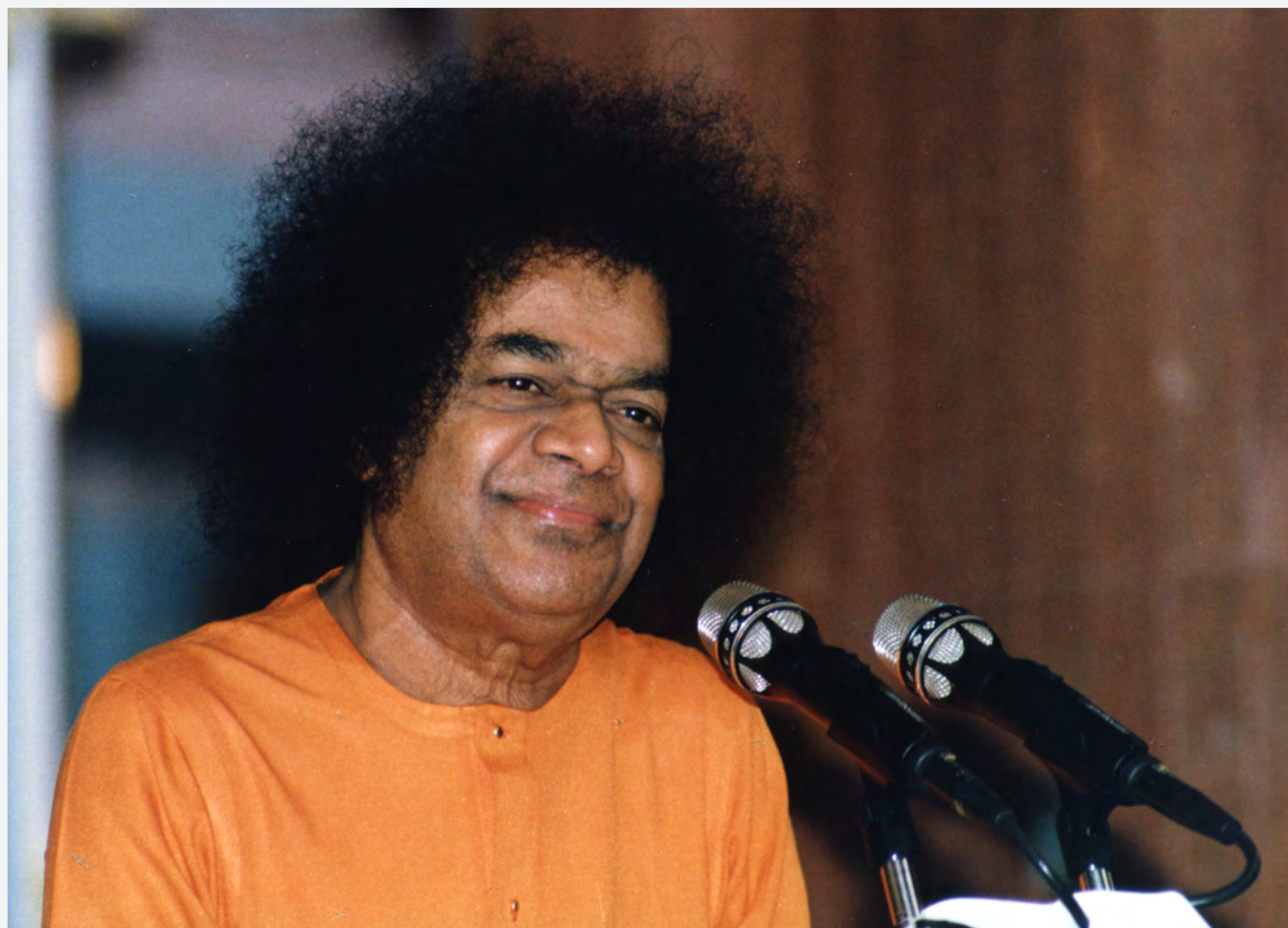
**Divine Discourse
on March 12, 2002**



CHAPTER *Nine*

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA'S MESSAGE
ON SERVICE





*T*o discard the evil in our thoughts is itself true sacrifice
and the highest form of self-control.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
November 21, 1988



SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LOVING SERVICE

Embodiments of Love! "A pure, unwavering, compassionate heart, truthful speech and use of the body for dedicated service to others are sublime qualities in a human being," says a Sanskrit poem.

Mankind has been engaged in the quest for truth from the earliest times. *Bharat* (India) is the birthplace of many sages who explored the realms of the spirit, discovered the highest truths and proclaimed them to the world. In more recent times, others have been engaged in pursuing scientific investigations to discover a different set of truths. Whatever the truths discovered by science or spirituality, the ultimate reality is the energy of the atom. All that is perceived or experienced in the manifested cosmos is the combination of atoms. The five basic elements are made up of atoms. The food you eat, the water you drink, the air you breathe and the sounds you hear are all expressions of atoms. The cosmos is made up of atoms.

It has taken science a thousand years (of investigation) to discover this truth. But many millennia ago, a young child, Prahlada, proclaimed this truth. He told his father, "Do not have any doubts as to whether *Hari* (the Supreme Lord) is at one place and not at another. Wherever you search for Him, you will find Him." (Swami recited a poem from the *Bhagavatam*.) Prahlada taught that the Divine permeates the entire universe in the form of atoms. This omnipresence of the Divine was also proclaimed in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

See the Divine in All

What pervades the entire universe is a manifestation of the Divine Energy. To experience this omnipresent energy, certain spiritual processes have been indicated. One of them is to see the Divine in whatever you do, whatever you perceive and whatever you experience.

"Love and Service represent the same truth" (Telugu saying). For man, love and service are like two wings with the help of which man should strive to realise the Spirit. The quest for truth really means discovering one's own inner reality. This eternal Divine Principle is in one and all. To experience this Divine, one has to develop certain sacred qualities.

Morality is a mark of a human being. Truth is the rule. Righteousness is the path. Sacrifice is the glory. These three are the hallmarks of humanity. Mankind is distinguished by these three qualities. Man today has lost the spirit of sacrifice. Morality has been undermined. There is no concern for truth. He is lost totally in mundane pursuits, forgetting his Divinity.

The Sai Organisations were set up to make people realise their true Divine nature. What is the primary purpose of the Sai Organisations? It is to make the people realise that they are sparks of the Divine and not embodiments of the physical products of Nature. The inherent Divinity of man has been clearly proclaimed in the *Bhagavad Gita*. This truth is not subject to changes.

Spiritual Value of Service

Some of the speakers at the conference have stated that Swami is bringing about transformation in individuals. When does transformation take place? After a person has received information. Therefore, the first requisite is to get the information about the presence of the Divine Principle in all. The Sai Organisations have been engaged in propagating this "information." *Seva* (service) is the ideal means by which this message can be conveyed. You should all realise that the human body has been given to you solely to render selfless service. Such service broadens the heart, destroys the ego and generates bliss.

Service also helps to promote consciousness of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Your task does not end there. You have at the same time to propagate the idea of *Ekathma-Bhavam* (spiritual oneness of all mankind). Mankind has to be led from dualism to non-dualism.

Arguments over the existence or non-existence of God are entirely futile and foolish, as Buddha pointed out. According to the minds of different persons, views and beliefs are bound to differ. But irrespective of these controversies, the truth is one. That Truth is God. *Dharma* is God. *Ahimsa* is God. Adhere to these three: truth, righteousness and non-violence. Follow the path of truth. There is no greater virtue than truth. The truth you speak must emanate from the heart and should be filled with love. Where there is love there is truth.

Stick to truth in whatever you do. This may not be easy. But through persistence truth will become a natural habit. Act according to the dictates of your conscience and not the promptings of your senses.

Love Is the Basis for All Actions

Make love the basic impulse for all your actions. Share your love with others. Be unselfish. Self lives by getting and forgetting. Love lives by giv-

ing and forgiving. Develop confidence in yourself. Through self-confidence you can achieve self-realisation.

The Sai Organisations have been enjoined to carry out a programme of ceiling on desires. Everyone should try to control desires as much as possible. The promotion of human values is another item in the programme. These human values are inherent in every person. All that is needed is for everyone to manifest them in his daily life. Truth, righteousness and peace are all in you. You are the embodiment of truth, peace, love and God. Recognise this fact.

Members of Sai Organisations should cultivate certain desirable practices. For instance, they should regulate their diet, because one's food influences one's thoughts. Smoking and intoxicating drinks have to be given up. They are ruinous for the health. Meat eating should also be given up because eating animal food promotes animal tendencies. The fourth evil that has to be eliminated is gambling. Those who take to the spiritual path should avoid as much as possible these four bad practices.

It is sinful to slaughter poor animals for one's food. Sai members should follow the motto "Help ever, hurt never." There is no meaning in professing to respect human values without observing the rule that you should cause no harm to others in any form whatsoever.

God loves those who serve others because He is in all of them. Whomever you may serve, consider it service to God. Divinise all your actions. Treat every action you perform as God's work.

Love to Love; Heart to Heart

Sai Organisations have not been set up for propaganda purposes. We do not need any publicity. Who invited all of you here? You came out of your love. It is an outpouring of your love for Swami. What is the nature of your relationship? Love to

love; heart to heart. It is your love for me, and my love for you, that has brought about this enormous gathering here today.

You have to bear in mind yet another fact about our Organisation. The services rendered by the *Seva Dal* to maintain cleanliness and security in the Nilayam campus are beyond praise. They are true *sevaks*. In our *seva* organisations there are hundreds of thousands of workers who are rendering service of various kinds. The office bearers should not feel that they are apart from the workers. All are workers. No one can consider himself a master.

Service can assume any form. What a mother does for her child is service. A husband and wife render mutual service. In this sense all are servants. God is the only Master. All others who call themselves “masters” like postmaster, station-master, etc., are not masters at all.

In rendering service, see that you do it for the satisfaction of your conscience and not to impress others. Treating service as an offering to the Divine, do it perfectly. Remember that God is watching every one of your actions. Be your own watchman to scrutinize what you do. When you do everything to satisfy your conscience, you are well on the way to Self-Realisation.

***Sadhana* of Overseas Devotees**

I am well aware that our Sai members are doing excellent work. Without boasting about it, we can claim that there are no organisations in the world like the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. The way the *sevaks* have been serving food and water to *lakhs* of people is inconceivable elsewhere.

Moreover, you have to appreciate the patience shown by overseas devotees. They are used to living in spacious houses with all amenities. Here they have been living in sheds adjusting themselves to the lack of many amenities. That adjustment is an index of their devotion.

The adjustment is itself a form of spiritual *sadhana*. Adjustment is possible when there is understanding. It is because they cherish the feeling “Here is our Swami, our God” that they are able to adjust themselves. This understanding is also a form of *sadhana*. Acquire this understanding and then act on that basis. Then you will experience bliss.

There is no use merely going on reading books. Practising what you have learnt is more important than filling the mind with book knowledge. In our organisation, all are well-read persons who are keen to practise what they have learnt. You are all treading the path of truth. The whole world is one. Respect all faiths alike. The world is like a *veena* with many strings. When the strings are in harmony, the world will be happy.

All should behave fraternally towards each other. There should be no differences on grounds of religion. All worship the same God. No religion preaches hatred. Truth and righteousness are common to all religions. Adhere to them. Observe morality and integrity in daily life.

Love for Swami Is Cause for Transformation

Today everyone in Prasanthi Nilayam is living as a member of one family. Whatever your language, religion, nationality or custom, you feel as one here. This is great spiritual *sadhana*. No one brought about this transformation. It was an individual transformation, each by himself or herself. How did they effect this transformation? Out of their love for Swami. That love accounts for this prodigious transformation.

In the Sai Organisation, because it functions in the workday world, some regulations have been laid down. Rules and regulations are essential. First of all, whatever resolutions have been passed at this conference, they should be carried out wholeheartedly. All sorts of conferences are held all over the world. Resolutions are passed.

But they are ignored after the conference is over. In the Sai Organisations, this should not happen. Having passed a resolution, you must “pass” in it! You would have scored a “pass” only when you implement the resolution. Therefore, you must carry out the decisions you have taken.

That is the meaning of discipline. Discipline grows out of devotion. Devotion stems from duty. Observe the three Ds: Discipline, Devotion and Duty. This is true spirituality. In the performance of every duty there should be devotion. There should be devotion and not diversion!

Devotion signifies love. Love for the Divine is the only true love. All other expressions of love are merely attachments of one sort or another. Love is God. Live in love. Start the day with love. Fill the day with love. End the day with love. That is the way to God. This love should be considered Divine by people of every faith. Manifest your love regardless of how others behave.

Share Your Bliss with Others

Cultivate this love. I am not concerned about the numerical growth of centres or devotees. I want only quality. Increase in quantity should be accompanied by improvement in quality. This is the

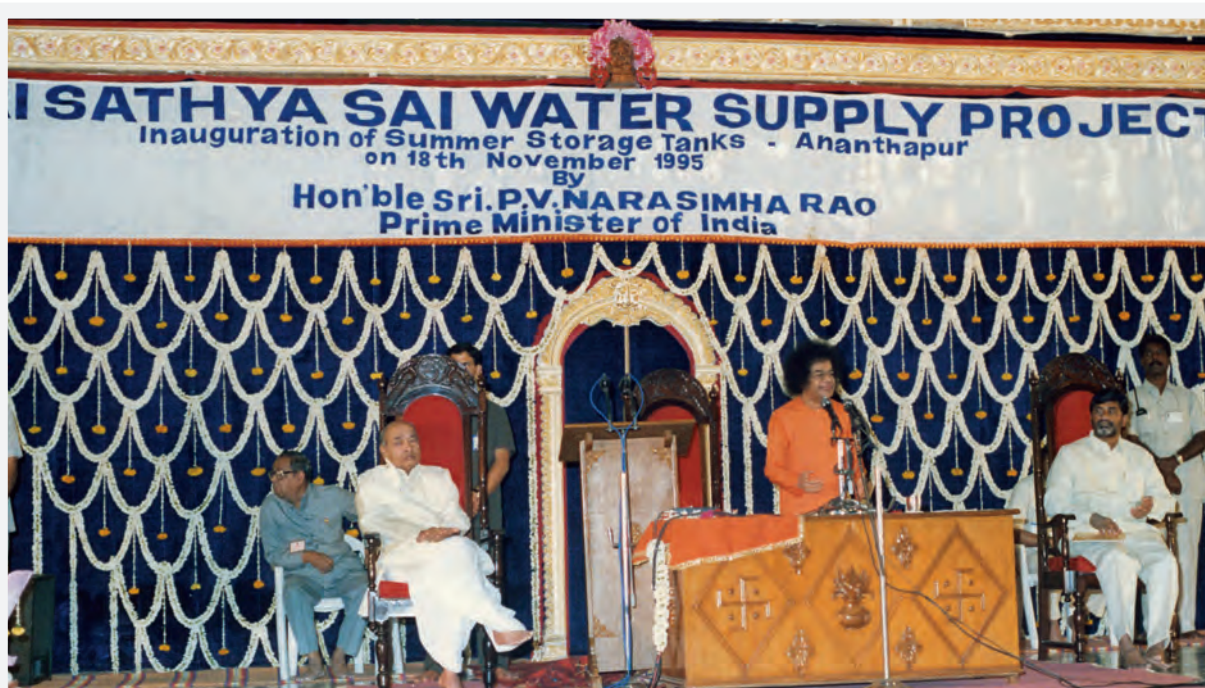
service you have to render. The bliss that you experience should be shared with others.

Do not violate the rules of the organisations. Thereby your love will grow. It is that love that is responsible for your putting up with all inconveniences and discomforts. Develop the spirit of sacrifice.

Realise that true happiness consists in union with God. You need not wish me Happy Birthday. I am always happy. I am a tank of happiness. Draw from it as much as you wish. Drink that water and sanctify your life. It was the thirst for Divine bliss that drew you here. Drink deep and experience that bliss. Live in peace in Prasanthi Nilayam, ignoring the attractions of the outer world. When you return to your respective countries, share your experience with your countrymen.

Enjoy the love I confer on you. It is totally free from self-interest. Receiving selfless love, make your love unselfish.

**Divine Discourse at
the Sixth World Conference of
Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations
on November 21, 1995**



THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

E*mbodiments of the Divine!* Selfless service enables man to elevate himself to lofty heights and blesses him with Divine splendour. Selfless service is also responsible for empowering man's mind and intellect with vitality, and awakening the humanity in man. For attaining progress in any sphere, it is not sufficient to put in dexterity and hard work. Love, compassion, morality, work ethics, understanding and tolerance are also needed to achieve accomplishment. Without these essential qualities, it is impossible to perform selfless service.

The joys and sorrows experienced daily by man, the desires and hatred that he develops through his daily living and the indulgence that his sense organs crave – these are all responsible for the perversions and diversions of his mind.

For ages, they have only fostered the feeling of duality in him – classifying everything into fragments of 'mine and thine'. They have intoxicated him with the feelings that are totally self-centred and bereft of any iota of concern for the world and his surroundings. This feeling of duality has further had a cyclic effect in man, enhancing negative sentiments like desires and hatred.

He who is incapable of thinking beyond himself, his family, his wealth and status, and is steeped in the mire of duality is a selfish man to the core. He will always visualise and be convinced that the truth is untruth and conducts himself by believing that the untruth is true!

Service to Oneself

If such a blinkered person seeks to cleanse his heart of all such grime, then selfless service is the only way for him. It is vital to realise that human life is presented to indulge in selfless service and not in selfish pursuits. Such service is not meant to be performed to obtain name and fame, or to exhibit the status and power of an individual. Service should not be performed to achieve one's own selfish needs and self-interest. Such service cannot even be considered as selfless in nature. Most men do not come forward to participate in selfless service because they are unable to recognise the sanctity and Divinity associated with such activities.

It is wrong to assume that one is doing service because such an act would benefit the society or the nation! One has to believe that selfless service facilitates emancipation to the doer and not anyone else. To the contrary, believing that the service one is doing is benefiting others and not recognising the Divinity associated with selfless service only fosters a feeling of ego in the doer. This ego in turn develops a selfish outlook in him.

That is why it is said: "He who does not have good qualities, spirit of sacrifice, sanctity of purpose and pious intent is as good as a dead person." A life that does not involve itself in selfless service is only an existence in total darkness, without any life.

Service to Society

We owe our existence to the society. All the name, fame, joy, happiness, wealth and prosper-

ity that we enjoy are obtained from the society. Society helps in solving an individual's problems and confers all happiness on him. It helps the flower of humanity to blossom in an individual. It is, therefore, essential that man serves such a society. It is important that man serves nature, through which he learns the highest truth of Divinity.

When someone lifts the handkerchief we drop and gives it to us, we do not forget to express our gratitude and say "thank you." However, we pay no attention to expressing our gratitude to nature and the society that are responsible for giving us so many comforts and facilities. Such a life that fails to express its gratitude is worse than the life of a beast.

Service should be the prime goal of human existence, and its primary task. To the contrary, we are discarding our main goal, placing our faith and vision on transient objectives and, thus, wasting our life.

Service and Sacrifice

Service does not mainly require wealth, riches, grains and other ingredients. Service indulged in by a heart bereft of any love is only going to be a wasteful exercise, despite all the other ingredients. It is, therefore, important that we first fill our hearts with love.

The spark of conscience in us is not wasteful. When associated with ego, it takes a distorted form. When associated with the Spirit, it takes a splendid form. Human life is blessed with the ability to recognise this sacred reality. Sadly, we are discarding this quality in human life. The consequence is we exist as human beings only in the form, but not in the quality.

Every man only yearns to acquire wealth, power, authority and worldly indulgence, but nothing else. He is firmly convinced that wealth alone can give him emancipation and liberation. To the

contrary, it is responsible for destroying humanity in man! Wealth does not foster us and neither does it protect us. Wealth is certainly essential, but the secret is to lead a moral life with wealth that is limited to only the amount required.

It is observed openly today that any act of service by an individual or an organisation is steeped in ego, pomp and show. As long as pomp and show are present, the splendour of the spirit will remain in the dark. Without experiencing the splendour of the spirit, the true human nature will never blossom. Existence as a human being is not possible unless humanity blossoms. A person will exist as a man in human form but will not be able to profess any quality associated with man.

It is, therefore, important to understand that service first requires a spirit of sacrifice. The ego in man is the first distortion that must be sacrificed.

"To discard the evil in our thoughts is itself true sacrifice and the highest form of self-control. Nothing is achieved by merely deserting one's wealth and family and proceeding to the forests!"

Serving God Present in Everyone

What is the reason for the society to degrade itself to such a sorry state today? It is because there are no experienced scholars who can correctly interpret the teachings of our great culture and disseminate the information to the people.

Considering that we are serving some unknown person is a grave error of judgment. Instead, one should entertain the sacred thought that he is serving Divinity embodied as that person. We need to strengthen the feeling that the same Divinity resides in one and all.

Avoid Criticising Others

It is correctly said: "Criticising and slandering others accrues sin, the effect of which will never leave you in this world. Recognise that others are not unknown entities but Divinity itself."

Therefore, never hurt or criticise anyone. Doing so is a sure sign of exhibiting the evil nature of your own self that has been lying suppressed. When you find a single fault with one person, others are instantly ready to point out ten faults within you! He who recognises this truth will never commit the mistake of pointing out faults in others. Those who indulge in projecting themselves as superior and degrade others are only showing the despicable side of their nature.

A human can be termed as man only when such mean mentalities and qualities are driven out of him. Therefore, see the Divine in each and every individual. It is only then that the true fruits of service can be obtained. Never aspire to obtain the fruit or result of your service. Instead, consider it as an opportunity given to you to seek your salvation. A service undertaken with such a sacred feeling and with such a pure intent becomes selfless in nature.

Service Leads to Purity

Embodiments of the Divine! Understand that the service activities you are undertaking today are all planned by you since you aspired to taste the sanctity of such tasks and thus progress in the path of spirituality. But they do not affect Me in any way and are not concerned with Me! Swami always preaches that selfless service should be taken up by all those who seek to wash away the filth covering the subconscious mind, and thus attain a purified state.

Recognise the fact that all service activities achieve only this purpose. Many consider that service gives liberation and thus sanctifies their lives. But this is not so! How can your life be sanctified without first purifying your subconscious mind? You must therefore implant in your hearts the knowledge that all activities performed are meant only to purify the subconscious mind. Understand and believe the truth that human life is given to undertake such sacred activities that purify and sanctify.

Seva with Sincerity

From birth comes activity; from activity comes righteousness; from righteousness comes Divinity – *Janma, Karma, Dharma* and *Brahma*. This is the link between the four – one must emerge from the other.

Some people claim that they cannot indulge in service activities because they are short of time or because they are tied up with their official duties, or that they have other responsibilities. Such excuses are only signs of weakness. It is a misconception to think that service means only activities like hard labour or sweeping the streets or such. Discharging your official duty sincerely and using your authority at work with proper work ethics – these also constitute selfless service!

People who are employed in a position of authority should always ask themselves if they are discharging their duty sincerely, in accordance with the salary that they are being given. Constantly thinking thus is also equivalent to doing selfless service. It is a sad commentary that today no employee is discharging his duty with such sanctity. Everyone yearns to accumulate wealth and get more money, but none pauses to introspect and ask if they are working sincerely in accordance with the salary that they are receiving. It is akin to being a traitor who has betrayed his country.

Whose hard earned money is being given to you as salary? It is your own countrymen's earnings. Hence, when you behave in a way that harms your countrymen, it is against the principles of service. As an example, let us consider a teacher. When he ensures that his best effort is put into teaching and that the students learn well, he is actually doing a service. Similarly, we can consider a trader. It is not essential that he goes into the market and sweeps the streets. If he can ensure that he makes just the required profit and does not exploit the customers that too is an act of service.

One must act in a way that satisfies his own conscience. His conscience must be the judge for his act. You may ask what does Swami like? I will say that one must discharge his duty sincerely. That is service. Do some form of community service to the society whenever you can. Instead of stopping with an individual, true service must span the entire society and then the nation. It is only in such service that one can experience Divinity.

There are no set rules and regulations for service. Wherever you feel some kind of service is required, you may bend your back and indulge in that activity. Do not give place to sundry thoughts during such times. Do not discriminate between the poor and the rich. Whoever he may be, wherever or whatever it may be, if there is a need, then act! Difficulties, sorrows and pain are common for one and all. Therefore it is futile to discuss the situation before doing service.

Serving in the Villages

Importantly, it is being noticed that those residing in our villages are today undergoing lots of hardships. Under such circumstances, it would be advisable to go to the villages, encourage them to participate in selfless service activities by explaining the situation clearly to them, and thus give them succour.

There are some who focus on cleanliness-related activities in the villages as a part of service. How long can you continue to do this? Instead, we may educate the villagers about the benefits of cleanliness and the need to keep dirt away from living areas. It can be clearly explained to them that because of the filth their health will suffer, thus impacting their capacity to earn a livelihood. If it is emphasised to them that health is wealth, then they will themselves put in efforts to keep their surroundings clean. On the contrary, if we make appearances once in a month or two and clean the villages, is it going to be of much use at all? One could instead encourage and educate

the villagers themselves to keep their neighbourhoods clean.

Ceiling on Desires

In the past, a topic was discussed called “Ceiling on Desires.” What is the inner significance of this phrase? Due to the pressure of limitless desires, the mind of man suffers from serious delusions. He is living in a world of fantasy and craze, and is totally alienated from Divinity. It is, therefore, essential that some kind of limit be set on the desires that man has. Thus, the concept of “Ceiling on Desires” came into being.

There are also people who are spendthrifts and waste their money. It was our wish that such wealth, instead of being frittered away, could be spent for the poor, needy and destitute. However, people have misunderstood the concept of ceiling on desires. They think it is sufficient to donate some amount for such charity whilst they continue to have limitless desires.

The correct process is to first reduce our own desires. As long as we infuse excessive desires of the world into ourselves, peace will continue to evade us. That way, man only binds himself more and more to the world. Breaking free from these bonds will require man to reduce his desires and limit them to only those that are essential.

Do Not Waste Food

How does one reduce his desires? Eat only to the extent you need to. If you serve yourself large portions of food out of selfishness, you will only end up with the sin of wasting food. The wasted food could have easily been served to another person who needed it. Hence, the first principle is “Do not waste.” Food is God, life is God. It is from food that man gets life that sustains his body and mind. The gross part of the food taken gets excreted as stool. The molecular part of the food goes to the blood. The subtle part of the food goes to the mind. It can, therefore, be concluded that man’s mind is shaped by what he eats. The



food that is being consumed today is primarily responsible for the demonic nature of man.

There is no compassion, mercy, tolerance and love. Instead hatred, jealousy, attachment and other evil qualities have taken their place. The responsibility for this lies with the food that we eat. Therefore, the food that is consumed should be pure and sacred. Such food fosters good feelings in man. The gross part of the water that we drink is excreted as urine. The subtle part is transformed into the spark of life. It is, therefore, clear that food and water are directly responsible for making man reach the state of Divine. It is said that food is God. Hence, if you waste food, it amounts to wasting God. Ensure that you eat pure food and in limited quantities only.

Do Not Waste Money

The second quantity is WEALTH. Indians have always considered wealth to be the very embodiment of goddess Lakshmi. Elders have, therefore, advised that wealth must never be misused since it would foster bad thoughts and intentions. It is for this reason that it is said: "Do not waste money. Misuse of money is evil." Squandering away money only makes man take the wrong path.

Do Not Waste Time

The third essential and important quantity is TIME. Time should never be wasted. Time should always be well spent since everything revolves around time. It is for this reason that the ancient *Vedas* have extolled God as time, the one beyond time, the controller of time, the embodiment of

time, etc. Time has been equated with God. Man's life and death are governed by time; his growth in between the two extremes of life and death is also dependent on time.

Wasting time, therefore, amounts to wasting God. Do not indulge in needless gossip – talk only to the extent required. Do not defile time by using it to vilify others. Not indulging in such slanders and gossip is itself the main requirement of “Do not waste time.”

Do Not Waste Energy

The fourth quantity is ENERGY or STRENGTH. Energy here refers to physical, mental and spiritual strength. All three should not be wasted. How does this energy get wasted? Seeing evil, hearing evil, speaking evil, thinking evil and doing evil – these five contribute to slackening our energy. Using these five properly contributes to enhancing our energy and making us realise Divinity. That is why it is said:

*See no evil, see what is good;
Hear no evil, hear what is good;
Speak no evil, speak what is good;
Think no evil, think what is good;
Do no evil, do what is good;
This is the way to GOD.*

Do Not Waste Energy on Sensual Pleasures

When our entire energy is draining away in wasteful expenditure, it impacts our memory and intellect. It also affects our discrimination. This is the reason why we find people totally bereft of any semblance of discrimination today. When discrimination is thus affected, how can man be expected to discharge his actions properly?

Let us consider a radio as an example. We are tuning it to some station and listening to news. Whatever be the volume level you use, as long as the radio is on, some units of electrical power will certainly be consumed. Our human body is

also like a radio. Whether you think or talk, some energy from inside you is surely going to be consumed. Until you go to sleep, your mind has some thought process going on in it. Why not ensure that the thoughts are good and sacred? This ensures that the energy consumed is for a good cause. In this way, whatever be the thought you are thinking, whatever be the activity you are doing, we can ensure the proper use of energy.

In this way, “Ceiling on Desires” points to the proper use and limiting of the four important quantities of food, wealth, time, and energy. These are essential for those who wish to enter into service.

Service Is More Important Than Money

However, today, such a ceiling is not visible. People dodge the main issue of limiting their desires and instead donate some token amount for the activities taken up by Sathya Sai Organisations. Money was never desired by Sathya Sai Organisations. The main agenda of our organisation is to ensure that people stand as ideals for others to emulate. We should change our mind set gradually to be able to achieve this. Sathya Sai Organisations should work for this with unity, without any discrimination of caste, creed or nationality.

Inculcate Virtues in Life

Embodiments of Divinity! Morality and ethics are more important than our caste or creed. Fostering love should be of higher priority than religion. Hankering after religion without first developing a feeling of love will only succeed in distorting the mind of man. There is only one religion, and that is the religion of mankind. Love is the highest morality that one needs to adopt. One should foster love and take morality and ethics as ideals of life, and then make efforts to guide his fellow men towards the right direction.

Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara

Since time immemorial, India had always been the teacher who propagated truth and righteousness to the world. This is the reason why the

dictum “Speak the truth, practise righteousness” reverberates through every corner of this country. Our countrymen should realise that the greatest welfare of the country is ensured when such sacred virtues, like truth and righteousness, are propagated with tolerance and understanding.

One should expand his heart with such sacred virtues. Hankering after scientific knowledge without focusing on wisdom is certain to be of no use. That is why it is better to have one person with a kind heart than a hundred intellectuals. This single person with a good heart can bring about a far greater change for the better in the world.

Being in the Sai Organisation, Purify Your Hearts

Man is shaped by his mind. Hence, when the mind is pure and influenced by good ideals, man too becomes worthy of his humanity. Everyone should aspire to experience that humanity. One may possess sense organs that are sharp, alert and fully developed. His mind may be of the highest degree of intellectual achievement. He may also be blessed with good wisdom. Along with all these, it is also important to aspire for spiritual awakening. Without spiritual awakening within, the senses, intellect and wisdom are sure to transform into artificial entities only. As a consequence, one will lead his life like an automaton.

Our life is not a machine, it reverberates with the sacredness of Divinity. Sathya Sai Organisations have been established to enable man to rediscover the path to his Divinity. Every member of this organisation is encouraged to enter into service activities for his fellow man as per his own potential and capabilities. Do not enter the organisation seeking fame, pomp and show. Never give scope for ego to infuse into the organisation. Just accept your role as a servant of the Divine, engaged in Divine activities. You are not the master. Remember that unless you are a servant first, you cannot be a master. Each member of

the organisation should stand like the backbone to the organisation.

Office Bearers Should Be Humble

Embodiments of Love! It is important for those who are office bearers of the organisation to always tread the right path. If they take to wrongdoing, it would influence all others to follow suit. Hence, if the organisation aims at emancipating the world, then the office bearers and the members of the organisation have to first be ideal in their outlook and selfless in their approach. Never give scope for selfishness and self-interest to creep into the service activities. Pomp and show must not even be encouraged to approach anywhere near. These two qualities have infused into every aspect of our lives and have become a fashion to be imbibed. They will only succeed in harming the nation but are of no use whatsoever.

Those who wish to be of constructive help to the nation should involve themselves only with selfless service. Pomp and show are destructive influences on the country. Our Sathya Sai Organisations should cultivate love by being selfless and without any trace of selfishness, self-interest, pomp or show. They should be pure in nature and encourage the spirit of sacrifice thus.

We should put into practice tolerance and understanding. These are the attributes of a person who genuinely wishes to indulge in service activities. One should not seek to use the power of authority on others. All are equally empowered. It is only the task distribution that puts us at different levels. One should limit oneself to only supervising the work aspect of those whom he is responsible for.

Ideals of Sai Organisation

Love does not depend on or give any authority. Our discipline should be associated with love. None of the procedures laid down in our organisation should be rigid and enforced like in the military! The only “force” to be used here should

be that of love. Speak with love. If a fault is detected, it should be addressed and corrected with love. Love should play the dominant role in everything. That is why it is said:

Start the day with love

Spend the day with love

Fill the day with love

End the day with love

This is the way to God.

Love should be in all aspects of our life. Love is God, and God is omnipresent. You are all embodiments of Love! You should, therefore, live in love and serve with love. Enjoy with love. You must ultimately merge with love. This is the ultimate goal of service with love.

Sathya Sai Organisations must not involve themselves with other issues; they must focus only on love and connect with the hearts of others through love. They should not seek wealth or authority, and should seek to progress only through love. I do not desire temples or places of worship; I do not wish for rituals and worship. Our actions should be our ritual and our service should be our worship.

Seeking to mobilise and collect funds for building temples or other service activities is a despicable act that must never be encouraged in our organisation. I have often cautioned you to keep the organisation away from wealth and money. Instead, we should focus on associating ourselves with good ethics and behaviour. It is unfortunate that some in the organisation are discounting this caution and resorting to collection of money, thus opening themselves to the sins of connections and relationships. There are others who falsely claim that Swami has blessed them with special powers and thus collect money! There is nothing more demonic in quality than this kind of behaviour.

You have all observed that for all these years I have never interfered with the activities of any person or persons. However, these people are using Sai's name to indulge in such shameful acts and, thus, defaming the name of Sai. They have converted the sacred purpose of the organisation into a business. In retrospect, it is indeed a business – but what kind of business? It is a business where only love has to be given and taken in return!

It is sad to note that, despite my repeated counselling, some in the organisation defile this sanctity, accumulate wealth in the name of the organisation and show favouritism by helping some and putting down others. Such behaviour is not expected. It is not that our organisation is filled with poor people – there are several rich people as well. Would it not be better for such people to volunteer and come forward from within the organisation itself to contribute to the service activity, instead of mobilising funds from others?

Why should these rich people in the organisation resort to the disgraceful act of begging for funds? Are they not satisfied with what they have? Do not indulge in such perverse ways to make money. It will only bring the Sathya Sai Organisations a bad name. My message to you all is this – do not bring a bad name to the Sathya Sai Organisations. Apart from this, I am not involved with the organisations in any way. To me everyone is a devotee and all can join the organisation.

In the Sathya Sai Organisations, there must be no discrimination between members and office bearers. This organisation has been established solely for the devotees and with no other purpose or intent. Every individual has equal authority in this organisation – and that authority is to work and enhance his humanity and uncover his true nature. Human values should be enhanced and fostered, and not the worldly values and vices. Rest assured that wherever funds are collected in the name of service activities, rituals and

prayers, it cannot have any relation to the Sathya Sai Organisations.

It is sad to see that several devotees indulge in this business of collecting money. There is nothing wrong if a few people with the required means get together and decide to undertake some service activity. But do not go from door to door and solicit donations. Sai only desires the welfare of the entire world. Everyone should be happy; everyone should foster human values in themselves. Every man should be able to help the other. This feeling of unity and tolerance should be developed within us. That is the real worth of taking a human birth and is the meaning of the statement "Human life is the most difficult to obtain among all."

Be Independent

Embodiments of Divinity! All of you must resolve that Sathya Sai Organisations must not have anything to do with wealth and money. Members of the organisation can plan among themselves and execute service activities. Understand that there are only two important aspects associated with our organisation. Do not have anything to do with wealth and do not have anything to do with the government. Let us do whatever we can as per our own capacity.

The government is anyway undertaking its own welfare schemes. Let them continue to do it. We should not use their name and resources and un-

dertake those activities already under consideration and execution by them. We will do what we can with our own resources and might.

Do whatever little you can in service. You will then see that the government will itself come forward to help us. But we should never go to seek their help for our service activities. Resources will come in from any direction because there are always good people who appreciate the good work done by us. If you seek the help of the government, a new official on transfer may not help or support us like the previous official. Then what happens to the service activity we have undertaken by depending on the government's help?

Hence, we should depend on our own strength and resources. Never depend on someone else's strength to discharge your service. That is true reliance on the strength of your own spirit. Place full confidence in the strength of the spirit since that is the true strength – the rest are all false sources only.

With this confidence, involve yourself in service and put the world on the right path. You will then see the real resplendent form of India. Do not hanker after name and fame. Seek love instead. Know that this is the true mission and task of Sathya Sai Organisations.

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10th  World CONFERENCE
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