

Vol 10, 39, 1970. Bring me the pain

THE fulfilment of human life consists in the service that man renders, without any thought of return, in an attitude of selflessness. Service rendered in this spirit sheds light in the dark interior of man, it widens the heart, it purifies the impulses and confers lasting *Aanandha*. This country has been emphasising the fundamental unity of mankind; this truth can be fixed in the experience, by means of dedicated service. India is a garden of flagrant colours; it has a variety of faiths and creeds, all emphasising this Unity and this path of service, in order to realise it. All creeds here declare that every one is brother or sister to every one else---that is the message of every saint and sage in this land.

With the passage of time, and the inroads of alien cultures and ungodly attitudes, this message has been neglected and we are in the pathetic plight of factions and fights between those who once were brothers! Passion and blind emotion have filled the heart of the nation, which was responding bravely to the call of brotherhood and service. Passion and emotion are as calamitous as earthquakes; their consequences can be felt far and wide. We have to cool down the passions and develop a sense of balance and equipoise in the human mind, through the cultivation of *Prema* (Love).

***Sathsangs* can arouse the latent Love in man**

This is the land where Thukaaraam, on his way from Kaashi to Raameshwaram, with sacred Ganga water in a pot on his shoulder---water that he had vowed to pour ceremonially on the Linga at Raameshwaram---saw a donkey dying of thirst! And, the sense of unity with all living beings overpowered him so much that without a second thought, he poured the holy Ganga he had carried so far for the sacred purpose, down the parched throat of the 'brother' and was happy to see in him the *Linga* he longed to adore! So, universal Love is latent in the traditions of the people; what is wanted is only awakening them from slumber. *Sathsangs* (good holy company) can arouse the latent Love; this work has to be done among the youth, at the present time. For the burden is on the shoulders of youth.

The world (and not God who is expressed through it and beyond it) is the centre of attention at the present time. The reaction to the world depends on the feelings which prompt the dealings with it; the feelings depend upon the experience gained already; the experience is coloured by the desire which urged the contact and drew the reaction. Desire is based on ignorance of the real nature of the world) The world is *maaya*, a mixture of fact and fiction, but it is valued as Truth! It is a fiction built on the basis of fact. The fact is Divinity; the fiction is variety. This deluding agent is God, for, the fact is hidden and the fiction is imposed by the *leela* (play) of God. And, God is but the appearance in Form of the Formless, Intangible, Immanent, Absolute, the *Niraakaara Paramaathma*, the *aakaasha* (space) within the *hridaya* (heart) of man and all living beings as well as of all the other *Bhuuthaas* or Principles, unbound, without' beginning or end.

The attribute by which *Aakaasha* can be cognised is *Shabdha* (sound) or the Word! In the beginning was the Word! The word became the object, it got embodied, concretised. That is why we call "object" as *padhaartha*. *Padha* means word, *artha* means meaning or purpose. The "object" is the purpose of which the word was uttered, the meaning which makes the word valid) We have the word 'tree' and the meaning is the tree that stands opposite! We have the word 'man'

and the meaning is you. The word and its meaning are inseparable, indistinguishable. The word did not arise without the object, nor the object without the word.

God is and can be, only One, not more

The word God too is the indication that there is the *Padhaartta*, that there is God. If there was no God, the word God would not have originated and gained currency. You may see God or you may not, but the word is proof that there is God.

God is Omnipresent; He is in the past, the present, the future. I am placing this garland on my finger. See, the part of the garland to the left of the finger is the future, the part to the right is the past and where it contacts the finger, that point is the present. Now, I roll the garland on the finger and pull it to the right. The future comes up and becomes the present and moves down into the past, but, the present is always present. God is always present, watching the future rolling on into the past!

And, God is and can be, only One, not more! "There is only One God and He is Omnipresent! There is only One Religion, the religion of Love. There is only One Language, the language of the Heart." This God has to be visualised by means of constant spiritual discipline. Do not involve yourselves in doubts and hesitations. If only you observe the disciplines and purify the Consciousness, you can see the God installed in your heart. There is sugar in the cup, but the water is insipid, for you have not stirred it well. There is God-in the world, and by stirring the Divine well into every drop or atom thereof, you can make the world a sweet thing to live by. Intelligence is the spoon; *Saadhana* is the process of stirring. Saturate every moment of life with God; it becomes sweet thereby.

God is the 'I' in all beings

As a matter of fact, you are even now dedicating everything to God; only, you do not do it consciously, with the joy that is your due! You say, "I do it for my pleasure. I go there to be happy. I am reading it for my satisfaction, for my progress." Who is this I that is doing, going, acting, reading, enjoying, being pleased? It is the I that sees, that hears, that thinks with the eye, the ear, the brain, etc. It is the I that Rathan Lal says, he is! Sohan Lal, Pran Lal and Indhu Lal all say I, I, I. This I is in every one. It is the individualised *Aathma* in each, it is the Universal that is reflected in the particular. So when you say, "I do it for my pleasure," you do it really for the pleasure of the I within you, namely, God. That is why the Geetha says, *Maam anusmaran, maam ekam sharanam vraja*: "Surrender yourself to Me!" Who is this 'me'? God. Why is He called 'I'? Because He is the I in all beings.

In the *Annamaya kosha* (material sheath), that is to say, when man is established in the physical, and in the *Praanamaya kosha*, when he is in the nervous and vital spheres of activity, he feels that life is fulfilled by means of food, recreation and a contented, comfortable existence. When he rises up into the *Manomaya kosha* (mental sheath), his imagination opens further vistas, and he gets glimpses of the glory and majesty of the Divine, which makes him adore and revere. The next *kosha*, the *Vijnanamaya kosha* (intellectual sheath), then steps in and makes him inquire into the validity of the experiences and leads him on to the fifth *kosha*, the *Aanandhamaya*, the stage of Bliss, with the confirmation of the hypothesis of the Divine, that the intellect framed. This liberates man from fear and doubt. Wisdom alone can grant full freedom. Just as the end of culture is progress, the end of knowledge is love, so, the end of wisdom is freedom.

***Bhakthi* Yoga alone can save and sustain**

Do not fritter the days in attaining affluence in material possessions, which are often impediments in the journey of life. Money comes and goes; morality comes---but, grows! Money is not true wealth; it loses value, it bloats the ego and hardens the heart. If it does not circulate, it destroys health, as blood does.

Embodiments of the Divine! Do not take it amiss, for, I am telling this only' out of the fullness of my love. There are many nowadays who go about with various short-cuts to liberation, paths which they have marked out and are determined to preach, attracting disciples and forming groups; they concoct these out of *Hatha yoga*, *Kriyaa yoga*, *Raaja yoga*, and some thin *Vedhaantha* and then, start out as guides and leaders. But, the fruits they confer are only flippant and flimsy; they are not lasting or truly liberating. *Bhakthi yoga* alone, as laid down and practised through the centuries, can save and sustain. God can be realised only through love. Without love in the heart, God will not reside in the desert. Other paths develop conceit, separate man from man, man from beast. They contract, they do not reach out, they shrink your sphere of awareness of the Divine! Love is expansion and expansion is Divine Life. Sow Love; it blossoms as compassion and tolerance; it yields the fruit of Peace (*Shaanthi*).

Respect everyone since the same *Aathma* is in all

God is reflected in the medium of Nature, in everything His image is to be cognised. If the medium is *Saathwik* (pure), then, God is as divine in the image as in His own Divine state; if it is reflected in the *Raajasik* (the active passionate) medium, the image becomes the individual Jeevi; when the *Thaamasik* (the dull) medium reflects it, then, the image is 'matter.' The 'Moon' is One; and it is so distant and unaffected; but, its reflections in various pots of water differ in brightness and steadiness, according to the clarity and calmness of the water.

The *Saathwik* is the pot of gold, the *Raajasik* is the pot of copper, and the *Thaamasik* is the iron pot! Their value may differ, but, the moon is reflected equally well in the water that each may have in them. Again, the golden pot is the Mahaathma, the copper one is the believer, the iron one is the atheist; but, in all three, the *Aathma* is the inner motivator, the indweller. So, respect everyone, since the same *Aathma* is in all.

The teacher must practise what he teaches, avoid what he wants his pupils to avoid; then only can his teachings affect the lives of those who are committed to them. Now, the *Guru* is riddled with desires and he coolly advises his disciple to discard desire! He smokes cigarettes but warns him against the habit! Such *Gurus* care more for publicity than genuine practice. The Sathya Sai Organisation has no desire to exhibit any superiority; it tries to hold forth the ideal, to be witness to the truth of certain fundamental spiritual truths and the validity Of certain spiritual disciplines.

Authenticity of *Sai Avathaar*

Embodiments of the Divine! This is the best time to tell you something about the authenticity of this Advent. I am saying this, not for establishing a claim for superiority or importance for this Body; I only wish to communicate the Truth. There are many who cannot bear or tolerate the splendour that I am manifesting, the Divinity that is expressed in every act, the wonders and amazing happenings that are the result of Grace; these people label these as acts of mesmerism or miracles or feats of magic! They hope to .bring these down in the estimation of people. Let me tell you this: Mine is no mesmerism, miracle or magic. Mine is genuine Divine Power.

There are others who cavil at these, and whisper that miracles are not conducive to spiritual development, that they will be handicaps in the process of realisation of God, and they persuade

you to stray away from the true path. These people are too weak to conceive the Divine; they have no strength or stamina to understand its magnificence and majesty. They have small minds and limited intellects.

Kamsa, the wicked uncle of Krishna, knew that he was to meet his death at the hands of Krishna; so, he was so terror-stricken that he saw Krishna wherever his eyes were turned! He saw him beside him, before him, behind him, above him, all around him! So, he shook his fist against the appearance and saying, "Krishna, fie upon your magic! I spurn your tactics to terrify me!" He boasted that his physical prowess could overpower the effects of the direct magic. But, when the little seven-year old boy, Krishna jumped up in the arena and gripped him by the neck, and sat on his chest, when he fell, to pound him to death, Krishna shouted into his ear, "Uncle! This is Magic! Magic! Magic!" you cannot declare that you have understood a phenomenon when what you do is simply to slight it by the use of a certain word!

You have no reason to suffer in the play of Love

God can do anything; He has all power in the palm of His Hand! My powers do not abide in Me a while and then, fade away! *Indhra jaalam idham---All* this is apparent manipulation by Divine Will. My Body, like all other bodies, is a temporary habitation; but My power is eternal, all-pervasive, everlasting! This body has been assumed, to serve a purpose: the establishment of *Dharma* and the teaching of *Dharma*. When that purpose is over, this Body will disappear, like the bubble on the waters.

The other day a very serious illness came upon this body, in Goa. When they came to know about this, many devoted to Me were plunged in anxiety! Illness can never affect this Body; it cannot approach it. If it comes sometime, that is but a passing phase' it belongs to some one and it comes to Me and goes, just as it came! When it comes, this body 'appears' to be ill! But, I have no contact with it, no affliction! Many people, when such a thing happens, take courage even to suggest to Me(!) ways of dealing with the situation!

They tell Me, "Why Swaami! Why do you allow the illness of another to come upon you? If he suffers from it, only one person suffers! But, when you allow it to come over you lakhs of people suffer? Leave it to him, Swaami!" they say. When this body is 'suffering,' it is the nature, the duty of devotees to suffer in unison; but, I must also follow My duty! To take upon Myself the sufferings of those who have surrendered to Me is My duty! I do My duty, and you; may do yours. But, when you look at the Truth squarely in the face, you will know that I have no 'suffering' and you too have no reason to suffer! The entire thing is the play of Love! It has been taken over by Me on account of Love and so, I have no pain or suffering) You suffer on account of Love. It is Love, Love, fight through; there is no reason for sorrow or pain or suffering!

Never deviate from your faith in God

Cultivate Love; become intoxicated with it. We have here tens of thousands gathered, calling themselves devotees, but, when you try to find out how genuine they are, you have to admit that ninety-nine per cent of them are only part-time devotees, not full-time devotees! Had you known the Truth about Me, you would not have suffered at all, at the news of illness from Raaj Bhavan, Goal There were some who had their faith severely shaken when the news came in! Devotees must shine ever steady, in the joy of faith.

A mother and son developed disagreement so fast and so seriously about the property rights of each that they were completely estranged, and they stood in court, facing each other, in opposite

boxes, before the judge. The judge asked the lady, "Do you know this young man standing there?" and the lady replied, "Yes; he is my son!" However violently she might hate him, she has to admit that he is her son! The young man is asked, likewise, "Do you know this lady?" and he replied, "Yes; she is my mother!" You too must never deviate from that faith whatever might happen, to pull you and God apart!

Pray for the welfare of all mankind

Faith so stable as this is fast becoming a rarity. When your wishes fail, you deny God; when wishes fructify, you adore Him with greater pomp, and have a few more pictures in your shrine, and you spend more money on flowers and incense! God has no preferences and prejudices; His is but reaction, reflection and re-sound! He comes, to confer *Aanandha*, to foster *Aanandha*, to teach ways of acquiring and activating *Aanandha*. He takes upon Himself the pain and sorrow of the world, in order to prepare the hearts of men for Love!

This Day marks the beginning of the Christian Era, the year of Christ. Christ sacrificed his life for the sake of those who put their faith in him. He propagated the truth that service is God, that sacrifice is God. Even if you falter in the adoration of God, do not falter in the service of the living God, who has assumed human shape and is moving all around you in such large numbers and wearing such manifold costumes of apparel and speech!

Only those who can pour out compassion to fellow-men can claim a place in the Grace of God. This is also the highest spiritual discipline; it impresses on you the unity of the human community and the glory of God's immanence. May this discipline which the *Seva Dhal* has taken up with genuine delight spread all over this country, and may the land be happy and prosperous. May the world have peace and happiness, and loving trust. That is My blessing. I want you to pray for the welfare and prosperity of all mankind.

Dharmakshethra, 25-12-1970

Vol 11, 54, 1972. He whom Christ announced

RELIGIONS arise from the minds of good men, who crave to make all men good; they strive to eliminate evil and cure the bad. They are many, since they have to be adjusted to the individuals, their activities, their professions and roles, their character and characteristics. The individual has to start observing the limits and laws laid down, and derive joy and strength thereby. And, then, his cleansed mind will lead the way, to higher and higher stages. He and the society of which he is a unit will benefit thereby.

It is therefore appropriate that the Birthday of Jesus, who felt the need to save mankind and who strove to achieve it, is celebrated; but, the celebration must take the form of adherence to the teachings, loyalty to the principles, practising the disciplines and experiencing the Awareness of the Divine that he sought to arouse.

These days, the world is deriving satisfaction in mere words, and in witnessing clever rules designed to cover up one's faults. The Birthdays of the Great are honoured by such hypocrisy and external pomp. There is no examination in the light of the message they gave, nor, any effort to practise it and derive the bliss it promises.

The Great Teachers belong to mankind. It is wrong to believe that Jesus belongs only to the Christians and the Christmas is a holy festival for the West only. To accept one of them as one's own and discard the rest as belonging to others, is a sign of pettiness. Christ, Raama, Krishna--- they are for all men everywhere.

Man's life is conditioned by feelings and deeds

The various limbs and organs together form a body; various nations and communities together form the world. The sustenance given by Divine Grace circulates in every part of the body, helping it to function in unison. The stream of Love, endowed by Divine Grace, has to circulate in every State and community to make the world live in Peace and Joy. If this truth is realised, there will arise no idea of difference.

If the members of a family are at loggerheads, the lands and other possessions of the family will be uncared for, and be either wasted or lost. The separation of one member will also be a big loss, for, the Grace that sustains the family will diminish and get lost. When a hand is amputated, the limb loses its function, and a great deal of blood too is lost during the removal. So too, the Divine Grace of Love is lost when a country sets itself apart: it also becomes a weak and functionless limb of the World community.

Division, difference and distinction cuts one off from the life-giving Grace, that feeds every cell of the body and every individual in the World. The World is sustained by the self-same Grace. A tree requires for its growth, soil, sunlight and atmosphere. But, more than these three, it requires the seed. Man's life is conditioned by feelings and deeds, and the consequences of 'these feelings and deeds. But, his existence, his very Is-ness, depends on the Will of God.

Growing trees may differ, according to the nature of the soil, the quantity of sunlight and the quality of the soil. So too, men may differ according to the consequences of the types of feelings and deeds that emanate from them. But, just as it is true to say that" the seeds are the same, is One, without any difference, the variety of forms, the variety of emotions and attitudes, the variety of communities and loyalties are the result of man's ignoring his fundamental Unity in the one Divine Will, and his acting contrary to that Unity.

Meaning of three statements made by Christ

The moving water of a river has the Moon in its depths; the still water of a lake has also the Moon underneath; the sky has the Moon up above. The Moon in the flowing river is broken and fragmentary, it flows fast, apparently, with the floods. The Moon in the lake is calm, unmoved, undistracted. These two are but reflections of the real Moon in the sky. The Moon reflected in the flood is the Individual Soul, engaged in activity, embroiled in-Maaya, cause and effect. The Moon reflected in the placid face of the lake is the *Yogi*, the Saint, who has attained balance, equipoise, peace, dwelling in the One. The real Moon in the sky is the Eternal Witness, the Absolute, the Primal Principle.

Christ spoke of these three, when He made, one after the other, three statements. Referring to the active individual soul, the flickering Moon, he said, "I am the Messenger of God;" referring to himself as the *Yogi*, who has risen beyond dualities, and attained balance, he said, "I am the Son of God." Realising that these two are but reflections, and that the real Moon is the Witness in the sky, that he too is the Formless, Nameless Absolute, he declared, towards the end of his life, "I and My Father are ONE."

All beings are images of the Universal *Aathma*, in the names and forms they have apparently assumed. This is the truth, enclosed, elaborated and demonstrated in the spiritual texts of India, which form the basis of *Bhaaratheeya* culture. The essence of all religions and faiths then, is this: the merging in this Unity. The goal of all spiritual endeavour is this: the merging in this Unity. The object of all enquiry is this: to cognise this Unity. But, this patent fact is ignored, and persons create strife, anxiety and unrest for themselves and perpetrate horrors to hold forth the support, the disunity so dear to their fractioned minds.

People today relish the very things religion condemned

The passage of time has clouded the splendour of the message, the fascination exercised by the material and the worldly has drawn them away from the path, and the expansion of science and technology has made them conceited and wrong-headed. So, people now relish the very things prohibited and promote the very things condemned by religion. All religions teach that one should revere the parents and evince gratitude to them; but, ridiculing them and neglecting them have become fashionable now. All religions lay down that the aged are to be honoured, since they are the repositories of experience and their guidance is indispensable; but, now elders and the aged are treated as nuisances and handicapped. All religions insist on truth; but now, the man who sticks to truth is laughed at as if he were a fool. Cruelty and violence, condemned by all religions, have raised themselves to the status of weapons of progress and means for desirable ends. However, the basic truths of religion are not affected or tarnished by the evil that men practise or the competitive propaganda they indulge in.

On Christ's Birthday, sacrifice at least a desire or two

Only those who are not keen on practising the message will waste their energies in condemning other religions and glorifying their own. And, once you enter sincerely into the path of spiritual practice, the urge to find faults in others or publish one's own excellences will disappear. Such people will celebrate the Birthday of the Founders in a spirit of dedication only, deepening the faith in their hearts and revering its doctrines by more intense practice rather than by more emphatic argumentation. If one has the yearning to reach the goal, one has to follow the path that leads to it. When you learn to reach God, you have to observe the guidelines He has marked out.

You need not dwell on His name, or His lineaments all the time! That may not take you far. But, walk along the Path; every step will bring you near. When you need to reach a village, you have to rise and move towards it; it will not rise and move towards you! When you need to reach God, rise and move, as He has directed you to. By this means alone you can make life worthwhile.

Jesus taught simple practical lessons in spiritual advancement for the good of mankind; He manifested Divine Powers to instil faith in the validity of his teachings; he marked out the path that can confer on men the sweet nectar of *Aanandha*. He exhorted people by precept and example to cultivate the virtues of charity, compassion, forbearance, love and faith. These are not separate and distinct qualities, they are only the many facets of the Divine in Man, which he has to recognise and develop.

Significance of the story related to Christ's birth

People talk of the sacrifice of Christ as evidence by His crucifixion. But, he was surrounded and bound, and crowned by the crowd who captured Him with a crown of thorns, and later, nailed to the cross by his captors. A person bound and beaten by the police cannot say that he has sacrificed anything, for, he is not a free man. Let us pay attention to the sacrifice that Jesus made while free, out of his own volition. He sacrificed his happiness, prosperity, comfort, safety and position; he braved the enmity of the powerful. He refused to yield or compromise. He renounced the 'ego', which is the toughest thing to get rid of. Honour Him for these. He willingly sacrificed the desires with which the body torments man; this is sacrifice greater than the sacrifice of the body under duress. The celebration of His birthday has to be marked by your sacrificing at least a desire or two, and conquering at least the more disastrous urges of the ego.

The followers of Jesus have got broken into schisms on various counts; but, the life of Christ is a lesson of Unity. When Christ was on the cross, ill-feelings towards the men who tortured Him troubled Him. Suddenly he heard a voice alerting him. "All Life is One, my dear Son { Be alike to every one!" This was followed by another admonition, "Death is the Dress of Life." As one casts off the worn clothes and dons another set, so, the soul dons and doffs bodies. Therefore, Jesus was warned against hate and ill-feelings, as well as the lamentation to which man is heir.

Manifestations seen when Christ was born

The lives of such personalities are lived out, in order to establish the welfare of humanity, the prosperity and peace of the world, and individual liberation from bondage to sensual desires and passions. This is illustrated by the strange phenomena that occur at the time of their Advent. It is believed that when Christ was born there were such manifestations. The ruler of the realm had ordered a census, and each had to be counted in his own village. So Mary and her husband moved along the road that led to his native village. Mary was with child; the pains started midway; they knew no one in the hamlet through which they were passing; so they took refuge in a cowshed. Joseph made ready the space between the cows, and went out into the road at midnight, to seek some woman who could help. But, soon, he heard the Baby's cry.

And, the story says, there was a Star in the sky, which fell with a New Light, and this led a few Tibetans and others to the place where the Saviour was born. This story is read and taken on trust by many, though stars do not fall or even slide down so suddenly. What the story signifies is this: There was a huge halo of splendour illuminating the sky over the village when Christ was born. This meant that He, who was to overcome the darkness of evil and ignorance had taken birth, that He will spread the Light of Love in the heart of man and councils of humanity.

Use and misuse of wealth and wisdom

Appearances of splendour, and other signs to herald the era that has dawned are natural when incarnations happen on earth. Jesus was to shatter the darkness that had enveloped the world and the aura of light was a sign that announced the event. The Masters arrive in answer to man's prayer. "*Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya*" (Lead us from darkness unto Light!)

If each one does his duty, in the spirit of dedication, the Light can illumine all, but, if the doors of the heart are shut against the Light, how can darkness disappear? You cannot sit back, and expect the Incarnation to bring peace and joy into you. The incarnation comes to warn, to guide, to awaken, to lay down the path, and shed the light of Love on it. But, man has to listen, learn and obey with hope and faith.

There is a tale told of old that Wisdom and Wealth once quarrelled loud and long, about their relative importance. Wealth argued that without it, the body will be weak, the brain hazy and wisdom a will-o-the-wisp. Wisdom retorted that, without it man cannot even distinguish wealth from non-wealth or know how to earn it or use it. The Soul intervened and told them that they were both equally important, but, only when properly used. Wealth without wisdom becomes an instrument of exploitation and tyranny: wisdom without wealth becomes mere fantasy and a bundle of blueprint. Use makes them worthwhile; misuse makes them disastrous.

It is like the knife in the hands of a maniac, which becomes an instrument for murder; in the hands of a surgeon, it becomes an instrument which saves a life! Are you doing good with wealth? Are you benefitting others by means of wisdom?---that is the test. This day, Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of Christ, resolve to lead the lives of loving service to the weak, the helpless, the distressed, the disconsolate. Cultivate tolerance and forbearance, charity and magnanimity. Hold dear the ideals He laid down and practise them, in your daily lives.

The best way of celebrating the Birth of Christ

The ways in which Christmas is being celebrated now show how far men have moved away from those ideals, how much ignominy they are heaping on his name! The midnight hour is revered; illumination is arranged; the Christmas Tree is set up; and then, the night is spent in drinking and dance. It is a day of Holy *Aanandha*, but, the *Aanandha* is reduced to the level of the poisoning excitement of intoxication!

Drink is so pernicious an evil habit, that when man puts the bottle in, he himself gets into the bottle and cannot escape! First man drinks wine, then the wine drinks more wine; and finally, the wine drinks man himself! He is sunk and drowned in drink. Liquor destroys the humanity in man! How then can it develop the Divinity in him? One must dance in Divine Bliss; instead, sensual dance is indulged in as a deleterious substitute! Make your hearts pure, your activities holy, and your feelings beneficial to all. That is the best way of celebrating the Birth of Christ.

There is one point that I cannot but bring to your special notice today. At the moment when Jesus was merging in the Supreme Principle of Divinity, He communicated some news to his followers, which has been interpreted in a variety of ways by commentators and those who relish the piling of writings on writings and meanings upon meanings, until it all swells up into a huge mess.

Christ's announcement of the Advent of Baba

The statement itself has been manipulated and tangled into a conundrum. The statement of Christ is simple: "He who sent me among you will come again!" and he pointed to a Lamb. The Lamb is merely a symbol, a sign. It stands for the Voice---Ba-Ba; the announcement was the Advent of Baba. "His Name will be Truth," Christ declared. *Sathya* means Truth. "He will wear a robe of red, a bloodred robe." (Here Baba pointed to the robe He was wearing!). "He will be short, with a crown (of hair). The Lamb is the sign and symbol of Love."

Christ did not declare that he will come again. He said, "He who made me will come again." That Ba-ba is this Baba and Sai, the short, curly-hair-crowned red-robed Baba, is come. He is not only in this Form, but, he is in every one of you, as the dweller in the Heart. He is there, short, with a robe of the colour of the blood that fills it.

The great axioms of *Bhaaratheeya* culture found in the *Vedhas*---*Ishwarassarvabhoothaanaam*, *Isaavaa-yamidham sarvam*, *Vasudhevassarvamidham*---"God is the inner Motivator of all beings. All this is enveloped in God, All this is Vaasudheva, the Divine"---are to be in every one. This is the inner mystery of Incarnation, God incarnating in all! All are One; The One is All.

There is only one God; He is Omnipresent. 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.

Bangalore, 24-12-1972

Roga denies you ease and peace. The roga (disease) can be cured by yoga (Divine communion), not by bhoga (material enjoyment).

Bhoga means catering to the whims and wildness of the senses.

Yoga means the regulation and reform of the impulses of the mind which run after goals laid down by the senses/

Make the senses the servants of the intelligence, not the overlords of the mind.

Tell them that the mind is dethroned, it is non-existent/ Sensuousness is a disease.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol 13, 27, 1976. Jesus

MAN is as a seed. The seed sprouts, becomes a sapling, grows into a tree and fulfils its destiny, offering flowers and fruits to the world. 'So, too, man rises from childhood through adolescence into youth and middle age, and when fully grown up he has to justify himself by offering to the world the flowers and fruits of good thoughts and deeds, himself acquiring the fullness of wisdom. A bird has need of two wings; a cart must have two wheels. Without these, they are mortally handicapped. Man, too, must have two types of knowledge---to live on and to live for. The one helps him to eke out his livelihood and the other rewards him for having lived at all. The one is called *jeevanopadhi* (the means of living), and the other, *jeevanaparamavaadhi* (the goal of living). The one enables us to garner the material riches which make our lives comfortable and safe; the other answers the questions that haunt us and pressurise us while we live---where have we come, to where are we proceeding, how did the Universe originate, etc. No religion concerns itself with the first type of knowledge, they all are interested in stressing the second type only. Each of you have to pay attention to this second type even more than to the first, for it has beneficial impact on the first also.

***Dharma* provides peace, contentment and joy**

Man has set down, in all lands and communities, certain rules and regulations in order to secure orderly and smooth running of his daily schedule of activities directed to the actual process of living. Since they have become part of the code of conduct, they are also described as 'discipline.' They are also subsumed under the basic principles of *dharma* (righteousness). *Dharma* promotes peace and happiness, contentment and joy. In every community, there have appeared, off and on, great personalities who shaped and burnished the codes and adapted the details to the needs of the times.

What we must strive for today is not a new religion or a new society or a new code of morality; they are there already, in each race and country. We also have the basic plans for spiritual training already laid down in most religions. But we need persons who have attained purity in all levels of consciousness. Man can reach perfect Bliss only when his heart becomes free from envy, egoism, greed and other evil traits. We need persons who can recognise and relish the recognition of the kinship and the identity between man and man, as well as between one society and another. They have to move beyond the bounds of the limited 'I,' to break loose from the entanglements of the senses. They have to jump over the battlements of the fort called 'body,' and enter enthusiastically the wide world beyond.

Turn inwards to acquire awareness of the Divine

From the narrow vision of 'individual need' man must voyage out into the broad vision of the 'Universal.' When a drop of water falls into the ocean, it loses its narrow individualities, its name and form, and assumes the form, name and taste of the ocean itself. If it seeks to live separately as a 'drop,' it will soon evaporate and be reduced to non-existence. Each one must become aware that he is part of the one Truth that encompasses everything in the Universe. It is reprehensible to stick for one's whole life-time to the low narrow paths of selfishness, envy, and greed. Make the heart big and the mind pure. Then only can peace and prosperity be established on the earth.

This day is a holy day, the day on which Jesus was born He announced himself as the Messenger of God. In fact, all humans are born as Messengers of God. The sole purpose of this human career is to propagate the Omnipresence of God, His Might and Glory. No one has incarnated for

merely consuming quantities of food and catering to one's senses. Human life is much more precious than that. That is why the capacity to appreciate beauty, truth and goodness has been endowed only on man.

To acquire awareness of the Divine, one need not journey to any special region or place. It is enough if the eye is turned inwards. In the Bhagavathgeetha, the inner reality, the *Aathman*, is described as 'resplendent like a billion suns.' But man has not become aware of the Light and Power within; he still flounders in the darkness of ignorance. The scriptures proclaim that man is *amrithasya puthrah* (the child of Immortality). But man is unaware of this glorious heritage. He feels he is mortal, his end is imminent and his existence is temporary.

Man reduces himself to the level of beasts

The scriptures also say that the *Aathman*, the Real Core of the individual, is *Aanandha Swaruupa* (the very embodiment of bliss). But man being blind to this truth, invites sorrow and anxiety to hold mastery over him and discards the joy that awaits him. Every man is a messenger to fellow-men, entrusted with the task of spreading knowledge of the joy that is being missed. If he misuses this mission and fritters away his years in gratifying his senses, he only loses the chance and reduces himself to the level of beasts. He who announced Himself as the Messenger of God, developed, through the blossoming of Divinity and the expansion of compassion and service in Him, to a stage when he declared Himself as the Son of God. And then, finally, He rose to the status of 'I and my Father are One.'

When Jesus declares that He is the Son of God, He becomes entitled to the paternal Majesty and Power. These He can claim only when He grows in the qualities that His Father has. As a result he attains *saayujya* (mergence), which leads Him to assert, 'I and my Father are one.' The scriptures say, *Brahmavith Brahmaiva Bhavathi*: He who knows *Brahman*, becomes *Brahman*.

Jesus inspired all mankind through His example

These three stages are referred to as *dhwaitha*, *visishtadhwaitha* and *adhwaitha* in *Vedhic* thought. Messenger and master, the two are basically separate, and so this stage is one of *dhwaitha* (dualism). The son and father, though two separate entities, are bound by affection and kindred feelings and attitudes. They are like the whole and the part, the body and the limb. This stage is called *visishtadhwaitha* (qualified nondualism). And when the Son and the Father are One, the stage is of *adhwaitha* (non-dualism).

Even a child would be eager to pass from one class to the next higher one; he would hate being in the same class, vegetating for years. Then what can we say of persons with intelligence and discrimination, satisfied with the attainment of the lower steps? Jesus passed through the entire process and inspired all mankind by His example and teachings, to be generous and kind, detached and discriminating, and to bring Light and Love to all. He attracted people by His miracles and transformed them into apostles and exemplary servants of man.

You must realise that the Divine current that flows and functions in every living being is the One Universal Entity. When you desire to enter the Mansion of God, you are confronted by two closed doors---the desire to praise yourself and the desire to defame others. The doors are bolted by envy, and there is also the huge lock of egoism preventing entry. So if you are earnest, you have to resort to the key of *prema* (love) and open the lock; then remove the bolt and throw the doors wide open. The education must train you in the difficult operation.

Give up the two evils of self-praise and scandal

You undergo training in various subjects of study, but the crown and cries of all subjects of study is *Aadhyaathmic vidhya* (spiritual wisdom). People desirous of bathing in sacred rivers are advised by Thyaagaraaja, the famous mystic, poet and singer, to bathe, in the Ocean, for all rivers pour their waters into it. Therefore a bath in the Ocean means bathing in the waters of all the rivers at the same time. So, too, the *Aathmavidhya* if mastered, is the key to all knowledge. It teaches us *Thath*, which if known, all else is known. It reveals to us that the One is in the many and that the many are really One. *Ishaavaashyam idham sarvam*: "All this is enveloped by God," as the *shruthi* (sacred text) declares.

Saadhana is the name for the mental discipline and intellectual effort to realise this Unity. Jesus sacrificed his life and poured out his blood to instil Love and Compassion in the heart of man, so that he may be happy when others are happy and sad when others are sad. It is not by festivity and fun that you should celebrate Christmas. Celebrate it, rather, by resolving and putting into practice at least one of the ideals He enunciated, or endeavouring to reach at least one of the goals that He placed before man.

Let Me call upon you to give up, in memory of this holy day, two evils from your mind: self-praise and talking scandal. Adopt one habit: the habit of loving service to the distressed. If you spend all your time and energy in worldly comfort and sensual delight, you are disgracing this human existence. Life is not to be spent in just eating; eating is only a necessity for living. You consider this habitation on of yours as your body; no, It is the temple of God. God resides therein. Keep it clean, fresh and fragrant through developing Compassion and Love. Use the temple of God only for holy thoughts, words and deeds. Do not demean it by using it for low, trivial and unholy tasks. Wherever you are, whatever you do have this resolution steady and strong.

Brindhaavan, 25-12-1976

Seeing one's own reality is the opening of the doors of liberation; for this, this mirror of the heart has to be prepared, by coating the back of the heart with sathya and dharma. Otherwise, the image will not appear. In every act of yours, if you observe truth and justice, then you can see your own reality revealed.

You may say that the burden of past acts and their inevitable consequences have to be borne; but the Grace of the Lord can burn that burden in a flash; the revelation of reality will, in a flash, save you from that burden.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 14, 16, 1978. Isa

THE followers of every religion, in their own way and style, call upon the One God who is Omnipresent. It is the same God who confers upon all mankind, health, prosperity, peace and happiness. No religion has a separate God showering Grace upon those who profess to abide by that faith alone! It is the destiny of man to journey from humanity to Divinity. In this pilgrimage he is bound to encounter various obstacles and trials. In order to illumine the path and help him overcome these troubles, sages, seers, realised souls, Divine personalities and Incarnations of God take birth in human form. They move among the afflicted and the seekers who have lost their way or strayed into the desert, and lead them into confidence and courage. Certain personalities are born and live out their days for this very purpose. They can be called *kaarana-janmas* (born for a purpose), for they take on *the janma* (birth) for a *kaarana* (cause, purpose). Such guides, exemplars and leaders, appear among all peoples and in all lands. They inspire faith in higher ideals, and teach in the Voice of God, counselling from the heart.

Of course there are many aspirants who by their devotion, dedication and disciplined lives, attain the vision of the Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient One. They are content with the Bliss they have won for themselves. There are others who go out to share this bliss with those beyond the pale; they guide and lead and are blessed thereby. They teach that multiplicity is a delusion and that Unity is the Reality.

The three stages of Jesus' life

Jesus was *kaarana-janma*, a Master born with a purpose, the mission of restoring love, charity and compassion in the heart of man. He had no attachment to the self, nor paid any heed to joy or sorrow, loss or gain. He had a heart that responded to the call of anguish, and he went about the land preaching the lesson of love. His life was a libation for the upliftment of humanity.

Like most seekers, he first searched for the Divine · in the objective world. But he soon realised that the world is a kaleidoscopic picture created by one's own imagination, and sought to find God within himself. His stay in the Himaalayan monasteries in Kashmir and in other centres of eastern asceticism and philosophical inquiry, gave him greater awareness. From the attitude of being a Messenger of God, he could now call himself the Son of Clod. The bond of relationship increased: the 'I' was no more some distant light or entity; the light became a part of the "I." With the body-consciousness predominant, he was a messenger. With the heart-consciousness in the ascendant, he-felt a greater nearness and dearness, and so the son-father bond seems natural at this stage.

Later as the *Aathman-consciousness* was established, Jesus could declare, "I and 'My Father are One." The three stages may be described as: "I was in the Light," "the Light was in me," and "I am the light," and may be compared to the *Dhwaitha* (dualism), *Visishtadhwaitha* (qualified non-dualism) and *Adhwaitha* (non-dualism) stages as described in *Vedhic* philosophy. The final stage is the one when all duality has been shed. This is the essence of all religious disciplines and teachings.

Jesus' original name was Isa

Jesus was honoured by the populace as Christ, for they found in his thoughts, words and deeds, no trace of ego. He had no envy or hatred, and was full of love and charity, humility and sympathy. Jesus' original name was Isa which, when repeated, is Sai. *Isa* and *Sai*, both mean

Ishwara (God), the Eternal Absolute, the *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). In the Tibetan manuscript, at the monastery where Isa spent some years, his name is written as Isha, which means the Lord of all living beings.

When Jesus proclaimed that he was the Messenger of God, he wanted to emphasise that every one is a messenger of God and has to speak, act and think like one. This is the true *Karma-Kaanda* (branch dealing with action and its reaction) of the *Vedhas*: *saadhana* (discipline) of *karma* (work), *japa* (prayer), *seva* (service) and *dhyaana* (meditation). When progress is furthered, Jesus asserted, each one can recognise all as Sons of God, Children of God, brothers and sisters of oneself, and so, deserving of worship. The *Upaasana Kaanda* (branch of *Vedhas* dealing with contemplation) is the scripture in *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion) for this stage. Finally, knowledge ripens into wisdom and the goal of *Jnaana Kaanda* (branch of *Vedhas* dealing with spiritual wisdom) is reached, when each one realises, "I and my Father are One."

Do not confine Jesus to one community

The Birthday of Jesus must be celebrated by all mankind, for such *kaarana-janmas* belong to the whole human race. They should not be confined to a single country or community. Jesus found that scholars and ritualists had befogged the true religion, He engaged himself in teaching both spirituality and morality, for education is the very light of life. Jesus found that people were running after glass beads, imagining them to be diamonds and attaching great value to them. He went round the holy shrines and discovered that they had become bazaars where Grace was being bargained and commercialised. He condemned the priesthood which tolerated and encouraged these practises. So he drew upon himself the anger of the heads of temples and monasteries. They tempted one of his disciples with 30 silver pieces, to betray him into their hands.

The Roman rulers were told that Jesus was attempting to assert himself as King and so could be punished for treason. Their insistence made the Governor order his crucifixion. When the nails were being driven into him to fix him on the Cross, Jesus heard the Voice of the Father saying, "All life is one, My dear Son. Be alike to every one," and he pleaded that those who were crucifying him may be pardoned for they knew not what they did. Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind.

Carols and candles, readings from the Bible and acting out the incidents that surrounded His Birth, are not enough to celebrate the Birth of Jesus. Jesus said that the bread taken in the 'last supper' was His Flesh, and the wine, His Blood. He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are to be treated as He Himself and that no distinction should be made. of friend or foe, we or they. Every body is His Body, sustained by the bread; every drop of blood flowing in the veins of every living being is His, animated by the activity that the wine imparted to it. That is to say, every man is Divine and has to be revered as such.

Man forgets or ignores the goal of life

You work as a messenger or servant; later, you worship, as a son does his father, and finally, you achieve the wisdom that You and He are One. That is the spiritual journey of which Jesus has shown the way in clear terms. He announced very early in life that he had come to illumine the spiritual path. Even as a bud, he emitted fragrance. He had the light in him, or else how can the tiny glow-worm light a lamp?

To elevate man, to raise the level of his consciousness, He has to incarnate as man. He has to speak to them in their own style and language, He has to teach them the methods that they can adopt and practise. Birds and beasts need no Divine Incarnation to guide them, for they have no inclination to stray away from their *dharma*. Man alone forgets or ignores the goal of life.

Christmas day, Prashanthi Nilayam, 25-12-1978

Vol. 14, 45, 1979. The way of Jesus

THERE are four types of persons---those who see only right everywhere, those who are less spiritual in their vision and so see right as right and wrong as wrong, those who shut their eyes to right and see only wrong and lastly, the worst of all, those who judge even the right to be wrong. No one brings wealth when he is born or takes it with him when he dies. Whatever riches one has accumulated have to be freely shared with others. Flowers scatter fragrance; trees offer fruits in plenty. Instead of learning the lessons they teach, man pursues his own sense-cravings, and his urge for fame and authority over others. Contentment is the most precious wealth; greed brings misery in its train. Contentment alone can lead man to the goal of life viz., the attainment of Divinity.

A tender heart is more valuable than all material possessions. When moral and spiritual excellence is gained, the divinity in man becomes patent. Vishwaamithra was a powerful king, proud of his might and the vastness of his kingdom. He wished to defeat the Sage Vasishta but could not succeed. Thus he learnt the lesson that material, physical or mental powers are too weak to win over Divine Power. So, he entered upon spiritual *saadhana* (effort) to rid his mind of anger, greed and envy. As a result, he himself became a sage.

The Kaurava brothers, a hundred of them, were intoxicated by greed for more, though they had riches in plenty and kingdoms vast in area; so, they contended with their cousins, the God-fearing and God-led Paandava brothers, who were only five in number. In the end, the Kauravas destroyed themselves to the last man and the Paandavas were blessed with victory.

Every man in the world is a messenger of God

The brothers, Hiranyaaksha and Hiranyakashipu, succeeded in securing as boons from God mastery over the elements but they misused this power and spread havoc over all the worlds. Man has to acquire mastery over the foul urges in his own mind---lust, anger, hatred, jealousy. Then only can he enjoy the Divine Peace that is his birth-right.

Every living being is on a pilgrimage---whether it is aware of it or not. The *Bhaagavatha Puraana* (Story of Glory of Divinity), says that the destiny of all beings is to return to their origin. Lord Krishna has declared in the Geetha that all beings have emerged from Him and have to merge in Him. The Sun causes clouds in the sky raising water from the sea as vapour; the waters of the sea fall as rain, the rain water accumulates and flows as streams and rivers, until it merges with the source, the sea. It is faithful to its destiny; it confronts bravely all the hurdles and obstacles on the pilgrim path. Every man has come into this world as a Messenger of God.

Jesus announced himself as a Messenger of God. He spent many years in austerities so that he could shower compassion and love on all humanity. Later, he asked himself, "Am I just a messenger, or am I more closely related to God, a part of God with the Divine as my essence?" Jesus spent twelve long years, wandering alone in deserts engaged in this inquiry. At the end of this period, he returned to the society of men and announced "I am the Son of God."

In Kali Age Judases have multiplied

At that time, the priests of the holy temples of Jerusalem had become corrupt and commercialised. They had deteriorated into proud and selfish men. Jesus condemned them and tried to root out the evil practises. For, all forms were in the eyes of Jesus, Divine Forms and he

could not tolerate any action which belied this status. So, when asked by people who he was, he could reply, "I and my Father are One." Jesus tried to teach everyone the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Tradition-minded and egoistic men considered Jesus a false prophet and they tried by every means to thwart his mission. Jesus, however, did not waver. Faced with opposition, he continued to be an example of living Truth, and to purify society. Many disciples, followed Jesus but throughout history, it has been the experience of Raama, Krishna, Jesus and Muhammad that disciples however close are seldom fully dedicated. Most are only part-time devotees. Jesus had 12 disciples, most of whom had faith in him and lived his teachings. But, Judas yielded to greed. He betrayed his Master for a mere 30 coins. He could not find joy in life after this treachery. His mind gave him no peace. He had to seek refuge in suicide.

Betrayal by people who pretend to adore is happening since ages. Corrupt, greedy and selfish people spread falsehoods about their own Masters. We hear of a Judas, 2000 years ago. But in the *Kali Age*, people are obsessed with money and Judases have multiplied. They seek to amass paltry riches whereas good character, good conduct and knowledge of God are the three real treasures to be gathered. Land and buildings, silver and gold, dollars and other currencies are temporary and trivial. They are possessions only until life lasts. But those three treasures will stay on, sustain and strengthen you until you attain union with the Infinite.

The three real treasures to be gathered

Man has mastered astronomy; he knows all about the earth. He is conversant with all that is happening in America, Russia and England. But he does not know who he is, and so, all other knowledge does not make him wise. He is eager to collect information about everything else but he never asks the question "Who am I?" though he uses the expression 'I' and 'my' freely almost always. You are the farmer; the body is the field. Sow the seeds of goodness, you can get the harvest of happiness; sow the seeds of evil, you reap the harvest of grief. You are the cause of either of these. Do not blame others or impute partiality to God. Above all, do not rely on this impermanent objective world; it is full of sorrow and change; cultivate detachment, equanimity and self-control and love.

This life is a temporary rest place

Develop knowledge about the higher levels of consciousness and the higher planes of existence. Knowledge leads to skill. From skill in using such knowledge, one acquires balance. You must recognise that this life is a stage in the long pilgrimage and that we are now at a hotel, a temporary resting place which has also a watchman. The mind is the watchman. So, do not feel permanently attached to the mind or the body. This 'negative' body has the 'positive' Divinity within it. When you become all-embracing infinite Love, the Divine will manifest in and through you. Try to be like Jesus.

Jesus was a person whose only joy was in spreading Divine Love, offering Divine Love, receiving Divine Love and living on Divine Love.

There are various theories about the birth date of Jesus based on the 'bright star that appeared at his birth.' It is visible once in 800 years, it is said. Some say he was born on the fifteenth day of September. But, he was born at 3-15 a.m. (early morning) on December 28, 1980 years ago. It was Sunday. The Star that appeared that day appears only once in 800 years. Its appearance had

nothing to do with the birth of Jesus. There is no rule that, when Divine Energy or Divine Incarnation descends on Earth, a star has to appear. That is the opinion of devotees only. But, Jesus was himself a 'Star' of infinite value, spreading brilliance of infinite dimension. Why posit another less brilliant glow?

Today is the Birth Day of Jesus, celebrated amidst December snow-falls with lights and Christmas Trees, and prayers. But it is useless to pray just one day and forget God, the rest of the year. That is an empty show; it does not emanate from the heart. We are true Christians only when we live according to the teachings of Christ and practise them in daily life. Even if we follow two teachings of his, that would be enough. Christ said, "All life is one, my dear Son! Be alike to every one."

Be engaged in doing God's work

If we truly follow this, it would be enough to fulfil our destiny. When he was on the Cross and overcome with agony, an unseen Voice said from Heaven, "Death is the Dress of Life." The body is the dress which the Divine Spirit puts on. Therefore, we should not weep when the body is worn out or falls or is injured. Death is an event, that is the very nature of the body. Men seek the cause for death but no one seeks the Divine Source of Life. Be engaged during the brief span of life in glorifying God and in doing God's Work.

God has incarnated in human form, in order to inspire man to follow higher ideals not only in India but foreign countries also. Men may have different languages and life styles but God is One and He is present everywhere. All religions speak of Him as Love and as attainable through love. Forms of Worshipping God differ, for they are shaped by time and place but love is the basic content of all the forms. The language of love is understood and spoken by all hearts. There is only one race really, and that is the race of mankind. We now consider petty distinctions of nationality, race, religion and language as vital and hold back love which must flow to every one from the heart. That was the life and message of Jesus. Nurture it in your hearts. Experience Jesus as your Messenger sent from God.

Become what you truly are

Love alone can reveal the Divinity latent in all. Love is God. Live in Love. Love lives by giving and forgiving; Self lives by getting and forgetting. Love is self-lessness; Selfishness is Love-lessness. *Do* not waste your life pursuing the narrow interests of the self. Love! Love! Become what you truly are---the embodiments of love. No matter how others treat you or what they think of you, do not worry. Follow Jesus Christ. Love for your own evolution and not for what others say. Do not imitate others. Cultivate your own life. You have your own heart, your own opinion, your ideas, your own will. Why then imitate? Imitation is human, they say; but creation is Divine. Follow your chosen path. Let your own experience of God be your guide and master. Do not go into the grave, weakly copying others. You won't find God if you search in the outside world. Your own heart shining with Love is God's Love. Follow the Master. Face the Devil. Fight to the end and finish the game. You are God. The true you is God.

You are not one person but three---the one, you think you are, the one others think you are and the one you really are. You think of yourself as your body and its sense cravings, others think of you as a personality. You are truly infinite spirit Divine. You should constantly remind yourself, "I am God" "I am God." "I am God." The day you see yourself as God, you become God.

If you think I am only human, you will be led astray. Do not allow your body and the sense to dictate your moves. Develop the inner vision. The body is the cart, the Spirit is the horse. Do not put the cart before the horse. Spiritual practice is the only means of acquiring mental peace. If all the cars in America are placed end to end, they would reach the moon; but there is no true happiness there, no peace of mind. Cultivate not riches, not comfort and luxuries, but Divine virtues. Then you become fit to receive God's Grace. Why trade permanent peace of mind for impermanent physical luxuries?

Speak sweetly; shed comfort with every glance of yours. Do not be slaves to your sensual desires. Prahlada told his father who had conquered the three worlds that he had failed to conquer lust and desire. You should conquer lust and vanquish anger. Exile from your mind greed, hate and jealousy. Dedicate your hand to the service of mankind. Jesus teaches infinite love and compassion. To resurrect love and compassion, you must kill jealousy and selfishness, purify your hearts. Earn the true mercy of Jesus. Follow the path shown by him and reach the position he holds.

From Discourse on 25-12-1979

Rules of behaviour must be observed by politicians, rulers, subjects, monks, who are leaders of the community and heads of monasteries, scholars and others, for they are exemplars and guides and their responsibilities are greater than ordinary persons.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 14, 60, 1980. The meaning of Christmas

THE meaning of *Avathaar* (Divine Incarnation) is this: to save mankind, God out of His love, affection and compassion, comes down to the level of man and arouses the Divine Consciousness in man. He makes man aware of Him in him, when He finds him desperately searching outside of himself for Him who is his very core.

In order to enable you to reach the highest goal of merging with the absolute, this chance has been granted to you as a reward for merit acquired in many previous lives. A bird needs two wings to fly; a cart needs two wheels to be pulled along. To journey towards the goal, man too needs study and steadfastness---*vidhya* (spiritual learning) and *thapas* (penance). The *Geetha* declares that among studies, the study of the *Aathma* is the holiest. It is known as *Aathma Vidhya* or *Brahma Vidhya* (science of the Self). The *Vidhya* shows the way; the *thapas* makes you reach the goal. The two are the two eyes that fulfil one purpose.

A farmer has to concentrate his efforts during certain favourable seasons, when ploughing and sowing have to be done. He cannot afford to count the cost or calculate the trouble. Rain or shine, night or day, he has to do the task, so that he can reap the harvest. So too, for you students, this is the period of life when you have to be active and alert. Your future is shaped by what you do now. Now is the very foundational stage of your life, when you prepare your mind, to meet its challenges and your intelligence, to solve its riddles.

God alone is the *Guru*, others are teachers

You are called '*Vidhyarthi*,' one who seeks *Vidhya*. But, it is a misfortune that most students seek, no *vidhya* (subjective enlightenment), but *Vishaya* (objective pleasure). Both *Guru* and *Sishya* (teacher and pupil) have fallen from the ideal. The pupil, should be the player, and the teacher, the director; the pupil should be like Arjuna, the wielder of the bow, the teacher should be like Krishna, the *Yogeshwara* (Lord of Divine Communion); the pupil should be *purusha* (person) and the *Guru* the *Purushothama* (spiritual preceptor). This is the reason why the *Guru* is exalted as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara and as *Parabrahma* (Supreme Reality) Itself.

God alone is the *guru*; others can at best be *Upaadhyayas* or *Adhyaapaks* (teachers, instructors). The *Guru* out of His infinite compassion and wisdom counsels the most beneficent path. The *shishya* (pupil) out of his infinite devotion, follows it and attains the goal. Arjuna said, after listening to the Lord's counsel, "*Karishye vachanam thava*," "I shall act according to your words." You have to be pupils like him. Then, you can live in peace and joy in this warring world of misery and demonstrate in your lives the excellence of the *Bhaaratheeya* (Indian) tradition and culture.

God is Eternal Power, Omnipotent, Omniscient. He is the cause and consequence---the potter, the clay and the pot. Without God, there can be no Universe. He willed and the Universe happened. It is His play, the manifestation of His power. Man embodies His Will, His power, His Wisdom. But, he is unaware of this glory. The cloud of ignorance veils the truth. God sends sages, saints and prophets to unveil the Truth and Himself appears as an *Avathaar* (divine incarnation) to awaken and liberate him.

Resolve to practise what all Jesus taught

Two thousand years ago, when narrow pride and thick ignorance defiled mankind, Jesus came as the embodiment of Love and compassion and lived among men, holding forth the highest ideals of life. You must pay attention to the lessons he elaborated in the various stages of his life. 'I am the Messenger of God,' he declared, first. Yes. Each individual has to accept that role and live as examples of Divine Love and Charity. The *guru* must; act as the alarm-clock; he should awaken the sleeper to his duty to himself. " *Uththishtha! jaagratha, " as the Upanishaths proclaim---* "Arise! Awake." And bear witness to the God within, in every thought, word and deed.

This day, Christmas is celebrated. Bring to mind the words he uttered, the advice he offered, the warning he gave, and decide to direct your daily lives along the path he laid down. His words must be imprinted on your hearts and you must resolve to practise all that he taught.

There are two points of view that struggle for acceptance by you---the *Paramaarthika* and the *Vyavahaarika*---the spiritual and the worldly, the reality-based and the appearance-based. After this discourse is over, when you proceed from this Hostel building towards Prashaanthi Nilayam, imagine you see a snake appearing on the road. In reality, it is only a length of rope. But, it appears as a snake and you feel a sense of terror. Your terror does not change the rope into a snake. When you apply light from a torch, you discover that the rope was ever a rope. The Universe is what appears; the Reality is Divinity, *Brahmam*. When the Light of Wisdom shines, the Truth is revealed. The Universe is enveloped by Divinity; it is the vesture. Jesus declared, "Death is the dress of life."

Jesus bore no ill-will towards any one

Jesus knew that God Wills all. So, even on the cross, when he suffered agony, he bore no ill-will towards any one and he exhorted those with him to treat all as instruments of His Will. "All are one; be alike to every one." Practise this attitude in your daily lives. Of course it is very difficult to develop unwavering faith in this great truth. The mind, as Arjuna complained, hops from belief to doubt, from one conclusion to its negation and it causes turmoil and confusion. But, there is one method by which it can be conquered.

The black-bee can bore a hole in the hardest wood. But, when dusk intervenes while it is sipping the nectar from the lotus-flower and, as a result, when the open petals close in on the bee, it finds itself imprisoned, with no hope of escape. It does not know how to deal with softness! So too, the mind can play its tricks and jump wantonly about on any arena; when placed on the lotus feet of the Lord, it becomes inactive and harmless. In order to offer the mind entirely to the Lord deep detachment from worldly desires is needed. Superficial devotion or shallow steadfastness cannot succeed. To fell the hard sandal wood tree, a heavy axe of steel is needed.

It is the privilege of this stage of life to cultivate this detachment, to subdue the vagaries of the mind, and to manifest the Divinity that is latent in you. That Divinity when expressed in action blossoms into loving service of fellow-beings. It renders the heart pure, free from pride and greed.

Be ever ready to cast the body away

Jesus wandered purposefully in lonely places for twelve long years, engaging himself in study, spiritual exercises and meditation on God. Of course, one must protect and preserve the body, which is a Divine gift, a boat equipped with instruments through which man can cross the Sea of

Perpetual Change and reach Divinity. This goal of life has to be reached before the body-boat develops leaks and disintegrates, through illness, sloth and senility. Physical, mental and spiritual health has to be fostered with vigilant care. Nevertheless, 'one' must be ever ready to east the body away in defence of *dharmā* or *dhaiva* (goodness or God). Have Jesus as your ideal for this. He exhorted all to observe the basically valid teachings of the ancient scriptures and to derive peace and joy therefrom.

The Jews held the rituals and regulations laid down by the prophets in the scriptural texts as valid for all time and so, they held the teachings of Jesus as wrong. They were not moved by personal hatred towards Jesus.

The problem arises in every age---the conflict between the letter and the spirit---the doctrines that are held sacred, the *manthra* (sacred formula) that is held to be holy, the various do's and don'ts that have to be scrupulously followed, and the underlying truth. In the *Vedhic* Faith also, one can find today this conflict between the upholders of ancient tradition and the promoters of deeper understanding. These later also base their teachings on the *Vedhas*.

Thought, word and deed must be one

The best way to resolve the confusions and conflicts that hamper moral, ethical, material, technological and spiritual progress is for man to live as fully as man ought to, and rise to the height of the Divine that is his Reality. That is the one Eternal, Universal teaching. The thoughts that the intellect frames must be reflected as feelings in the mind and translated into action by the hands. Thought, word, and deed must be coordinated. They must fulfil one another. The sign of a holy person or *Maanava* is, "*Manasyekam Vaachasyekam Karmanyekam*," "*One mind, one word, one act*." The three are one, not different.

Christmas means the Mass that is held on the birthday of Christ. It is fundamentally a sacred religious rite. To deal with it as if it is a festival for drinking and dancing or even for recalling Jesus to memory is very wrong. The day must be spent in prayer; not merely this day, but cultivate the *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) of prayer as a normal way of life. Prayers for worldly ends do not reach God. They will reach only those deities who deal with such restricted spheres. But, all prayers arising from pure love, unselfish eagerness to render service and hearts that are all-inclusive will reach God. For, God is the very Embodiment of love. We know that we have to see the Moon only through Moonlight. So too, God who is love can be seen and realised only through love. Love is God, Live in Love. That is the Message I give you.

College Hostel, Vidhyaagiri, 24-12-1980

Above all, recognise this truth: Sai is in all. When you hate another, you are hating Sai; when you hate Sai, you are hating yourself. When you inflict pain on another name, remember that the other is yourself, in another form, with another name.

Envy causes pain on those who are envied. When another's fortune is green, why should your eyes be red? Why get wild when another eats his fill?

Give up this vice of envy; be happy when another is happy. That is more pleasing to the Lord than all the manthras you recite, or all

the flowers you heap on his picture or image, or even the hours you spend in japam or dhyaanam (silent recitation of holy words or meditation).

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 15, 37, 1981. Parama prema

*The Lord is Love, His Form is Love,
All beings are Love, Love saves and serves,
Through Love alone can Good arise.
Love reveals the God in all.*

Love binds one person to another. Love attaches one thing to another. Without Love the Universe is naught. The highest Love makes us aware of the Lord in every one. The Lord is equally present in all. Life is Love; Love is Life. Without God, deprived of God, nothing and nobody can exist. We live on and through the Divine Will. It is His will that operates as Love, in each of us. It is He who prompts the prayer, "Let all the worlds be happy." For, He makes us aware that the God we adore, the God we love, the God we live by, is in every other being as Love. Thus Love expands and encompasses all creation.

Looking a little closer, we discover that life itself is Love. They are not two but one. Love is the very nature of life, as burning is the nature of fire, or wetness of water, or sweetness of sugar. We tend a plant only when the leaves are green; when they become dry and the plant becomes a life-less stick, we stop loving it. Love lasts as long as life exists. The mother is loved as long as there is life in her; when life departs, we bury her without the least compunction. Love is bound with life. In fact, Love is Life. The person with no Love to share is as bad as dead. This is the reason why love expands in an ever widening circle.

Love is the fruit of life. The fruit has three components' the skin, the juicy kernel and the seed. To experience the fruit, we have first to remove the skin. The skin represents egoism, the 'I' feeling, the excluding, limiting, individualising principle. The seed represents 'selfishness', the 'mine' feeling, the possessive, the greedy, desireful principle. This too has to be discarded. What remains is the sweet juice, the *rasa*, which the *Upanishads* describe as Divine, the Love Supreme. *Parama prema* is *Jyothi*, *Amrutham*, *Brahma*: "*Aapo Jyotheeraso amrutham Brahma.*" Everyone has the right to partake of this nectarine prema and to share it with others. No one is excluded on the basis of race, caste, creed or place of origin. The only condition is: "Have the skin and the seed been removed?"

Give Love to God and be liberated from worry

When the Love Principle is known and practised, man will be free from anxiety and fear. Imagine your visiting a friend in a city and planning to stay with him for ten days. You have some money with you, and you are afraid to carry it about with you. Now, if you have handed over the purse to your friend for safe-keeping, you can happily go round, to all the places in the city and suburbs you long to visit. You can roam through the busiest market, with no trace of fear. The purse you had is Love; give it all to God. He will liberate you from worry, anxiety and fear.

Through *japa*, *dhyana* and *seva saadhana*, you have to cultivate Love towards God. Take Dhruva, for example. He prayed and practised austerities in order to induce God to grant him the rulership of the Kingdom. But when God appeared as Vishnu before him, he said, "Lord! I do not desire the Kingdom. I want you and you only." Similarly in the preliminary stages, one prays

for worldly boons and material gain, but as thoughts get clarified and purified, one desires just one boon from the Lord---He Himself!

For, God is the entity closest to man, dearest to man. Your mother and father might be a little afar but God is right with you, in you. Even if you do not love Him, He will not depart from you or move afar. "*Anoraniyaan*" (smaller than the atom) say the *Vedhas*. He becomes "*Mahathomaheeyaan*," expanding beyond the cosmos and filling all with grace. In every cell. He will be in you. You can earn this awareness through intense Love.

Good works always provoke the wicked

Jesus was compassion (*karuna*) come in human form. He spread the spirit of compassion and conferred solace on the distressed and the suffering. Noticing the torture of birds and beasts at the Temple in Jerusalem, he reprimanded the vendors and drove them out of the precincts. He drew upon himself the anger of the priests.

Good works always provoke the wicked. But one should not falter or fear when opposition obstructs. The challenge gives joy; it evokes hidden sources of strength; it brings down Grace to reinforce the effort. Pleasure springs during the interval between two pains. One has to struggle with difficulties in order to taste the delight of victory. Jesus was the target for many mighty obstacles and he braved them all. As a result, his name and story and message are shedding splendrous light all over the world now.

Not Jesus only, every Prophet, Messenger of God, Teacher of Truth and Spiritual Leader had to wade through ridicule, neglect and persecution. Though a diamond is cast in a dust bin, its lustre remains; its price will not diminish. Though a sweet pumpkin grows on a thorny fence, its taste remains; its attraction will not diminish. Even if a peacock's egg is hatched in a fowl-roost, its charm remains and its nature does not change.

The Divine, though it moves among all the sundry, can never be affected or deflected. Envious folk heaped insults on Jesus. Even among his disciples, some betrayed him and deserted him. Self-dominated people turn envious at greatness and goodness. But *since prema, the prema* of Jesus, had no trace of self in it, Jesus was unafraid. The loveless are enveloped in fear. Love instills courage and promotes adventure. It delights in daring. If you follow the Master, you can face the devil, fight to the end and finish the game.

Love must bind all believers together

Jesus was Love. *Sathya Sai* too is Love. That explains the gathering of Christians of all sects, which we see here. In Rome today, Catholics gather to celebrate the Advent of Jesus. The Protestants celebrate it by themselves in their churches. The *Jews* are not welcomed anywhere. But, in the Presence of *Sathya Sai*, all are equally welcome. The *Jews* arraigned Jesus and demanded that he should be punished; in this Presence, *Jews* are adoring that very Jesus. The *prema* of *Sathya Sai* has transformed and transcended those memories. It made them realise that there is only one caste, the caste of Humanity, there is only one religion, the Religion of Love.

A few moments ago, AI Drucker spoke to you on Jesus Christ. He got the courage and the wisdom to offer homage to Christ, because of the impact of Swaami's Presence. He understands that there is only one God and that God is omnipresent. Names and forms are different naturally; but they are all aspects of the *ONE*. Love must bind all believers together; not only believers but non-believers too must be loved and served as His images.

Love must be manifested as Service, *Seva*. *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. Jesus pleaded for Compassion. Compassion was His Message. He was sorely distressed at the sight of the poor. This day, Jesus is worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Sai is being worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Every where, pomp, pageantry, hollow exhibitionism! Lectures, Lectures, Lectures! No activity, no love, no *seva*. Heroes while lecturing, zeros while putting what is said into practice. Develop Compassion. Live in Love. Be Good; do Good and see Good. This is the way to God.

Christmas Day, 1981, Poornachandra Auditorium

*God has endowed
you with hunger and
He supplies the food.
He has endowed you
with illness, and
He grows the species you need.
Your duty is to see that you get the
proper hunger and the right illness
and use the appropriate food or drug.
Sathya Sai Baaba*

Vol. 15, 59, 1982. Everyone is a son of God

*He who is known as Allah by Muslims,
As Jevovah 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-Aathma.*

Embodiments of Love! Nature confers, like heat and cold, 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 Geetha. The Geetha says: *Samathwam Yogam* uchyathe. (Equanimity, equal-mindedness, steadiness, is known as yoga).

The Geetha 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, praise and criticism, are 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 which demonstrate distinct characteristics. Over millennia, Bhaarath 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 *Vedha!* This truth must be implanted in the mind by discriminating reason. That is why Shri Krishna says, "I am discrimination in the human being." That is the distinct feature of man.

In the *Bhaagavatha Puraana* 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 does get 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 *Aathma* is delight; all that concerns the self is misery. This is the *Upanishadhic* declaration. Man loses himself in fights and factions, greed and gain, and ignores the source, the substance which 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 which 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 every where at all times. He need not be sought anywhere, any time. 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, 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 ought to be really 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 Dharmatruue.

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 relieve 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 which 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 the 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 held forth.

Today, man runs after desires; 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 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 which 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, fraternity for enmity. To behave otherwise is a sign of weakness, of want of courage, of lack of faith in human goodness. Jesus won in this holy struggle. On this day, we 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 on to 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; 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 *Bhakthi*; to have Jesus awakened in us is the path *of Jnaana*. Jesus was a messenger of God; but note this also' all of you are 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 Prashanthi Nilayam. Having come from such long distances, undergone so much troubles on the way, and stayed here, you have to take with you from here at least a few subline, 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 the 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, "Swaami! Swaami !" 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, every one 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, the thing eaten is the same. The eating has become routine, repetitive, mechanical, a kind of compulsive habit.

You too, like every one 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 *Dhyan*, you are beside yourself with joy: "O! Swaami 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'etre* of existence in the body. This is what Jesus taught by precept and example to mankind, the *Aathmic* principle which 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.

Christmas Day, Prashanthi Nilayam, 25-1-1982

Vol. 17, 30, 1984. Secure God's Love

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine *Aathma*! Forgetting his true nature man spends his life in the pursuit and enjoyment of meretricious and evanescent sensuous pleasures and mundane desires. Does man secure peace, however much he may succeed in indulging in worldly pleasures? No. Ultimately he ends his life in discontent and despair. Ignoring the pure, eternal, infinite Divine Truth in him, man fosters animal and demonic traits.

What is the reason for this betrayal of his true nature, which renders his life meaningless? It is because he neglects the code governing life based on restraints and righteousness. The old saying is: "Dharma (righteousness) is at the root of everything. It is the highest virtue." Morality is the corollary to *Dharma*. Morality does not merely mean the observance of certain rules in the work-a-day world. Morality means adherence to the straight and sacred path of right conduct. Morality is the blossoming of good conduct. It is the royal road to the acme of human achievement. The honour of the community rests upon morality. Without morals a community decays. Morality alone makes or mars the community.

True love has no selfishness in it

Only in an individual who is morally strong does the human personality find its best expression. The term personality can be applied only to one who manifests the hidden unmanifested divinity within him by his conduct. Mere human form does not make one a human personality. It is the behaviour that counts. Only those who lead well-regulated lives can be regarded as real human beings manifesting their true divine nature. Such great historical personages as Manu, Nala, Raghu, Bali and Harischandra were examples of the highest expressions of human excellence. Jesus was also one such personality who manifested the perfection man is capable of. Prophet Mohammed was another historic figure who led a rigorous life of righteousness and spiritual endeavour.

Love is another name for Dharma. True Love is priceless. It has no trace of selfishness in it. It does not change. It is pure and unsullied. It always grows and never diminishes. It is spontaneous. The love of God is of -such a nature: it is spontaneous, free from selfishness, unwavering, and always full. Ordinary human love is motivated by selfish considerations. It is liable to change owing to changes in time and circumstance. For persons immersed in such love, it is difficult to comprehend or realise the greatness of Divine Love. The English philosopher Bacon has pointed out how the love of God is all-encompassing and unchanging and how it can grow into Universal love.

Sai's incomparable love to one and all

Love wears the mantle of Truth. And one wedded to Truth is ever young and vigorous. The *Upanishaths* have declared that the votary of truth will not know old age. The Bible also declares that the body gets fortified by adherence to truth. Truth should not be confined to speech. It must express itself in action. Only the one who is truthful in word and deed can be esteemed as a genuine human being, according to Prophet Mohammed. Buddhism also lays down that everyone, irrespective of sex or country, must live up to truth.

You may believe in it or not. I must tell you that total adherence to truth, absolute selflessness, universality and spontaneous outpouring of love are to be seen only in Sai and nowhere else. Sai has not an iota of self-interest. Sai is motiveless. Sai deals with *saadhaks* (spiritual aspirants)

according to their deserts. Sai will continue to love even those who revile Him. Sai will not forget anyone, even if he forgets Sai. But occasionally, Sai will appear to ignore those who may have forgotten Sai, acted against His injunctions, set at naught Sai ideals or traduced Sai. From this, some persons may imagine that Swaami is angry with some person or dissatisfied with some others. It is not without reason that Sai avoids meeting or talking to some persons. I do not wish to waste My words on persons, who do not respect Sai's directives or follow Sai's ideals. I do not wish to speak to those who have no regard for My words. That does not mean I have no love towards them.

Strive to understand the nature of God's Love

Love will not submit to the forces of envy or hatred however powerful they may be. Love will prevail over them. Once when Buddha was travelling, he was confronted by a demoness with a sword in hand. "Oh Buddha! Your Love must submit today to my envy. Your life will end today." Buddha answered her, with a smile: "I will not submit to envy or hatred. I am not affected by praise or blame or ridicule. I love even you who bear such illwill towards *Me*." When the demoness heard these words, she turned into a dove and vanished.

Those who hate others are ultimately consumed by their own hatred. Those filled with envy ultimately meet their end in it. Richard, a character in one of Shakespeare's plays was filled with envy and could not bear to see any one superior or better looking than himself. In the end, he was a victim of his own envy and died miserably. Similar examples-can be found in the Indian epics. Bhasmaasura, who got a boon from Shiva that any one on whom he placed his palm should be reduced to ashes, was himself reduced to ashes when he placed his palm over his head.

In the pursuit of the good and godly life, one may encounter many difficulties and disturbances. Many doubts and questions crop up. It is only when these difficulties are faced squarely and the troubles are borne with patience and fortitude that we can understand the true nature of Reality. You should not allow 'yourselves to be overwhelmed in any way by difficulties and sorrows, doubts and disappointments. You must have faith. Have confidence in yourself and strive to understand well the nature of God's love. To secure that love is the sacred goal of human life. The transforming power of Love is boundless. St.Paul, who was originally an inveterate critic of Jesus, was transformed by Christ's love into the greatest apostle of Jesus.

Man's evil actions bring discredit to human species

The animosity which some persons show towards good and godly people can be traced to one or other of three factors. In the first category are those who have no faith in God or goodness and hence oppose anything that is good or godly. In the second category are those who turn against God because their desires or ambitions have not been fulfilled. The third category are those who are envious by nature and cannot tolerate anything good. Other than these three types, there is a fourth type composed of persons who think of God or seek God's favour when they are in trouble or difficulties and who forget God immediately after their troubles are over or their desires have been fulfilled.

It is unfortunate that man, who is inherently Divine in his origin and in whom the Aathma resides as the indwelling witness, is caught up today in unrighteous and evil actions and is bringing discredit to the human species. In the Dark Ages, when men indulged in wicked and cruel actions and behaved like demons or wild beasts, there might be some excuse. But in the present age, when such great advances have been made in science and technology and when people call

themselves civilised, if inhuman practices are predominant and wickedness and ingratitude are the rule, one is compelled to ask whether these persons are human beings or demons!

The irony of the present situation is that, on the one side, governments are piling up monstrous lethal weapons, indulging in demonical actions and promoting conflicts among nations, while at international gatherings they proclaim their desire for peace. Is there any meaning in this? Why should those who crave for peace encourage conflicts? If they genuinely desire peace, they should pursue policies which will be conducive to the promotion of peace.

Everyone should realise that God is One

The foremost need today is for everyone to realise that God is One. This is what Jesus and Mahomed proclaimed. The word "*Allah*" really means the One Supreme which contains everything in the Universe. This is the primary message of the *Vedhas* (ancient sacred scriptures): "*Om ithyekaaksharam Brahma*"---the single letter Om is *Brahmam*.

The essential truth of all religions is that God is one. Jesus proclaimed the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. One can have only one father not two. When Jesus was born three wise men followed a star to reach his place of birth. Seeing the new-born babe they bowed to the divine child in their hearts. Before leaving, each of them spoke about the child as follows to the parents. One sage told Mary: "He loveth God." The second sage said: "God loveth him." The third man said: "He is God." What is the inner significance of these three pronouncements about Jesus? The first statement that "He loveth God" contains the implication that Jesus is a messenger of God. A messenger can love his master, but the master may not so easily love his messenger. The second statement declared that "God loves him (Jesus)."

Why? Because he is the son of God. The third statement "He is God" bears out what Jesus said: "I and my Father are One." It means that as the Son of God he is entitled to acquire his Father's place. The unity of Father and Son was proclaimed by the third sage.

All human beings are "messengers of God"

The inner meaning of all this is that every human being in the world is a messenger of God. What does this signify? What is the message that the human being is expected to convey? That he is a "messenger of God," not of the devil. A messenger of God must propagate the divine teachings of God to the world. You have no right to call yourselves messengers of God if your actions are bad, your thoughts are evil and you preach wrong ideas. Such persons can only be called agents of the Devil.

From today, "as messengers of *God*," you have to demonstrate to the world the purity, the Truth and the Love that the Divine symbolises. When you lead a life of purity and morality, you are entitled to regard yourselves as "Sons of God." God is the embodiment of Love and you should not do anything which is contrary to the love that God represents. You should develop those good qualities which can make you worthy "sons of God."

In the Bible it is recorded that Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. When they asked him why He was doing so, Jesus answered: "I am washing your feet as your servant, so that you may learn to serve the world." Every man is, to begin with, a messenger-of God. When he fulfills his duties as a messenger, he realises that he is a son of God and then achieves oneness with the Divine.

God's love is boundless and Universal, unlike human love, which is narrow and selfish. Swaami's love is "beyond reason." It is unlimited and unchanging. I am promoting love all around through

My love. Those of you who have been nourished by this love should not deprive yourselves of its beneficence. I do not seek anything. I impose no hardships on anyone. In such a situation, if you understand the real nature of Swaami's love and utilise that love to transform yourselves into embodiments of love, you will be setting an example to the world.

Bhagavan's Christmas Day discourse at Puurnachandra

Auditorium, Prashanthi Nilayam, 25-12-1984

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 Bhakthi; to have Jesus awakened in us is the path of Jnaana. Jesus was a messenger of God; but note this also: all of you are 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.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 18, 30, 1985. One God : basic truth of all faiths

ALL religions, all scriptures, all spiritual teachings point only to one truth--the Unity of Dignity. You may profess whatever faith you like. But you should not disparage another's beliefs. It is a travesty of devotion.

The propaganda, indulged in by some propagators of Christianity, casting aspersions on other faiths, does great harm to the personality of Jesus.

Oh man! Through good deeds and sacrifice

Foster the feeling of Love

Get rid of evil traits

And lead a worthy life.

Embodiments of Love! There is nothing more precious in the world than Time. You should not waste even a single minute of it. Men today tend to waste their time in selfish pursuits instead of devoting it to selfless service. They are eager to receive help from others, but have no desire to render help.

There are two types of human beings--the degraded and the sublime. The degraded are those who seek or receive things from others and not only forget to repay the obligation, but even try to harm those who have helped them. The sublime are those whose natural trait is to go to the help of others. If they give a word they will try to honour it whatever the difficulties and obstacles. They will not go back on their pledges, regardless of what others may say or do.

Journey to the Divine

The Bharatiya Culture which laid emphasis on the four Purusharthas (the basic aims of life--Dharma, Artha, *Kama* and *Moksha*), looked upon life as a journey to the Divine---the attainment of *Moksha* (Liberation). But how can men caught up in the quest for wealth and sensuous pleasures develop the desire for *Moksha*? Man today makes no attempt to discover his true nature or his real destiny. Forgetting the great truths given to the world by Bharatiya sages and seers, men are leading utterly meaningless lives, unaware of the potentiality of the human to become the Divine.

There is, for instance, the simple gesture of folding hands when one greets another in offering "*Namaskar*." What is the inner significance of this gesture? For one thing, the coming together of the two palms is a demonstration of the unity that subsumes the multiplicity. For another, it represents the offering of the five sense organs and the five organs of action to the Lord as an act of surrender. The Muslims use the term *Salaam* as form of greeting. What does the word mean? "*Sa*" refers to "*Sat*", the Lord who is the embodiment of Truth, Awareness and Bliss (*Sat-Chith-Ananda*); "*La*" means "*layam*" (mergence). *Salaam* means merging in the Supreme who is also the embodiment of Truth and Bliss. The Christians also have similar expressions for indicating submission to the Divine.

The Basic Truth

All faiths have emphasized one common factor-- that there is only One God and Truth is His form. There are no differences between Hindus, Muslims and Christians on this basic concept.

All religions, all scriptures, all spiritual teachings point only to one truth---the unity of Divinity. Instead of realising this, men are lost in wrong paths.

Jesus sacrificed his life for the regeneration and welfare of mankind. Today there are some who exaggerate the so-called differences between different faiths and, for their own selfish purposes, exploit these differences and thereby bring a bad name to the great founders of these religions, who were spiritual giants. No prophet or messiah asked his followers to hate other religions or the followers of other faiths. Every religion has declared that God is One and that the Divine dwells in every being. Jesus also proclaimed the truth that the One Spirit resides in all beings. When Jesus was addressing the Jews, an ethereal voice declared: "All lives are one, my dear Son. Be alike to everyone." When Jesus was being crucified, the same ethereal voice declared that the human body is only a vesture for the Spirit. The body is subject to constant change. But the indwelling Spirit is immortal. This was the truth proclaimed by Vedanta when it said: "The body is a temple in which the Eternal Spirit resides as the Indweller." The inner meaning of this is that wherever you may go, the Eternal Spirit remains with you. You must regard the body as the temple of the Spirit; bear in mind that Divinity is ever within you. Only when you realise this truth can you begin to experience the Divine.

Do not decry other religious faiths

Whether in Hinduism or Buddhism, Jainism or Sikhism, Christianity or Islam, Divinity is One and ONE ONLY. Those who profess great love for their particular religion are indulging in make-believe when they assume that their religion is superior to that of others. Hindus regard Hinduism as the greatest religion. Wherein lies its greatness? If you declare that the God of all religions is One, why claim superiority for Hinduism and decry other religions? Does that bespeak your love for Hinduism? This applies also to those professing Christianity. They say: "We are Christians. We believe in the unique divinity of Jesus. There is no other divine Saviour." One may claim that Jesus is Divine. But is he entitled to deride other religions? No religion should allow decrying of other faiths. It is not a religion at all that cavils at other religions. It is a form of arrogance. The great saints who worshipped Christ or Rama or Krishna or Allah were inspired by their profound teachings. But how many of the followers of these faiths live up to these teachings today? If the teachings of the Founder of a religion are not followed, can it be called a religion? Those who, in the name of religion, further their selfish interests are bringing discredit on the founder of the religion.

The first thing to be learnt is that THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD. Men may be different in form and name and colour and their country and historical circumstances may vary. But, God has no such differences. Hence, you should not cavil at any religion or attack it or deride it. You may profess whatever faith you like. But, you should not disparage another's beliefs. It is a travesty of devotion. Sri Krishna says in the Gita that the mark of a true devotee is absence of illwill towards anyone (*Adweshtaa Sarva-boothaanaam*). We must respect the divine that is in every creature.

Religious intolerance

It is a characteristic of the *Kali Age* that one religion is pitted against another. This only reveals the small-mindedness of the followers and is not the fault of the founders. It stems from envious intolerance and egoistic conceit. These afflictions prevent one from understanding his own religion, while condemning that of others.

No one should cast aspersions on the deities or founders of other faiths. All of them are worthy of worship. It is narrow-minded pettiness to say Jesus is great and Rama or Krishna is small or vice versa. Such misguided propaganda is puerile and demeaning. It is not an index of true devotion. It is a kind of mental aberration.

We are all aware of the kind of selfless service which birds, animals and trees are rendering to man. But we see many men who out of selfishness are not only ungrateful to their community, their parents and their *Gurus*, but even to God. Such persons can never come to anything good. They do not realise the truth of the saying, "As you sow, so shall you reap." If you have good thoughts and do good deeds, they multiply like good seeds sown in a well-manured field. But if you fill your heart with bad feelings, bad thoughts will multiply many-fold.

The meaning of true devotion

You must make continuous effort to cultivate your heart on right lines. *Karma Yoga* and *Jnana Yoga* are considered important for this purpose. But these disciplines are not easy to practise. *Bhakti Yoga*, the path of devotion, is superior to these. The devotee seeks to enjoy the bliss of continuous contemplation of the Divine and does not even desire *Moksha* merge in the Divine.

Devotion means giving up all other desires and dedicating all actions and thoughts to God. When you offer every act of yours to God, it becomes worship. Everything you do must be done as an offering to God. The body has been described as the temple of God. You must fill yourself with the feeling that God is in you, beside you, around you, and with you wherever you go. When you love God with this consciousness, the love results in Self-realisation.

There are two forms of Love. One binds you to God. The other binds you to the world. The mind is responsible for either of these states. It is like a lock. If you turn the key to the right, the lock opens. If you turn the key to the left, it gets locked. The heart is the key to the lock of the mind. If you turn the key towards the world, you have attachment (bondage). You must see that desire and hatred do not get lodged in the mind. Bear no ill-will towards anyone. Avoid the company of those who are evil-minded. By cultivating the company of the good, you can raise yourself, because your bad qualities get diluted by association with the good, like sewage water when it enters the sea.

Good company takes one near to God

In the Ramayana, we see that by his association with Hanuman, Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana, was transformed into a devotee of the Lord. On the other hand, Kaikeyi, because of the influences of the evil-minded Manthara, brought infamy and widowhood upon herself and estranged herself from her noble son Bharata.

In the Mahabharata, we have the example of Dharmaraja, who had to endure many difficulties and humiliations because of indulgence in gambling with dice during a brief association with the wicked Kauravas. Association with the evil-minded can lead to endless troubles. Pay any price to avoid the company of the bad. Pay any price to acquire the company of the good. The company of the good takes you near to God. *Sadhana* makes you dear to the Lord. When you are near and dear you become one with God. When you have realised God, you have secured everything. Without God, everything else is valueless.

There are many who are deeply devoted to Jesus. Their duty is to glorify the great message of Jesus. The most important message of Jesus is the establishment of "Peace on Earth and goodwill

among men." Without peace, mankind cannot achieve progress in any sphere---material, spiritual or moral.

Jesus's vital message to mankind

In the *Treta Yuga*, Sri Rama came to establish the reign of *Sathya and Dharma* (Truth and Righteousness). In the *Dwapara Yuga*, Sri Krishna came with the mission to promote *Prema and Shanthi* (Love and Peace). In the *Kali Yuga* {the present yuga, *Sathya Dharma Shanthi and Prema* are the purposes of the Divine Mission. Hence you must make these four the guiding principles of your life. When you adhere to these four principles, *Ahimsa* (Non-violence) issues as a natural result. There is no use in merely invoking the name of Jesus and praying to Him without regard to His most vital message: "God is in everyone. Do not revile anyone. Do not cause harm to anyone." This was Jesus's greatest message.

At present there is a growing tendency among propagators of the Christian faith to cast aspersions on other religions. Money is being spent lavishly to spread Christianity. None of you should have any part in such activities. This type of propaganda does great harm to the personality of Jesus, Jesus was a supremely pure and sacred person. To forget Jesus's teachings and to profess love for Him is no love at all. You must all remember: "God is One. Love is God. Live in Love." Only by this means can humanity, despite the many divisions that exist at present, be unified. Absorb the teachings of all the great seers and prophets. Do not despise anyone. Everyone is entitled to accept what is good from any source. Differences of creed and caste are irrelevant. There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one religion, the religion of Love. There is only one language, the language of the heart. There is only one God, He is omnipresent.

Develop a broad outlook

No quarter should be given for propaganda which sets up one religion against another. All the diverse communities in the nation should be united. Mankind should become one family. The world will then become a paradise. If differences are allowed to grow, the nation will disintegrate. It is said that atom bombs will reduce the world to ashes. But those who are promoting religious bigotry and hatred are doing worse damage than what the atom bombs can do. They are destroying the love and compassion in human hearts. They are breaking up mankind into fragments. There is no greater sin than this.

What the world needs today is the redeeming and unifying force of love---love which continually expands and embraces more and more people. By giving up narrow ideas regarding one's religion, nation or caste, by developing a broad outlook and cultivating the company of the good, you can elevate your life and make it meaningful and satisfying. Many of you have come from distant countries at great expense. You must make good use of your stay here by cultivating good company, imbibing good thoughts, developing a large-hearted attitude towards all, taking to heart the wise words of elders and trying to put into practice at least some of their teachings. Otherwise, you will have wasted both life and money.

I wish you all happiness.

Christmas Day Discourse at Brindavan, on 25-12-1985.

The word Dharma, which is really bound up with an infinite variety of meanings, is being inadequately described by one word, duty, in modern age. Duty is something which is connected with an individual, a predicament, or with a particular time or country. On the other hand, Dharma is eternal, the same for everyone, everywhere. It expresses the significance of the inner Atma. The birth place of Dharma is the heart. What emanates from the heart as a pure idea, when translated into action will be called Dharma.

BABA

Vol. 19, 28, 1986. Truth and Faith

SATHYAM *Jnanam, Anantham Brahma*. (Truth, Wisdom, Beginning-less and Endless *Brahma*). *Brahmam* manifested first as *Akasa* (Space); the *Akasa* concretised as *Vayu* (the Atmosphere); the Atmosphere revealed the Fire characterised by Warmth and Energy; fire yielded water; from water, solid matter, earth was produced. Plants grew on earth and fostered man with food. This chain links man with *Brahmam* and persistently draws man up to his distant source.

The gross body of man sustained by food encases the subtle mental and the subtler intellect enclosing the still subtler, *Ananda*, the deepest delight, the innermost urge in man. The progress from the gross corporeal body, which depends on food through the incorporeal sheaths of *Prana*, Mind and intellect until the *Ananda* core is the summum bonum of human existence.

Living beings concern themselves, mostly with only the food sheath, the breath sheath and the mental sheath, they do not have the capacity to transcend the vagaries and volitions of the mind and the memories stored therein. They are promoted more by instinct and impulse, rather than by intellect, which enables one to discriminate and discard what is harmful and hollow. Man alone can exercise this faculty and decide on a course of action which can lead him to *Ananda*.

Great need to cultivate a broad outlook

But, man seldom uses this faculty or benefits by it. He gets lost in a maze of multiplying desires and earns, instead of *Ananda*, frustration and despair. The *Ananda* (Bliss), for which he is equipped and entitled, eludes him. *Ananda* is Divine. Caught in the turbulence of the worldly stream, he ignores and forgets his inherent hunger and the need to acquire the awareness of the Divinity within.

The destiny of a nation or community is dependent on the moral fibre of the people. Their character must be deep-rooted in Faith and in Truth: Truth must be revealed as unity of Thought, Word and Deed. Jesus emphasised in his teachings the importance of Faith and the damage and the danger of hypocrisy. Joining both palms together and offering *namsakar* is an act of dedication of one's thought and speech. The greeting "Salaam" too is a symbol of surrendering all three.

Christ proclaimed that God is all powerful and omnipresent, the One without a second. His teachings have to be interpreted, understood and followed from the universal point of view. This concept of God should not be narrowed down in an exclusive attitude of mind. There is great need, in a world broken into racial and religious units, to cultivate a broad outlook and large hearted attitudes. Narrow loyalties cause friction and conflict. This is the primary message of Jesus. It grew in him by stages. He looked upon himself, at first, only as a Messenger of God. Later, sensing closer relationship with God, he announced himself as the Son of God. As the awareness of Self developed, through contacts and meditation, he realised his identity with God, and he could assert, "I and my Father are One."

Path of Love is a means of merger

Jesus advised one of his foremost disciples, Peter to live in love, for Love is God. Man can experience God only when he becomes the embodiment of Love, which doesn't seek anything or expect even gratitude in return, Love which becomes sacrifice and service, spontaneously. When Peter listened to such exhortations from the Master, he found a new joy welling up within him and a new meaning in the word joy. 'J' meant Jesus and the letter directed him to love Jesus first.

'O' meant others who must be loved next. 'Y' meant yourself who ought to be loved only last. But, look at the human condition today. Man loves himself first, others next and Jesus last!

When God occupies the mind, the objective world or nature which is only the product of the mind loses its validity and man, the wave on the ocean, lapses in his source. The individual self and the omniself merge in Unity. Every religion seeks to present this basic truth about God, Nature and Man. Every creed is in essence highlighting this fact and the path of Love as the means of merger. So one must respect all creeds and faiths. They are beacons of light guiding pilgrims along the many paths to the Universal Absolute.

Welcome the chance for sacrificing

The three major paths are known as *Karma, Bhakti and Jnana*. There are many rivers in this land which act as channels for carrying life blood to the valleys and plains, like the Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri. Of these, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswathi have symbolised, since ages, the three spiritual paths to God-realisation. The Ganga represents *Nishkama Karma* or *Karma Yoga* (selfless activity). The Yamuna proclaims the glory of Divine Love, or the path of *Bhakti*. Saraswathi which flows underground, unseen represents the *Jnana Marga*, or the path of relentless inquiry unto the reality. The goal of the inquiry is the discovery of the One without a second--*Adwaita Darsanam, Jnanam*--of the unity that appears as Diversity. The junction of these three rivers summarises for every child of Bharath, his three duties to himself--disinterested service to fellow-men as an inescapable obligation, dedication and devotion towards God and achievement of constant awareness of the One that manifests as many.

The body is the temple of God and therefore it has to be maintained, unsuffered by disease and distress. It has not been offered to man for catering to one's selfish vagaries. Jesus sanctified his body by sacrificing it for saving others. He was conscious of that supreme purpose and duty. With faith in the one-ness of humanity, he stood against opponents and critics and confronted their onslaughts. Every saint and prophet who strove to uplift the downtrodden and open the eyes of the blind to the splendour of God and Grace, had to be ready and willing for the ultimate sacrifice. One has to expect trouble and welcome the chance for sacrificing all that one clings to, while one is upholding Truth and righteousness. Faith in God is the bedrock that can save man from downfall.

When Rama was exiled into the forest, he paid no consideration to the privations he had to encounter there. He was so devoted to *Dharma* that he was unaffected by events. He allowed the vicissitudes of life to flow along, without harming him. The Pandavas are examples to illustrate how calamities and crises can be overcome by faith in God and the equanimity it confers.

God is in search of the genuine devotee

Likewise, Jesus demonstrated and preached the power of faith and, ultimately, invited on himself the supreme sacrifice of life itself. When his disciples started abusing his tormentors, his voice warned them to desist. "All are one, my son! Be alike to everyone." By a vision he granted to Paul who was reviling him, he transformed him into a penitent disciple, full of faith and ardour.

It is only when we look upon the universe as permeated by God that we acquire the strength to fight the forces of evil. Many persons who engage themselves in prayers and pilgrimages for years wonder why they have not been able to realise God. It is unnecessary to go round the world searching for God. God, is in search of the genuine devotee. The devotee who is conscious of the omnipresence of God will find Him everywhere. He must have the firm conviction that there is

no place where God is not present. That is the real mark of devotion. Meditation and prayer have value as means of purifying oneself. But they do not lead to God-realisation. Unwavering faith in God grants inexpressible Bliss. One should not give way to doubts which undermine faith.

The power of Love is infinite. It can conquer anything. Once while Lord Buddha was journeying, he was confronted by a demoness who threatened to kill him. Smilingly, Buddha said: "You are not a demon; you are a deity! I love you even if you behave like a demon." Hearing these loving words, the demoness turned into a dove and flew away. Love can change the heart of even an inveterate enemy. It is this kind of Universal love that should be cultivated by everyone. There are people professing different faiths in the world--Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Zorastrians and so on. There should be no difference or distrust amongst them, for all of them uphold Truth and *Dharma*.

It was to promote unity among people of different faiths that Guru Nanak started community *bhajans* which generate vibrations of harmony and peace.

Today, the world is bedevilled by conflict and violence. Peace and prosperity can emerge only when people turn to the path of love and morality and lead purposeful lives. Regard yourselves as embodiments of Love and dedicate your lives like Jesus to the service of your fellow men.

Discourse in the Poorchandra Auditorium on 25.12.1986.

Vol. 20, 31, 1987. Divinity through Love

*Men and women of many faiths
From the four comers of the world
Have gathered here with love and humility
Unmindful of comfort or discomfort,
Enduring numerous travails,
All for the sake of Baba's grace!
Dispelling rampant atheism
And instilling faith in God
Sai's all-embracing love
Is transforming mankind
And leading them to the Divine.*

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Although physically there are no basic differences among human beings, many differences can be seen in their practices, their thoughts and feelings. Every nation is an aggregation of human beings. Differences in the life-styles of human communities in the various nations are quite significant, though the natural environment over the globe as a whole is not so varied. This is a significant characteristic of the human predicament.

Truth is one. It is beyond mind and speech. It transcends the categories of time and space. Innumerable seekers have pursued different paths to recognise this Truth. There are notable differences among the seekers of Truth. These differences do not affect the nature of the universe. On the contrary, these differences must be viewed as different stages in the understanding of the Cosmic process. It is the existence of these differences that has prompted the continuous search for a unifying principle.

The ultimate Truth is one

The six schools of Indian Metaphysics (the *Shat-darsanas*) have been offered to us by the great seekers of the past. Little attention is being paid today to these sacred teachings. Although the spiritual paths indicated by these different *Darsanas* appear to be different, their goal is common and the ultimate truth proclaimed by them is one and the same. Because of the differences among the various sects and communities in the country and growth of materialism among the people, the tenets of the six *Darsanas* are not being seriously pursued. The materialist doctrine has gripped the world so much that the greatness of Indian metaphysics is not being appreciated. Even the climate for a proper consideration of this philosophy does not seem to exist.

The materialist doctrine proceeds on the assumption that *Chaitanya* (Consciousness) is a product of sensory experiences and that the evolution of Consciousness is dependent on and is based on the evolution of matter. Inanimate matter is the basis for the materialist doctrine. Matter is finite. The *Vedic* doctrine repudiates the view that consciousness can arise out of physical senses which are limited by their origin in matter which is finite and limited. In total opposition to this materialistic doctrine, the *Adhyatmic* (spiritual) view was projected to demonstrate the falsity of the concept of the primacy of matter over consciousness.

Man and Nature

For the spiritual view, the basis is the Atma (Spirit). The Atma is infinite. The Vedantic doctrine proclaimed the infinite nature of the Self and pointed out that matter is both inert and finite. The Sruti declares: "*Tripaadhasya-amrutam divi.*" Consciousness constitutes three-fourths and one-fourth is inert matter. Thus, it is consciousness that animates matter and not matter that gives rise to consciousness. This is the essence of the spiritual concept. "*Oordhva moolam Adhah-saakha*" says the Gita. (The roots are high up, the branches of the Cosmic tree are below). This is further confirmation of the view that the material universe has emanated from the Universal Consciousness.

It is *Chaitanya* (Consciousness) that activates Jada (matter) and not matter that gives rise to consciousness. Modern technology has produced fantastic devices, harnessed new sources of energy and turned out spacecraft for exploring the moon and other planets in outer space. But can all these instruments operate by themselves? No. Behind them lies human ingenuity and intelligence. Greater than all the machines is man.

Man is consciousness incarnate. It is this consciousness that makes the machines move and it is indisputably clear that inert matter cannot create consciousness. Man is the highest object in creation. Man should not be a creature of instincts like the animals, which are subject to Nature, but should become a master of Nature. He should progress from *the Nara* (human) to the *Narayana* (Divine). An intelligent human being should not regard himself as bound by *Samsara* (worldly attachments). It is not the world that binds man. It has neither eyes to see nor hands to grasp. Man is a prisoner of his own thoughts and desires. In his attachment to the ephemeral and the perishable, man forgets his inherent divinity and does not realise that everything in the universe has come from the Divine and cannot exist without the power of the Divine.

Divinity in the Cosmos

The Cosmos is a projection of the Eternal, Infinite Reality (*Brahman*) and is not separate from the *Brahman*. "*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath*" (The universe is permeated by the Divine). When this truth is recognised, it will be obvious that all that one perceives or experiences is a manifestation of the Divine. Every tree is a *Kalpavriksha* (wish-fulfilling tree). Every place of work is the shrine of the Divine. Many imagine that they are engaged in spiritual exercises to realise this sense of oneness with the Divine. Various spiritual exercises or different forms of worship may give some feeling of personal satisfaction, but will not result in God-realisation. God needs nothing from anyone. God does not seek offerings, nor is pleased by them. The Divine is not different from you. It is your likes and dislikes that separate you from God. When you get rid of desires and aversions, you will realise your inherent divinity. All the spiritual exercises one does or rituals one observes in offering worship can serve only to purify the mind and eliminate the ego. Mankind should strive for the ideal of human unity by recognising the divinity that is present in every human being.

Sins and repentance

There is an age-old practice among Christians to pray to God for forgiving their sins. In the churches, it is the practice for devotees to confess their sins, make cash offerings and obtain absolution from the pontiff or the priest. The belief in redemption through repentance and offerings to the Divine is prevalent in India also. These practices are based on misconceptions

about the Divine. There should be an earnest enquiry into the nature of the Divine and people should try to get rid of superstitious beliefs which have no basis in Truth.

It should be noted that the spirit of enquiry was prevalent among the ancient Greeks centuries before Christ. Socrates was a great teacher who promoted the spirit of enquiry among the youth of Athens. Socrates was so much wedded to the pursuit of truth that he preferred death in his home city to making good his escape with the help of his disciples. He set no value on life, property or possessions.

Jesus and the rich man

Jesus also set no value on wealth or position. Once a rich man came to Jesus when he was in the house of Martha and Mary. The rich man told Jesus that despite all his wealth and possessions he was not having peace of mind. He was harassed by many worries and appealed to Jesus to show him a way out. Jesus told him: "There is a simple way but will you follow it? You have been accumulating riches and your worries have grown with them. What are you going to do with all this wealth, which some day you will have to leave behind? Distribute it among the poor and the needy and all your worries will go. Accumulate instead the wealth of God's grace through love of your fellowmen."

This is the message that has to be understood today. What people should seek is the earning of God's love. All other forms of wealth, including the wealth of scholarship, are valueless.

By chastising the rich and ministering to the poor and the diseased, Jesus taught his disciples a new way of life based on faith in God. Starting his ministry as a Messenger of God, Jesus finally declared: "My Father and I are one." St. Paul, who was in the beginning an inveterate critic of Jesus, became the first propagator of the Christian faith after having a vision of Christ in a dream in which Jesus told him: "Every man is a spark of the Divine. When you hate me, you are hating yourself and hating God." Paul had to face many ordeals in propagating Christ's message. The early Christians were subject to persecution by the Roman rulers. In course of time the Christian faith established itself in Rome, which became the seat of the Catholic church.

"Kingdom of Heaven is within you"

Christ declared that God can be realised only through love. Once a high priest in Jerusalem called Jesus and asked him: "Are you King of the Jews?" Jesus replied: "I do not say so." The priest told Jesus: "You are leading the people astray by your wrong teachings. You are telling them that everyone can enter Heaven only through you." Jesus said that he had been telling the people to seek the Kingdom of Heaven. The priest asked: "Where is that Kingdom?" Jesus replied: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you, within everybody. When this is my teaching, how can I be accused of claiming that the Kingdom of Heaven can be attained only through me?" How did Jesus get the courage to speak in this fashion? It was because he was proclaiming the truth. Truth is born of love, which comes from faith in God.

Where there is confidence, 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.

In Bharat there is a belief that Divinity exists in the three forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara. No one has seen these deities in their different forms. These forms have been conceived to develop faith in certain ways. The Trinity are symbolically present in everyone. The heart has been equated with *Easwara*.

This means that the heart symbolises the *Atmic* principle in man. This refers not to physical heart but to the spiritual heart. The heart represents divinity as well as the Love principle. The *Atma* is unbounded and hence Love also has no limit. Men in their narrow-mindedness may set limits to their love, but love as a Divine quality is infinite.

"You are the Divine"

The mind has emanated from the heart. It is all-pervading. *Manomoolam idam jagath*. ("The mind is the basis of the Cosmos"). The mind symbolises Vishnu. The word Vishnu means that which pervades everything in the universe. As the mind has emanated from the heart, the Vishnu principle has come from the Easwara principle. Brahma is said to have emerged from Vishnu. In man the Aham (ego) has arisen from the mind and Brahma is symbolic of Aham. This is the esoteric interpretation of the Trinity.

It means that the Trinity are present in everyone. The heart is *Easwara*, the mind is Vishnu and the "I" is Brahma. When you regard the self as Brahma, your thoughts and actions will not go astray. The mind will be a means of liberation, when it is rid of the impurities residing in it. All spiritual exercises are designed only to cleanse the mind. When the mind becomes pure, the divine is experienced spontaneously.

The Divine is not separate from you. You are the Divine. This conviction must grow in you. In the beginning you regard yourself as a mere human being. Then, you reach the stage when you realise your potential divinity. Finally you reach the stage when you realise your divinity. These three stages could be noticed in the career of Jesus. At the outset, he declared: "I am a Messenger of God." Then, he said: "I am the Son of God." Finally he affirmed: "I and my Father are One." Through this process, Christ achieved oneness with the Divine.

You must embark on the journey to unity with the Divine from now itself. Time waits for no one. Concentrate all your efforts on the realisation of God. The primary requisite is the elimination of the ego. Without getting rid of the ego, the bliss of divinity cannot be experienced. Ostentatious worship is of no use. Wealth, power and position are of no avail in the spiritual quest. They cannot confer peace or remove the fear that haunts man all the time. Only the man of faith is completely free from fear. Hence, develop faith in God and lead a God-directed life. You may pursue your studies or avocations without giving up your faith in God. What is happening now is that men are forgetting God in the pursuit of wealth. They are seeking *annam* (food) instead of *Atma*. When the *Atma* is realised all other things will be got without any great effort.

Bear in mind the three maxims

The man who has realised the Self has redeemed his life. That man is blest who is conscious of his faults. The one who sees the good in others is equally blest. Show love towards all.

People from many countries have gathered here today. Wherefore have they come here? They are not wanting in wealth. They do not lack comforts. They enjoy many things in their countries. But they do not experience real bliss, which can come only from spiritual realisation. And it is for this they have come. You have to turn your minds towards the *Atma*. The *Atma* is infinite. You have to get rid of the ideas of "mine" and "thine." Regard yourselves as the children of one

God, who is the universal protector. Bear in mind three things: Love of God, fear of sin, observance of social morality.

One who has no love of God, easily commits sin and loses all moral values. Love of God promotes the fear of sin and makes one lead a moral life. These triune principles are like the Divine Trinity. They will promote *Thrikarana suddhi* (purity in thought, word and deed). Whatever is done with such purity will be conducive to God-realisation. Above all, cultivate love. it is love that has brought you all here. Strengthen that love. Love is God. Live in Love. You may choose any form of worship or pursue any spiritual path you like. Whatever delights your heart will please God. Follow the dictates of your conscience, fill your hearts with love and immerse yourselves in the bliss of the Divine.

*Christmas message presented to an unprecedented
gathering of Overseas and Indian devotees in the
Poornachandra Auditorium on 25-12-1987.*

Vol. 21, 34, 1988. Love - The Key To Human Unity

The root cause of all difficulties experienced by man is forgetting his spiritual reality and identifying himself with his body. The body is only the vesture of the Indwelling Spirit. By immersing himself in body-consciousness, man develops egoism and possessiveness, which result in promoting many bad qualities. He forgets his inherent divinity and fails to use the senses and organs he is endowed with for the purposes of the Divine.

Two different characteristics are to be found among men. One characteristic, which is rather common, is for one to delude himself that he is a good man, with many virtues, intelligence and talents. The other quality which is rare, is recognition of the good quality in others, their merits, abilities and good deeds and appreciate their ideals. Jesus belonged to the second category. He saw the good qualities in others, rejoiced over their virtues and shared his joy with others.

In his twelfth year, Jesus and his parents, Joseph and Mary, happened to go to a Jewish festival in Jerusalem. In the jostling crowds Jesus got separated from his parents. After a frantic search, Mary found him in a temple listening to a speech of the High Priest. When Mary told Jesus about the anxiety that they felt when they missed him, Jesus replied: "Why should you worry about me? When I am with God, who is my Father, why should you have any fear on my account?" Jesus thus revealed that he regarded himself as the Son of God.

Jesus prayed to God for three things

Jesus grew up at Nazareth till he reached thirty. After Joseph's passing, Jesus sought his mother's permission to embark on his Divine mission. He got baptised by John, the Baptist, and spent forty days in penance in a forest. During the penance, he prayed to God for three things: One--- He should be blessed with the quality of loving equally everyone; Two He should have the strength and forbearance to suffer patiently any indignity or persecution that he might be subjected to by anyone; Three--He should be enabled to use his God-given body wholly in the service of God.

After forty days Jesus emerged from his penance with the faith that his prayers had been granted. Jesus encountered the fishermen, at Galilee, who became his first disciples. He told them that he had come to establish the reign of love on earth and that they would be his helpers in his mission. He spoke to them about the preciousness of human birth and urged them to seek the Kingdom of God within themselves.

By the way of illustration, Christ told them the following parable: In a river the water is flowing in a swift current. But even the tiny fish are able to swim in it and move about merrily. In the same river, a huge elephant caught in the rapids, is likely to get washed away or drowned in spite of its enormous size. Whatever the speed of the current, the small fish are able to swim freely in the river and enjoy themselves. But an elephant is unable to survive in it. The reason is: What you need for survival in a river is not bulk but the ability to swim. Likewise man who is caught up in the ocean of worldly existence (*Samsara*) needs, not so much metaphysics, scholarship or detachment, as the grace of Divine love.

Without faith in God one cannot experience bliss

Without any knowledge of Vedanta, if one is blessed with God's love, he can surmount all problems of life. Without faith in God, all scholarship, wealth or name and fame are of no avail. He cannot experience bliss.

Christ also taught that the body should be used for recognising the Indwelling Spirit and not to protect itself. It is the mark of ignorance to pamper the body and ignore the Spirit within.

If a tiny sugar crystal is mixed in a heap of sand, even the most intelligent person will not be able to separate the sugar from the sand and recover it. But without any extraordinary intelligence, an ant is able to make its way to the particle of sugar in the sand heap and relish its sweetness. The ant is aware of the sweetness of sugar and is able to get at the sugar even in a heap of sand. Likewise, man: should seek to distinguish between the permanent and the transient and realise what is everlasting. Man is endowed with the capacity to discriminate between the permanent and the evanescent, but unfortunately instead of using this capacity he is caught up in the delusions of the phenomenal world and is wasting his life.

"You must adhere to truth and not succumb to falsehood or unrighteousness. You must face with courage the vicissitudes of life. You must love even your enemies. Universal love transcends all other virtues. Love is the supreme virtue," declared Jesus.

Only Love of God is real Love

Jesus taught that God is Love. Instead of recognising this basic truth, men are allowing hatred, envy and other evil qualities to pollute their love. Man is gifted with the quality of love not to express it for selfish purposes but to direct it towards God. Jesus declared that there was nothing great about returning good for good. They should do good even to those who harm them.

As Jesus went on with his preaching and drew multitudes towards him, some of the priests and those in authority grew envious at his popularity. This happens in all countries. They started persecuting him and charging him with treason. Jesus, however, continued up to the end to carry on his mission of Love and Righteousness, first, as the Messenger of God, and later as the Son of God. There is a reason for anyone coming in the human form. This may not be known to all. Only the Divine knows the real purpose. Everyone should regard himself as a Messenger of God and try to lead an ideal life. This means that one has to give up selfishness and self-interest. This may not be easy. But with God's Grace, it should be possible to progress towards Self-realisation gradually.

Love is the means of developing devotion and achieving liberation, apart from other things. Only the love of God is real love. It is the royal road for man to realise the divinity in him and in everyone.

Sai Love unifies all from different countries

Here is an example of the power of love. Today in this hall are gathered people from many countries. They speak different languages and adopt different religions and culture and have different dresses, manners and customs. Forgetting all these differences, they are all moving here as brothers and sisters because of their love for Sai, which has unified them. They are expressing the joy of oneness because of the love in their hearts. When there is no love there is hatred. Faith in God promotes love. Love leads to peace. Peace prepares the way for truth. Living in truth, man experiences bliss, which is Divine.

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.

Hence, faith has to be strengthened.

Many forms, but one God

The Divine manifests Himself in many forms. God is worshipped in many forms for the joy to be derived from it. In ancient Rome, many Gods were worshipped, as in Bharath. At that time there was no belief in one God. Then came Christianity. The concept of unity in diversity came to be accepted. In ancient Greece, Plato, the disciple of Socrates, was the first to point out the immanence of the Divine in everything in the Universe.

Truth is one, regardless of the nation or religion. Truth or Divinity cannot change according to place or circumstance. That is why it is said: Truth is God. That Truth is within us. *Vedanta* (transcendental knowledge) has described it as *Sath-chith-ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). The names and forms of human beings may vary, but the Supreme in them--the *Sath-chith-ananda*--does not vary. It is eternal and changeless.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Strike down the walls that separate man from man. Get rid of differences based on caste and creed. Develop firm faith in the oneness of humanity. Cultivate love in your hearts. Only then will the nation be united, prosperous and happy.

Look at the state of things in Bethlehem, the birth-place of Jesus. Christmas could not be celebrated there this year, because of the ill-feelings among the people. How unfortunate that while the rest of the world is celebrating Christmas there should be no celebration in the place where Jesus was born.

God belongs to all. He is Universal. All of you have to give up differences of every kind and give no room for narrow parochial and national loyalties. Consider yourselves as the children of one God. You may worship God in any form of your choice, but recognise the truth that God is only one. The observance of holy days like Christmas is an occasion for realising the importance of love and harmony among human beings.

It is not right to celebrate Christ's birthday by feasting, drinking, singing and merry-making. The ideals taught by Jesus should be put into practice. That is the right way to celebrate his birthday. Whomsoever you adore, you must try to live up to his teachings. What kind of devotion is it when the devotee does not practice what he professes? It is pseudo-devotion.

Remember the Lord with love. Worship Him with love. Sanctify your life with love.

Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, Christmas Day, 25 Dec 1988

Vol. 22, 38, 1989. Where to find God

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! God is complete love incarnate. This love shines equally in every human being. The fragrance of a flower remains the same whether it is held in the right hand or the left. Likewise God has no distinctions such as the favoured and the excluded. Different persons, proceeding from their own likes and dislikes, attribute to the Divine the differences existing in their own minds. God has no feelings of difference such as the good and the bad, the likable and the unwanted, the wicked and the virtuous. The sandalwood tree imparts its fragrance even to the axe that fells it. Likewise God is ever prepared to love, foster and protect equally everyone without any distinction. But narrow-minded persons cannot easily grasp the Divine's equal-mindedness. Indeed, how can a fishmonger know the value of diamonds? Everyone apprehends God's powers and attributes according to his own limited conceptions and experiences.

The reason for man's narrow outlook

To get rid of such narrow ideas, the first requisite is the cultivation of love. How is love to be promoted? By "giving and forgiving" man develops love within himself. In relation to God, this implies that you should always have the attitude of offering your heart to God. Today, far from having such a sacred attitude what we witness is the habit of "getting and forgetting."

Today man receives the love, the blessings, and the grace of God, but shows no gratitude and is immersed in his own selfish pursuits. This accounts for his narrow outlook.

Sanjaya declared at the end of the *Gita* that where Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Partha, the valiant archer, stand together, there is victory. Man makes various efforts to achieve prosperity, success and bliss. But the means of achieving them is for man to take his stand by the side of *Bhagavan*. Partha means the son of the *Prithvi* (Earth). It applies to every man. Sanjaya's declaration means that victory is assured when either man is by the side of God or God is beside man. Neither of these happens today. Man leads a life remote from God.

To start with, man has to recognise what is the goal of life. Seekers in all countries and followers of different religions have enquired into this question of the purpose of life. As a result of these enquiries, different religions arose. Jesus is the founder of the Christian faith. For centuries before Christ, Judaism existed as the religion of the Jews. The Jews believed in the coming of the Messiah to protect the people of Israel.

When Jesus was born, three kings came from the east to bless the infant in Bethlehem. The first king, seeing the child, declared that he would be a great lover of God. The second one declared that God would immensely love the child. The third one declared that Jesus is God and God is Jesus. What is the inner meaning of these statements? The first statement implies that all who love God are messengers of God. When God loves a person, he becomes a son of God. When a person gives up the sense of dualism and merges his consciousness in the Divine he becomes one with the Divine.

Jesus's life and mission

When Jesus was a child, during a visit to Jerusalem, he was lost in the crowd. After a frantic search Mary found him in a temple listening intently to the speech of a priest. When Mary told Jesus about the trouble they had gone through in searching for him, Jesus said: "Mother! When I am safe with my Father in His home, why should you worry about me? This is the temple of

God. It is my Father's mansion. Nothing will be lacking here. In this eternal and sacred home I am perfectly safe as well protected." This shows that even by his twelfth year, Jesus was full of Divine qualities and was imparting the Divine message to those around him. Christ declared to the world three important things: (1) God is one. (2) He is omnipotent. (3) Do not hurt anyone. God is the indweller in every being. Christ embarked on his mission and went about calling upon people to earn the love of God by developing love towards God.

People professing different faiths worship God under different names: Vishnu, Siva, Ganesa, Allah, Christ, and others. The truth is there is only one God. People today try to find God in religions. But God is to be found not in *mathamu* (religions) but in the *mathi* (mind). It is only when the mind is controlled and purified that God will be recognised.

The Lord dwells within man

People claim to make offerings to God without knowing where He is. There is a pretence of offering everything to *Brahman*, but they do not know where *Brahman* dwells. The Lord has declared: "I am residing within you in the form of *Vaisvanara* and am consuming all the offerings you are making. I am digesting everything and providing the sustenance for your body."

While the Lord is ever by the side of man, he is searching for God all over the world. By exploring the external, you can never purify the internal. It is essential to transform the consciousness. You have to rectify your conduct and actions, because everything depends on your actions. Adhering to the righteous path, with a pure heart, you have to divinise your life. All spiritual disciplines have been designed only for this purpose. All the prayers, *japas and pujas* that are offered are intended only to purify the heart.

All those who have achieved greatness in any field--education, science, etc.--have been able to do so solely because of their conduct. Neither physical strength nor wealth, nor even intellectual ability, can make one respected and honoured. It is the way one lives that confers honour and dignity on him. Therefore, it is only through our actions that we should strive to realise the Divine. Without right conduct, all other spiritual practices are of no avail. Hence, all devotees should acquire good and sacred qualities in furtherance of their striving to realise God.

You all are in the Kingdom of Sai!

You all are in Sai's Home!

You all are in Sai's Light!

You all are in Sai's Heart!

I will bless you, I will bless you in

This Holy Night This is your right.

If you entertain proper thoughts, you will realise that all of you are in God's home. The whole universe is the mansion of the Lord. Once you recognise this truth, how can any differences arise?

Understand the ways of the Divine

People imagine that God is angry, or indifferent. Such persons have no understanding of Divinity. If there is a tumour in the stomach, the surgeon uses a knife to remove it. Is the

operation done out of ill-will towards the patient? Not at all. It is for his own good that the operation is done to make him well again. Likewise, when a person has developed some bad qualities, a surgical operation has to be done to rid him of his vices. When this is done by the Divine, God is said to be angry or displeased. This is the mark of a petty mind. Those who have understood the Divine's love principle will not make such a mistake.

Today is the birthday of the founder of a great religion. Christians revere Jesus as a Messenger of God and the Son of God. On this sacred day, the old students of the Sathya Sai College for Women at Anantapur, who have formed an association called Messengers of Sathya Sai, celebrate their annual day. "How shall we show our gratitude to the Institution which has educated us and done so much good to us?" was the question put by an old student, who is the President of the association. "How shall we show our gratitude to Bhagavan?" she asked.

Serve the society with dedication

Dear old students! Wherever you may be, go into the society and render social service in all possible ways, with faith in God and in a selfless spirit. As she said, it is true that after getting married, the girls have to put up with various restraints imposed by their in-laws and husbands. Admittedly, the Bharatiya culture and tradition circumscribe the freedom of women. On the other hand, boys enjoy greater freedom and liberty to act as they please. Whatever job they take up or business they may carry on, whatever country they may go to, they have considerable freedom. There will be none to restrain them. If they want to do social service, they can do a great deal. Unfortunately, they are not filled with such noble urges. Women who have those sacred impulses to serve society suffer from handicaps and restraints. At least from today, I desire that young men and women, who have studied in the Sai educational institutions, will show their gratitude to their alma mater by engaging themselves in social service and stand forth as ideals for others by their dedicated lives. By merely acquiring degrees, you do not become educated persons.

Using education only for securing a mess of pottage is puerile. You must use your knowledge for bettering the lives of others. Of what use is a mountain of book knowledge, if you cannot secure real happiness as a human being? Will not God take care of man if he places his faith in the Divine? What is it that is achieved by ceaseless preoccupation with earning a living, for forgetting the all-pervading Lord?

Everybody clamours for peace, saying "I want peace." But can peace be found in the external world, which is only filled with pieces? Peace has to be found within oneself by getting rid of the "I" and desire. Peace is being destroyed by the ego and by insatiable desires. Restrain your desires. Man is haunted by endless worries of many kinds. Only by turning his mind towards God can he get rid of the worries. Men have to reduce desires and cultivate *vairagya* (detachment) so that they can have real peace of mind.

What is it that students, who have spent ten or twelve years in Sai educational institutions, can show as evidence of their having benefited from their education? It should be evident to some extent from their conduct and practices. If this is not present, what is the use of their studies? If they have not learnt during this precious period in their lives to practise self-control and self-discipline, they will be guilty of having wasted their great opportunities. The essence of education consists in the cultivation of good qualities and the development of right values for meaningful living.

I bless you all students in the hope that you will dedicate yourselves to the service of the people and thereby earn the grace of the Lord.

Christmas Day Discourse to a large gathering of devotees from overseas countries in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 25-12-1989.

Vol. 23, 36, 1990. Love: Sacrifice :Unity

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! There is a Creator for this marvellous and beautiful cosmos, consisting of moving and unmoving objects. He is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent. He has been worshipped as God by many names and in many forms by various people.

Adored by Muslims as Allah,

As Jehovah by Christians,

As the Lotus-eyed Lord by Vaishnavites,

As Sambhu by Saivites,

The One who confers health and wealth,

Revere Him as the one Supreme Omni-Self

Unity, fellow-feeling and devotion are essential for every human being. To promote these sacred qualities in mankind, some great souls sought to establish different religions. Religion is not a restrictive concept. Religion is intended to develop the human personality and indicate the basic guide-lines for right living. Religion brings out the humanness in man and enables him to live in harmony with his fellow-men. It provides the link between the individual and the Divine. It demonstrates the unity that underlies the diversity in the world.

Love, Sacrifice, Service and Righteousness are the four limbs of Religion. Religion brings out the divine and sublime feelings in man and makes him serve society. It evokes all that is great, blissful and good in men and demonstrates the unity of mankind.

It is supremely unfortunate that Religion, which has such high and sacred objectives, is construed and practised in a narrow way and propagated as a narrow creed.

Religion is like an undercurrent that sustains the whole of humanity. The founders of religions, with a view to spreading the subtle secrets of religious faith, laid down certain rules of conduct and conveyed their message to the people.

What the religions teach

Buddhism declared that Truth and Non-violence are the basic requisites', for getting rid of delusions and achieving purity in life.

Christianity proclaimed that all are children of God and should have fraternal feelings towards each other. Jesus declared: "All are one, be alike to everyone."

According to Islam, all are members of one family in spiritual terms. It regarded prayer as the best means of ensuring peace and security in society.

Emperor Manu declared: "*Thyajeth deham Kulasyaartho; Kulam janapadaschaartho*" (One must be prepared to sacrifice his body for his community and his community for the sake of the nation). Manu's *Dharmasastra* laid down that the welfare of society is most important.

The Upanishads declared: "*Sahasraakshas-sahasrapaad*" (The Divine has a myriad eyes and a myriad feet). All eyes are God's; all feet are His; all hands are His. This was the message of the *Upanishads*. In this manner, the *Upanishads* emphasized the oneness of humanity.

For man, it is the collective concept that is fundamental and not individualism. No one can live in this world all by himself. He has to cultivate the sense of community if he wishes to live in peace and happiness.

"Sahanaa vavathu; sahanau bhunakthu; sahaviryam karavaavahai" (Let us live together; let us struggle together; let us grow together in joy and harmony). This was the teaching of the *Vedas*.

The greatness of unity and purity

It is evident that in this way all religions propagated unity for promoting the well-being of society. The welfare of the world is bound up with the well-being of society. Self-Realisation and Self-knowledge can be got only through social involvement. Unfortunately, society today is riddled with strife, chaos and conflict.

All religions preached the greatness of spiritual purity. All religions called upon people to adhere to the path of Truth. They also taught that good qualities are essential for man. Thus, when the essence of all religions is one and the same, when all the scriptures proclaim the same truth, when the goal of all human efforts is one, where is the basis for any differences? The paths are varied, but the destination is one and the same.

It is a sign of man's degradation that in spite of these truths, he indulges in conflicts and agitations on account of religious differences. When there is a downpour, the water that comes down is pure. The rain falls on mountains, plains, rivers, the sea and so on. According to the region through which the rain water passes, its name and form undergo changes. Because of these variations, it should not be thought that the water itself is different.

Based on the teachings of the founders of different faiths, having regard to the requirements of the time and circumstance of particular countries, and keeping in view the specific needs of the people concerned, certain rules and regulations were laid down. On this account, one faith should not be considered superior and another inferior. Man's primary duty is to bear in mind these sacred truths and practise them in his life.

Truth, beauty and goodness

Truth is a fundamental principle. All religions have declared that no one should break his plighted word. That man should honour his pledges, that he should regard his words as his life-breath, that keeping his promises is the greatest treasure--this was the primary teaching of the great Law-giver, Emperor Manu (author of the *Dharmasastra*).

Plato was the foremost among the disciples of Socrates. Aristotle was a disciple of Plato. Alexander was a pupil of Aristotle. Plato commended a system of polity based on morality, righteousness, mutual forbearance as conducive to the well-being of society. He attached the greatest importance to Truth, Beauty and Goodness as the basic virtues. In the *Vedas* these three qualities have been described as *Sathyam*, *Sivam*, *Sundaram*. Thus, though different words are used, their essential purport is the same. Spiritual discipline consists in recognizing the unity underlying the apparent diversity and realising divinity.

Love should not be confined to human beings

Bharatiya culture has always upheld the supremacy of faith in God. *Bharatiya* culture was based on the view that there is nothing in the world which is not permeated by the Divine. From a stone to a diamond, from a blade of grass to a blooming lotus, from an ant to an elephant, everything

was regarded as a manifestation of the Divine. *Bharatiya* culture upheld the view that love should not be confined to human beings, but should be extended to all beings and objects in creation. Ignoramuses who have not understood this great truth speak disparagingly of *Bharatiyas* as people who worship stones, trees, serpents and the like. In the eyes of *Bharatiyas*, every object is a creation of God. "*Sarvam khalu idam Brahma*" (All this is *Brahma*), "*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat*" (The cosmos is permeated by Vishnu)--these *Vedantic* declarations proclaim the same truth. You cannot find in any other country a universal, all-embracing sacred declaration of this kind. This contains the broad concept of social justice. You cannot see in any other country such a sacred view.

Although all religions have preached this truth of oneness and *samathvam* (equality), selfish persons, for their own ends, have interpreted them in narrow terms and promoted strife and discord between different people. One who is merely well-versed in the scriptures cannot be called a *Pandita* (a person with knowledge and wisdom). Even a master of the *Vedas*, *sastras* and *puranas* cannot be esteemed a *Pandita*. Scholarship alone does not make a man a *pandita*. Mastery of language does not confer this title. "*Pandithaah samadarsinah*" (*Pandits* are those who see all with an equal eye), says the *Gita*. Only the person who has this vision of equality can be esteemed a *pandita*. Hence, we should look upon all religions with *Samadrishti* (equal respect). No religion should be criticised or reviled. One should imbibe the sweet essence in all religions.

The essence of all religions is the principle of Oneness, the principle of Love. When you cultivate this principle of love, there is no room for hatred.

Conflicts are caused due to selfishness

Today religion is regarded as the cause for all the conflict, violence and bitterness in the world. But, *matham* (religion) is not the cause. *Mathulu* (Selfish minds) are responsible for all the conflict. Are there not conflicts in countries with only one religion? People in Iran and Iraq profess the same Islamic faith. What is the reason for the conflict between them? What is the reason for conflicts between countries which profess Christianity?

In Bharat, all are *Bharatiyas*. But why is there discord amongst them? When we examine this question deeply, we find that religions are not the real reason for these conflicts. Only selfish minds are the cause. Wearing the garb of religion, these selfish persons are inciting conflicts among the people.

Embodiments of Divine Love! If you desire to secure genuine peace in the world, you should not have any antipathy towards religion. You must hold *neethi* (morality) as superior to your *jaathi* (community). You must cherish good feelings as more important than religious beliefs. *Mamatha* (mutual regard), *samatha* (equalmindedness) and *kshamatha* (forbearance) are basic qualities necessary for every human being. Only the person with these three qualities can be regarded as a true man. It is essential that everyone should cultivate these three sacred qualities.

Try to live harmoniously

How did differences arise within each religion? After the passing of the founders of these religions, the followers violated the teachings of the founders and quarrelled among themselves on account of their selfish interests. With the passage of time, schisms developed in each religion

and separate sects were formed. This is the result of individual, selfish motives and not the fault of the original founders.

People must first of all get rid of self-interest and self-centredness. They must develop love, forbearance and compassion. They must try to live harmoniously. Only then can we claim to be lovers of peace in the nation and of the well-being of the world. Service should be the guiding principle. There should be no room for any kind of differences in rendering service. When you wish to serve society, you must be prepared to sacrifice your individual and communal interests. Such sacrifice alone will sublimate one's life. The *Veda* has emphatically declared that immortality can be attained only through *thyaga* (sacrifice) and not by any other means.

Christmas in Prashaanthi Nilayam

To propagate this message of equal mindedness, the army of Sai devotees must prepare themselves. Today, in Prashaanthi Nilayam members belonging to a variety of faiths have come together. They speak different languages. They belong to diverse traditions. But all of them have a single belief, a single ideal--that is Love.

The Christmas festival is celebrated in many countries with a lot of fanfare, merriment and riotous festivities. You should note one thing. Nowhere in the world is Christmas celebrated in the manner in which it is done in Prashaanthi Nilayam. People belonging to different countries, different faiths and different cultures, coming together to adore God and celebrating this festival in such a holy atmosphere cannot be found anywhere else. This should spread to all countries.

Christmas is celebrated in America, Germany, Italy and other countries. But in what manner? By sumptuous eating, drinking and dancing and wasting time. Here also you indulge in drink. But what is it you are drinking? You are drinking Pure Divine Love. It is this Love that you must offer to the world.

Don't entertain religious difference of any kind. Put into practice the message you receive here and share the bliss of your experience with others. Preaching to others is not enough.

Everyone should develop devotion and dedication. Life without devotion is worthless. If one does not show his gratitude to the Creator, of what avail is his life? Should you not show some gratitude to the Lord who has provided such infinite benefits through Nature and the elements? Gratitude should be the life-breath of a man.

The founders of religions experienced these truths and propagated them as ideals for mankind. You must wholeheartedly live up to these teachings. Mere reading of the Bible or reciting the Quran, repeating the *Bhagavad Gita* or chanting the *Granth Saheb* is not meritorious. The basic teachings in each of these texts have to be put into practice in daily life.

Discharging your debt is a pious obligation

Socrates used to gather young men around him and expound to them how to enquire into what is transient and what is permanent. He told them that only those who have devotion and dedication are entitled to wield power. A ruler should adhere to truth and show his gratitude to God. Puffed up with ego, he should not forget the Almighty. Those who did not relish Socrates's teachings, brought charges against him. When he was sentenced to death, he chose to die by drinking the cup of hemlock from the hands of his disciples. Before his death, he told his disciples that no one should die leaving an undischarged debt behind him. He told a disciple that he owed a cock to a friend and asked him to discharge that obligation.

Prophet Mohammed, likewise, told his disciples before his passing that the money he owed to a camel driver should be paid before his end came. The discharging of one's debts is regarded as a pious obligation for every Bharatiya. Harischandra sacrificed everything for the sake of honouring his plighted word.

It will be seen that all religions have emphasised the greatness of truth, sacrifice and unity. Learn to live in love and harmony with all the members of your society. This is the basic teaching of Christianity and Islam. Guru Nanak favoured community prayers in preference to individual prayer in isolation. When all people join in unison to pray to God, their prayers will melt the heart of God. In a large gathering there must be at least one who prays with a pure heart. That prayer will reach God. Hence, devotees should take part in community bhajans. They should participate in community service and involve themselves in the life of the community. This is the noblest path.

Cultivate love. Love is the form of the Divine and God can be realised only through love. Of all the myriad names given to God, the one which is most to be cherished is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). *Sat* represents Truth. *Chit* represents *Jnana* (wisdom). Where *Sat* and *Chit* are present, *Ananda* (Bliss) is bound to be present. As God is Truth, He has to be realised through Truth. As God is *Jnana*, He has to be realised through *Jnana Marga* (the path of Knowledge). As He is *Ananda* (Bliss), He has to be realised through bliss. Follow the path of Love and achieve the goal of Unity. Banish all differences. This is the supreme message for you today.

Do not give room for religious differences

Embodiments of Divine Love! Wherever you may be, in whatever country, do not give room for religious differences. Do not give up religion. Get rid of differences based on religion. Adhere to your faith and your traditions. When differences between religions are given up, love will develop in you. When love grows, you can have a direct vision of God. Without love, verbal prayers are of no avail. Realise that the love that is present in everyone is common to all. It is love that has brought you all together. It is the cord of love that has bound all of you. It is the unifier, the motivator and the bringer of joy to all. Therefore, develop love.

Christmas message at Poornachandra Auditorium on 25-12-1990.

The Sun is teaching us that when one is oneself, there will be no exhaustion or elation, no disgust or pride. The task of Surya is not something imposed from outside and taken up under compulsion. That is why it is performed systematically and smoothly. He is also exhorting mankind to use the time that He creates and allots, fully and fruitfully; not merely for living comfortably and safely, but for living a moral and elevating life, worthy of the destiny that is man's. Now you can realise why the Gita was first taught by the Lord to the Sun. He is the great Karma yogi, the great Nishkaama Karma Yogi.

BABA

Vol. 24, 29, 1991. Develop spiritual oneness

*Religion teaches self-discipline
and promotes one's well being;
It enhances one's spiritual power
and makes one effulgent.
If people live without knowing
Its inner secret
The community and its culture
decline and suffer.*

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Innumerable waves arise from the vast ocean. The waves appear to differ in form from one another. But these multifarious waves are not different from the ocean. In all the waves, the nature and qualities of the ocean are immanent. Likewise, the innumerable beings which you see in this boundless cosmos appear to be different from one another, but all of them emerged from the same cosmic source whose form is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

Religions are not different from each other

When rain pours down from the sky, pure water falls on the earth, mountains, rivers and the sea. But the pure water acquires the colour and taste of the region or spot where it falls. Likewise, prophets and messiahs, coming down in different forms of the world at different times, imparted their message in terms appropriate to the time, the place and the conditions of the people concerned. Religions' cannot be considered different from each other for this reason.

*All religions have taught
only what is good for humanity.
Religion should be practised
with this awareness.
If the minds are pure,
how can religion be bad?*

It is a mark of ignorance to consider one religion as superior and another as inferior and develop religious differences on this basis. The teachings of all religions are sacred. The basic doctrines are founded on truth. *Atma-tathva* (the truth of the Spirit) is the essence of religions, the message of all the scriptures and the basis of all metaphysics. The primary duty of human beings is to recognise that the paths indicated by different religions may vary but the goal is one.

Love, sacrifice, compassion, morality, integrity and similar qualities are common to all religions. In different ways all religions sought to promote unity in diversity.

Bharatiya philosophy, culture and sacred way of life permeate and shine like an undercurrent in all religions. Bharatiya culture has affirmed the profound Vedic truth "*Eko vasi sarva bhootha*

antaratma" (It is the One Spirit that dwells in all beings). This unity of the Spirit is proclaimed in various contexts in the teachings of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

Although in terms of physical form, human beings appear different, in terms of the Spirit they are all one--this is the truth propagated by Christianity. It has declared that all are the children of one Lord and believing in the Fatherhood of God, all should live in harmony.

"Namaskar" is the message of unity

This basic truth of the spiritual oneness of all creation is emphasised at every stage in Bharatiya culture. *"Ekam Sath-vipraa bahudhaa vadanthi"* (The Reality is One; the wise call it by different names). The Ultimate Reality is One only. Your mental reactions give rise to multiplicity. What you have to offer the Lord is *Ekaatma bhaava* (the sense of spiritual oneness). Bharatiyas are wont to fold the two palms together and offer *Namaskar* (salutation). What is the inner significance of this form of greeting? It is an expression of the unity of the many in the One.

In Islam, the expression *salaam* is used as a form of greeting. "Sa" in this term signifies the combined expression of *Saalokyam*, *Saaroopyam*, *Saameepyam* and *Saayujyam* (Seeing the Divine, having the vision of the form of the Divine, nearing the Divine and merging in the Divine). When these four expressions are combined and merged into one--"La" signifying merger---you have *Salaam* (the merging of the many in the One).

In Christianity, the term *"Esu"* (Jesus) is used to describe Christ. This term also signifies the oneness of Divinity. The inner significance of the term *"Esu"* is the recognition of the One Divine in all beings.

In Jainism also, the same truth was taught by Mahavira. When the senses are allowed to have their way, all kinds of reactions occur. It is only when the senses are brought under unified control that the nature of Divinity can be comprehended. The eyes have the power of sight. The ears can hear. The powers of all the sense organs--seeing, hearing, speaking, etc., are derived from the Divine. It is the Divine that enables the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the mind to think and to have various experiences. It is when all these sensory processes are brought under unified control (by the conquest of the senses) that man becomes a conqueror a "Jina"---as termed by the Jains. Because he had conquered his senses the title of victor was conferred on Mahavira.

Love is the life-breath of every being

Even as ornaments are varied but gold is one, religions are varied but their basic spiritual truth is the same. Buddhism also enunciates the same oneness. It declares that in every human being what should emanate is love. For every being, love is the life-breath. When such love animates a person, he will not resort to violence; he will practise *Ahimsa* (non-violence).

Buddha urged that if human life is to be redeemed, men should cultivate love. Thus, if we try to understand the basic truth of every religion, it will be seen that it teaches only Unity. Religious differences poison the mind. No one should give room for religious differences. All are spiritually one.

In this context, it should be realised that from time to time, prophets, messiahs and *avatars* manifest themselves on earth to proclaim the glow of the human estate and make humanness blossom among mankind.

The advent of Jesus

Two thousand years ago, in Palestine, a province of the Roman empire, there were Jews professing Judaism. The Jews believed in one God called Yehovah. They believed that God would send a messiah for the people of Israel. Jerusalem was the sacred city of the Jews and continued to be so even under the Romans.

This was the time when Jesus was born. From his childhood Jesus displayed such sacred qualities as compassion, love and sacrifice. Realising from his early years that the discharge of one's duties was the primary obligation of a human being, Jesus used to help his father in his work as a carpenter. The father passed away in Jesus's twelfth year. For a while he carried on his father's work, but in due course he set out his ministry in the service of the people.

Like the fragrance in the bud of a flower, Jesus's divinity was evident from his boyhood. Three kings from the East came to see him at the time of his birth. One of them, on seeing the child, felt that he would be a lover of God. Another felt that he would be loved by God. The third king felt that he would one day declare his oneness with God. The first one's thought indicated Jesus's role as a "Messenger of God." The second one's thought indicated that he would be the "Son of God." The third person's thought indicated that the child would indicate one day that "I and my Father are one."

Who is a "Messenger of God"? He is the one who comprehends the purpose of his life. The "Son of God" is one who appears as divine to others. "I and my Father are one" signifies the true nature of the individual, his identity with divinity. It is in this manner that Christ progressed in his ministry. He conveyed His message in simple and convincing terms.

Changes in time, place and circumstances bring about changes in religious ideas and institutions. This is evident in the history of all religions and creeds. Such changes can be seen in the history of Christianity and the career of the Catholic Church. One of the notable changes was effected by the Reformation brought about by Martin Luther.

Basic teachings of Jesus Christ

Christ's basic teachings were related to promotion of compassion, sympathy, love, sacrifice and fellowship among human beings. Jesus was named the Christ as he was regarded as the "chosen" messenger of God.

The growth of Christianity in the Middle Ages culminated as it were in its acquiring the status of a State religion under Emperor Constantine. With the growth of Christianity, schisms also developed in the religion. The growth of schisms often results in a decline in spirituality. As men develop worldly desires, religious faith declines. Men do not realise that the pursuit of physical pleasures is like the pursuit of a mirage to quench one's thirst.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Realise that human happiness is not to be found in sensory objects or experiences. Whatever pleasure is derived from these is transient and momentary. Real and enduring bliss is to be derived from within one's self. Body is a thing of *matter--Annamaya*. Life is based on *Prana* (lifebreath)--*Pranamaya*. Mind is *subtle--Manomaya*. In all, man is enveloped in five *sheaths--Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijanamaya* and *Anandamaya kosas*. The first two are gross and the last three are subtle.

Man is a product of his mind. The mind consists of a bundle of thoughts. Thoughts lead to actions. Actions are the source of joys and sorrows experienced in daily life. It follows from this

that if the world today is in bad shape, it is because men's actions are misdirected. All the good and the evil in the world are based on the actions of men. When men's actions are sublime, the world will be great and noble.

Man is a combination of body, mind and *Atma*

When we speak of man, we should consider him as the combination of body, mind and *Atma*. The body is an instrument for performing actions. Mind is the faculty that determines what is right or wrong. The *Atma* is that which is ever pure, unchanging and permanent.

"Man" implies three things: doing, knowing, being. It is when the body, mind and the *Atma* are present in union that a human being can be said to exist. When the body alone acts without regard to the mind and *Atma*, that person is said to be in the state of *Pasuthvam* (animal state). When the mind alone acts in association with the body, without regard to the *Atma*, that condition is described as *Danavatvam* (demonic). When *the Atma* functions according to its true nature, without concern for the body and the mind, that state is described as *Daivatvam* (oneness with the Divine).

The four categories of men

Hence, man has in him, these four possibilities: animality, humanness, demonic nature and divinity.

"Brahmanishtaratho devah," says a *Vedic* aphorism. This means that one who is ever immersed in the contemplation of the *Brahmam* (Supreme) is divine. Such a person is ever dedicated to righteousness and integrity and leads a life of purity. Ever seeking to be helpful to others, he showers love on all and does no harm to anyone.

"Sathyanithyaratho marthyah" (One who is always wedded to Truth is a true man). This means that one who adheres to truth and righteous conduct in daily life is alone entitled to be called a man.

The third category is described as *"Madhyapaanoratha daanavah"* (One who is addicted to intoxicating drinks and meat eating and leads a sensuous life is a demonic being). Such a person is intensely selfish and has no feeling or consideration for others. A wicked person, swayed by evil motives and evil actions, is described as a demon.

The fourth category consists of beings who only lead a life devoted to eating, sleeping and sexual indulgence with no awareness of the real meaning of human existence. Such ignorant beings have been described as *Pasubhis-samaanah* (equal to animals). Such persons are immersed in sensual pleasures. The senses should be regarded as instruments for rendering service to others. The foolish idea that all pleasures consist in indulgence of sensual appetites should be given up. Only animals are content to derive all satisfaction from the senses alone. Hence every man should firmly declare, "I am a man and not an animal." Only when he has this double conviction will man cease to be an animal and assert his humanness. Unfortunately today men claim to be human, but are engaged in animal activities.

All religions have emphasised the same truths in their basic teachings, But few people try to understand the inner import of religions. Out of a narrow feeling that one's own religion is superior and other faiths are inferior, members of different religions are developing hatred towards members of other faiths and acting like demons. Such narrow ideas should be given up

totally. All should develop the awareness that though names and forms may be different, the essential truth is one in all religions.

Firmly believe that "Love is God: God is love"

Today all over the world because of these narrow-minded attitudes, conflict, disorder and violence are rampant. To overcome these troubles, there is one simple method. Men must firmly adhere to the idea that "Love is God and God is Love." Live in Love. This is the task before every one. Where love prevails, peace will grow.

To promote love, the first requisite is faith. It is only when you believe that one is your mother that you develop love towards her. If you do not regard her as your mother, you will not have that love for her. Therefore, faith is the starting point.

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.

There is constant quest for peace. Everyone is seeking it. But peace is not to be had from the external world. Peace is within you. Only the divinity within you is the basis of peace within. When you turn your vision outward, what you have are only pieces. Try to comprehend your own true nature. When you go on affirming, "I am God, I am God," you realise your divinity, as declared in the Upanishadic saying "*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi*" (The Knower of the *Brahman* becomes *Brahman* itself).

Eschew hatred; develop love

First of all, strengthen your faith. Without faith all kinds of worship and all spiritual disciplines are of no use; they are a waste of time. To begin with, cultivate love. Everything grows out of love. That love will reveal to you your true self. That love will confer bliss on you. Therefore, eschew hatred; develop love. What matters in the world is not what you eat. How important, for instance, is bread? Is it bread that sustains your life? Not at all. It is God alone who sustains and protects you. How many millionaires are there in the world living in the lap of luxury? But only God's grace can protect them. Without it, all their wealth will be of no avail.

What you should pray for is God's love. With all your scholarship, all your power and pelf, and all your scientific achievements, how far have you succeeded in raising your status as a human being? How far have you preserved your humanness? Without ensuring humanness, man cannot ensure peace or security.

(Bhagavan then referred to the activities of the old students of the Sathya Sai College for Women who are members of the organisation called "Messengers of Sathya Sai." This part of Bhagavan's discourse is published separately in the next chapter).

Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 25-12-1991.

Not only in this Kali Yuga but even the earlier yugas, the Kritha, the Thretha and the Dwapara, Namasmarana has been the secret of liberation from bondage. The temple is the place where Namasmarana is natural and automatic and undisturbed. Therefore, going to them is imperative, especially in the Kali age when the air is full of wicked and ungodly thoughts.

BABA

Vol 25, 39, 1992. Unity Based On Divinity

Embodiments of Divine Love! In the world today all those who are held in high esteem as great personages have earned their good name only by their character and conduct. To accomplish anything one wants, one should have firm determination. Those with fickle minds cannot achieve anything.

All religions and scriptures agree that going to the aid of fellow-beings in times of need and saving them from distressing situations is the greatest virtue of a person. Every human being has equal rights in the world. All belong to one family. To enjoy peace of mind, it is essential to practice forbearance and equanimity. There are persons good and bad, rich and poor, educated and uneducated in every country of the world. Though born in the same family and breathing the same air, some persons are narrow minded and have crooked ideas and indulge in selfish deeds, while others are good and selfless.

"Suhrudham Sarva bhuuthaanaam," "Ekaathma Sarvabhuutha antharaatma" are well known aphorisms from the scriptures. To be friendly towards all beings is the duty of everyone, since the same *A atma* is there in all beings. Comprehending this truth, it is the duty of everyone born as a human being to do good to others on the basis of love.

There is no need to search for God anywhere, since God resides in every being. The body is, therefore, to be considered as the temple of God. Today man is breeding bad thoughts in the mind, thereby polluting the heart which is the seat of the Divine.

Four kinds of potentialities of human beings

In every human being, there are four kinds of potentialities, namely, animal, demonic, human and Divine.

The one with the divine quality will be a *Brahma-Nishtha* or one engaged in the contemplation of the *Aatma* within and will enjoy *Aatmic* bliss and sanctify every moment of his life by doing good deeds. He realises that the same *Aatma* is there in all beings as the *Antharaatma* (Inner Self) and leads a blissful life, discarding selfish thoughts. He is a *Brahma Jnaani* or *Aatma Jnaani*, a realised soul, who is aware of the truth that revering others is revering the Lord and hurting others is hurting the Lord. Such persons radiate divinity though they are in a human body.

The "human" type of persons follow the path of Truth and Righteousness--*Sathya Dharma paro marthyah*. They are engaged in activities in strict accordance with *Sathya* and *Dharma* (Truth and Righteousness), using their sense of discrimination in the right manner. They discharge their responsibilities without craving for position, power, pelf or fame. Such a person lives in harmony with his fellow beings and discharges his duties with firm belief in the three precepts: fear of sin, love of God and morality in society.

The next type is the demonic person. Such a person does not care for the code of conduct for human beings, indulges in the shameless pursuit of sensual pleasures, is filled with ego and pride, and does not hesitate to hurt others for selfish purposes. He goes on nonchalantly committing sinful deeds. Egoism is his life breath and attachment is his backbone. Such a selfish person is termed as demonic.

One who lacks wisdom is like an animal

"Jnaana Viheenah Pashubhih Samaanaha" (The man lacking wisdom is like an animal). A person who is steeped in ignorance is considered to be no better than an animal. Such a person's life is centred only on sense gratification. His thoughts never go beyond the senses because of his ignorance of the divinity within him. He deems the transient earthly pleasures as heavenly bliss and lives in delusion devoid of discrimination.

Every man must make an effort to rise to humanness, shedding his animal and demonic qualities, and then strive to realise his divine nature. Nowadays, we find that men are going down in the reverse direction, from the human to the demonic and animal states.

The message of Jesus Christ

On December 25th, when Jesus was born, three kings came to his birthplace. These three gave expression to three different views about the new-born babe. One of them, looking at the infant, said: "This child looks like one who will be a lover of God." A second king said: "God will love this child." The third king declared: "Verily, this child is God Himself." The first one viewed the child from the physical point of view. The second saw the child from the mental viewpoint. The third saw from the *Aatmic* (spiritual) point of view.

The three declarations indicate how one can progress from the human to the divine level. What is needed is the destruction of the animal and demonic qualities in man. Man today worships inanimate idols and images, but makes no attempt to love his fellow human beings in flesh and blood. This was the first message of Jesus. Though one sees his neighbours day after day, he does not choose to love them. How can one believe that such a person can love an invisible God? If a man cannot love a fellow human being who is visible before his eyes, how can he love what is not visible to him? This is not possible. Only a man who loves living beings around him can love the invisible Divine. Love must start with love for beings that have form. It must be extended to all beings. This is the primary stage in spirituality.

Spirituality does not mean preoccupation with meditation, worship, etc. It involves total extinction of the animal and demonic qualities in man and the manifestation of his inherent divinity. When the attachments and hatreds in which man is enveloped are removed, the inherent divinity in man, the *Sath-chith-ananda* in him will manifest Itself.

There is no need to search for the omnipresent Divine in any specific place. When you are yourself divine, why search for the Divine elsewhere? It is a mark of ignorance.

How Jesus Christ's message was accepted

Jesus performed many miraculous deeds, relieved the sufferings of many in distress, preached sublime truths to the people, and ultimately sacrificed his life. For over a hundred years after his martyrdom, Christ's message did not have any impact. Four centuries later, Christianity was accepted by Roman emperors. Even after many centuries humanity is yet to realise the inherent divinity of man.

Man is searching for a reason for every belief or action. Should you seek a reason for sanctifying the time spent by you on any action? When you are engaged in unselfish activity for the common good of society and discharging your duties with dedication, you are sanctifying your life.

There are four basic elements in every action. They are *Kaarana*, *Karma*, *Kaala* and *Karthavyam*. *Kaarana* is the reason, *Karma* is the action, *Kaala* is the time and *Karthavyam* is

the duty that has been discharged. We can cite an example for this. Supposing you want to go to Madras to see your relatives; you go to the bus-stand in the morning, sit in the bus, travel for eight hours and reach Madras in the evening. Now, -seeing your relatives is *Kaarana* (cause). Sitting in the bus and travelling is *karma* (action). Spending eight hours is *Kaala* (time factor) and seeing your relatives in Madras and getting satisfaction therefrom is *Karthavyam* (goal).

If you do the same things in your dream, there is no time factor. The cause and action factors are also absent. As soon as you wake up, you find that you are only in the bed and discover that your seeing your relatives in Madras was unreal. All the four factors are absent in the dream state. Only where all the four are present will it be real.

The purpose in view is termed *Lakshyam*. You are born as a human being for doing your *Karma* (duty). Life is given to you only to recognise Divinity and the body is the instrument for achieving this *Kaarana* (purpose). When you have spent your life, you have done the *karma* (action) in the duration of your *life--kaala*. You should have the satisfaction of having achieved the *karthavyam* (goal).

Christ preached only this truth and taught the people that the body should be used for service to society. This is the teaching of Vedanta. Vedanta declares that the body is intended only to do actions in the world in a selfless way.

The genesis of the Christmas tree

Jesus was crucified on a Friday and He rose from the tomb on a Sunday. That is why Sunday is taken as the day of worship and service in churches. Catholics gave importance to Virgin Mary, the mother of Christ, while Protestants gave importance to the birth of Christ. Catholics celebrate Christmas by worshipping Mary on the evening of 24th and Protestants celebrate the birth of Christ on the 25th. There is a custom of putting up a Christmas tree on this day and worshipping it. The genesis of this custom can be traced to Germany. A preacher by name Jensen from England once visited Germany. When he was travelling in Germany on his mission, he noticed some Germans attempting to offer a child's life as sacrifice to propitiate God who, they believed, lived in an oak tree. The priest was worried and questioned them why they were offering an innocent child as sacrifice to a tree. As they asserted that God lived in the tree, he took an axe and cut the tree. To his surprise, he was shaken by an inexplicable vibration from head to foot. He noticed the form of a child between the two portions of the tree that was cut by him.

System of worshipping Divinity in many forms

This incident teaches the truth that God lives not only in human beings but also in plants and trees. From that time onwards people started putting up a Christmas tree and worshipping it on this Christmas day. The system of worshipping Divinity in many forms including plants and stones, which originated in Bharath, has been prevalent for a long time in other countries also.

There are sanyasis even among Christians. The men are called monks and the women are called nuns. There is no difference in this regard among the various religions. In all religions the goal is one. Christianity propagated this oneness of God. But nowadays the pure, permanent *Aatmic* principle is forgotten in the preoccupation with worldly pursuits. (Bhagavan then described how the practice of having grandfather Christmas wearing a red robe and distributing gifts to children on Christmas day came into existence. Swami related the story of Nicholas, who began this practice when he became head of a church).

Heart is the seat of Truth

In all religions, birthdays of great personalities are celebrated but the ideals for which they lived are not remembered and followed. If you do not care to follow their teachings the celebrations lose their meaning and become artificial observances. It is not doing justice to the good people whose birthdays are being celebrated. Christ taught people to love all beings and serve all with compassion. It is only by practising these ideals that one can truly celebrate His birthday. The Divinity within should be reflected in every action. The seat of Truth is in your heart. Worship means loving others with your full heart. You must live in love and lead a life of selfless service based on love. This is the only right way of celebrating the birth of Christ.

God, in fact, has no birth and no death. No change is there in God, who is changeless and permanent. The *Aatma* within is but a reflection of God and it is the same in all beings as an eternal witness. Birth and death pertain only to the body. It is not correct to worship the body. Through *Saakaara* (the transient body) man has to merge in *Niraakaara* (the ultimate Supreme Reality).

Embodiments of the Divine Aatma! Christmas is celebrated in innumerable places all over the world. Nowhere in the world is it done in the way it is celebrated here in Prashanthi Nilayam. People elsewhere may attend some church service and revel in drinking and dining parties. But, here, people from many countries in the world, speaking many languages, following different faiths and cultures, assemble together unitedly, start the day with singing God's name and glory regardless of their differences, join in spending the day in carrying the message of Universal love. This is Unity in diversity and true Adwaitha in action. Every minute we are experiencing this. Whenever one makes *Namaskaram* to elders, what is its significance? It signifies the bringing together of the five senses of perception and the five senses of action into one, thus unifying the different senses. In *namaskaram* you have "*na*" and "*maskaram*"; "*na*" means "*no*", which indicates that your ego is given up, and you have no body consciousness. The unity of all the sense organs will wipe out the *Ahamkaara*. This will lead to purity and purity will lead to divinity. This unity can be seen only in Prashanthi Nilayam.

Nowadays politicians and preachers talk of unity and purity but in practice it is not followed by the preachers themselves. It is only in Prashanthi Nilayam that this unity and purity are pervading naturally without any effort from anyone. All are living here like brothers and sisters of the same family.

The power of love in Prashanthi Nilayam

There are a number of foreigners here, who are very affluent and command princely comforts in their places, who have to put up with an austere life. They live in sheds in a spirit of fellowship and camaraderie though bereft of even the minimum comforts. They could not enjoy their life in their big mansions as much as they enjoy their stay here in such uncomfortable conditions. The reason is the Divine Love in them. If there is no such love in you, you cannot live here in such uncomfortable conditions even for a minute.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Devotees who have come from far off countries! You are putting up with the life here in spite of the lack of amenities to which you are normally accustomed back home and are feeling happy. This is indeed a big *Sadhana* and can be termed even as *Thapas* or penance.

The foreigners, in spite of their discomforts and difficulties, radiate joy through their smiling faces. This is because of their love for Swami. They are spending a lot of money to come here and undergo the rigours of the disciplined life here most willingly and yet are always happy. But in spite of all comforts, the people of our own country who gather here do not present a cheerful countenance.

Embodiments of Love! One who is having constant remembrance of God, with love and devotion, will ever be happy whether he is in a village or a city, flying in the sky or in a forest, because God dances in his heart and confers delight.

Because of the lack of unity, this nation is experiencing a lot of difficulties and turmoil. Promotion of unity is essential for peace in the nation and the world. There is no use in simply greeting others with words coming from the lips; greetings should come from the heart with sincerity and love.

Poornachandra Auditorium, Christmas day, 25 Dec 1992

The grace of God cannot be won through the gymnastics of reason, the contortions of yoga or denials of asceticism. Love alone can win it, love that needs no requital, love that knows no bargaining, love that is paid gladly as tribute to all living. Love that is unwavering.

Sathya Sai Baba

Vol. 26, 37, 1993. Let love prevail

*Whom the Mohammedans adore as Allah,
The Christians as Jehovah,
The Vaishnavites as the Lotus-eyed Lord,
The Shaivites as Sambhu,
That God, who confers on all
Long life, health and prosperity,
Is one only--have this conviction.
The Lord is all love;
Love is His Divine form;
That-Love is the redeeming Manthra
For all beings in this world.
Without experiencing a fragment
Of that Love how can you experience
The Divine, Oh man?*

EMBODIMENTS of Divine love! If one object has to combine with another, or one individual has to associate with another, love is the basis for the affinity. The entire world is filled with love. The world is Love and Love is the world.

In every human being love is present as an effulgence which shines in his feelings. Love is life and life is love. Even as the power to burn is natural for fire, and the power to cool is natural for water, love is a natural trait for man. Without it he ceases to be human.

Love and life are inter-related

Love is an inborn quality in man. It is his lifebreath. We nourish a sapling with great love. When the sapling grows and later becomes a dry plant, we cast it away without any concern. How much love did we lavish on the sapling? We cherished it as long as it had life. After it became dry and lifeless, we had no love for it. From infancy we bear love for the mother who has borne us and reared us. But when she passes away, the dead body is burnt without any attachment. What is it that was loved earlier? The living being was loved. Hence life and love are mutually inter-related.

Men today tend to forget the love-life relationship. Love today is mingled with self-interest. In the tree of every man's life there is the fruit of love. To enjoy this fruit, the rind that covers it has to be removed at the outset. The seeds in the fruit have also to be removed. The sweet juice in the fruit can be enjoyed only after the rind and the seeds have been removed. In the fruit of the tree of life, the rind is *Ahamkaara* (egoism). The seeds in that fruit are the selfish interests of man. Only when the ego and selfishness are eliminated, the sweet juice of love can be experienced.

The Upanishaths described this love as "the sweet juice that is *amritham* (nectarine) and the Supreme *Brahman*." This means that the juice (of love) is nectar itself, is verily the *Brahman* (Divine). It is life itself. It is the Divine *Effulgence--Thejas*.

This juice of love is equal to *Brahman*. It confers immortality on man and fills him with Divine bliss. Men today are unable to grasp the meaning of this Love Principle. It is essentially Divine in its nature. Hence, "Love is God; live in Love."

Most people, however, in their fascination for sensuous pleasures and worldly objects, are deeming the attachments to these as love. Immersed in selfish pursuits and interests, men seek everything for only selfish reasons and have no regard for the transcendental. Everything is desired for self-enjoyment and not out of love for the sake of love. We should love for the sake of the Divine, to realise the eternal. Love should be for experiencing the effulgence of *Jnaana*.

The martyrdom of Jesus

Love is thus, an amalgam of sweetness, effulgence and wisdom. Compassion is the reflection of love. Jesus is the embodiment of compassion. He looked with compassion at the poor and the miserable and gave them succour. In those days, people used to treat birds and animals without pity in the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus sought to put an end to these cruel practices.

From those times to the present, those who care for the well-being of all living beings and humanity were subjected to many trials and tribulations. Good people are always pursued by difficulties and troubles. The messiahs, the prophets, saints and God-men have always suffered from troubles and ordeals of various kinds. You should not bother about them. Have faith in God. When you live up to the truths you believe in, you will be indifferent to what others think.

Jesus was unaffected by the persecution to which he was subjected on a charge of treason. Moreover, whatever attempts may be made to suppress good people, their goodness cannot be extinguished.

*A fine diamond even if it is in a heap of garbage
will not lose its brilliance or its value.*

*A pumpkin, even if it is grown beside a hedge,
will not lose its sweetness.*

*A peahen's egg, even if it is hatched in a crow's nest,
will not lose its colours.*

Love is an expression of the Divine effulgence

Likewise, the glory and greatness of good men will suffer no diminution in whatever circumstances, or situation they may be placed. Such Divine effulgence is shining in every human being. Love is an expression of this effulgence. To manifest this love, men must be prepared to bear every kind of suffering.

*Can the sweet juice of the
sugar be had for
Making sugar without the
cane being crushed?*

The human body is like the sugarcane filled with the juice of love. It is only when the body is subjected to hardship that the divine, sweet juice of love can flow from it. Without trouble to the body, pains to the mind, and control of the feelings, how can you expect to experience the Divine? Men today aspire for liberation without suffering from their part. God's love is not to be secured so easily. The precious gem of love can be got only in the bazaar of *Thyaaga* (sacrifice). It is valued only in the Kingdom of Love. How can it be got in the market of cheap wares?

Devotee should first give up selfishness

Man's devotion these days is suffused with selfishness. Everything he does stems from self-interest. The first requisite is the giving up of selfishness. There must be a curb on egoistic conceit and possessiveness. The mind must be submerged in pure love.

You may have heard about the life of St. Paul. In the beginning he was bitterly opposed to Jesus. He was ceaselessly criticizing Jesus. One day Jesus appeared in his dream and said: "Saul, are you not a human being? Is it proper for you to revile one who has done you no harm, has entertained no evil thoughts about you and has not led you to wrong ways? What harm have I done to you? Why are you abusing me? This is sheer folly. You are thereby demeaning yourself. Beware, beware!" After uttering this warning, Jesus vanished. On waking up in the morning Saul (as Paul was known before his transformation) lamented that he had been false to this human nature by deriding and condemning fellow beings. He felt that Jesus was doing many good deeds. He was one who could not bear the sight of others sufferings. He was showering love on everyone. Saul felt that it was a sin to revile such a person. From that date Saul became a devotee of Jesus and came to be known as St. Paul.

In this manner, in the lives of many *Avathaars* one finds that despite all the love and blessings they receive and the benefits they derive from the *Avathaars*, some devotees turn against the Divine when their selfish desires are not fulfilled.

Three types of traducers of God

There are three types of traducers of God. In the first category are those who have no belief in God and always indulge in abuse of God. Without faith, how can there be any devotion? And without devotion, how can there be love? Without love, how can he be termed human? The words of such a person are worthless.

The second category of persons are those who adore God when their desires are fulfilled and deride God when their wishes are not satisfied. They imagine that they have a right to receive favours from God. Such petty-minded persons revile God. Their desires are sky-high. But their deserts are minimal. Their spiritual efforts are insignificant. Nevertheless, they criticise God when their insatiable desires are not satisfied.

The third category of persons are those who turn against God out of jealousy. They cannot bear the prosperity or position of others towards whom they think, God is partial. There is a remedy for almost every malady, but none at all for the disease of Jealousy. The envious indulge in calumny against God.

It is because of the ubiquitous presence of these three categories of anti-God men that spirituality and the divine feeling of love have become rare commodities today.

There is a *Vedhic* saying: "The knower of *Brahman* becomes *Brahman* himself." You are aware of the Godly man, Moses, described in the Bible. He was one who was ceaselessly praying to the

Lord. He was a fervent lover of God. His intense devotion and love ultimately transformed his face and filled it with a divine radiance.

Likewise, the *Gopikas*, through their intense devotion to Krishna, became the living images of Krishna. Rathnaakara, who was a highwayman in his early years, acquired the radiance of Raama by continually chanting the name of Raama.

Develop the sense of oneness with God

Whatever the God you worship, adore Him with *Thadhaathmabhaava* (a sense of oneness). Bodies may be two, but the heart is one. This is the feeling with which God should be worshipped. Only then you reach the state when you can declare: "You and I are one."

How this state is to be realised is illustrated by a biblical episode. Once St. John, while walking along, saw an angel reading a book. He asked who she was and what she was reading. She replied that she was an angel and that she was reading a book dealing with the doctrine of love. He asked for the book and the angel gave it to him, but said: "You must eat this book. When you are consuming the book, its taste will be bitter. But after you have eaten and digested it, it will become very sweet." "Eating the book" means absorbing the contents of the book, practising them and experiencing the bliss derived therefrom.

While reading and digesting "the book" the experience was bitter as declared by the angel. But, in due course, there was great transformation in St. John. His speech acquired a unique sweetness. His looks were sweet. Everything about him became sweet. What does this mean? It signifies the truth that you should completely identify yourself with the Divine love, which you seek from God. This love is not a purchasable commodity.

Today, devotion is treated as an exercise in shareholding, a kind of business partnership. But this is not right. The devotees should feel: "Everything is Thine." It is only when there is such a feeling of total surrender that the nature of Divine love can be comprehended.

Activities of "Messengers of Sathya Sai"

There is nothing more easy in the world than the spiritual path. It has to be followed in the form of *Seva* (loving service). To demonstrate to the world the beauty, the sweetness and the glory of selfless and loving service, the association called Messengers of Sathya Sai was formed (from among the old students of the Sathya Sai College for Women at Ananthapur). These girls, regardless of the families into which they got married and the countries where they had to live, pledged themselves to carry on their service activities. What this vow means should be properly understood. Men have greater freedom to act as they please. Married women have less freedom. They come under the sway of their husbands and in-laws. Despite these constraints, these former students have not only carried on their service activities but also interested their husbands in them.

The service activities of the "Messengers of Sathya Sai" are beyond praise. There are boy students amongst us. Of what use are they? They enjoy freedom, but are making no good use of it. They take no part in service activities. They are self-centred. But the girl students are not like that. They are not concerned about publicising themselves. To mention some of their service activities: In many small hamlets, these girls are building the roofs for the villagers houses, working like men. They go to the foreign countries where their husbands are employed.

The annual report of the Messengers of Sathya Sai mentions that their members are rendering service in different countries like Kuwait, Australia, and New Zealand. Their varied service activities are highly commendable. I am confident that very soon their activities will cover the entire world and promote the welfare of every country. Whatever work they take up, they carry it out with firm resolve.

For instance, there are numerous primary schools in which men and women teachers work. But men teachers do not work with the same zeal and earnestness as women teachers. For one thing, women are by nature accustomed to rearing and teaching the young. The record of performance of the students is much better in schools taught by women teachers than in schools with male teachers.

Follow the women's example

For the past sixteen years, these ex-students of the Women's College have been rendering great service. For the past one week the old students present in Prashaanthi Nilayam have been eager to train themselves for security duties in the Nilayam. Male students have shown no such eagerness. It is unbecoming of men students to be indifferent to service activities. It is a pity that they have not been impelled to action although they have been listening to the reports of the services of the girls year after year.

There was an officer by name Raammohan Rao. He used to sport an impressive moustache. One day when he was going to his office, he passed by a man who was lying on the road, injured in an accident. He went on without rendering any help to the injured man, while some women rushed to his aid. In the office he reflected over his conduct and felt ashamed that he had failed to go to the help of an injured man while some women had gone to help him. Feeling that he had behaved in an unmanly way, he removed his moustache. When he went to the officers club the next day, the members noticed the change in his face and asked him what accounted for it. He confessed that he had failed to act as a true human being and had forfeited the right to call himself a man. From that day, he dedicated his life to social service.

Service should be your watchword

All those who are in high positions will acquit themselves as true human beings only when they render selfless service to their fellow-men. Plunge yourselves in society and take part in service activities. When women are doing such splendid services, why should men lag behind? If men and women together render service, Bhaarith will be a gloriously prosperous nation. Not in Bhaarith alone, but in every country men and women should render service to those in need. Many overseas devotees here are found eating and strolling about without doing any useful work. They should shed their laziness and take part in some worthwhile activity.

Service should be your watchword. The spirit of sacrifice is essential. To speak about devotion without a spirit of sacrifice is meaningless.

Many of the women carry on their service activities in spite of the troubles which they face from their husbands. This shows their spirit of sacrifice. The Messengers of Sathya Sai are doing signal service. They need not confine themselves to their own members. They should try to draw other women into service activities and strive to improve the living conditions of the poor people in rural areas.

Follow the message of Sai

If the name of Jesus is glorified all over the world today, it is because of His boundless love. He served the lowly and the lost, and in the end, offered his life itself as a sacrifice. How many of those, who call themselves devotees of Jesus, are following His teachings? Those who claim to worship Raama, how far are they following His example? How many professed devotees of Krishna are living up to His teachings? There are many who claim to be Sai devotees. How many of them are following the message of Sai? If everyone seeks the answer within himself, he will see that it is a zero. Anyone who claims to be a Sai devotee should dedicate his life to Sai ideals. That is true devotion and real penance. That is the hall-mark of humanness. It will be reflected in love, which will find expression in compassion that generates real *Aanandha*.

The greatest quality in every man is love. When love is absent, evil qualities like hatred and jealousy rear their heads. Make love the breath of your life.

Christmas Day Discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 25-12-1993.

Vol. 27, 33, 1994. Spread the message of Love

The Cosmos is controlled by the Divine;

The Divine is governed by Truth;

Truth is governed by noble beings;

The noble are the Divine Itself.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! The entire visible cosmos is under the control of the Divine. The Divine is governed by Truth. That Truth is subject to *Utthamaa-dheenam* (noble beings). A noble person is the embodiment of God.

The human body, made up of the five basic elements and endowed with the five sense organs, is not different from the mind. The mind wears the body as a vesture. The mind, for its enjoyment, uses the body as an instrument. It is the cause of all experiences. A body without a mind is as illusory as a crop on a barren field.

In ordinary life people regard the body as permanent and for the sake of its pleasures undertake all kinds of efforts. This is a sign of ignorance. A body without the mind is as useless as a school without a teacher and a temple without a deity. The body should be regarded as an instrument for right living.

Men are developing their intellectual abilities but are using their intelligence for wrong purposes. Knowledge without right action is useless. Mere action without knowledge is foolishness. Hence it is necessary to combine knowledge with cultivation of character.

The most important faculty in man is *Prajna-Shakthi* (the power of integrated Awareness). It is from *Prajna-Shakthi* that other powers like *Ichcha-Shakthi* (will power), *Medha-Shakthi* (intelligence), *Vaak-Shakthi* (the power of speech) and *Vichaarana-Shakthi* (the reasoning powers) are derived. This integrated Awareness is sustained by thoughts.

Good company and good thoughts

The most important requisite for man in the world is truth based on thought. True thoughts constitute the proper wealth for man. But, alas, modern man makes no efforts to cultivate good thoughts. The absence of good thoughts weakens the will power. With a weak will man cannot accomplish even simple things. To achieve anything worth while in life man has to strengthen his will power.

It is well known that humanness thrives on good company and good thoughts. What good thoughts can achieve is illustrated by the life of a poor boy in Tamil Nadu, Muthuswamy Iyer. His father died at a very young age. The forlorn widow summoned the young man and told him that there were many poor people in the world who were suffering many hardships because they were not able to get justice. "Somehow you must pursue your studies so that you may one day provide help to these unfortunate people," she said. The mother's words strengthened the determination of the young lad. He pursued his studies diligently though he lacked many necessities. In the evenings he used to study under street lamps, as there was no light at home. He was solely inspired by his mother's good advice. As a result of this hard work, he graduated and secured a law degree. He dedicated himself to the service of the weak and helpless. His zeal and devotion resulted in due course in his becoming the first Indian Judge of the Madras High

Court. Consider the lowliness of his birth and what eminence he achieved! It was entirely due to the noble thoughts he cherished and his strength of will.

Noble thoughts strengthen will-power

In many foreign countries, young men who started their lives as dish washers, or newspaper vendors or shoeshine boys, achieved eminence as writers by dint of hard work and noble aspirations. Their achievements are entirely due to their ennobling thoughts which strengthened their will-power and inspired in others confidence in their abilities.

In Britain there was a poor youth named James MacDonald who used to help school children by writing the addresses on letters for them. As he wrote each address he used to tell the boy; "God bless you." He also used to tell them, off and on, "God is great." Often he had to go without food, but his heart was filled with noble feelings. Such a lad one day became the Prime Minister of Britain. Only his noble thoughts could have raised him from his poor state to the office of the Prime Minister:

Good fortunes grow according to good thoughts

Man's bad or good fortune is related to his thoughts. Sowing the seed of thoughts man reaps the fruit known as Karma (deeds). Sowing the seed of *karma*, man reaps the fruit called *Abhyaasa* (practice). From *Abhyaasa*, man reaps the fruit of *Seela* (character). From *Seela* one reaps the fruit of *Adhristam* (good fortune). Thus fortune is based on character, which is based on good practices arising out of good deeds based on good thoughts. Thus according to the development of good thoughts, one's good fortune will also grow.

Unfortunately; men today are deluded by bad thoughts and are engaged in evil deeds. They enjoy bad company and as a result come to a bad end. Everyone of you can experiment in a small way with the gradual elimination of bad thoughts. You will discover for yourself how your will-power grows with the diminution of bad thoughts. Man has forgotten that the spiritual path alone will rescue him from the grip of insatiable desires, endless worries and numerous troubles. He is indulging in various malpractices.

As desires multiply; the will-power weakens and vice versa. You can find out for yourselves how when addiction to coffee, tea and smoking is reduced, the willpower gets stronger. The results can be verified with just one week of practice. By addiction to various deleterious practices, man's will-power and other faculties decline in strength. The will-power should be strengthened by giving up bad habits and it should be directed towards social service.

Jesus and social service

Jesus exemplified the spirit of social service. The inspiration for this came from his mother Mary. From his childhood Mary taught him such good qualities as truth, kindness, compassion and justice. In his twelfth year, Jesus and his parents went to Jerusalem for a festival. In the crowds the parents lost trace of Jesus and searched for him everywhere. Not finding him anywhere, Mary sat under a tree and prayed to God to come to her help. At that moment, a thought flashed in her mind that Jesus was perhaps in a nearby temple. And Jesus was there sitting in a corner of the temple and listening to the words of the priest. Mary affectionately rushed towards him and embraced him. "Child, what agony I went through on your account," she said. Jesus told her: "Mother! Why should you have any fear? Those who believe in the world will have fears. But why should anyone believing in God fear at all? I am in the company of my

Father. Why do you fear? You taught me that God is everything for us. How, then, can you worry like this?"

Jesus had learnt his lessons from his mother and developed his spiritual faith.

After they returned from Jerusalem, Jesus felt that service to his parents was his foremost duty, because he owed everything to them. In this spirit, he used to assist his father in his carpentry work. Joseph passed away when Jesus was thirty. He sought his mother's permission to devote himself to the service of the needy and the forlorn.

After leaving home, Jesus had himself baptized by John. Then for forty days Jesus observed severe austerities without food and drink. At first he considered himself as Messenger of God. After the penance he realised he was the Son of God. He began his ministry with a group of fishermen as his first disciples. He taught them that they should first seek the Kingdom of Heaven. To enter that Kingdom they had to cultivate loving hearts. Then, their hearts would become the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus further declared to them: "I and my Father are one."

Foster love in your hearts and redeem your lives

What is it that men should acquire today? It is the broadening of the heart so that it may be filled with all-embracing love. Only then the sense of spiritual oneness of all mankind can be experienced. Out of that sense of unity will be born the love of God. This love will generate pure bliss in the heart that is boundless, indescribable and everlasting. For all forms of bliss, love is the source. A heart without love is like a barren land.

Foster love in your hearts and redeem your lives. Whatever your scholarship or wealth, they are valueless without love. Without devotion all other accomplishments are of no avail for realising God. Men aspire for liberation. True liberation means freedom from desires. Today men cannot go to forests for penance or engage themselves in meditation and other spiritual exercises. The easiest spiritual path for all people is to dedicate all their actions to God.

Today we celebrate the birthday of Christ. It is said that when Jesus was born in a manger, three kings were led by a star to Jesus's place of birth. In fact, they were not kings but three shepherds. One of them, seeing the infant Jesus observed: "This child will be a lover of God." A second one said: "No, God will love him." The third one said: "Verily he is God Himself."

Oneness with God

The true significance of these three statements is-"To love God is to be His Messenger." To be loved by God is to be a son of God. The final state is to be one with God. As Jesus said: "I and my Father are one." Thus all persons are messengers of God. This means that they should divinise themselves. When can men call themselves "Sons of God?" Recognise what pure actions are done by God, selflessly for the sake of all. There is no trace of self-interest in Him. Everything He does, says or thinks is for the good of others. On the other side, everything men do, speak or think is born out of selfishness. Men have become puppets in the hands of selfishness. Men can describe themselves as "Sons of God" only when they are completely free from selfishness and become Godly. To call yourself the "Son of God," you have to manifest the qualities of the Father.

In the Prahlada story, consider the emergence of the Lord from a pillar. The significance of the destruction of the pillar is a prelude to the manifestation of the Lord. The illusion relating to the body has to be destroyed for the Divine to manifest Himself.

The body is no doubt essential upto a point. It has been given for the performance of right actions and to discover the secret underlying action. *Kaaya* (body), *Karma* (action), *Marina* (mystery) and *Dharma* (righteousness) together signify the purpose of *Janma* (human birth). Today men are not aware of righteousness or the role of *Karma*. Of what use is human existence?

Do not give room for the waywardness of the mind. Purify the mind and direct it towards the righteous path. It is a straight and narrow path. In the spiritual field there is no royal highway. The path is narrow because the goal is infinitely precious. Crowds swarm a fish market but only a few go to a diamonds shop. The road to God is for the few who are genuine *saadhaks* (spiritual aspirants).

The birthdays of saints and prophets are being celebrated these days with feats and festivals. This is not the way to celebrate them. The followers should live upto the teachings of the great Masters.

Uniqueness of Christmas in Prashanthi Nilayam

Christmas is celebrated today in many countries. In every country small groups of people go to their respective churches, listen to the sermon and return to their homes. In some places people eat, drink, and make themselves merry.

But nowhere in the world can you find Christmas being celebrated with the solemnity and holiness obtaining in Prashanthi Nilayam. Here are gathered men and women from all countries. There are many denominations among Christians and the members thereof celebrate Christmas in their separate ways. Only in Prashanthi Nilayam do Christians of all denominations and men and women of other faiths join to celebrate Christmas. Here are devotees from Germany, Russia, Argentina, America and many other countries. They speak different languages. Prashanthi Nilayam has become a mini-world. All of them work in unison. You witnessed last night the beautiful play by children from so many countries. They conveyed the Divine Message so effectively. Here is a concrete manifestation of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God.

People talk about brotherhood, but there is often no fraternal feelings among brothers even in one family. That is not the case here. Here you see brotherhood in action, from heart to heart and love to love.

Holy festivals are conducted in such an ideal manner only in Prashanthi Nilayam. Devotees should set an example of ideal living to the whole world.

Messengers of Sathya Sai

Today; the former girl students of Sathya Sai College at Ananthapur, who have formed as association called Messengers of Sathya Sai, are observing their annual day. They are doing good service. They carry out the commands of Svaami in the spirit and the letter. They are spread all over the world---Switzerland, Australia, Canada, Germany; Japan and other countries. They come to Prashanthi Nilayam from these far off places out of their devotion to Sai. They are bringing their husbands and children also out of their deep love for Svaami. They go out to villages and do various kinds of service there. They serve the blind and deaf and dumb children and make them self-reliant and useful citizens. They are carrying on their work wholeheartedly.

For the expenses of their travel from far off countries they save money from their domestic budgets. This is a sign of their dedication to God's work.

In this manner the old students of the Ananthapur College are leading exemplary lives wherever they are. In addition to all their multifarious household duties, they carry on their social service activities.

In this cosmic university all are students. Hence everyone should render social service to the extent of one's capacity and spread Svaami's ideals among all. There is nothing selfish in Svaami's message. Hence anyone can spread it selflessly.

Carry the message of unity to every home

Sow the seed of love in your hearts and it will grow in due course into a big tree. God is one. Do not entertain any differences of creed or caste. Carry the message of unity to every home.

Embodiments of love! Regard Love as your life-breath and as the sole purpose of your existence.

Discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 25-12-1994, Christmas Day.

You tell Me that you have read the Bhaagavatha Vaahini and all the other Vaahinis that I have written for you. Good! But let Me ask you, have you put even a single direction given in them into daily practice? Question yourself calmly and decide to benefit by practising the process mentioned in them.

BABA

Vol. 28, 38, 1995. Realise God through Pure Love

*All the objects in this visible universe are
Extremely beautiful, attractive and pleasing.
The Divine is immanent in the entire cosmos.
The cosmos is filled with love.
The Supreme Self is the embodiment of love;
Hence if love encounters love they merge;
Hence if you develop your love
You become eligible to achieve
Oneness with the Divine.*

LOVE exists for love and nothing else. It is spontaneous and imparts delight. Everything is permeated by love. Love sees with the heart and not the eyes. It listens not through the ears but by the tranquillity of the heart. It speaks not with the tongue but out of compassion. Compassion, kindness and love are separate words which mean the same thing. Love has many synonyms.

Love can emanate only from the heart and not any other source. Love is immortal, nectarine, blissful and infinite. A heart filled with love is boundless. Just as rivers with different names and forms merge in the ocean and become one with it, love in many forms enters the ocean of the heart and gets identified with it.

True love has no beginning or end

Love can conquer anything. Selfless, pure, unalloyed love leads man to God. Selfish and constricted love binds one to the world. Unable to comprehend the pure and sacred love, man today is a prey to endless worries because of his attachment to worldly objects. Man's primary duty is to understand the truth about the Love principle. Once he understands the nature of love, he will not go astray. The various contexts in which the word love is used today have no relation to the true meaning of love. The affection, between a mother and child or between a husband and wife is incidental to a certain temporary relationship and is not real love at all. True love has neither a beginning nor an end. It exists in all the three categories of time--past, present and future. That alone is true love which can fill man with enduring bliss.

One's thoughts, one's words and looks should be filled with love. This is divine love. One who is saturated with this love can never be subject to suffering. Men today are affected by praise or blame. But one who is filled with divine love transcends praise or censure. He is unaffected by criticism or flattery. He treats alike joy and sorrow, profit and loss, victory and defeat.

It is not easy to experience such love. It is easy to blame God but difficult to realise God. Men today prefer the easy path to the rough, one. They should realise that there can be no pleasure without pain.

The mission of Jesus

It was to teach mankind the greatness of divine love that Jesus came. His father passed away when Jesus was ten years old. Thereafter, with the permission of his mother, he embarked on his

ministry of service to the people. He resolved on three tasks: one, to be filled with Divine love and to share it with others was the main purpose of his life; two, he should not succumb to praise or censure in carrying out his mission; three, to inspire in others the conviction that the Divinity within is omnipresent. Jesus considered spreading the gospel of love as his foremost task. He encountered many ordeals in carrying out his mission, but he regarded them all as challenges to be overcome. He was determined to treat pleasure and pain, sickness and failure with equanimity. He could not bear to see any one suffer. He was opposed to the traffic in birds going on in the temple in Jerusalem. The affected persons turned against him. But Jesus carried on, regardless of their hostility. In the end he sacrificed his life for the sake of others and out of his love for all.

Every human being is potentially a messenger of God. But, today, men have become messengers of the Lord of Death. They are traitors to their true human state. Humanness demands that everyone should manifest the Divinity within him. Everyone should be a real messenger of God and strive to promote peace and security in the world. There is no other path to be followed. God's message is sacred and totally free from self-interest.

When Christ was born, three kings came to see the infant. One of them declared that the child would be a lover of God. The second one said that he would be the beloved of God. The third one declared that he was God. A lover of God is a messenger of God. The one whom God loves is a "Son of God." When one experiences both of these, he becomes one with God. "Father and Son are one."

Therefore, at the outset you must prepare yourselves to be messengers of God. This means that you should live up to the message of God. The message calls for service to all. Compassion, morality and integrity are essential elements in the message. In propagating this message faith in God should be promoted. Love should be the watchword. The absence of love gives rise to hatred. Today there is no unity among the people. Without unity how can there be bliss? Without bliss how can anyone experience God?

Men should lead selfless lives. This may seem difficult. But, in reality there is nothing easier. It is selfishness that creates all kinds of difficulties for mankind. Selfless love will give no room for any evil. Unselfish love may meet with opposition from one's kith and kin and from worldly persons. But one should not be deterred by such opposition. Love should be cherished as one's life breath.

The elements and the Divine

It is essential to have faith in God. The five elements are manifestations of God. They are the earth, water, fire, air and ether (or space). In the earth God exists in the form of *Prajna* (Awareness). In fire, God is in the form of *Jaagratha-Swaruupa* (wakefulness). The *Vedhik* warning is, "Be awake". In air, God exists as the *Praana* (vital breath). In ether (or space) God pervades it as the primal sound, *Omkaara*. Every element thus proclaims the manifestation of one aspect of God.

All beings experience the presence of the Divine through the five elements, the five senses, and the five life breaths. Some may ask, "When the Divine is omnipresent and is in all beings, why is He not visible to us?" If investigation is made on right lines, God can be perceived. Some human effort is essential to get this perception. Just as the reflection of the sun can be seen in all its purity only in clear and still water, though reflections may be noticed in ponds, wells and oceans,

God can be perceived only when the heart is pure and unselfish. How can God be expected to appear before a person whose mind is wavering and whose outlook is self-centred? The wavering mind will experience only a hazy figure. In a steady mind, God will present a clear image.

Mind is the cause of man's bondage

The mind, according to the scriptures, is the cause of man's bondage or liberation. The mind has three qualities: *Thamas*, *Rajas* and *Sathva*. The *Thaamasik* quality makes the mind ignore the truth, pursue the false and impels man to indulge in what is unholy and improper. It is necessary to correct this tendency of the *Thamo-guna*. The *Rajo-guna* is responsible for a person living in a kind of dream-state and treating it as real. The *Saathvik* quality makes a person see good even in a bad person or object. The *Saathvik* person sees God in the whole cosmos and fosters the godly approach to creation.

Today people all over the world are racked by fears of various sorts. There is no peace anywhere. But people should not give way to despair. They should face the situation with courage, without bothering about the results.

Make love the basis for all your actions. The Gopikas prayed to Krishna to play on the flute and fill their barren hearts with love so that love may grow and ripen in their hearts. The love of God should be free from any desire for favours. God judges the devotee's love by the intensity of the feeling and not by the number of ways in which worship is offered.

Love of God does not mean giving up your normal duties. In the performance of these duties, every action should be done as an offering to God - *Bhaagavath preethyartham* (for the sake of pleasing God). Look upon the body as a moving temple, wherein God resides. Recognise that God is always with you and around you.

Messengers of Sathya Sai

The Messengers of Sathya Sai are doing excellent work. They are helping to build dwellings for the poor in the villages. They also arrange for the marriage of poor villagers, raising the money from among themselves. Many old students of the Women's College (at Ananthapur) are living in overseas countries like Germany, U.S.A, Australia and Japan. It is an index of their devotion to Svaami that they have come from these distant places for this annual meeting of "the Messengers" at great expense. I asked the President of the Association why the members are wasting money in this way. Why should they not use it for helping some poor people in their places? Every trip costs about a lakh of rupees per person. Her reply was: "Svaami! We are not concerned about the expense. We come to Svaami to get our spiritual batteries recharged so that we may render better service. Money comes in one way or another. But we have to develop our spirit of sacrifice. It is for this reason that we are coming here. Even the money we earn is not really ours. We are merely agents. We are a kind of trustees for our incomes."

This attitude has to be appreciated. People should regard all wealth as coming from God to be used for sacred purposes. No one brings anything with him at birth and carries anything with him at death. All relationships in between are transient. Treat all alike. Even bad people will be transformed if you treat them with love.

Show love to those who dislike you also

St. Paul was an example of one who originally hated Christ but later became his foremost apostle. When you show love towards all, even to those who dislike you, God will love you. Then you become a "Son of God." You earn the right to inherit the Kingdom of God. You can become one with God.

Among the Messengers of Sathya Sai, consisting of men and women, it is the women who are carrying on more service activities. This is all the more commendable because of the handicaps they labour under as housewives with in-laws and others who dominate over them. Nevertheless they are persuading their husbands to come to Svaami. This is true *seva* because they are converting sceptics to believe in God.

The male old students have more freedom but are not equally zealous in rendering service. They should realise the true meaning of freedom, namely, carrying out the dictates of the Spirit.

As a nation we have achieved freedom, but we have not achieved unity. Unity can be achieved only through love. This was the message of Jesus.

Make yourselves worthy of calling 'Sai Devotees'

Students! When you are observing today the birthday of a divine personality you have also to follow his teachings. You have to remember what constitutes the greatness of the person whose birthday you celebrate. We celebrate Shri Raama's birthday, but how many respect the words of the father as Raama did? How far are you prepared to sacrifice position and power as Raama did? People insist on rights to which they have no claim. How can they call themselves devotees of Raama? You should follow the ideals of Raama.

What is meant by calling yourselves devotees of Sai? You have to foster love and develop unity. You must consider yourselves as members of one family, the children of one God. Only then you are entitled to call yourselves Sai devotees. Whatever others may say, do not bear any ill-will towards them. Welcome everything as for your good.

The more you serve God, the more the bliss you will experience. Hence, fill your life with love, grow in love and end your life in love.

Christmas message in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 25-12-1995.

Vol. 29, 53, 1996. Realise God through love

ASTHIRAM Jeevitham loke (Life in the mundane world is impermanent). Life in this phenomenal world is not permanent. "*Asthiram yauvvanam dhanam*" (Youth and wealth are not lasting). They are like passing clouds. "*Asthiram dhaara-puthraadhi*" (Wife and children and other relatives are liable to vanish like white mist in a moment). "*Dharmam Keerthi dhvayam sthiram*" (Righteousness and fame endure forever). In human life, righteous living and a good reputation are the two that are everlasting.

In the history of mankind several religions arose to promote the moral advancement, the prosperity and the welfare of humanity.

*Vaishnavites have esteemed Vishnu as the Supreme Shaivites have
given the highest place to Shambhu*

*The worshippers of Ganapathi accord the highest
place for Ganesha;*

*Saraswathi is adored as the Supreme
by the seekers of knowledge;*

*Muslims regard Allah as the Supreme Lord
While Christians hail Jesus as the Saviour;
Buddhists worship Buddha as the Supreme
Enlightened One;*

Jains accord the highest place to Mahaveera;

Paarsis adore Zoroaster

Sikhs deem Naanak as the Supreme teacher

Baba devotees adore Sai as the Supreme

The wise regard all of them as equal.

All religions should be revered equally

Because God is one and the same God for all of them.

God is Truth. He is Righteousness.

He is peace. He is the embodiment of love.

(Telugu poem).

Embodiments of Love! It is essential to realise and act on the basis that the purpose of religion is to promote unity in diversity, banish divisive tendencies and make human beings lead ideal lives.

The common essence of all religions

The essence of all religions, the message of all scriptures and the destination for all mankind is the same. But because of selfishness, narrow-mindedness and concern for self-interest, religion is

used as a pretext for promoting differences and conflicts. "All religions teach only what is good if they are studied intelligently. If your mind is good, what religion can be bad?" says a Telugu poem. Morality and integrity, righteousness and charity, truth and tradition, forbearance and non-violence are basic tenets of all religions. These basic truths are common to all religions. But over the years men have forgotten these truths and have fostered divisive tendencies in the place of unity. As a result, respect for human values has gone. It is essential to recognise the Divine unity that suffuses all the diversity in human existence.

The life of Jesus

(Bhagavaan gave a brief account of the Jewish concept of the creation, of the cosmos and referred to the birth of Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph). As the name and fame of Jesus spread, opposition to him developed among a section of Jews. After his father's death, young Jesus considered it his duty to help his mother and revere her as divine. Jesus preached the primary obligation of everyone to show one's gratitude to the parents. Jesus came with his mother to Jerusalem when he was eleven years old. His mother was worried about the activities of Jesus. Jesus was critical of the ways of the Jews in the temple in Jerusalem.

He came out against the harmful practices in the temple and preached the omnipresence of God in all living beings. He exhorted the people not to cause harm to anyone.

What he preached was in accord with the basic teachings of all religions. He engaged himself in a mission of mercy to the sick and the poor. He offered food to the hungry. Seeing his acts of love and kindness, people declared that he was a "Messenger of God." Jesus constantly referred to God as the father. Later he declared: "I and my father are one." Jesus dedicated his life to the propagation of faith in one God who is common to all mankind.

Men today celebrate the birthdays of great holy men but they do not follow the teachings of the masters. There is nothing great about the celebration of birthdays. People must resolve to uphold their ideals and act up to their teachings.

A unique book

There is a book compiled in Britain around 1530 A.D, containing all the information about Jesus gathered during the preceding centuries. The Russians condensed all this material in a small book which they preserved in a place on the Black Sea coast. (Svaami produced the little book by a circular wave of His hand and held it before the audience). This is the book. You can see the cross on the cover page. The book was designed to demonstrate the common features of all religions. What is contained in this book is not to be found even in the Bible. It contains an entirely new account of the life of Jesus.

It is not open to all to understand the ways of the Lord. To know about God one has to develop godly feelings. In this book, there are bookmark threads which distinguish every faith by a *shloka* relating to it. There is one page which contains the *shloka* from the Bhagavath Geetha in which Krishna exhorts Arjuna to give up all beliefs and take sole refuge in Him and assured Arjuna that thereafter he will absolve Arjuna of all the sins (Cheers).

The essence of all creeds is one and the same thing. Man's primary duty is to surrender to God. "Surrender" means attaining the state in which the devotee feels he is one with God. This feeling arises out of the conviction that the same divinity is present in all. Bodies of human beings are varied like bulbs, but the current passing through them is the same. The colour of the bulbs or their wattage may vary. But the current activating them is the same.

This book contains the *Vedhic* saying: "*Ekoham bahushyaam.*"

Follow the conscience

The same God dwells in all beings. There is no justification for differences on the basis of religion. It is attachment to the body which accounts for religious differences. Do not regard the body as permanent. It is a water bubble. The mind is a mad monkey. Don't follow either of them. Follow the conscience. That is the main message contained in this little book. The culture of Bhaarith has experienced this truth in the concept of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

Today people read all kinds of books and go after all sorts of "great persons." They do not enquire about what constitutes greatness. Realise that there is no one greater than each of you. But you have not discovered the real truth about yourself, like an elephant that does not know its own strength. A mahout with a goad is able to control it.

Recognise the fact that the whole universe is within you. You have all the powers in you. They are derived from the Divine Spirit within you. It is the Divinity which endows you with a Free Will. Forgetting the supreme power of the Spirit, people place their reliance on the powers of the body, the mind and the intellect.

Love binds all people

Embodiments of Love! If you want to realise God, if you wish to experience the Divinity within you, if you want to know your true self, you have to develop pure, unsullied love. It is this that binds all people. It is described as the *Prema-paasham* (tether of love).

Today there are numerous sects within Christianity all of which are engaged in propagating their respective doctrines. While this preaching goes on, there is very little of practice in daily life. Practice is most important. People may be entitled to propagate their creed. But that does not achieve anything lasting. Only practical example matters. When you practise what you preach, others will be inspired by your example. No one will care for the teaching of a person who does not practise what he preaches.

I have often told the students that of all forms of knowledge, the one that is most beneficial is practical knowledge which is relevant to everyone. You have to act on the conviction that the same Divine Spirit dwells in one and all.

Oblivious to this truth, man is immersed today in selfish pursuits. This selfishness is degrading man to the lowest levels. To develop true humanness, everyone has to foster the feeling of spiritual oneness. This sense of oneness constitutes true religion. Religion means "realisation" of your true self.

Develop the love of God. All other forms of love are not love at all, but only fleeting and impermanent attachments. Man's biggest folly is forgetting his divinity. All should realise that they come "from God." All are children of God. Everyone should seek to get nearer and nearer to God. That is *saadhana*. You must feel that God is *Hridayavaasi* (dwells in the heart). You must develop compassion in the heart, because without it the heart is only a stone.

That is the message of Jesus--the message of love. Love is God. Live in love. Start the day with love. Spend the day with love. End the day with love. This is the way to God. Only the person who is filled with love will be dear to the Lord.

God is your unfailing friend

This book contains the declaration: "*Yo madhbhaktah.*" "The devotee who is filled with love of God is dear to me," says the Lord in the Geetha. God is your unfailing friend in weal and woe. You must acquire His friendship.

There are many devotees from overseas here today. They should be firm in their devotion whatever changes in the situation they may face.

You may begin worshipping God with specific form and name (*saakaara*). But when you are faced with difficulties you experience God as a helper. When you have some desires, you pray to God for fulfilling them. You are then an *artharthi* (seeker of favours). In these different ways the devotee has to develop his relationship to God.

To illustrate how God responds to the prayers of devotees, I would relate the story of a rich man with four wives, who expressed what they wanted him to get for them during a trip abroad. The first wife, who was spiritually enlightened, prayed for his safe return. The second wife wanted him to bring some sacred books. The third wife, who was ailing wanted him to get some medicines. The fourth wife, who was a "modern", asked him to get her sarees and jewellery. The merchant on his return gave the three wives what they wanted and stayed with the first wife because she had no other desire except to have him back.

How God responds to devotees

God responds to devotees in the same manner. To those who aspire for wealth, he gives wealth. Those who seek knowledge, He will help them to acquire it. Those who are ailing and who pray to God will get the relief they pray for. God builds hospitals for their treatment. Those who pray to God for oneness with Him, will realise Him. This is the way God responds to the four kinds of devotees.

The devotees should consider God alone as important and not other mundane desires. If you have God with you, all other things are got easily. So, God is your real wealth. Real health is God.

Men should strive for God-Realisation because they came from God and should go back to Him.

Today there are devotees here from many countries--Germany, Japan and others. Whatever happiness you may have experienced here, you will have to go back to your countries when your money is exhausted or your visa expires. Your aim must be to acquire a permanent visa to stay here permanently. That is got by God's grace. You can get it through love and love alone. When you have that love, your proximity to God is ensured for ever.

Embodiments of love! There is love in everyone of you. Develop that love. Share it with others. When you have this love there is no need for you to go in search of *aashrams*. There are some foolish, persons who go on hopping from one aashram to another. This is sheer folly. There is no need to go anywhere. The Divine is in your heart. Adhere to one belief firmly. Do not change your faith from day to day. Follow one path with firm faith. That is the Love principle.

Discourse on 25-12-1996, in the Sai Kulwant Mandap.

Grace takes away the malignity of the karma which you have to undergo; you know there are dated drugs, which are declared ineffective after a certain date; well, the eject of karma is rendered

null, though the account of karma is there and has to be rendered or, the Lord can save a man completely from the consequences, as was done by Me to the bhaktha whose paralytic stroke and heart attacks I took over, some months ago, in the Gurupurnima week!

Baba

Vol. 30, 33, 1997. Dedicate your lives to the Divine

Faith, Daring, Courage and Intelligence,

Energy and Valour---wherever

These six qualities exist

Divine protection is assured.

EMBODIMENTS of Love ! Vishvaasam (faith or confidence), Saahasam (daring or determination), Dhairyam (courage), Buddhi (intelligence), shakthi (energy) and Paraakramam (valour)---when a man has these six qualities, the Divine will stand by him in all his endeavours. In any age or at any place or in any circumstance, these six good qualities are essential. No worry will haunt any man who has these six virtues.

These six qualities cannot be acquired by education nor can they be imparted by any preceptor. Nor can they be inherited from one's parents.

These qualities are secured only by *Aathma-vishvaasam* (Self-confidence).

Faith is essential for every activity in life

The first among the six qualities is *Vishvaasam* (faith). In our daily experience faith is evident from the simple act of posting a letter. No one will send a letter by post if he did not have faith in the postal department. The address and the postage stamp on the letter are unaffected by distance. Likewise, God makes no distinction-between those near to Him or remote from Him. One's faith should be properly addressed. The faith should be unwavering, total and free from doubts of any kind. The letter of Faith has also to carry the stamp of *Prema* (Love). It should be selfless love. Selfish love will be useless. When firm faith is associated with unselfish love, the prayers addressed to Bhagavaan are bound to reach Him.

This kind of faith has become rare nowadays. Self-confidence is totally absent. How can one without confidence in himself have faith in God? And how can such a person hope for God's grace? Hence, every man must cultivate firm faith.

Today in every field, firm faith is essential. Any one who leaves home for his office sets out with the confidence that he will return home in the evening. No one will embark on any undertaking unless at the outset he has the confidence that he can do the job. Faith is thus essential for every activity in life.

The ancient sages accomplished many great things by their faith. Their achievements are cherished by people today, even after thousands of years.

Unfortunately, because of the influence of *kali* in the present age, faith is declining from moment to moment. People change their beliefs constantly. Such changes are mental aberrations. They do not pertain to the Spirit (which dwells in the heart).

What are human values?

Mankind has a history of lakhs of years. But Humanity is yet to realise the greatness of humanness. After all these years, man is still unable to answer the question: "What are human values?"

Men study books, listen to discourses, experience gains and losses, joys and sorrows, but all these do not give them a firm hold on what is permanent in life. If they had acquired this hold they would have realised that the world is one family.

The *Vedhas* taught the concept of one human family. The *Vedhas* declared that the *Brihath* (Supreme Cosmic Principle) has no limits. It is infinite.

Mankind has also no bounds or barriers. In fact, there are no barriers between humanity and every other species of living beings like birds, beasts and insects and even trees. All of them belong to a single family of living beings. In the Tree of Life, man appears in many forms--as animals, birds and insects. In all these forms he experiences his divine essence.

You are all aware of the fact that Ganapathi has two mothers, Gauri and Ganga. For every man there are four mothers. The first mother is *Sathyam* (Truth). The second mother is *Dharmam* (Righteousness). The third is *Prema* (Love). The fourth is *Shaanthi* (peace). Man must live in such a manner that he pleases all the four mothers. Man, however, has given up these four sacred mothers and adores four others who are adopted mothers. Who are they? Injustice, immorality, unrighteousness and falsehood--these are the adopted mothers. As a result, man is a prey to many difficulties. Man, who ought to adhere to Truth, Right Conduct and Love, has become a creature of injustice, wickedness and untruth. As a result of abandoning one's natural mothers and clinging to unnatural relationships man is leading a polluted life and forfeiting peace.

In an earlier aeon Raama declared that the mother and the Motherland are greater than Heaven itself. But man today has given up his natural mother and is adoring meretricious mothers. Man should love Truth, Righteousness, Love and Peace as his mothers. In no circumstance should he cause any pain to these four because that will result in great suffering for him.

The six inner enemies of man

The Creator has endowed man with numerous marvellous qualities. Besides the six virtues mentioned earlier man also got vices. The opposites of the six virtues are *Kaama* (Desire), *Krodha* (Anger), *Lobha* (Greed), *Moha* (fascination), *Madha* (Pride) and *Maathsarya* (Envy). These are known as the six enemies of man. They are part of creation. The mind is the master of these vices. Man tries to train the mind to overcome these vices. But this is not easy for all. The reason is that, being unaware of how to control the mind, man becomes an easy prey to its vagaries. Everyone should strive to find out how to use the mind in any situation, at any time and in any circumstance.

Men today are dominated by three evil qualities: anger, hatred, and envy. These three qualities poison the mind of man. Consequently, every action of man gets poisoned. Every word he utters is venomous. All actions done by the promptings of the mind are tainted. All sensory actions are equally polluted. To transform these evil thoughts and actions into good ones, it is necessary to infuse love into all thoughts and actions. When the mind is filled with Love, all actions get suffused with Love.

Today man is totally unaware of what is meant by Love. Man equates desire with Love. He imagines that whatever he yearns for are prompted by Love. This is not true *Prema* (love). *Prema* is totally free from desire. It is utterly selfless. It seeks no return. It is all encompassing. It makes no distinction between friend and foe.

Forgetting this concept of universal selfless love, filling himself with selfish desires, man fancies that he is filled with Love. This is mundane attachment. It is quite apart from the Love that flows

from the Spirit inside. Spiritual love is boundless. It is free from the feeling of hatred. It is capable of expressing itself in universal terms.

It is vital to fill the mind with Love and expel the six enemies residing in it. Every part of the body should be filled with Divine Love. That is the way to divinise man.

Fill the heart with Love and render service

Many people imagine that to divinise man and make him a godly being is a superhuman exercise. This is not so. Divine Love is within the competence of man. It is natural to man. He is entitled to possess it. Divine Love should not be considered as something transcendental or alien to man. But men tend to degrade this love by giving it different forms and names and degrade themselves.

The defect lies in the perversion of Love and is not inherent in it. Convert anger into Love. Turn hatred into Love. To effect this change what is needed is a change of heart---filling it with Love. When the heart is filled with Love, the whole world becomes loveable.

The mind is restless and fickle. All troubles that afflict man stem from the mind. The thoughts arising from the mind are the cause of human birth.

The *Vedhas* describe man as *Manuja*. This implies that man takes birth to experience fulfilment of his desires. Hence, it is necessary for man to make his desires sublime. He should seek to know what could make his life ideal and exemplary.

What can contribute to the well-being of society? What is ideal for the whole world? Thinking over these questions, one should develop sublime ideas. People should not act in haste on every impulse of the mind. It is said that the body is a prerequisite for the achievement of righteousness but it is important to note that man is endowed with a body to render service to others. The implication of the two dicta is that while discharging his duties, man should also render service to others.

There is any number of helpful sea-vices to be rendered by men in this world today. We have here three types of devotees. There are those who are not conscious of their abilities. There are a second type of devotees, who seek God alone and do not desire anything else from God. The third type are those who adore God as the embodiment of Truth and get their wishes fulfilled by their prayers to Him as the omnipotent Lord. God is one. But devotees can worship him under different names and forms.

Divine exists in the microcosm and the macrocosm

Man has no need to seek anything outside him. He has the universe within him in his heart. He is potentially the Cosmic Being. He has in him the magnetic power of attraction. It is derived from the Divine. Every atom has his Divine power. Men think that only what is perceived by the senses is real and what is beyond human perception is unreal. This is wrong. It is the unseen that contains everything. When you see a man, you consider his physical features as the only reality about him. But you can have more conception of his powers and talents, which are not visible externally. He has Compassion, Love, the spirit of Sacrifice, sublime thoughts, none of which are apparent to you. For that reason, can you say that they do not exist? Likewise, the secret of man's actions may not be apparent. A flower, for instance, has fragrance, which has no visible form. The form of fragrance is to be found in the form of the flower. Without the flower there is

no fragrance. It is said that *Prema* (love) has no form. But love has a form. The mother, who loves her child, expresses the form of love.

Likewise, everything has a form. But the ignorant not aware of the truth, declare that what is formless is non-existent. There is nothing in the universe, which is without form. For one to understand this truth, he has to realise that the Divine exists in the microcosm and the macrocosm.

All are one! Be alike to everyone

There were controversies regarding Jesus. These differences were the cause of the ordeals he had to go through. But Jesus was prepared to face any trouble or any penalty he considered Compassion as the supreme quality. At first, he declared he was a "Messenger of God." Then, he announced: "I am the Son of God." Ultimately he declared: "I and my Father are One." You must take note of this oneness. You must proclaim yore: oneness and not your diversity.

Today people talk about unity but do not practise it. In every discourse Svaami speaks about love. How many practise it? How many have tried to understand the Love Principle? Who has this Love? Love is not to be seen anywhere.

Where there is love, there is no room for hatred. Do not be envious of anyone. When this evil quality appears. Love takes to flight. A pure heart is abode of Love. Where there is Purity, there is Unity. Unity leads to Divinity.

Today Purity is absent. How, then, do you realise Divinity? You must offer everything to God without any desire. Dedicate all yours to God. This was the teaching of Jesus. He considered everything as an offering to God. When he was being nailed on the cross, people around were weeping. At that moment an ethereal voice declared: All are one, my dear son! be alike to everyone." Jesus declared: "Death is the dress of life." Just as we change our clothes, we also change our bodies. The bodies are vestures (for the indwelling Spirit). Hence bodies should be regarded as mere vestures. We should not worry about the body.

Love is God. Live in Love

Buddha also, before he attained *Nirvaana* expounded his teachings clearly. His step-mother's son, Ananda, was in tears at that time. Buddha told him: "Ananda! You should not shed tears like this. Why are you weeping?" Ananda said: "I am grieving over your imminent passing." Buddha declared- "I am not dying. Nor are you living. All have to give up this body. Therefore, you must not shed tears."

How many heed such sayings? You must learn to lead ideal lives. That is the right way to observe the birthday of Christ. Few care to observe the ideals of the great teachers.

You must realise that there is nothing more divine than Love. Love is God. Live in Love. This is your duty. Fill your hearts with Love. You will then be free from all afflictions.

You must feel that you are suffering because of Love. But that suffering is due to constricted love. When your love is all-embracing there will be no room for suffering.

Towards the end of his life Raamakrishna Paramahansa was suffering from cancer of the throat. All his disciples appealed to him to pray to the Mother; Durga Devi, whom Raamakrishna worshipped, to relieve him of his malady. Raamakrishna said: "I have prayed to the Mother." They asked him what the Mother's response was. Raamakrishna said- "The Mother told me:

'When I am caring so many things with so many mouths, does it matter very much if you are unable to eat with your one mouth?' her words opened my eyes."

Sing the glories of God and serve others

All mouths are the mouths of God. The *Vedas* proclaim that the Divine has a myriad heads and myriad eyes and myriad feet. This means that all heads are His, all eyes are His and all feet are His. God is infinite. Man is finite. The infinite Divine must be loved with boundless Love. God's love is limitless and undiminishing. It is ever pure and unsullied. You must serve everyone with a loving heart.

Christ was the victim of envious persons who were opposed to His teachings and who levelled accusations against Him. Devotees of God should not mind the criticisms of envious persons. All good people have to face such troubles. They should treat everything as meant for their good. This was how the Paandavas looked upon all the troubles they experienced.

Yesterday and today the overseas devotees filled everyone with joy by their music programmes. God is a lover of music and enjoys music. Sainly devotees like Naaradha and Thumburu, who are always in the proximity of God, are always singing the glory of God. Nothing else can give so much joy as music. You can please God with your music. God revels in music. Music is therefore holy. It reflects the state of one's inner being. Singing the glories of God, render service to the people. You will derive the greatest joy when you sing and serve.

Discourse in Sai Kulvanth Hall on the evening of 25-12-1997.