32. Recognise your Divine Identity

Neither merit nor sin, neither joy nor sorrow;

Neither manthras nor pilgrimages;

Neither charity nor yajna;

Neither eating, nor food, nor consumer of food.

I am none of these.

I am the Eternal Bliss Divine,

The One Absolute. I am Shiva.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! You are neither endowed with merit not with sin. You are nor creatures of happiness or sorrow. You are not creatures of *manthras* (sacred chants). Nor the products of manual or mechanical skills. You are not renunciants or hedonists. Who, then, are you? Your real form is *Sadhaanandha Roopam* (the eternal Bliss Divine), the Divine form of Auspiciousness (Shiva).

But, because of the differences in external physical forms, you are victims of the ignorance of your true selves. from a pauper to a millionaire, from an ignoramus to a great scholar, irrespective of whether one is a male or a female, young or old, anyone, when describing one's Self, uses the term "I" *(nenu).* The scriptures have described it as *Aathma* or *Hridhaya.*

*Hridhaya mean*s that which enshrines kindness. Hence all of you are embodiments of kindness. It is only when everyone recognises this quality of kindness that-world peace will be realised. People pronounce the prayer- *"Lokaas Samasthaas Sukhino Bhavanthu"* (May all the people in all the worlds be happy). But few practise that kindness which will make the people happy.

The "I" Principle

No Individual can introduce himself (or herself) to the outside world without using the term "I" *(nenu).* Even birds and beasts are not using the term "I" because they do not know human speech. Otherwise, each of them would declare: "I am a cow," "I am an eagle," I am a dog" and so on. All beings in the world proclaim their existence by using the term "I."

The "I" is present in all beings. The all-pervading *Brahmic* Principle is also the "I." Without properly understanding the nature of the "I" man identifies himself with the body and is immersed in the delusion caused by this mistaken identification.

The whole cosmos is associated with *dhvaitham* (duality or plurality) based on the distinction between "I" and "this" (the other). This refers to *dhrishyam* (what is perceived). "I" refers to the *dhrashtha* (seer). Without the seer, the seen cannot exist. Let Me hold up this handkerchief. This is a cloth.

The reference to the cloth cannot be made without using the term *"*this*"*. The term "this" has to be used to refer to a specific object. When I say "this is a hall.," the statement points to a specific object that is perceived.

All names and forms are associated with objects of perception. It is the *drashtha* (seer) who testifies to the existence of what is perceived.

The seer and the seen

You see the bulbs shedding light in the hall. What is shedding light is not the bulb but the current in the bulb. The bulb is a *Upaadhi* (vesture).

If you ask a young boy when he came to Prashaanthi Nilayam, he will answer- "I came on the 20th, Svaami." If he is asked, "Why did you come?" he will answer: "I came for the Convocation." Who is it that came? The body (of the boy). Identifying himself with the body, he replies that "he" came on the 20th. Yesterday, he slipped and sustained a fracture in the leg. Today, he comes to Me and says- "Svaami! My leg has sustained a fracture." Does not this mean that his leg is different from him?

At one moment you identify yourself with your body. At another moment you distinguish yourself as separate from your body. That means that all that you perceive belongs to the realm of *dhrishyam* (the seen). The perceiver who enters into the perception of all things is the Reality. He is unchanging and remains changeless through all the categories of time--past, present and future. The *Shruthis* called that unchanging entity as "I" *(Nenu).* That "I" represents the *Aathma.* The *Aathma* becomes *Hridhaya,* the scat *of karuna* (compassion).

'All terms like "I", *Karuna, Aathma, Hridhaya* or God are all synonymous. They are all different names given to the same entity in common parlance. The name Raama or Krishna by which one may be called is a name conferred on a person and is not born with him.

The first name given to anyone at birth is "I." Even for God the first original name is "I". The *Upanishaths* declare- "A*ham Bhahma-asmi"* (I am *Brahmam).* In this declaration *Aham* ("I") comes first and *Brahmam* comes thereafter. Hence, the "I" is the primal basis for everything. Very few make any attempt to recognise the nature of this *"I."*

Many persons are engaged in 'different kinds of spiritual exercises. For whose sake are these exercises done? The usual answer is "I am doing the *saadhanas* to seek God." Where is the need to search for God, when he is omnipresent? It is a ludicrous exercise. When you are yourself Divine, where is the need for a quest? A man who goes enquiring about where he is will be deemed crazy.

Role of the Mind

Man today has failed to recognise his Divine identity.

This situation has to be changed. How is it to be done?

A bent branch may be straightened,

A rock may be softened,

But can a perverted

Mind be reformed? (Thelugu poem)

It is the incorrigible perverted mind that accounts for man going astray.

The mind is the toot cause of man's happiness or sorrow, health or disease, his goodness or wickedness. What, then, is the meaning of man's search? It is the desire to experience a vision of the *Aathma* (Self).

The different forms of devotional exercises in which people engage themselves are not really for experiencing God but for some kind of mental satisfaction.

If you want to go on with these spiritual exercises, you must do so with only one aim in view, namely, to get rid of *the anaathma-bhaava* (forgetting the *Aathma* and identifying one's self with the body). You will then realise that the *Aathma* is the only reality The *anaathma-bhaava* is like the darkness in a room. It has no existence of its own. The moment a light is brought, the darkness disappears.

God has no form or name

You may ask: "How am I to declare "A*ham Brahmaasmi"* (I am the Brahmam)? Yes, you can do so. But, first of all you must understand the *Aham,* the "I". The "I" principle is the Divine. *Vedhaantha* declares- *"Ekam Eva adhvaitheeyam Brahma."* The Absolute is One only without a second. In the work-a-day world, men are used to worshipping the Absolute with different names and forms. But the Supreme Reality is only one. Different names are used in the context of different functions. It is like calling the same person by different epithets according to the particular function he is discharging at any moment. God has no form or name. All names and forms are creations of the human mind. The *Shruthi* has declared that the Lord is the attributeless eternal Reality.

In this context, there is no point in people going after *gurus* and preceptors. You are your own preceptor. You must subdue your mind. Only then you can develop good qualities. Man is losing peace because of giving a free rein to the mind.

The Divine nature of the *Aham* ('I') must be properly understood. That "I" is the master of the body, the senses and the intellect. It is the power that permeates the entire cosmos. To worship such an omnipresent power in a small shrine is hardly appropriate. To confine the infinite Divine to the limits of a small photograph for worship is hardly befitting.

What is the need to have a number of photographs? It is demeaning the Divine to adore Him in a multiplicity of pictures. (Svaami sang a song in Thelugu which dilated on the futility of trying to erect temples, light lamps or confer names on the infinite cosmic Lord who is boundless, infinitely effulgent, is the indweller in every being and contains within Himself the entire universe. How can such a God be offered food or adored in anyway?)

All the forms in which God is worshipped are products of the human imagination. The proper way-to experience God is to feel with all your inner being that you are the Divine itself. That experience will make you feel the presence of the Divine in all beings and in all things. With that experience there will be no room for hatred towards anyone. Such a one will nor do evil deeds.

What is the reason for the ubiquitous existence all over the world of violence, discord and disorder? It is the absence of the feeling of the spiritual oneness of all beings. The same Divine Indweller is present in all beings, like the current that illumines all bulbs. All are manifestations of the Divine, as declared in the *Geetha.* (Svaami sang a song to describe how the Gopikas found it impossible to realise the true nature of Krishna, whose divinity was manifested in the subtlest particle and in the infinite vastness of the cosmos).

Recognise the omnipresence of God

When men begin to recognise the omnipresence of God they will be transformed. All their thoughts and actions will get diminished. It may be asked: "Who is responsible for the evil in the

world?" The persons indulging in the evil deeds are responsible. God is only a witness. The rewards or punishments people receive in life are fruits of their own actions and not conferred by God.

When all actions are done in a spirit of dedication to the Divine and with recognition of one's own divinity, all actions become sanctified. Identification of the "I" with the body is the cause of all troubles. It turns the "I" into the *Ahamkaara* (ego). The ego is at the toot of all troubles. There is nothing wrong in looking after the body, but life should not be based on attachment to the body.

As I was coming to the Hall, many devotees greeted Me with the words, "Happy birthday!" They should wish "happy birthdays" for those who are not happy I do not need your birthday greetings. The divine is *Nithyaanandham* (perennially in bliss).

The Divine is ever blissful,

confers supreme happiness on others,

is the very embodiment of the highest wisdom,

has transcended the opposites, is vast as space,

cloud-like in complexion, with prefect features.

(Sanskrith verse)

Like the lightning in the heart of a cloud, wisdom should illumine your hearts. That wisdom will reveal the Divine in you.

Understand the spiritual basis of "I" principle

Embodiments of Love! You have all come here at great expense and trouble. Make the utmost effort to understand the spiritual basis of the "I" principle. When you regard the "I" as the *Aathma* (Self), you will be free from all suffering. In case troubles come, they will vanish like the snow on a mountain. Why should you bother about these passing clouds? When you have realised *Aathma-jnaana (Self-awareness)* there will be no need for you to worry about anything.

All troubles arise because, obsessed with the mind, man forgets the *Aathma.* When your life is illumined by the effulgence of the *Aathma, the* mind will be put in the shade. When you ignore the body and the mind, you will understand your true nature--the *Aathmik* Principle in you. When you have realised this basic truth, you can carry on all your daily activities and do your duties in a spirit of dedication.

Today there is no peace anywhere in the world. What is the reason? People have forgotten *Aathma-thathva* (the reality of the Spirit). They have lost faith in the Spirit and have developed attachment to worldly things. People look at the phenomenal world. But they do not see it as a manifestation of the Divine. Herein lies their foolishness.

All that is perceived by the eyes is divine. The perceiver is also divine. Spirituality points out the Divinity that is present in both the seer and the seen. When this basic spiritual oneness is realised, the division between man and nature disappears.

God is closer to you than any mother

Have the conviction that God is with you always. A mother may forget her child, but God will never forget you. He is closer to you than any mother. Never forget God.

Are all those who are coming to Prashaanthi Nilayam experiencing "Prashaanthi"? No. They are engaged in too much talking, moving about from one place to another. What for have you come? For whose abode have you come? Why should you wander about restlessly? Make use of this golden opportunity to acquire peace of mind. Gather as much spiritual experience as you can while you are here and. ruminate over it when you go back like a cow chewing the cud.

You have come here to strengthen your relationship with the Divine. Hold on to it firmly Put into practice at least one of the things you learn here. Of what avail is a mountain of' book knowledge without a modicum of practice?

It is not enough to chant the names of God. God must be installed in the heart. Make your conscience your guide and preceptor. That will promote true devotion. All external paraphernalia have no use.

There are four mottos, which all devotees should follow:

(1) Avoid bad company

(2) Welcome association with good persons.

(3) Rememberalways the transient and the permanent.

(4) Ceaselessly engage yourself in meritorious acts.

It is by these means that you become good. Remember the message of Vyaasa epitomised in the dictum: "Help ever; hurt never." If these basic rules are followed, all countries will be happy and peaceful. Each country is a part of the mansion of planet earth. Bhaarath is a part of this mansion. When we have this broad vision, humanity will be one in spirit.

Svaami does not rejoice in the celebration of birthdays. Since all of you have come for this celebration I am obliged to give you satisfaction. I have no wants. Whatever I do is for your sake. Recognise this truth. I have no dislike for anyone and no one dislikes me. All are mine and I belong to all. My benediction is "May all be happy". Everyone should adhere to the path of righteousness. All should manifest their spiritual bliss. Till you realise that spiritual oneness, you have to perform devotional acts like *bhajans, japas* and prayers.

Advice to Devotees

You must install in your hearts the essence of today's message to all of you. I want you to exercise control over five vital things in life.

First: "Do not waste money." Realise that "Misuse of money is evil." If you wish to keep a photo (of Bhagavaan), have only one. Why do you waste money on buying too many photos? Do not go on buying photos.

Second: "Do not waste food." Realise that "food is God." Your body is the product of the food taken by your parents. Waste of food is waste of God.

Third: "Do not waste Time." Time is God. The scriptures have extolled many ways God as the Master of Time. Time wasted is life wasted.

Fourth: "Do not waste energy." Energy enters into every one of our actions. When you see, speak, hear, act or think energy is expended. In every one of these activities you should see that you do nor waste your energies unnecessarily.

Fifth: "Do not forget God," at any moment whatever you may be doing. God is present wherever you may go. He is with you, beside you and around you always. Hence there is no need for you to go to some temple to pray to God. Your heart is your temple. Turn your vision inward. Thereby understand the *Aathmik* Principle.

In your journey to Prashaanthi Nilayam you must have undergone many inconveniences. In future avoid unnecessary journeys. You may do so when you need it for your contentment.

Hence, do not waste time. Do not give room for useless thoughts. Do not waste your love. Love is life itself. With-our love one is as good as dead. Install love in your hearts.

Avoid bad company

Avoid unnecessary and excessive association with all and sundry. Many of you have come here away from your kith and kin. People have come from America or Japan, Germany or Russia, leaving their parents or other relatives. Why, then, should they cultivate new relationships with others here? Keep yourself to yourself as far as possible. Keep your mind pure. Them is no need to indulge in talk with people in all sorts of places. Talk less, think more. Cultivate this habit. Unnecessary association with strangers may have unexpected consequences of a serious nature. You might have noticed in the play staged by the students how one person got into trouble because of his association with some undesirable persons. Ultimately he recognised his mistake and felt that his mind had been poisoned by association with bad persons. Others should not be blamed. The mistake was his in not keeping his association confined to good persons. He cried over his folly in joining bad company

To join bad company and come to grief is a self-wrought calamity. Keep your association with anyone to the barest minimum. Genuine spiritual aspirants should be particularly careful in eschewing bad company. They should create an environment conducive to their spiritual progress and mental peace. That is the only thing Svaami wants.

Having come to Prashaanthi Nilayam, all of you must become exemplary' devotees. Outsiders must feel spontaneously how exemplary is the behaviour of Sai students and Sai devotees. That reaction will do you more good than satisfying Me.

Sathya Sai is the devotee of devotees

I have no devotees. You may describe yourselves as Sathya Sai devotees. I am myself a devotee. Whose devotee? A devotee of those who claim to be My devotees. My duty is to fulfil their desires. I belong to you and you belong to Me. Understand and strengthen this relationship This is My sole desire.

I do not relish the celebration of my birthday or pompous decorations for the purpose. Such ostentation is not good for anyone. Adopt a practical attitude towards the spiritual life.

With the holy thoughts, in you on this auspicious day, you must go out into the world and spread our sacred feelings among others. Do not confine your feelings to yourselves or retain them only during your stay here. Spread them wherever you go.

Svaami is above all distinctions of caste, religion or language. The caste of humanity, the religion of love and the language of the heart---these are what I stand for. Experience this truth and share your joy with others.

Discourse in Sai Kulvanth Hall on the morning 23-1 I- 1997.

When you do not love man, your heart will not love God. Despising brother men, you cannot at the same time, worship God; if you do, God will not accept that hypocrisy. God is resident in every heart; so, if you serve anyone, that service reaches the God within him. It brings to you the grace of God.

Baba