

Where There Is Purity, There Is Divinity

(Discourse delivered on the occasion of Dasara Celebrations – October 11, 2002)

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

“Those who have the spirit of sacrifice without any trace of body attachment or infatuation are truly our Gurus then and now. The word of Sai is verily the truth.”

Embodiments of love!

God pervades every cell and atom of the universe spreading His divine effulgence everywhere. The Upanishads declared that God is all-pervasive and all that one sees is only the manifestation of divinity. Unfortunately, man today is not making any attempt to understand and experience the teachings of Upanishads and that of ancient sages and seers. Though the Upanishads have revealed the all pervasiveness of Divinity in the simplest manner, it is rather surprising that man is not making any effort to understand the same. A number of examples can be given to prove the existence of Divinity. Who is responsible for the sweetness in sugarcane? Who has made the chillies hot and spicy? Every object in this world has a unique attribute which proves the existence of divinity as its very life principle. Who is the cause for the bitterness in Neem and fragrance in flowers? It is the manifestation and expression of Divinity. Any number of examples can be given which will help you to understand the existence of Divinity. People say fragrance is the natural quality of a flower and do not enquire further. Who is responsible for this natural quality? You feel thrilled when you look at a mountain. Boundless joy flows through you when you see a stream in full flow. You feel ecstatic watching a lush green forest. Is it just the law of nature or the mystery

of God? It is not merely the law of nature but the mysterious Manifestation of God in the form of nature. How can one explain the presence of bird inside an egg? All these are pointers to Divinity. You need undertake any particular *Sadhana* in order to visualize Divinity. You can experience Him in each atom and each cell of the creation.

Man is born to parents. Everyone including you and Me are born out of mother's womb. But, people have forgotten the truth that God is the Mother of all. God knows the desires and feelings of man but man cannot understand what God expects from him. None can understand God's Will. Parents can understand the feelings of the child. Mother knows the likes and dislikes of her child. In the same manner, the child can understand the likes and dislikes of the mother. But a devotee cannot understand the Will of God, what is acceptable to Him and what is not. How can one, who cannot understand his fellowmen, understand God? Man's mind is limited, whereas Divinity is expansive and transcendental. This being so, how can man understand God in His fullness? Hence, it is not easy to please God and earn His grace. Only when you understand the divine principle fully well would you have worshipped God in the true sense. How can one understand the divine principle which is *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana*

Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam (attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). Can anyone comprehend the mystery behind the existence of the bird in an egg? How has the sugarcane acquired sweetness? It is not possible to understand these subtleties. The sweetness of sugarcane, the hot taste of chilli, the sour taste of tamarind, the bitter taste of neem ... all these are the expressions of God. God has created these things to make us understand His existence. The mighty mountains, the beautiful rivers and the raging waves of ocean ... all these speak of the mystery, grandeur and beauty of God. It is impossible to describe the splendor of God and to comprehend His powers. But man tries to estimate the infinite Divine power with his finite mind and limited capacity.

Embodiments of Love! Divinity can neither be expressed in words nor can it be gauged by the mind. *Yatho Vacho Nivarthante Aprapya Manasa Saha* (whence the words along with the mind rebound in futility without comprehending Divinity). People attempt to describe God based on their own finite understanding. Only Himself and none else knows God's plans, His mysterious nature and ways. When your mind is unable to comprehend even trivial matters, how can it estimate the infinite Divine principle? Hence, do not try to understand the ways of the Divine. Instead purify your heart and try to know your true nature. The same is stated in Vedanta: "Know Thyself". Modern students argue foolishly, "Where is the need to know, 'who I am', when I am already aware of it?"

They think that knowing their names, nativity, profession, nationality, etc., amounts to knowing themselves. They say, "I am so and so, I belong to such and such a place. I do such and such job, etc." These answers relate to the body and not to the real Self. These are born out of body attachment and not out of awareness of the Self. The *vedantic* statement "Know Thyself" does not mean knowing about your physical body - height, weight, complexion, etc. You are not merely an individual (*vyashti*). Your true Identity corresponds to *samashti* (society). The same 'I' exists in you as well as in society. *Sarvata Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Sruthimalloke Sarva-mavruthya Thishthati* (With hands, feet, eyes, heads, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). The *Atmic* principle is all-pervasive and is uniformly present in all beings. There may be difference based on names, forms and educational qualifications, but the *Atma* is one and the same in everyone. You have to make efforts to visualize and experience this oneness.

Embodiments of Love! Instead of visualizing the unity in diversity, man is doing the opposite. The essence of Vedanta lies in seeing unity in diversity. Vedanta is the quintessence of the Upanishads. What is the inner meaning of the term Upanishad? 'Upa' - near, 'ni' - down and 'shad' - sit. It means that you should sit down at the feet of the master and listen to his teachings. Even in schools, the teacher is seated on a higher pedestal and the students sit down close to him. The Upanishads contain many lofty ideals and sacred inner meanings. The truth

the Upanishads teach is embodied in the principle of the *Atma*.

The *Atma* is formless and steady. It has no feet, but moves about everywhere. It has no ears but can hear everything. It is present everywhere, but none can grasp it. Everything is under its control. This is the mysterious and magnificent power of *Atma*.

When you respect and love an individual, he will respect you and love you in turn. But when you respect and love everyone, God Himself will respect you and love you. You should make efforts to become recipients of God's love.

The divine principle of *Atma* present in humanity is all-encompassing. Its vastness is beyond any description or estimation. However, physical forms can be considered as pointers to it. When someone asks you, "Sir, have you seen Anil Kumar in Prasanthi Nilayam?", you say, "Yes, I have seen him. He wears a good suit, speaks good English, is brown-complexioned, talks in a humorous manner." You are able to recognize only his physical features and behavior. But there are many more things in him which you cannot see. Can you recognize the feelings he has in his mind? It is impossible.

You are able to see only the physical body and the external behaviour. But you are not able to visualise the eternal flow of bliss within. All types of power are latent in man. You may be highly educated, but from where did you acquire your education? You have not acquired it from outside. It has originated from the Self.

Non-dualism is the essence of Vedanta. *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* (Perception of, non-duality is the supreme wisdom). Not all can have the experience of non-dualism. Man is immersed in dualism. Dual mind is the root cause of unsteadiness. A man with dual mind is half-blind. How can such a person understand the sacred teachings of Vedanta? The teachings that are found in Vedanta are not found in any other text. Each verse in Vedanta is a repository of supreme bliss. Even if you were to use the ocean water as the ink, it will not be sufficient to describe the greatness of these verses in full. Each *sloka* is pregnant with such profound meaning. Man is not making any attempt to understand these *slokas*. As a result, he is being immersed in *shoka* (sorrow).

Sage Valmiki composed the great epic Ramayana, the inner significance of which could not be understood by all. G.G. Krishna was a great astrologer and a saint. He said that, as he read the Ramayana repeatedly, he was able to get new insights into the sacred epic. He was curious to know how Sage Valmiki described the mysterious birth of Sita. It is mentioned in the Ramayana that King Janaka found her while he was plowing the field for the performance of a *Yajna*. But, nothing is mentioned as to how she was born. He called her *Bhujaatha*, meaning, one born out of Mother Earth.

King Janaka had the *Siva Dhanus* (bow of Lord Siva) in his palace. It was so heavy that no ordinary mortal could lift it. When Sita was young, one day she was enjoying a game of ball with other girls. It so happened that the ball rolled over and went under the case in

which Siva's bow was kept. All the girls tried their might to move the bow aside, but in vain. Other strong men were called and they used all their strength to move the bow, but it did not budge an inch. King Janaka was watching all this from the balcony with curiosity. But, Sita did not notice her father. After some time, she smilingly asked everybody to move aside and casually pulled the bow with her left hand and retrieved the ball. King Janaka was astonished at Sita's mighty power. He thought, "It is because of merits done in many past lives that I could have Sita as my daughter." He decided that he would give her in marriage only to the one who could lift Lord Siva's bow. He performed a grand *Yajna* and invited many kings to try their hand at lifting Lord Siva's bow and win Sita's hand. Many kings and princes assembled in King Janaka's court. The bow was so heavy that hundreds of elephants were required to carry it to the place of contest. People wondered as to how anybody could lift such a heavy bow. Kings, one after the other, tried to lift the bow, but miserably failed in their attempts. Then came Ravana. His very appearance instilled fear in the minds of people. They felt that Ravana was no match to Sita, the embodiment of all beauty. Sita's mother Sunayana was praying fervently to Lord Siva to see that Ravana failed in his attempt to lift the bow. Meanwhile, Ravana used all his might to lift the bow, and in the process, lost his balance and fell down. He got trapped under the bow and could not extricate himself. He felt humiliated in the open court. At the instance of Viswamitra, Rama walked slowly and majestically towards the bow. Lakshmana was sure that Rama

could lift the bow. People were stricken with awe, watching the splendor and gait of Rama. They felt He was a perfect match to Sita. Sunayana also had the same feeling. But she was anxious whether the young Rama would be able to lift the mighty bow and win the hand of Sita. As people watched with amazement, Rama effortlessly lifted the bow with his left hand, even as Sita had done it with her left hand earlier. As Rama bent the bow to string it, it broke with a deafening sound. The musicians with their various instruments burst into song. King Janaka's joy knew no bounds. He at once came towards Rama along with his daughter Sita, who was holding a garland in her hand. He said, "Rama, I had made a promise that Sita would be given in marriage to the one who lifted the bow of Lord Siva. I want to give my daughter to you and keep up my promise." But Rama was not willing to accept the marriage proposal without the permission of His parents. He was the paragon of all virtues. "*Sarve Loka Hithe Rathah* (one engaged in the welfare of all). *Sarve Jnanopasampannah* (one who is endowed with all wisdom). *Sarve Samudhitha Gunaihi* (one replete with all praiseworthy virtues)". Rama embodied these ideals. When Janaka brought Sita to Him, He did not even look at her for He considered it improper to look at her before marriage. The conduct of modern youth stands in stark contrast to the exemplary behavior of Rama. They are besides themselves at the thought of marriage. The question of their seeking the permission of their parents does not even arise in their minds. Viswamitra also tried to persuade Rama to accept the marriage proposal. But Rama was firm in His

resolve. He said, “I have to follow *Dharma*, and not the wishes of individuals. However, I respect everybody.”

After three days, King Dasaratha along with his entire family, friends and relatives arrived in Mithila. It is only after obtaining His father’s permission that Rama agreed to the wedding. But, later on, when His father Dasaratha and preceptor Vasishtha urged Him to ascend the throne, He did not pay heed to their words. He went to forest against their wishes. His only intention was to uphold the promise made by His father. He did not want to put His father’s name to disrepute. Hence, He sacrificed the Kingdom and all comforts, and left for the forest.

The marriage ceremony was in progress. As part of the ritual, a curtain was placed between the bride and groom. As long as it was there, they were not supposed to look at each other. But, Sita and Rama, being highly virtuous, did not look at each other even after the curtain was removed. Both were looking down. Then Viswamitra in a lighter vein said, “Oh Rama! Sita is the daughter of Mother Earth. Why don’t You look at her, instead of looking at Mother Earth?” Rama had not seen Sita till then. As He had not tied the *Mangalasutra* till then, He felt it was a sin to look at her. He considered all women to be His mothers. One should try to emulate such exemplary behavior. In a family, both husband and wife should lead a virtuous life. Even if one of them is wanting in virtues, they cannot enjoy peace and happiness.

The wedding took place. It was now time for the garlanding ceremony. Sita waited with the garland in her hands. She, being short in stature, could not garland Rama, who was tall and broad-shouldered. Moments passed but Rama would not bend His head! He did not want to bend His head before a woman in order to protect His own honor. He looked at Lakshmana and made an almost imperceptible gesture. The four brothers were always sharp and alert. This was depicted in Thyagaraja’s song.

*“But for their devotion to Rama,
Would a monkey cross the ocean?
Would the goddess Lakshmi worship You?
Would Lakshmana willingly serve You?
Would the highly intelligent Bharata
offer his prostrations to You?
Oh! How great indeed is the power of
devotion to Lord Rama’s strength”*

Lakshmana was the incarnation of Adishesha - the heavenly serpent that carried the entire world on its hood. He understood that Rama wanted him to raise the portion of earth where Sita was standing. He indicated that if Sita was raised, so would everyone else! Lakshmana hit upon an idea. All of a sudden, he fell at Rama’s feet and would not get up. Rama was forced to bend down and raise Lakshmana from His feet. Sita was highly intelligent. Grabbing this chance, she at once placed her garland on Rama’s neck. There should be such an understanding between husband and wife.

If you aspire to attain God, you have to make efforts to acquire the necessary eligibility. That is true spirituality. That is the essence of the Upanishads. God submits Himself to those who understand the essence of the Upani-

shads and act accordingly. Who is God? What does He look like? Do not limit Him to a name and a form like Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana etc. In fact, He has no specific name and form. He is the embodiment of Energy. These Navaratri celebrations are meant to worship God in the form of energy. One should not pray for temporary results. Instead, one should pray for Divine grace with pure, steady and selfless devotion. Once you have Divine grace, you can achieve anything.

Embodiments of Love! Nobody can understand the efficacy of the *Mantras* that the *Rithwiks* chant during the performance of the *Yajna*. These brahmins are pure-hearted. I want to tell you a small example. At 12 o' clock in the noon, the brahmins assembled for lunch here. But the person who was doing the *Sahasra Lingarchana* did not get up from his place as he had not completed the ritual. Similarly, the person who was reading the Bhagavata and the four Brahmins who were doing *Veda Parayanam* did not get up from their seats till they completed their tasks. The person who does *Sahasra Lingarchana* did not get up till 2'o clock in the afternoon. It is because of their dedication and devotion that the *Mantras* they chant assume greater significance. Even if you do not understand their meanings, you will derive immense benefit by listening to

them. This listening will ultimately take you to liberation. *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnu-smaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (Self-surrender). So long as you do not develop *Sneham* with God, you will not be able to attain the stage of *Atmanivedanam*. The first step to self-surrender is *Sravanam*.

The *Yajna* that we are performing now is meant for *Loka Kalyanam* (good of the world). Do not think that we are performing the *Yajna* just because people are performing *Yajnas* elsewhere. This *Yajna* is being performed with total spirit of sacrifice. We have no desires or expectations. Our only desire is that everyone should be happy. People perform *Yajnas* and *Yagas* to overcome famine and drought situations. But I don't take such things into consideration. I do not give scope for such constricted vision. Famine, drought, etc., come and go. Whatever you do should confer everlasting happiness on all. It should help you to attain Divine grace.

Tomorrow, I shall explain the teachings of Upanishads and their inner meanings.

