25. I will be closer to Devotees

ON THE occasion of Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday, He began His discourse with a poem in which He declared His *avataric* advent as the continuation of all the earlier *avatars* from Narasimha to Sri Krishna.

He alone is a real man
Whose thought, words and deeds
Are in perfect harmony.
How can he be a genuine man
When his mind is divorced from speech and deed
And all three are not in harmony?
If birth, old age and death don't happen,
If desires don't fail and gain isn't lost
If the world isn't the fleeting flow it is,
How could man have affection, compassion, love?

The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save Prahlada, the Supreme Person came;
The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save the elephant, the Lotus-eyed came;

The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save the poor Kuchela the Lord of Veda came;

The attributes and quashes which were assumed
When, to save the boy, Dhruva, He came from Heaven;
Now, with all the attributes, all the qualities has come,
He whom the gods adore, the Refuge of the Rejected.
The Lord of all the worlds, the Lord of Infinite Glory,
As all Existence, as all Knowledge and
All Bliss in one Form embodied
As Puttaparthi Sathya Sai, the Over-lord of all that Is.

God is known as Easwara, since He is the source and store of prosperity and power. He is known as Sankara, for He is the embodiment of sanctity and auspiciousness. God has no birth or death. He has no wants, no desires. There is no single thing which He lacks and longs to acquire. But, man ignores God who is the very basis of his life and refuses to recognize things as mere things. His mind has become a bundle of desires.

Direct Kama **towards spiritual progress**

In *Vedantic* parlance, this striving and yearning, this desire which prompts men, is called Kama When the spirit of inquiry gets sharper and deeper, it leads man beyond realms of the senses and even the feeble faculty of reason, beyond the stars and space, and helps him to dive into the boundless ocean of Bliss. Instead, if *Kama* gets bogged down in the distracting objective world, it plunges man into misery. When Kama is directed towards spiritual progress, it rewards man, filling his heart with Divine Delight. For, the Divine is free from mental modes or physical

forms; It has no likes or dislikes; It is not bound by time or space. It is ever pure, ever conscious; It is free from the blemish of duality. Only persons endowed with *Satwa guna* (unruffled serenity) can have a Vision of the Divine *(Saakshaathkara),* and achieve the heroic victory.

In money, there is no evil. In scholarship, there is no evil. In knowledge and intelligence, there is no evil. But evil arises from the activities which man carries on with their help. Pure water has no colour. Poured into a black bottle, it appears black. Poured into a red bottle, it appears red. The water does not become red or black; the colour is due to what we have done to it.

When money, scholarship, cleverness and intelligence are possessed by persons in whom Rajas (passion, emotion, extrovert qualites) predominates, they promote hatred, ambition and lust. When possessed by persons in whom Tomas (sloth, dullness, conceit) predominates, they promote miserliness, greed and envy. When possessed by persons in whom *Satwa (*equanimity, balance, putty) predominates, they promote love, compassion, urge to serve, the unity of all mankind and World Peace.

The sublimation of character into the stage of Satwa is the duty which everyone owes himself. This is the path; this is the real goal. You must try ceaselessly to tread the path and reach the goal.

Man's *Dharma* and duty to be fulfilled

God is the sole sustainer of human life--the basis, the structure, the consummation. Money cannot help man to cultivate godliness and merge in God, the source. Scholarship too is equally powerless. The Upanishad proclaims that release from death can be achieved neither through entanglement in works, nor through one's progeny, nor through the accumulation of riches. It can be gained only through Thyaga (acts of renunciation, detachment, unconcern, giving up). It is a pity that this warning is not heeded and man is engaged in mere grabbing and grasping. As a result he suffers from more and more bonds that get tighter and tighter.

The best means to escape from this fate is to take refuge in the company of the good and godly, and journey along their beneficial path. This is the valid vesture (*Dharma)* that can protect man. One must take delight in wearing it and becoming worthy of it. Dharma also indicates the unchanging genuine nature of every entity--its essential characteristic.

Man has to recognise his divine core

Consider a car, for example. Its shape is not its is-ness. It needs steering wheel and ball-bearings, tyres, lights and wires. These, however, do not constitute the *Dharma* of the car. Its *Dharma* is to transport the person safe and swift to his destination. The *Dharma* of man is to transport himself safe and swift to his destination, namely, the Divine. That duty has to be fulfilled. That destiny has to be realized. All the rest--attainments and achievements--are of secondary value, complementary, at best, to the main purpose. One must pursue this *Dharma* without faltering or failing in that duty. Of what avail is the length of years spent in living, if man is unaware of the meaning and purpose of life? It is not enough if one passes off as a human person and parades oneself as a good specimen of the race. He has to be judged on the basis of the motives of his actions and the ideals he follows. He has to recognize his divine core, and attempt to unfold it in thought, word and deed.

Man cannot exist without God sustaining him. God too needs man in order to announce Himself. With no son, how can the father announce Himself as such? The word Nara (man) implies the

concept of Narayana (God). Man creates God in his own image by the intensity of Sadhana and God creates man in His image by willing it to happen.

Most people are too weak to concede of Godhead, too weak in intellect and imagination. Egoism freezes flowing water into hard blocks of ice, but when the Sun of wisdom shines, they are softened and resume their real nature. Egoism prevents Sadhana and promotes intransigence and ignorance. Intelligence gets perverted and the man becomes a fool. You may succeed in squeezing oil from sand or count the horns of rabbits, but you can never discover any notable virtue in such fools. Their greatest defect is their ingratitude to providence.

My Love--the Greatest Treasure

Among the 1008 Names for the Sun, which the scriptures recommend for use during solar worship, are found four very meaningful names--the destroyer of darkness (external and internal), the dispeller of fog (hesitation, doubt etc.), the destroyer of the enemy (darkness dare not face the Sun) and the destroyer of the ungrateful (ingratitude is the consequence of wrong outlook, distorted vision). The Sun is the light that makes the eyes see. So, the Sun punishes the ungrateful, by keeping away from such (that is to say, by rendering them blind). The good they recede from the world is fast forgotten by the ungrateful; their hearts are rock on which it does not produce any impression. The grateful person will treasure as a gift even the smallest service, but, the ungrateful forgets the gift, however valuable, and even renders disservice to the giver.

It is the nature of the world that every person has to encounter some one opponent or enemy. Sai alone does not find even a single enemy in the whole world. Some people, following their own fantasy, may assume that I dislike them. But, in my view, there is no one I do not love. All are dear to me. Let me tell you that no one else in the world today has as much wealth, as much property, as much treasure as I have, not even the World Bank, not even the richest emperors and kings.

What is that wealth, that property, that treasure? It is my selfless, universal Love. That uniquely potent Love has kept this body radiant and young. As the world goes, at the age of 60, the physique becomes weak and the mind loses its alertness. But, I skip along as fresh and active as ever. I see and hear, I play and sing as bright and busy as a youth of sixteen. This sacred nature I have assumed will not allow physical or other weakness to hinder me.

"Being with Me earns higher respect"

Some people are misled by happenings that do not affect my Reality or my Purpose. They observe, with their feeble understanding, that a few have left my presence and they clamour that thereby, my works are bound to be affected! Those who have left have done so, not because they do not like me, but because they did not get from me what they desired. Or, they could not receive here the status and respect available in the outer world. When they are questioned, they invent other reasons to explain their conduct. They do not realize that being with me and shaping their lives under my direction can be the source of even higher status and respect. I am glad, however, that they are contented with their lot, though they impute faults in me to buttress their action. That, too, is an act of service, a boon from which they draw 'benefits'. Does the ocean depend on rivers for its existence or do rivers depend on the ocean for the rains that feed them? My status and success are based on my own will, my goodness, my love. They do not grow or decline, when a few stay or depart. They alone are the beneficiaries or losers.

There was a garden of grapevine, with thick bunches of ripe fruit. A fox which was passing by was delighted at the prospect of eating the juicy grapes. But, though it leaped high many times, it could not reach a single cluster. It was so exhausted that it dragged itself slowly away. A crow saw its plight. It cawed a question: "Brother Fox! Have you eaten grapes a stomach full?" The fox replied, "Disgusting! I didn't eat a single one. They are awfully sour." This is the explanation for their leaving the Presence.

They have the same foxy cleverness. They couldn't reach up to the standard set by Sai and so, they invent excuses.

The Sai Realty will be clear to all

No one, in fact, has the right or reason to point a finger at any blot in me. My total selflessness, my compassionate heart full of eagerness to serve and save, my resolve to establish peace and prosperity, my determination to shower *Ananda* on the world---these are being manifested more and more from day to day, and I am at all times in immeasurable Ananda. I am not affected by anxiety even for a moment. Consider, is there anyone in this world who can announce this? It is sheer ignorance that induces people to comment otherwise. When they experience my Love and witness the unfolding of my mission, the comments will cease, and the Reality that Sai is, will be clear to them. That knowledge can bear fruit by transforming your human-ness into Divinity, into Sai. *"Brahma Vid Brahmaiva Bhavathi"* (The Knower of *Brahmam* becomes *Brahmam* itself).

Keep a ceiling on desires

This project of transformation involves consideration of the problems that afflict the individual, the society, the nation and mankind. The rules and regulations laid down by Government cannot cure certain deep-rooted defects. So, the Sai Organization was commissioned to promote among the members a ceiling on desires. People now yield, on account of weakness of will, to the temptations that clamour for their money. The richer they are, the more wasteful are the ways in which they spend them. Even a struggling middle class family attempts to adopt the spending habits of the reckless rich and suffers min. A worker drawing ten rupees as daily wages spends two rupees on drink, three on the Cinema and two more on some spree or the other, forcing his family to starve.

The message of placing a ceiling on desires and utilizing the money thus saved into a fund was to use the money for social service among the villages, for the poor and the illiterate.

But, the underlying principle was generally neglected. What was offered to the fund was not savings derived by desisting from desires. The old, deleterious habits were not given up. Smoking, drinking, etc., continue undiminished. The object of the programme was to put a brake on harmful desires and not the collection of money.

The power of Sai Sankalpa

Of course, money is an essential requisite and those who have assumed responsibility for service projects do need it. Six thousand villages have been adopted by the units of the organization and facilities for education and medicine are provided therein, besides roads and wells. When I decide on a project, the wherewithal for accomplishing has to be spontaneously available without any fund raising campaign. My will has the power to concretize my plan. I willed that a College must rise in Puttaparthi; the Rajmatha of Nawanagar built it. In order to feed it with properly trained boys, I willed a Higher Secondary School; Bozzani from America asked that he be given the chance to build it. I thought that at this place education on Sai lines must be available to

children from the Primary stage itself. Craxi, the brother of the Prime Minister of Italy, offered to build the School. At Bangalore, when I decided on a plan for a College and Hostel, Mrs. Elsie Cowan asked that she be given the privilege of completing it. Such is the might of my S*ankalpa* my Will.

Another small event. For full eight days, hundreds of thousands of people are treated as guests and breakfast, lunch and dinner are provided in festival style. When ten persons are fed free, the host desires that it should appear with huge headlines in newspapers. But, who craves for publicity when one's dear relatives gather for meals at home. Though lakhs of people share in the hospitality, one finds no hurry and no parading.

When I entertained the idea of granting this boon to every one drawn to the Birthday festival, Dr. Bhaskara Rao from West Godavari District and Karunyananda from East Godavari District arrived at Kodaikanal and prayed that they be blessed with the sacred responsibility. I warned them that the lakhs would be too big a burden, but they persisted, saying: "With your blessings, we can take on even crores." And, prompts, without any fuss, 5000 bags of rice reached here from those two districts and from Krishna, Guntur and Nellore districts. Hundreds of bags of wheat, flour and suji arrived from Punjab, followed by the same number of sugar and jaggery bags from U.P. From Madras huge quantities of pulses were brought by members of the organization. Did any one demand or ask for these? Can you get them by asking for them or demanding that they be given? Try and see what happens. Everything was offered spontaneously, silently, sincerer, with so much love and humility. This is their homage of *Thyaga,* of service through sacrifice.

Circulation of money should ensure health

A man should own only as much wealth as is essential. It is like the size of his shoes. If the shoes are too loose, he cannot walk; if they are too tight, he cannot wear them. Too much money is a torture; rich people will agree with this judgment. It is foolish to accumulate money and sit on the pile, which turns into garbages. Spread garbage over the com field, it will fertilize the crop and multiply the harvest. After all, how much and how long can a man enjoy? A dog can only lap up water, even from a huge lake. Like blood, money too should circulate to ensure health.

Members of the organization should understand and follow these ideals set before them. In fact, no other organization has such selfless workers engaged in loving service. If you watch with an open eye, you find them cheerfully and enthusiastically labouring in the kitchens and serving the meals, cleaning and sweeping, though most of them are unaccustomed to manual work, and accommodating themselves in open grounds. Their faith has given them this fortitude. The volunteers and S*eva Dal* members, men and women, have toiled in the true split of dedication and surrender.

When the festival was just on, Kasturi repeated to me what he had heard over the radio. A cyclone was about to cross the coast, and enter Nellore and Ongole and cause heavy rains in Rayalaseema too, But, it did not happen. The devotion of the people gathered here and anxious to reach here was the shield that turned away the cyclone into insignificance. If it had swept in, devotees would have suffered much. Their devotion touched my heart and I willed that they should not be inconvenienced in any way. I have a heart, soft as butter, but butter too has to be warmed up in order that it may melt. Your devotion was the warmth. None has yet announced where the cyclone has gone! How can any one gauge the wonder?

Transform into heroic messengers of Dharma

Your disciplined devotion, your love, your fortitude are examples. It is not proper that I praise my own people. Westerners have come in large numbers, though everything here is discomfort for them. They are braving through all this. It is real *Tapas* for each of them. You must devote your days, your actions, your indigence and skills for transforming yourselves into heroic messengers of *Dharma* and *Karma.*

I desire one thing from you. Develop brotherhood with all. Adopt right conduct always. Give up selfish activity. Welcome all chances to serve the illiterate and the poor.

As part of the sixtieth Birthday Celebrations, I am prescribing a test which you have to accept. When you undergo it and emerge victorious, you can be pronounced as real humans. The farmer ploughs the field, sows the seed and watches the crop grow, until the grain is harvested. The next process is winnowing. The light chaff will then be carried away by the wind and the hard grain will stay. I shall start winnowing from now; the test will remove the chaff.

***Sai and Sai Sevaks* are bound by Love**

Man justifies himself and proves his claim to be a worthy individual only though *seva* (service), undertaken sincerely, selflessly, and with no thought of worldly reward. Seva is the only path to self-realization. It is the highest expression of love and of the sacrifice love involves. You have to expend yourselves in Seva unto the very last breath. You cannot retire after a certain years of Seva or when you reach a certain age. When you have such a Lord and Master, there should be no dearth of S*evaks* (servants). The servants are the glory of the Lord. The Ahalya rock of steady *Tapas* had to earn the contact of the Divine Feet of Rama, to get Life, Love and Light. The resurrected Ahalya is the Glory of Rama. The Sathya Sai Prabhu {Lord) and the Sathya Sai Sevaks are inseparably bound by Love and Loyalty. Sai exists for you and you exist for Sai. We cannot be apart from each other.

One other point. A misgiving has spread, and it is causing confusion in people's minds, that after the sixtieth birthday, Swami will not be available and that there will occur a change in Swami. Mine is not a changing nature. I will never be distant from devotees. I will be available to devotees more and more from now. Sathya Sai is *Sathya* (Truth). How can Truth change? So, give up all such guesses and imaginations and engage yourselves in the service of your fellowmen.

Sixtieth Birthday discourse at Prashaanthi Nilayam on 23-11 - 1985.

> *Selfless service alone will please Sai. Do not preach what you do not practise. Act according to what you say. Remember the significance of these directives and carry on your work in a spirit of dedication.*
>
> *BABA*