

Vol, 34, 1960. The click of the camera

WHAT Kuppa Bairaagi Shaasthri told you now about *Brahma Jijnaasa* (desire of getting knowledge of the Supreme Soul) and *Aathma* (soul) was very learned and very useful, especially for *Saadhakas* who have reached a certain stage of discipline and study, but I know that most of it was beyond you. My task is to give you the stuff that you need now, in a form that is both sweet and digestible. It is difficult to grasp the idea of the *Aathma*, about which Kupa Bairaagi Shasthri spoke, in spite of all the quotations he gave from all the commentaries on the *Upanishaths*.

It is just the gold in all the jewels, the base and the substance, however many forms and whatever shapes the jewels may have. To become a particular jewel is to lose the Universal nature or rather to limit it. To lose the name and form of gold and become a jewel is to feel separate, to forget the One. The *Aathma* does not change, no one can transform it. Its nature is hidden by various veils of ignorance, such as those which Thyaagaraaja prayed Lord Venkatesha to pull apart, in the famous *song*---"*Thera theeyaga raadha*."

The veils are known as mind, intellect, etc. The jewel must know it is not, it was not, it will not be oval or square or fiat or round, or anklet or necklace or ring or bangle. It must yearn to know its real nature and become aware of the basic truth, apart from the unreal appearance. When it becomes gold again or rather when it ceases to think of itself as anything but gold, it can be said to have attained Bliss.

Love has to begin with a great yearning for Light

Because you have taken residence in this body, you cannot call the body, 'I'. When you sit here in this Hall, you do not call the Hall "I"; you know you are separate and that you are here only temporarily. When you move about in a *tonga* (horse-cart), you do not say that the tonga is you, do you? You do not take the tonga inside when you step down from it on reaching home. So also, you have to drop this body when you reach "home".

The 'I' in you is *Paramaathma* (Supreme Being) Himself. 'I' is the tiny wavelet that plays with the wind for a moment, over the deep waters of the sea. The wave gives you the impression that it is separate from the azure and timeless ocean below. But it is just an appearance, a creation of the two ideas---Name and Form. Get rid of the two ideas and the wave disappears in the sea; its reality flashes upon you and you know.

Paramaathma reveals Its Glory as *Prema* (Love) in man; *Prema* appears in various forms: attaching itself to riches or parents or children or one's a life-mate or friends. All these are sparks of the same flame and the Love of the Universal is its highest expression. This *Prema* cannot be cultivated by reading guide-books and made-easies and learning the steps by rote. It has to begin with a great yearning for the Light, an unbearable agony to escape from the Darkness and see Light, as in the prayer, "*Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya.*" The yearning itself will draw down the Light. The Love will grow of itself and by its slow and inevitable alchemy turn you into Gold. Prahlada was a *Raakshasa* (demon) but *Prema* (Love) liberated him nevertheless; Jataayu was a bird, Dhruva but a toddler, the cowherds of Brindhaavan were unlettered folk; yet, through that alchemy, they all shone in the splendour of *Prema* and knew the Source.

***Samskaara* will have its say at the time of death**

Once you take on the Name of the Lord which is sweetness itself, it will awaken all the sweetness latent in you; when you have tasted the joy, you can never for a moment exist without that sustenance. It becomes as essential as air for the lungs. You may say, listening to some *Puraanic* (mythological) tales, that it is quite enough if the name of the Lord is remembered, however casually, at the very last moment of life! But it is a hard task to recall that name, if you have not practised it for years. In the surge of emotions and thoughts that will invade you at the last moment, the Name of God will be submerged unless you learn from now on to bring that Name to the top of the consciousness, whenever you want it.

There was a shop-keeper once who was inspired by that tale of Ajaamila. He decided to remember the Name with his last breath, by a short cut; he named his sons after the various *Avathaars* (divine incarnations), for he knew that he has bound to call them when he was about to die. The moment came at last and as expected, he called on all his sons by name, one by one. There were six of them and so he called the Lord by proxy six times in all. The boys came and stood round his cot and as he surveyed the group, the thought that came to the dying man's mind, just when he was about to die was, "Alas! they have all come away; who will look after the shop now?" You see, his shop was his very breath all through life and he could not switch it on to God at short notice. The *Samskara* (merit of actions) will have its say, whatever you may wish.

Without faith, no progress is possible

It is no mean achievement to get the Name of the Lord on one's tongue at the last moment. It needs the practice of many years, based on a deep-seated Faith. It needs a strong character, without hatred or malice; for the thought of God cannot survive in a climate of pride and greed. And how do you know which moment is the last? Yama, the God of Death, does not give notice of his arrival to take hold of you. He is like the man with the camera taking snapshots; he does not warn, "Ready? I am clicking." If you wish your portrait to hang on the walls of Heaven, it must be attractive; your stance, your pose, your smile must all be nice, is it not? So it is best to be ready for the click, night and day, with the name **ever** tripping on the tongue and the glory always radiant in the mind. Then, whenever shot, your photo will be fine.

What is most needed is the cultivation of virtue, and fear of sin and the fear of wrong. How do you decide that an act or a thought is sinful or wrong? It has to be done on the basis of the *Shaasthras* and of the Voice within. Without faith, no progress is possible, even in the material world. Science considers the *prathyaksha* (the seen), as the final proof; but how far can you trust the *prathyaksha*? You respect a person not on the basis of his dress or hairstyle which are *prathyaksha*, but on the basis of his character and attainments, which are *paroksha* (invisible).

You suffer now because all your attachment is towards *Prakrithi* (Nature), and all your *Vairaagya* (non-attachment) is towards *Purusha* or God! This has to be reversed! You must cultivate non-attachment towards Nature and attachment to the Lord.

All joy is derived from the form-full aspect of God

I am reminded now of the story of Shankara Bhatta. He was a great *saadhaka* intent on *japa* and *dhyaana* to such an extent that he was reduced to skin and bone. He worshipped Goddess Saraswathi (Goddess of Learning) which is the key to open the doors of *Mukthi* (Liberation). Goddess Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth) saw his sad plight and was moved with great pity. She chided Saraswathi for denying Her votary even the common joys of life and Herself hid in his leaky hut to pour on him Her Grace. She offered him plenty and prosperity, fame and fortune. She derided Saraswathi for neglecting to award comfort and joy on Her hapless servant. But Shankara Bhatta turned a deaf ear to Her allurements; he said, politely but firmly, "No, Saraswathi has blessed me with the most precious wealth, the gift of knowledge that liberates me. I do not crave Your Grace. Please remove yourself from my presence."

There is nothing so grand and so sublime as the Lord in whom you find refuge. Call on Him by any Name or speak of Him as the Nameless one. It is both *Sa-aakaara* and *Nir-aakaara* (with Form and Formless). The ocean takes the form of the vessel which contains a part of it. When that is done, the Formless takes Form; the Absolute is reduced to the Particular. You will find out, however, that all the joy is derived from the Form-full aspect of God; the Formless causes no joy or grief; it is beyond all duality.

Jewels give joy, not gold. You can experience the Name, you can imbibe the Form; you can take them to heart and dwell upon them and fill yourself with the joy that they evoke. That is why Jayadheva, Gouranga, Raamakrishna and others wished to remain ants, tasting Sugar rather than becoming Sugar itself. The Name is like the seed, implanted in your heart; when the shower of His Grace falls upon it, it sprouts into a lovely tree. All trees that sprout from the Names of the Lord are equally lovely and shady. If you

have *Krishna-naama*, the vision that you win and the form that you evoke is that of Krishna; if you have *Raama-naama*, it is the Raama-form that sprouts.

Do not allow your mind to waver due to doubts

Leelaashukha had the Name of Krishna embedded in the well-ploughed field of his heart and so, the Lord appeared before him with a peacock feather, a flute and a charming mischievous smile! He fulfills your innermost aspiration in a flash, if it is compelling enough. Only you should not allow your mind to waver due to doubt or disappointment. Leave all to Him and be at ease; it is the man with no faith that is tossed about on the sea, like a ship caught in a storm with neither rudder nor anchor. The *Bhaktha* bears the ups and downs of life, keeping the balance of his mind even.

You sometimes talk as if the devotee leads a life beset with hardships and sorrows and that the man who does not bend before a Higher Power is care-free and prosperous; but this is a totally wrong idea. The *Bhaktha* sails on an even keel; he has inner peace, a spring of joy which sustains him and keeps him together.

Bairaagi Shaastri said that this is an auspicious day for you because this is My Birthday; but let Me tell you, I have many Birthdays like this. The Auspicious Day for you is the day on which your mind is cleansed and not the day on which I took this human form. I am ever new and ever ancient, ever *noothana* (modern) and ever *sanaathana* (ancient). I come always for the sake of reviving *Dharma*, for tending the virtuous and ensuring them conditions congenial for progress. Some doubters might ask, "Can *Paramaathma* assume human form?" Well, man can derive *aanandha* only through the human form; we can receive instruction, inspiration, illumination only through human language and human communication.

God bows to your will and carries your burden

I will never force you to take up a particular Name or Form of the Lord as your *ishtam* (wish). The Lord has a million Names and a million Forms, and He wants that faith and attachment should be

evoked in you by any one of them, as you recite the Names or contemplate the Forms. That is why they have a string of 1008 Names for use to worship; the devotee might be drawn closer to the Lord while any one Name is being repeated, however distracted or inattentive he might be during the rest of the list. Like the coldness of the atmosphere which freezes the water, the compelling agony of the *Bhaktha's* heart solidifies the *Niraakaar* (Formless Absolute) into the shape and the attitude that are yearned for. "*Yadh bhaavare, thath bhavathi*"---"*as felt, so fashioned.*" He bows to your will, He carries your burden, provided you trust Him with it.

Therefore, so act and feel and speak that you get "*iha soukhyam, para soukhyam and kaivalya soukhyam*" ("joy here, joy hereafter, joy everlasting" all three). I bless you all that you get more success in the struggle.

Prashanthi Nilayam, Birthday Festival, 23-11-1960

You must tread the spiritual path with an uncontrollable urge to reach the Goal; you must cultivate the yearning for liberation from all this encumbrance.

Remember that you have to dwell in a house built on four stout pillars: dharma, artha, kaama and moksha (righteousness, wealth, desire and liberation); Dharma supporting artha, and moksha being the only kaama or desire.

However much you may earn either wealth or strength, unless you tap the springs of aanandha (bliss) you cannot have peace and lasting content.

Shri Sathya Sai

Vol 2, 25, 1961. Birthday sparks

THIS day, the 23rd November 1961 is significant in more senses than one; it is not only the day which marks the date of birth of this *Avathaar*; the previous Sai *Avathaar* was also inaugurated on a Thursday, and on the day after the *Kaarthika Deepam* or *Kaarthika Pournami* (the full-moon day of the month of *Kaarthika*). Today also it is the day after the *Kaarthika Deepam* and a Thursday!

You are all lucky that you could come to Prashanthi Nilayam from great distances and have *dharshan* (audience), on this auspicious day. But, the joy you get today is only a reminder of the eternal full joy that is in store for you, in fact, for all mankind. That joy is your birthright; this momentary bliss is but a drop of that ocean; to get that, you must dedicate yourself to *saadhana*, continuous and conscious *saadhana* (spiritual practice). The symbol on the Prashanthi Flag, the symbol that is put up in concrete form in front of the Nilayam, has therefore to be clearly understood by every one of you. Conquer lust, anger and hatred, roam in the expanse of equal and impartial Love to all created things and then, you are fit for *yoga* (inner communion with Divinity), which will open the petals of your heart. Then, from the fragrance and beauty of that Lotus will emerge the Flame of *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom), illumining *maaya* (world illusion) into destruction until you and the *Jyothi* (Flame) become One.

It is when you approach near that it appears in all its majesty, in all its overwhelming size. Suppose you see it small, what does that indicate? Not that it is small, but that you are afar! Remember. The Sun and the Moon appear huge, huger by far than the stars, for they are near and the stars are far. Approach the Lord and realise Him as Big; do not stand afar, and prate that He is small!

You are all entitled to joy that is eternal

Incarnation is for the sake of fostering, *dharma*, for demarcating and directing it and to show mankind the true path of desireless activity. That is the one task I am engaged in, through various channels. Instead of reforming you without your knowledge, it is better to reform you with your own co-operation and knowledge. So, I reveal to you my Glory, off and on, to a little extent, through what you call miracles. I do not engage in them for name and fame; I am miraculous by My very Nature! Every moment of Mine is a *Mahaathmya*, a Miracle! They are beyond your understanding your art and skill and intelligence. I must save every one of you; even if you say, nay, and move away, I shall do it. Those who have strayed away from Me have to return to the fold, sooner or later, for I will not allow them to be distant for long I shall drag them towards Me. That is My basic Nature, Love and Mercy.

Today, at this meeting, as members of this gathering you are all overwhelmed with joy, I can see that But, this is momentary, this will not last. You are all entitled to broader realms of joy, deeper springs of joy and joy that is eternal. Your real *dharma*, the purpose for which you have taken human birth, is to earn and enjoy that Bliss, which no external contact can change or diminish. To earn it, is quite easy; it can be done by every one, who just sits calmly and examines himself and his mind, unaffected by likes and dislikes. Then he discovers that life is a dream, and that he has a calm refuge of peace inside his own heart. He learns to dive into its cool depths forgetting and ignoring the buffets of luck, both good and ill.

If time is well used a paamara can become Paramahamsa

The doctor first diagnoses the disease and then, he prescribes the course of treatment. So too, you must submit yourself to the diagnosis of your illness, viz, misery, travail and pain. Investigate fearlessly and with care; and you will find that while your basic nature is Bliss (*aanandha*), you have falsely identified yourself with the temporary, the frivolous and the paltry and so, that attachment brings about all the sorrow. You have to realise that both joy and sorrow are passing phases, like white or dark clouds across the blue sky, and you have to learn to treat both prosperity and adversity with equanimity.

If only time is well used, the *paamara* (the ignorant) can become the *Paramahamsa* (ascetic of the highest order) and the *Paramahamsa* can also be transfused into *Paramaathma* (the Universal Substance and Substratum.).

Just as fish which can live only when it is immersed in water, when it feels the element all around it, so too man is an animal that can live only when immersed in *aanandha*; (bliss) he must have *aanandha* not only at home, in society and in the world but, more than all, in the heart. As a matter of fact, the *aanandha* in the heart produces *aanandha* everywhere; the heart is the spring of joy. That spring has to be touched by constant meditation, recitation and the intermittent dwelling on the glory, the grace and the inexhaustible manifestations of the Lord: *smarana*, *chethana* and *manana*. Hold fast to the goal; the *Bhaktha* (devotee) should never turn back. Never give way to doubt or despair.

Pray, as the performance of a duty

A person driving a car concentrates on the road, for he is anxious to save himself and others from accident. Fear is what induces single-mindedness in his case. Love is a greater force for giving concentration. If you have steady and resolute love, the concentration becomes intense and unshakeable. Faith develops into love and love results in concentration. Prayer is possible and begins to yield fruit, under such conditions. Pray, using the Name as a symbol of the Lord; pray keeping all the waves of the mind stilled. Pray, as the performance of a duty for your very real existence, as the only justification for your coming into the world, as man.

"Mine" and "yours:" these attitudes are only for identification; they are not real; they are temporary. "His"---that is the truth, the eternal. It is like the headmaster of a school being in temporary charge of the furniture of the school. He has to hand over the items when he is transferred or retired. Treat all things with which you are endowed, as the headmaster treats the furniture. Be always aware that the final checking-up is imminent. Wait for that moment with joy. Be ready for that event. Have your accounts up to date and the balance ready calculated to be handed over. Treat all things entrusted to you with care and diligence.

Naaraayana is the Lord of the Water; (*naaram* means water). But, what is the water of which He is the Lord? He resides in the heart, and His presence when recognised melts even the stoniest heart and the water emanates from the eye as tears of joy, gratitude and fullness! His Presence is said to have been recognised by man, when he is suffused by sympathy, making him sad while another is sad and joyful when another is filled with joy. Naaraayana is He who brings tears of joy to the eyes! That is the function of your tear glands: to express internal joy; not to weep like a fool or a coward.

Prashanthi Nilayam, Birthday Discourse, 23-11-1961

The person devoid to God knows to failure. The Name of the Lord, if taken sincerely, overcomes all obstacles. It is saturated with sweetness; it has to iota of the bitterness of defeat in it. When the Saviour is by your side, why doubt whether you will be saved?

Sathya Sai Baaba

Vol 2, 48, 1962. Open your eyes

UPPULUURI Ganapathi Shaasthry has a title that very few *scholars have*. He is called *Aamnaayarthi Vaachaspathi* ---the Master Expounder of the Meaning of the *Vedhas*. I had permitted him to speak for as long as he liked; indeed, I had encouraged him to make a long speech for just after this he is opening the *Vedhashaasthra Paathashaala*---an institution that is dear to his heart when established anywhere, but dearer to him because it is established here, in the Prashanthi Nilayam. In fact, he sees in it an important step in My Plan of *Vedhic* revival. But he was so over-powered by *Aanandha* that he could not proceed with his speech even for a few minutes. As he said, he spoke even those few words just to express his debt to the *Vedhas*. It is not only his debt but the debt of all humanity. The *Vedhas* have shaped India and India shaped, is shaping, and will shape, the rest of the world.

The *Vedhas* are without beginning or end; they are eternal messages caught by developed consciousnesses in the silence of meditation. Loyalty to the *Vedhas* has faded often in the past also and so the present 'decline' which Ganapathi Shaasthry deplored is just a passing phase.

Dhuurvaasa was a reputed *Vedhic* scholar; he had the music of the *Saama Vedha* on his tongue and the cinders of anger in his eye; a strange combination, indeed. Seeing this absurdity, Saraswathi, the Goddess of Learning and Liberation, laughed in derision. The sage was stung to the quick; he threw a curse on Her and she was born on earth as the daughter of *Aathreya*. There was a brother too, a feeble minded chap incapable, in spite of the efforts of the skilled teachers, of even pronouncing the *Vedha* aright. He was beaten with a rod, but that only made him weep helplessly. Saraswathi was moved with great pity. She intervened and saved him from physical torture. She taught him the four *Vedhas* and the six *Shaasthras* and he became a great Master.

Vedhas are in need of revival again

Meanwhile, the *Vedha* had faded from human memory and, as a result, famine stalked the land. *Rishis* were reduced to skeletons. They yearned for the *Vedha*, for that was the sustenance on which they lived. Saaraswatha, the brother of Saraswathi, prayed to *Chandhra* (the Moon). She made the earth sprout forth edible plants (*Saakha*), on which the *Rishis* decided to live. Saaraswatha taught them the sixty different sections of the *Vedhas* but so thick was the fog that had descended on the *Vedhas* that the sages who learnt the *Vedhas* from him were confounded by cynical critics. Naaradha had to assure them that what they had learnt was the genuine *Vedha* itself, but even he could not remove the main of doubt. They jointly approached Brahma. He said, "You were all able to get this Vision of Me as a result of your *Vedhic* study; you can have yourself become *Brahma* when you practise what you have studied." That was how Saaraswatha Maharshi revived the *Vedhas* once in the past.

Reasons for the present sorrow and suffering

Now again the *Vedhas* are in need of revival, of promotion. Someone has to prevent the axe from reaching its mottos, the goats eating the sprouts. Do not be too conceited, feeling that the *Avathaar* has come for you particularly. I have come for the sake of *Dharma*. And, how is the *avathaar* to guard *Dharma*? Well, *Vedhokhilo Dharma Moolam*---"The *Vedhas* are the root of *Dharma*." When the *Vedhas* remain unharmed, that is to say, when the *Vedhic* scholars are unharmed, the *Vedha* will remain ever-green in the heart of man. That is the real *Dharma-sthaapana*.

You may ask, "Well. The Lord has incarnated. Then why should the world be torn by strife and stricken with sorrow?" Why, even when Lord Krishna was here, there was war and wickedness, strife and sorrow. The husk will have to be pulled out, the pure saved always from the impure. The present suffering is mainly due to the lapses in discipline among the professed followers of the *Vedhic* path, their disregard for the morality laid down in the *Shaasthras* and their absence of faith in the ancient scriptures. What use can a blind man make of a lamp, however bright it may be?

You may ask why *Pandiths* and *Vedhic* scholars are passing through hard times now? They are mostly hungry, ill-clad and homeless; that being the reason why no one comes forward to join *Vedhic* schools? *Paatasaalaas* are becoming defunct. But I want to tell you that the *Pandiths* and *Shaasthris* have come to this pass because they have themselves lost faith in the *Vedhas*. They are like the proverbial cat which is loyal to two homes and is denied food and comfort in either. The *Pandiths* have one eye on secular matters and secular studies and another on the spiritual. Let them be fixed in that faith, faith in the *Vedhas*. Then the *Vedha* will keep them happy. Because if the *Vedha* cannot make a man happy, what else can? Like the hotel-keeper who goes to a druggist for a pill when he gets a headache, while that same druggist goes to the same hotel for a cup of coffee when he gets a headache, the West comes to the East for mental peace and the East is enamoured of the West for what it considers necessary for mental peace!

Story of unshakable faith of a devotee

Let me tell you an incident which happened while in the previous body at *Shirdhi*. There was a lady from Pahalgaoon, a simple illiterate devotee. She stored water in her kitchen in three clean, brightly polished brass pots from three separate wells and she had named the pots---Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswathi. She always referred to them by those names. Whenever any thirsty wayfarer called at her door, she mixed water from all three and offered it to the person as *Thriveni Theertha* (water from three rivers). Neighbours used to laugh at her faith, but her belief that the three wells were connected underground with the three rivers that joined at Prayag, was unshakable.

Her husband started on a pilgrimage to Kaashi. His mother, while blessing him on his departure, put on his finger her own gold ring and directed him to take good care of it, for it would be a talisman for him. When he was taking the ceremonial bath at the Manikarnika Ghat, the ring slipped into the waters and could not be retrieved. When he returned and related this story, he said, "Ganga waned it; she took it," just to console his mother. When the wife heard this, she said, "No, no! Mother Ganga will not hanker after the property of a poor old lady. She will accept only what is offered out of love. She will give us back the ring, I am sure. I shall ask Ganga; she is in our kitchen." So saying, she went in and with folded hands, she prayed before the particular pot named by her as Ganga. Putting her hand in she searched the bottom and sure enough, she got the ring back! She had come to Dwaarakamaayi with her husband and mother-in-law. It is faith that matters; the form and the name on which it is fixed do not matter. For all names are His; all forms are His.

The four-fold Mission of Sai

Faith can grow only on the soil of *Dharma*, with the fertile sub-soil of *Vedha*. That is why the *Paatasaala* (*Vedhic* School) is started here today. I announced this in October and it is being started in November. With Me, the resolution and the realisation coincide in time; there is no time-lag. You may say that only twenty boys have joined now. When a huge country is

administered by a cabinet of twelve, this band of students is enough for the work I have in view. My task is to open your eyes to the Glory of the *Vedhas* and to convince you that the *Vedhic* injunctions, when put into practice, will yield the results promised. My task is to make you aware of your errors and the loss you are incurring; not only you who are here just now, but all the people of India and even the world.

This *Paathashaala* will grow into a University, establishing branches wherever there are other types of Universities now. It will afford cool green shade for all. My *prema* towards the *Vedha* is equalled only by My *prema* towards Humanity. My Mission, remember, is just fourfold: *Vedha poshana*, *Vidwath poshana*, (fostering the *Vedhas* and *Vedhic* Scholars), *Dharma rakshana* and *Bhaktha rakshana* (Protection of virtue and devotees). Spreading My Grace and My Power along these four directions, I establish Myself in the Centre.

These boys will grow into strong straight Pillars of the *Sanaathana Dharma*---the Ancient Wisdom, the Eternal Path; they will be the leaders and guides of this land in the days to come. Parents who have sent them to this *Paathashaala* have every reason to be happy, for these boys will be Gems spreading *Vedhic* splendour everywhere, disseminating *Shaasthraic* learning everywhere. I shall care for them as the apple of My eye, more than any mother. They will always have My Blessings.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1962

Fear is the biggest cause for illness. When you have slight temperature, you start imagining that it is the beginning of some serious fever. You say to yourself someone whom you knew had also a slight increase of temperature, which later became serious and led to complications and so, you become more prone to illness than formerly.

Think rather of the instances where fever was prevented or overcome; think of the Grace of the Lord that restores and saves.

Sathya Sai Baaba

Vol 4, 37, 1964. Keep the flag flying

[In the poem that Baaba composed impromptu and sang before commencing His speech, He announced Himself as Shri Naatha, Loka Naatha and Anaatha Naatha (Lord of Lakshmi, of the world and of the helpless), the same He, who saved the Gajendhra, the boy Dhruva, the poor Kuchela and the helpless Prahlada!]

THE hearts of *bhakthas* gathered here are all blossoming now like lotuses when the sun rises, for they believe this is the day when the Lord was born in human form. I may tell them that every day is *Janmotsavam*, a *Brahmotsavam*, an *Aanandhotsavam* (different kinds of festivals), at Puttaparthi; as well as wherever *bhakthas* are. The *Niraakaara* (the Formless) comes in *Naraakaara* (form of man) when the virtue of the good and the vice of the wicked reach a certain stage. Prahlada's devotion and his father's disregard both had to ripen before *Narasimha avathara* could take place. To know the truth of the *avathara*, the *saadhaka* must culture the mind, as the ryot does the field. He has to clear the field of thorny undergrowth, wild creepers and tenuous roots. He has to plough the land, water it and sow the seeds well. He has to guard the seedlings and tender plants from insect pests as well as from the depredations of goats and cattle; he has to put up a fence all round. So too, egoism, pride and greed have to be removed from the heart; *sathya*, *japa*, *dhyana* (truth, repetition of the Lord's name and meditation), form the ploughing and the levelling; *prema* is the water that has to soak into the field and make it soft and rich; *naama* is the seed and *bhakthi* is the sprout; *kaama* and *krodha* are the cattle and the fence is discipline; *aanandha* is the harvest.

Knowledge is the final stage of *karma*

Of course, you will get faith in God only when you have yourselves discovered that the universe must have a creator, a protector, an agency for both evolution and involution or a power that exercises all these three functions. To grasp that idea, the heart must be pure, the mind must be clear. For this, *karma* is very important. The *Karmakaanda* (section dealing with rituals) in the *Vedhas* is the major part of the *shruthi*, for *jnaana* is but the final stage of *karma*. The army will have many soldiers but only just a handful of officers; so too, *karmas* are many, and they all obey the *jnaani*. Of the hundred parts of the *Vedhas*, 80 will be *karma*, 16 *upaasana* and 4 *jnaana*. *Karma* has to be done for educating the impulses and training the feelings. Then, you develop the attitude of *upaasana*, of humility before the great unknown, and finally, you realise that the only reality is you, which is the same as He.

You hear nowadays of equality (*Samaanathwa*), of each being equal to the rest. This is wrong notion, for we find the parents and children differently equipped; when one is happy, the other is miserable; there is no equality in hunger or joy. Of course all are equally entitled to love and sympathy, and to the grace of God. All are entitled to the medicines in the hospital; but what is given to one should not be given to another. There can be no equality in the doling out of medicine! Each deserves the medicine that will cure him of his illness.

I know that this struggle in the name of equality is only one of the ways in which man is trying to get *aanandha*. In almost all parts of the world, man is today pursuing many such short-cuts and wrong paths of achieve *aanandha*. But let Me tell you, without reforming conduct, daily behaviour, the little acts of daily life, *aanandha* will be beyond reach. I consider *pravarthana* (practice), as essential.

A man or an institution is to be judged by his or its integrity, whether acts are according to the principles professed. The mind, the body, the word---all three must work in unison. By such disciplined *karma* the senses will be sublimated and *prashaanthi* won; then, out of this *prashaanthi* will arise *prakaanthi* (the great light), and from that will emerge *Param-jyothi* (the suprasplendour or illumination). That illumination will reveal *Param-aathma* (the Oversoul), the Universal.

Now, I am hoisting on this Prashaanthi Nilayam the Prashaanthi Hag, according to the convention that has grown here, like the conventions in the material plane. The flag represents the spiritual discipline I have laid down for you: conquest of *kaama* and *krodha*, achievement of prema and the practice of *japa yoga*, leading to the blossoming of the lotus of the heart and the emergence of the *jyothi* of jnaana therein. When I hoist it over the Nilayam, you should convert your hearts into Prashaanthi Nilayams and hoist the flag there too, and keep it flying.
Prashaanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1964

Vol 4, 38, 1964. Karma and karuna

[After the song which Baaba opened His discourse, He thrilled every one by singing the two lines from the Bhagavadh Geetha, which declare "Yadaa yadaa hi dharmasya glaanir bhavathi, Bhaaritha, Abhyuththaanam adharmaasya tadh aathmaanam srujaamyaham," and adding "Parithraanaaya saadhuunaam, vinaasaayacha dhushkrutaam, dharma samsthaapanaarthaaya sambhavaami yuge yuge." "Whenever dharma declines, I restore it and put down the forces which cause the decline, by assuming a form" and "I am born again and again in every crisis in order to protect the good, punish the wicked and restore dharma." He began His discourse after this announcement of His Identity with the source of all avathaars].

EVERYONE is now seeking comfort and pleasure; that is the be-all and end-all. If you tell a man that he can eat whatever he likes and as much as he likes, he is delighted; if you add that he might develop, as a consequence, some illness or other, he will treat you as an enemy. No regimen or control is popular. But strength is derived only from control, from restraint, from regulation. Man becomes tough and capable of endurance only if he welcomes hardships. Struggle, and you get the strength to succeed. Seek the basis for the seen, in the unseen. The tall skyscraper has a deep base reaching into the earth. This seen world has, as its base, the unseen *Paramaathma*; your body is but the vehicle through which you can search, investigate, and discover that base.

There is no one fully good

The body is the instrument for doing karma; the Shaasthry said that *buddhi* (intellect) is shaped by karma --- "*Buddhi karmaanusaarini*"; *japa* and *dhyana* will purify the *buddhi* and make it an instrument for self-realisation and for winning grace. The warmth of divine grace will melt all *ajnaana* away; you can win it by engaging yourself in good deeds. Do the karma for which you are best fitted, which is your *swadharma* (one's duties that accord with one's nature); do it without complaint, without any malingering. That is the principle of *varnaashrama* dharma (duties of social groups and stages of life).

India was the home of peace and prosperity when this was followed by rich and poor alike; but, now, the land is plunged in darkness and confusion. Therefore, another *avathaar* has come, for teaching people of *dharma* they have forgotten. Raama, Krishna and other *avathaars* had to kill one or more individuals, who could be identified as enemies of the *dharmic* way of life, and thus restore the practice of virtue. But, now, there is no one fully good, and so, who deserves the protection of God? All are tainted by wickedness, and so, who will survive, if the *avathaar* decides to uproot?

Therefore, I have to correct the *buddhi*, by various means; I have to counsel, help, command, condemn and standby as friend and well-wisher to all, so that they may give up evil propensities and recognising the straight 'path, tread it and reach the goal. I have to reveal to the people the worth of the *Vedhas*, the *Shaasthras* and the scriptural texts, which lay down the norms.

The easiest path to self-realisation is the surrender of the ego, *sharanaagathi*. Arjuna surrendered and so, the war in which he was engaged was transformed into a *yajna*, a spiritual exercise! Daksha performed a *yajna*; but he did not surrender; he was so full of egoism that he slighted God! So, his *yajna* was transformed into a war reeking with hate. Do not pit your tiny ego against the Almighty; leave it to His Will and you will have lasting peace.

Grace can countermand all effects of *karma*

You might say that the *karma* of the previous birth has to be consumed in this birth and that no amount of grace can save man from that. Evidently, some one has taught you to believe so. But I assure you, you need not suffer from karma like that. When a severe pain torments you, the doctor gives you a morphine injection and you do not feel the pain, though it is there in the body. Grace is like the morphine; the pain is not felt, though you go through it! 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 effect of karma is rendered null, though the account is there and has to be rendered! Or, the Lord can save 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 *Gurupoornima* week! It is wrong to say the "*Lalaatha likhitham*" (what is written on the forehead, i.e. fate) cannot be wiped out; that what one has earned in previous births must be consumed in this birth. Grace can countermand all that; nothing can stand in its way. It is the grace of the "Almighty," remember.

Of the *avathaars*, some are for a definite limited purpose like Vaamana or Narasimha. They are just manifestations, to counter some particular evils. They are not full-fledged, long-lasting, expansive, like Raama and Krishna. The Lord has no hate in His composition; He is all mercy. That is why Krishna proceeded to the Kaurava court, as a messenger of peace, with compromise proposals. He showed man how patient he should be in spite of provocations, how self-control wins in the end.

God has no favourites or rivals

Krishna demonstrated that if you practise the *saadhana* of the constant presence of God, you are bound to achieve victory. Take Him as the charioteer; He will steer you through the heaviest odds. He has no favourites or rivals. Like fire, He spreads warmth to all who are near Him. If you do not feel the warmth, do not blame Him: blame yourself that you are far from Him. Look at Bheeshma! He prayed to the very Krishna who had vowed to kill him; he prayed that Krishna should grant him a vision of His divine splendour! That is true *bhakthi*, real *jnaana*! He had the faith, the vision, and Krishna blessed him.

Hiranyakashipu said, 'He is nowhere' and so, He was nowhere for him; Prahlada asserted 'He is everywhere,' and He appeared from the pillar to prove him true. God did not have to run into the pillar in order to come out of it, to reply to the challenge of the father. He was there all along, just as in everything else. He had only to make Himself visible!

I too am like that; if you accept Me and say yes, I too respond and say S S S! If you deny and say, no, I also echo, no. Come, examine, experience and have faith; that is the method of utilising Me.

Do not demean your talents

Dakshinamurthy taught his disciples by his silence, Shaasthry said. Yes; what he did was to make the disciples rely on their own intelligence. Do not demean your talents; when you dive deep into yourselves, you can discover the source of all strength. Ants creeping over a rock, millions of them, can carve a deep groove along their path. The minute feet of the ant have that power. You might have seen on the walls around the village wells, hollows produced on granite slabs by the continuous placing of water pots! The pots are made of mud, but, they erase even the

hardest granite over the years and cause the hollows where they rest! The *Aathma-swaruupam* (embodiment of Self) is not *alpa-swaruupam* (an insignificant embodiment)! The *aathma* is not anaemic. It is a powerful dynamo, capable of generating enormous power. The *guru* (spiritual teacher) shows you the *guri* (goal); but, you must generate the power yourself, by your own *saadhana* (spiritual effort).

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1964, 8 p.m.

[Speech delivered after the offering of flower-garlands by devotees continuously at one sitting, from 10-30 a.m. till 7-30 p.m.]

Vol. 5, 55, 1965. Pilgrimage to the throne

The search for truth must become your daily spiritual discipline; every moment must be used for this primary duty. Truth can reflect itself in your intelligence only when it is cleaned by *thapas*. *Thapas* means all acts undertaken with higher motives; all acts indicating yearning for the spirit; repenting for past blunders; staunch determination to adhere to virtue, self-control; unyielding adherence to equanimity in the face of success or failure. *Thaapam* means heat, burning, intensity, earnestness of endeavour. It is *thapas* (penance or religious austerity) that fosters renunciation and discipline.

This discipline is essential when, as at present, the temptations to deviate are so many. In this iron age, when darkness is enveloping the mind of man, any little lamp that can light the steps is most welcome. That is why I advise you to resort to *sath-karma*, *sad-aachaara* and *sath-pravarthana* (good deeds, good conduct and good attitudes and outlook), so that you may be established in the constant presence of the Lord. You must also strive to "hear" (*shravana*) elevating words, to ruminate on these promptings of the spirit (*manana*) and then, when the validity is recognised, to meditate on it in profound reverence (*nididhyaasana*). All other activity is secondary; this alone is edifying, this alone is beneficial.

This day, there is a Solar eclipse and many people wondered whether the Birthday festival will be celebrated or postponed. The shadow of the moon falling upon the sun is not the calamity that people should fear; the shadow of *maaya* falling upon the intelligence is the eclipse that has to be treated as a bad omen, as inauspicious. The mind is the moon, the intelligence is the sun; see that they do not suffer from eclipse. Then, you are safe. Do not worry when something happens in the outer sky; worry when the shadow of some dark desire, some foul passion, some monstrous emotion, some fell intention casts its evil gloom over your inner sky. See that the splendour of the Lord, the cool rays of His Grace are not dimmed in the recesses of your heart.

The emblem of Prashaanthi Nilayam

I find that some one has upset the usual seating arrangements; the women are on the left and the men on the right. That is to say, the women have most of the scorching sun and the men are under the shade of the tree. So, I shall not keep you longer. I shall unfurl the flag, which is the symbol of Prashaanthi, the higher equanimity when all dualities are superceded and man gains the supreme joy of calm balance, unaffected by ups and downs, pain or pleasure, when the waves are stilled and the storms rage no more. The flag contains the picture of the emblem that is represented in concrete shape in front of the porch here; it is the summary of the progress of the pilgrim to the throne of the Lord in the altar of his heart.

The pilgrim must traverse and overstep the vast wastes of worldly desires (*kaama*) and overcome the thick slushy growths of anger and hate (*krodha*) and negotiate the cliffs of hatred and malice (*dwesha*), so that he might relax on the green pastures of concord and love (*prema*). Having thus become master of his inner foes, he has to rest in the silence of his own heart, as a *Yogi*, with all the agitations of his inner realm stilled. That is the meaning of the six-ringed pillar in the centre of the circle here; the six rings are the six *chakras* (centres of energy) of yogic discipline in the central spinal *naadi* (nerve current) of man.

Fixed in the undisturbed calm of his deepest consciousness, man finds that the lotus of the heart blooms into a thousand petals and then, the flame of awakening into the truth lights itself, as *Prashaanthi*. That moment, the seeker knows that he and all else are One, that the One is

Brahmam. This progress that every one has to make, today or tomorrow, in this life or in the next, is outlined as a clear picture in the symbol on the flag; so, when it flutters above this Prashanthi Nilayam, resolve to hoist it on your heart too. Take the first step today, in this long pilgrimage. Give up, in order to gain; restrain, in order to receive; become blind (to the external view), in order to see more clearly (the inner vision).

Prashanthi Nilayam: Birthday Festival, 23-11-1965

Anger, malice, greed and envy---all these are obstacles in the path of love and co-operation. They lower man from the Divine to the animal level.

SHRI SATHYA SAI

Vol. 5, 56, 1965. The rules of the game

Every man is engaged in searching for something lost. Life is the chance afforded to him to recover the peace and the joy that he had lost, when last he was here. If he recovers them now, he need not come again. But, he loses them through ignorance of their value and of the means of retaining them. If only he would stay in the consciousness of *Shivoham*---"I am Shiva; I am immortal, I am the source and spring of Bliss"---he would be supremely content; but, instead of this correct evaluation of himself, this recognition of his innate reality, man goes about weeping at his helplessness, his inadequacy, his poverty, his evanescence. This is the tragic fate from which man has to be rescued.

The deer is trapped, the elephant is drawn into the *kheddah* (the trap), and the serpent is charmed---all by taking advantage of their slavery to the senses. Man must demonstrate his superiority over the animal, by conquest over the senses. He must wriggle out of his animal shackles and assert his "humanity", which is essentially "divinity". When Emperor Bharthrihari gave up his throne and went into a hermitage in the forest, the subordinate rulers who were his tributaries laughed at the stupid step and asked him how he got the idea and what he gained. Bharthrihari replied, "I have now gained a vaster empire, a richer and more peaceful empire; I gave in exchange a poor barren torn empire; see what profit I have made."

Sacrifice the animality and bestial lust in you

Sacrifice, so that you may be saved. You have to sacrifice, not a bleating sheep or a horse or cow, but your animality, the bestial lust and greed, hate and malice. Sacrifice these and you earn the heaven of unflinching peace. Killing a sheep is a cheap trick, which will not deceive any one; for, you are asked to kill the sheep inside you, the cowardly beast that revels in the mass and perpetrates mob fury in blind anger. Gauthama Buddha saw sheep being driven to be slaughtered at a sacrifice (*yajna*); he tenderly lifted a sweet little lamb on his shoulder and followed the sheep to the special enclosure where the ruler of the State was performing the *yajna*. On being told that the ceremonial killing of the lamb will bring great good to the ruler and the state, Buddha said, "Of course you must admit that a man, a prince, a monk is much more valuable than a tiny trivial lamb. Kill me and win merit a hundredfold", and advised him about the inner weaknesses and vices that are symbolised by the victims of the *yajna*.

Buddha argued him out of his false attachment to the paltry benefits promised for ritual correctitude. He told him that the prayer that rose from every Indian at sunrise and at sunset was "*Sarve janaah sukhino bhavanthu*"---"Let all beings attain happiness." "The sacrifice of a living being to secure happiness here or hereafter though accompanied by the recitation of all the appropriate ritual formulae was a selfish act and so, it deserves discouragement. To kill, so that you may live longer and with fuller joy is a reprehensible act, Buddha declared. It is comparable to the disgraceful pride of those who swagger like bullies because they have the atom bomb which can reduce to ashes entire states and vast cities. They make mankind cower in fear, just as the sacrificer in the *yajnas* makes the victims shiver in terror.

Only those who base their actions on the universal principle of God that dwells in every being and prompts every deed, word and thought, can deserve the gratitude of mankind. All beings are flowers strung on the selfsame string to make a multicoloured garland for the Lord. You talk of international understanding, but it can come only when the idea of difference and separateness inherent in the word "nation" disappears and when man sees the Lord in all men. When a thorn

pricks your foot, you get tears in the eye. For, they are of the same body; so too, when a worm is crushed, your heart must react to its pain. This must be cultivated as a *saadhana* and practised until it becomes one's nature.

God is forgotten when self-interest demurs

A parrot taught to utter *Raam Raam Raam* was caught by a cat and when the cat dug its teeth into it, it forgot *Raam Raam Raam*, it screeched like any parrot when it is in great pain. *Raam Raam Raam* was forgotten! So too, all talk of the unity of mankind, of the immanence of God and the pervasiveness of the Divine is forgotten, when self-interest demurs!

There was a Sultan once who had a daughter always immersed in the meditation of God. She was so pious and pure that the father decided to give her in marriage only to a person who was equally busy in spiritual activities and study, and equally determined in spiritual practices. The Prince of the neighbouring State asked for her hand and pleaded for it so tenaciously that the problem of her marriage had to be faced quick.

While searching for a suitable groom, the Sultan one evening saw a young fakir, lost in meditation, in a corner of the mosque, his face lit with the glow of inexpressible inward joy. He watched him silently for hours and when at last, he came into consciousness of the surroundings, he asked him whether he was married, and when he heard he was not he was greatly pleased. He introduced himself and offered his daughter to him. The fakir argued that he was far too poor to maintain a princess as his wife, but, the Sultan described her *saadhana* and put his mind to rest, on that score. The *fakir* agreed, but the Sultan was to spend for the wedding ceremony only three paise, one for betel-nut, one for jaggery and one for incense. The conditions were accepted and the princess was sent to live with him in the caravanserai.

Have faith in God's capacity

A few days later, she discovered tied in a corner of his garment a small piece of bread; she asked him how it happened to be there. He replied, "I retained it for the morning." The princess said that by this act, he had declared himself to be an *unworthy fakir*, to be a non-believer. For, he had, by that act, doubted God's love and God's capacity to feed His children. He had no confidence in God and His Mercy. So saying, she returned to her father and continued her spiritual practices undisturbed. He who has planted the tender seedling will fulfil his responsibility and water it into a sturdy plant. Have faith; do not simply profess and deny in practice.

God is no partial benefactor; he gives the fruit from every tree, according to the seed. You have planted the sour mango, hoping to use the fruit for pickles; then, why lament that the fruit is not sweet to the tongue? Do good and aspire to get the fruit of goodness---that is pardonable. It is not as bad as doing bad and blaming God that He has given you the seed for evil deeds. Once when the *Guru* of Nanak accosted him, he was writing something with rapt attention. So, Nanak did not answer. When later he was asked why, he said, "My heart was transcribing on my brain (paper) with the pen of God-centred thought using the ink got by burning all sense-pursuits." The fate of the country will depend on the character of its people and character is elevated and purified by *saadhana*, the hard way of regulation of behaviour and the control of desire. God is the guardian, and as guardian, He has to warn and punish to wean people away from harmful habits. If it is necessary, the guardian will resort to the infliction of pain too, as a curative and corrective treatment.

Rules of behaviour must be observed by all

Limit, control, regulate, set bounds and bounds; that is the way to succeed. If people let loose their thoughts, words and deeds, calamity will be the consequence. *Shaastra* means that which 'lays down limits'; interest in the art of living is created by these rules. Imagine a game of football which has no rules, the ball is never 'out', there is no foul, no corner, no offside, no hands, nothing by which you can decide who plays well or ill, who wins or loses. The game will lose all zest; it will be pandemonium, a free fight. 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.

People talk grandly of *Adhwaita*, of the one-ness of all, but, they are the very persons who exaggerate every difference and emphasise every distinction. People boast that they have been coming to Puttaparthi since 20, 15 or 10 years, as if we have some grades of senior or junior according to the years during which they have contacted Puttaparthi; but really speaking, one has to value only the beneficial changes brought about by that contact in the character and conduct of the individual. How much have you imbibed, the lessons learnt from here? How much have you succeeded in stopping the leaks which, as outer-faced senses, were draining your discrimination and drying up the fountain of inner joy?

The eye scatters your vision in a hundred directions; the ear drags your mind to many false melodies; the hands hanker after hundred flimsy acts. They degrade and demolish man. Man being divine must have the divine all around him all the time, in order to be alive; like fish, he must have the water of divine joy all around him. Instead, he is now seeking to keep himself alive by artificial respiration and borrowed blood. He is himself *Amritha-swaruupa* and *Aananda-swaruupa* (Immortal and Bliss personified). So, why should he strive to get *aananda* from outside?

Man must have divine joy all around him

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, 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*.

India is the home of many religions and philosophies; but, no one of them is observed reverentially by its adherents. They are used only as labels to identify persons or communities, or as uniforms for certain purposes on certain occasions. Persons take pride when they resort to clubs or gambling places; but, they are ashamed to go to a temple or a spiritual guide. People live beyond their earnings and enter recklessly into debt, since they are eager to gather all the insignia of high life, like transistors, bush coats, refrigerators and the like. Love of pomp, desire to beat others in standard of living, eagerness to appear superior to the rest---these make men fall into discontent and deceit. Be simple in your method of living, have *saathwik* food and *saathwik* recreations; let your mind be fixed on the ideals of service; let your thoughts be guided by *sathya*, *dharma*, *shaanthi* and *prema*. That is the blessing I confer on you today.

Prashanthi Nilayam: Birthday Festival, 23-11-1965

The proof of the rain is the wetness of the ground. Likewise, the proof of true devotion is in the peace of mind, that the aspirant has been able to attain, the peace which protects him against the onslaught of failures, the peace in which he is unruffled by loss and dishonour.

SHRI SATHYA SAI

Vol. 6, 38, 1966. Birthday Message

In the beginningless and endless Stream of Time, night and day, summer and winter, roll endlessly on; they are carried mercilessly on over the Universe by the flood. The term of living beings diminishes with every day. While being carried forward in the flood, man is surprisingly unaware of his fate; he never spends a thought on his fast declining life-term, He is blind in his ignorance.

Riches and wealth are short-lived; office and authority are temporary; the life-breath is a flickering flame in the wind. Youth is a three-day fair. Pleasures and fortunes are bundles of sorrow. Knowing this, if man devotes this limited term of life to the service of the Lord, then, he is indeed blessed.

Seek refuge at the Feet of the Lord even before the life-breath flies out of the cage of the body. It is an open cage! Any moment, the bird may fly into the outer regions. That is the fact. The ignorant do not realise this; they beat their drums and proclaim proudly how rich they are or how happy they are, surrounded by their sons and grandsons. Alas, the very physical frame which is so carefully nourished since birth rots and falls aside. What then shall we say of those who feel that these other things are "mine"? Theirs is but the delusion of an insane mind. Everything is untrue, everything is impermanent; castles in the air, constructions in dreams.

Contemplate on this Truth; approach Shri Hari and glorify Him; that alone can confer on you permanent Joy.

Inside the room called Body, in the strong box called the Heart, the precious gem of jnaana exists; four wily thieves *kaama*, *krodha*, *lobha* and *asuuya*---lust, anger, greed and envy---are lying in wait to rob it. Awake to the danger before it is too late; reinforce yourself with the support of the Universal Guardian the Lord, and keep the gem intact. That will make you rich in *prema*, rich in *shaanthi*.

When Bliss is attained there is no grief

When the clouds that hide the face of the moon are wafted by the winds, the moon shines clear and cool; so too, when the clouds of egoism are wafted away, the mind of man will shine pure and full, with its own native light. That is the stage of Bliss. When that is attained, there is no more grief. Where there is the lamp, there darkness cannot exist. The lamp of *jnaana* once lit never dies, never fades, never flickers. The *aanandha* and the *shaanthi* too never fade, never flicker. But the *aanandha* and the *shaanthi* that men seek from the objects of the world prompted by their senses flicker fast and fade and die. They satisfy for a moment a foolish craze. They are attained through lust, anger, hate and envy and so, they are false and fickle. Control and conquer these; then only can you acquire real *Aanandha* and *Shaanthi*. You can not only acquire these, you can become these.

What do the wars of mankind teach, except this, that lust, anger, hate and envy are evil forces that haunt man? Examine the anarchy and the lawlessness, the chaos, and killings that have arisen in the world today. They are the products of these forces. Why, even the ills of your bodies and of your homes are but the consequence of these evils.. Unaware of the faults and failings in oneself, man imputes faults and foists failings on others and starts blaming and hurting them. This is sin; this gives you a feeling of innocence and exultation for a while, but, cannot confer anything other than worry, grief and pain.

Spiritual aspirants must control anger

Hate and envy distort man's true charm. Anger is the fuel for all varieties of sin. Just look at yourself in a mirror, when you are attacked by anger, and you will discover that you are then akin to Suurpanakha or Lankini of ancient times. The *Rajo guna* that is over-powering you then is the *Raakshasa* trait you must learn to avoid. Those aspiring for success in the spiritual field must therefore decide to control anger, to subdue the vagaries of the mind with its changing resolution to do and not to do things. They must put down their mental agitations and worries and see that they do not create worry in others also. They must convince themselves that in every one there is *Shivam*, recognisable as *swaasam* (breath); they must develop *Vishwaprema* (Universal love) and demonstrate it in their words and deeds. May you all win *sathyam*, *shaanthi* and *sukham* through these means. May you merge in the source of all *Aanandham*.

There is also another point. The *Shaasthras* say that envy, greed, lust, anger are all *vyaadhi kaaranam* (sources of disease). Those afflicted with these qualities may consume the most healthy food; but, it will not give them health. They will suffer from various digestive and nervous troubles. Therefore, devotees and those aspiring to be liberated, must cut asunder these evil tendencies with the sharp sword of *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom). They must pray to the Lord to save them from contact with these foul characteristics. From this very moment, pray for the Grace which will enable you to control and conquer them. Deepen your faith in God. Expand your *prema* and take into its fold, the whole of mankind. There is no alternative path for the *bhaktha*.

You should not be ever entangled in the meshes of this world and its problems.

Try to escape into the purer air of the spirit as often as you can, taking the name of the Lord on your tongue.

Of the 24 hours of the day, have 6 hours for your individual needs, 6 hours for the service of the others, 6 hours for sleep and 6 for dwelling in the Presence of the Lord. Those six hours will endow you with the strength of steel

Sathya Sai Baaba

Vol. 7, 41, 1967. As He Wills

I HAVE selected you from among the assembled in order to shape you into *Sevaks* (volunteers) during the Birthday Festival that begins tomorrow. I have spoken many times before, about the discipline that I would like you to submit yourself to. You can examine yourself and decide how far you have succeeded in observing those rules of conduct.

The world today is torn by factions and fear and it is imperative that the good are assured of peace and the general level of living is raised to a higher moral standard by the propagation of *Dharma*. People must become proficient in *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shaanthi*, *Prema* and *Ahimsa*, weapons that can overwhelm the passions that have turned heart into a den of wickedness. This chance to become a *Sevak* here is but the first step in training in the proper use of these weapons.

Do not imagine that this is a temporary responsibility, which you shoulder today and lay down in a few days. This is a form of worship into which you are initiated so that your hearts may be cleansed and God reflected therein. This training as a volunteer will lead you to see the bliss of *Aathmaanandha* and the Light of Reality. It will induce you to search for your own inner truth, your *swa-swaruupa* (own natural form). All the acts you perform must be directed towards one end: drawing down on you the Grace of God. All the provisions stocked in the store-room in your house are there to meet one purpose: appease your hunger. So too all Karma is for attaining God.

Getting fixed in Faith is genuine education

But, caught in the darkness of *Ajnaana* (spiritual ignorance), man mistakes the purpose. He imagines that he can be happy, if he caters to his senses; this is only self-deception. The ego is not the cause of this; the real culprit is the darkness produced by ignorance of the goal of life. Believe that God resides in every one as the *Aathma*, which illumines his senses and the vision. Then, the darkness will disappear and Light will prevail. Learning the process of getting fixed in that faith is the genuine education. The others are lamps that have no flame, that cannot dispel darkness. They may be designated so, but that name is misnomer.

When you call yourself a *Sevak*, offering service to another, have also reverence in your mind that the person whom you serve is the Lord Himself in that form. This attitude is very helpful for the *Saadhak*. *Maanava seva* is *Maadhava* seva---the service of man is service of God. But, when? When we feel in the depth of heart that the person whom you serve is a wave of the same sea from which you derive your individuality, your taste, your name and form. I have called you in today and I am naming you as "Volunteers" in order to give you an opportunity to practise this *Saadhana* of *Maadhava* seva through *Maanava* seva.

Do not therefore take this as a new authority conferred on you, or as a burden landed on your shoulders. Acceptance of the Will of God has its own advantage; it yields rich fruits. Hanumaan did not become conceited when Raama selected him for the crucial southward search and when Raama gave into his custody the Ring to be given to Seetha (assuring him in the process that he would certainly succeed in discovering her); nor was he affected by fear, at the tremendous responsibility that was heaped on him. He just accepted what was given; he was neither happy nor unhappy. He felt that Raama the Lord knows all and so his duty was only to obey.

God's tests are for giving you greater Grace

You must cultivate the same attitude towards my commands and instructions. Be convinced that

if you obey them strictly, you will attain victory. One evening Krishna took Arjuna far out of Dwaraka City and while they were alone together, He pointed at a bird flying over their head and asked him "Arjuna, isn't that a dove?" Arjuna agreed; he said it was a dove. Suddenly, Krishna turned towards him and said, "No, it is a crow." Arjuna concurred and said, "I am sorry, it certainly is a crow." Immediately, Krishna asked him, "A crow, no, it must be a kite. Is it not so?" and Arjuna promptly agreed. "Yes. It is a kite." At this, Krishna smiled and asked Arjuna, "Are you in your senses? What exactly do you see? Why you say, of the same bird, it is a dove, it must be a crow and it is a kite?" Arjuna said, "Who am I to dispute your statement? You can make it a crow even if it is not one, or, change it into a kite. I have found that the safest thing is to agree with you, in full faith. I know of no other course." It was only after this test, for unflinching faith that Krishna assured himself of the credentials of Arjuna to receive the Geetha advice.

The inquiry about the identity of the bird was a test. God tests man so; you must welcome tests. Tests are only for giving you greater grace. They are not to be treated as punishments. It promotes your confidence. You enter a house and decide to live there, only after you are assured that the foundation is secure, is it not? When your faith is fixed, your life too will flow in peace.

Wishes can never win peace

All who come to Prashanthi Nilayam are your kith and kin, remember. Respect them, serve them with that attitude. To have such attitude you must have deep patience. Praise or blame, appreciation or criticism, you must bear all with fortitude. Never yield to anger or dispiritedness. The command is pre-eminent; have your mind fixed on that. The rest is but incidental. The *Dharma shaasthras* lay down that women, the sick, those who are burdened with loads, and the aged have to be helped and given first preference. Even if the sick man is a decrepit low-born man, the Emperor has to give him the right of way and allow him to be served first; else, he invites punishment from the Gods. The aged have accumulated much more experience than you; they are filled with sweetness, like ripe fruits. The wise men or *Jnaanis* have also to be served and revered. What is the sweetness, in these? It is the quality of *Shaantham*, of being unruffled at the ups and downs of life.

The asceticism that you have to adopt is just this: Obey the *Aajna*, the order of the Lord. You have no need to fast and torture the body: can you kill the snake by beating the mound, which has it in its hole? Can torment teach you the truth? Control thoughts; divert feelings; canalise the currents of the impulses. The pendulum will stop its swing only when you stop winding the clock with its key. Stop winding; then the pendulum will remain at one point; the mind will remain at the Feet of God.

Wishes can never win peace; a wish is tiny seed from out of which a huge tree emanates, the tree in its turn scatters a crore of seeds, which sprout into crores of trees. Fry the seed and it will not sprout again. When wishes multiply quick and fast, concentration is impossible; when water is poured on a height, it flows along the inclines, down into the hollows. Concentration is the reverse process: rolling a rock uphill. This requires unintermittent effort, unbroken attention, and ceaseless striving. Allow confidence to slacken but a moment---the rock will come rolling down.

Each volunteer should become a centre of inspiration

You have another great responsibility, too. This land, Bhaarath, has to guide others in selfless service, in the development of an attitude of detached devotion to duty. From ancient times, India

is famous as the land of dedicated Karma, of holy living and thinking, of incessant subduing of the harmful passions surging in the mind, of the tireless pursuit of the goal of Peace. But, latterly, Indians too have been infected by the diseases prevalent in other parts of the world; they have started spurning holy company, sacred books and spiritual discipline. This is a tragedy; once again, the ancient modes of life have to be revived; the ancient attitudes have to be appreciated and adopted. That faith in the imperishable *Aathman* (which is the reality of both the individual and the Universe) has once again to vitalise activities.

Being *Sevaks* and volunteers, you must adhere to Truth, first and foremost. Whatever be the temptation, do not slide away from Truth. In fact, after wearing this badge as the sign of your dedication to service, you must not deviate from *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shaanthi* and *Prema*. When a man takes up the role of Harischandra on the stage, he has to adhere to Truth so long at least as he is on the stage. So also, so long as you wear this badge, stick to these four qualities. Then, when you find how happy you feel, how well you are able to move with your fellow beings, you will yourself appreciate the path and stick to it. It is not only during a *Navaraathri* or a *Shivaraathri* or a *Deepaavali* Festival, not only at Prashaanthi Nilayam for a few days---but, always and everywhere, you must stick to these virtues. Each one of you will then be a centre of inspiration in your villages. Factions and fear will cease; all will be like brothers and sisters, through your silent influence and example.

Each little act of self-control is Saadhana

These badges must curb your conceit, not fan them into harmful pride. They are not symbols of authority; they are but pointers indicating that the wearer is a trustworthy friend, an efficient worker, a smiling kinsman, a devoted guide, an inspiration. Most of the people who come here are in distress, physical or mental. As mentioned in the Geetha, "*Anithyam asukham lokam imam praapya bhajaswa maam*". "Having come to this world, which is transitory and full of travail, worship Me, pray to Me." So they come seeking peace, joy and courage, hope, vitality and confidence. They must be welcomed with reverence and sympathy, love and consideration. Try to know that type of behaviour, which line of conduct, which attitude of service will please Me; then, follow that type, that line, that attitude. Then, your service too will be fruitful. I do not like people smoking and so, give up smoking; I do not like harsh language, loud noise, wild behaviour, demeaning conversation on low topics---so, avoid them. I like sweet soft low talk; so, practise that. Do not push or drag; do not just order about! Tell every one the reason why certain rules and disciplines have been laid down; try to convince and win the co-operation of people. Here, everything is part of *saadhana* and so, each little act of self-control helps advancement. Don't rush forward yourselves, into vantage positions near the dais; wherever you are you can win Grace, doing the duty allotted to you. By neglecting the duty and rushing forward, be warned that you are only denying yourself the Grace. I see all things everywhere; so, there is no need for you to push and rush to catch My eye.

What you feel, that you become

The Lord values the mental attitude behind each act. *Yad bhaavam, thad bhaavathi*---what you feel, that you become. Transmute every act into an item of *pooja*, of worship; then, derive maximum joy. Sai in every being; so, do not slight any. Revere and serve all, to the best of your ability. When some one calls out for water to slake his thirst and you offer him a cup, feel that you are offering it to Me; then, the act purifies you more and cleanses you. It is not the man in need that you serve; you are serving God, that is in you and him.

Karma is the flower and *Jnaana* is the fruit. The flower becomes the fruit, in the fullness of time. Only, one has to guard it and keep it free from pests. Charcoal is wood that has undergone but a part of the baptism of fire; let it undergo that baptism to the full; it becomes white, light ash that flies with the wind into the four quarters. The purification of mind from the passions have to be taken up through the fire of *Jnaana* until success is gained. In *saadhana*, there is no half-way house, no resting place.

Your installation on the throne of Aathma-realisation, as the monarch of your own inner consciousness, is the consummation of *saadhana* of life itself. One can sacrifice everything for the sublime success. The Paandavas gave up the empire for which they struggled long and sacrificed four million lives on the battlefield, so that they may get enthroned as such monarch. They sought the peace of the Himalayas in the later phase of their life. Only by "giving up" can that status be won. The *Upanishads* say that immortality can be achieved, not by sacred acts, nor by virtuous progeny, nor by accumulated wealth, but only by "giving up," *Thyaaga*. You have to give up all attachment to food and recreation, to I and Mine when you yearn for the Lord.

Voice of God can be heard in the silence alone

A picture printed on paper cannot be peeled off it; it becomes inherent in it. The Lord's name and form must be so imprinted on your heart. You wear the badge with this portrait on your chest; the original of the portrait must be worn on the heart, imprinted on the heart.

The *Gopees* had done that. Prahlada too had achieved it. That is the reason why he did not wail or protest, when he was subjected to torture and torment; he saw, he heard, he felt, he knew only Maaraayana, the Lord. Try to develop that deep faith and devotion.

One other point: In this Prashanthi Nilayam, you should see that *Prashanthi* is preserved. Emphasise this step in *saadhana* before all. In the silence alone, can the Voice of God be heard. Serve the thousands who are arriving here, in this spirit and with these objects in view; that is the way to obey the Will, the *Aajna*. The *aajna* (command) is the boat that will take you across the Sea of Change, into the Eternal and the Absolute.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 22.11.1967

Vol. 8, 45, 1968. Give the giver the gift

This is a pot; this a thatch; this a house; this a wall; this jungle; this a hill; this the ground; this the lake; this the fire; this the wind; this the sky; this the maker of the day; this the light of night; these the stars; these the planets; these the inert, these the vital; this is he, that is his person; these are all distinct from Me; this material world is different from Me---thus as a witness, I cognise all this and fill each with the principle of existence without the help of any disciplinary process, for I 'am above and beyond all this.

This is an auspicious moment in the history of India, when you have a great chance to understand the truths embodied in the scriptures of this land and the ideals that are embedded in the ways of living that are prescribed by the codes propounded therein. In order that you may attain the only goal of human life, namely, realising the Divine and becoming Divine, the Eternal has limited itself and come in this human form. It will reveal the ideals again, and re-establish it among all men. Of course, it is difficult for those who are unacquainted with the scriptures to grasp the mystery of this advent.

I may tell you, nevertheless, that all the five elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) have been created by the Will of the Supreme. They have each to be used by you with reverential care and vigilant discrimination. Reckless use of any of them will only rebound on you with tremendous harm. External nature has to be handled with caution and awe.

Control the tongue with double care

So too, your inner 'nature,' your internal instruments! Of these, two are capable of vast harm; the tongue and sex. Since sex is aroused and inflamed by the food consumed and the drink taken in, the tongue needs greater attention. While the eye, the ear and the nose serve as instruments of knowledge about one particular characteristic of Nature, the tongue makes itself available for two purposes: to judge taste and to utter word-symbols of communication. You must control the tongue with double care, since it can harm you in two ways.

Without the control of the senses, *saadhana* is ineffective; it is like keeping water in leaky pot, when the senses are given full sway. *Pathanjali* (the celebrated sage author of the *Yoga-suuthras*) has said that when tongue is conquered, victory is yours. When the tongue craves for some delicacy, assert that you will not cater to its whims. The monks and monastic dignitaries in this land have fallen prey to the tongue and are unable to curb its vagaries; they wear the robes of renunciation but clamour for tasty delicacies and thus bring the institution of monkhood into disrepute. If you persist in giving yourself simple food that is not savoury or hot, but amply sustaining, the tongue may squirm for a few days, but it will soon welcome it. That is the way to subdue it and overcome the evil consequences of its being your master.

Control your taste; control your talk

Since the tongue is equally insistent on scandal and lascivious talk, you have to curb that tendency also. Talk little; talk sweetly; talk only when there is pressing need; talk only to those to whom you must; do not shout or raise the voice, in anger or excitement. Such control will improve health and mental peace. It will lead to better public relations and less involvement in contacts and conflicts with others. You may be laughed at as a kill-joy but there are compensations enough for you. It will conserve your time 'and energy; you can put your inner

energy to better use. You may take My special Birthday Message for you' Control your taste. Control your talk.

This is but a part of the larger programme of controlling the senses. Your devotion to God is best expressed by achieving the control of the senses. For, the senses rush towards the temporary and the tawdry; thus, they foul the heart. I require from each of you no other gift, no more valuable offering than the heart I have endowed you with. Give Me that heart, as pure as when I gave it to you, full of the nectar of love I filled it with.

Do not be jubilant because this is the day when this body became manifest, through birth, forty-three years ago. Birth and death are inevitable incidents in the careers of physical sheaths. Worth is judged by what happens in the interval. That is what one has to be jubilant over. Utilise that period for the progress of the spirit.

There are three lines along which endeavour has to be directed: (i) Spiritual exercise and discipline; (ii) cultivation of detachment, and (iii) Development of confidence in one's Self. Without these three, life is wearisome and wasteful journey through the sands. Give up, renounce---that is the virtue you need for spiritual progress. It is not the value of the thing given up that counts; it is the loftiness of the impulse behind the act.

Feel that each moment is a step towards God

So long as one is dominated by sense pleasure, it cannot be said that his spiritual life has begun. Now, many clamour for the experience of spiritual bliss, but, few earn it, because they find themselves too weak to reject the clamour of the senses! A little enquiry will reveal that the senses are bad masters and very inefficient sources of knowledge; the joy they bring is transitory and fraught with grief. Mere knowledge will not endow you with the well-spring of joy in the heart; only the contemplation of the might and majesty of God, as seen in the Universe, can be a never-failing source of joy. No two can agree on any matter, be they brothers or sisters, lifemates or father and son. It is only as pilgrims on the Godward path that two can heartily agree and lovingly co-operate.

You can be a pilgrim even while attending to your daily duties. Only, you have to feel that each moment is a step towards Him. Do everything as dedicated to Him, as directed by Him, as work for His adoration or for serving His children. Test all your actions, words, thoughts on this touchstone: "Will this be approved by God? Will this rebound to His renown?"

In the epic of Raamaayana, you find the father (Emperor Dhasaratha) is infatuated with his dear wife and he sends his son Raama to the forest in exile for fourteen years; the son, however, is such a true follower of righteousness that he exiles his dear wife to the forest, in obedience to the whisperings of a section of his people. The father was the slave of his senses; the son was master. God will approve the latter and disapprove the former. So also, those who have no conception of the Lord who is above and beyond all human conventions may cavil at some of the actions of Krishna, but, those who are aware of His Divinity will understand their true significance.

All men are cowherds, all animals are cows

When you dedicate yourselves to the glorification of the Lord, you will revere the body, the senses, the intelligence, the Will and all the instruments of knowledge, action and feeling as essential for His work. While others will get intoxicated with pride, the bhaktha (devotee) will be intoxicated with *prema* (selfless love).

You have heard that when the Divine Cowherd boy played on the flute, the men, women and children and even the cattle of Brindhaavan hurried to him, as if drawn by the irresistible magic of His music, Divine Melody, that stills all the turbid waves which we name as joy and grief. They left off the work they were engaged in; they had no other thought than the attainment of the Divine presence; the cattle stopped grazing, the calves stopped guzzling milk. The story of Krishna and the *Gopees* (cowherd-girls) has a deep inner meaning. Brindhaavan is not a specific place on the map; it is the Universe Itself.

All men are cowherds; all animals are cows. Every heart is filled with the longing for the Lord; the flute is the call of the Lord; the sport called *Raasakreeda* (the sportive dance; the dance of Krishna in His boyhood with the cowherdesses), where Lord Krishna is described as dancing with the milk-maids in the moonlight---every maid has a boy-Krishna holding her hand in the dance---is the symbol of the yearning and the travail borne by those who aim at reaching His presence. The Lord manifests such Grace that each one of you has the Lord all for yourself; you need not be sad that you won't have Him, when others get Him; nor need you be proud that you have Him and no one else can have him at the same time! The Lord is installed in the altar of your heart.

Be pure and humble as pilgrims ought to be

Offer your entire self your entire life, to Him; then your adoration will transform and transmute you so fast and completely that you and He can be merged into One. He thinks, feels and acts as you do; you think, feel and acts as He does. You will be transformed as a rock is transformed by the sculptor, into an idol, deserving the worship of generations of sincere men. In the process you will have to bear many a hammer stroke, many a chisel-wound, for He is the sculptor. He is but releasing you from petrification! Offer your heart to the Lord, let the rest of you suffer transformation at His hands. Do not defile time, or the physical sheath, or this life's chance, using them for paltry ends.

Your pilgrimage to this place on this occasion is but a part of the long pilgrimage upon which you entered when you were born, which may not end even when you die. Do not forget that fact. Be pure, alert and humble as pilgrims ought to be. Treasure the good things you see and the basic truths you hear. Use them as props and promptings for further stages of the journey.

It serves no purpose if you merely acknowledge that the Lord has come but do not yearn to benefit by the Advent. In the previous ages, in what are called *Kritha*, *Thretha* and *Dwaapara Yugas* (each *Yuga* or Age being a long cycle or time period in Hindhu mythology) the Incarnations of the Lord were not accepted as such by many. Even their parents, kinsmen, and comrades hesitated to adore them. Only a few sages, who had cultivated the inner vision through study and *saadhana*, knew their reality.

Keep relationship with this Incarnation unbroken

But, today in this *Kali yuga*, while the currents of contradiction and controversy are undermining faith and adoration, the good fortune that has brought you face to face with Me is something for which you must thank your merit won through many lives. This is no ordinary good fortune. This incarnation is moving with you, your job and grief in order to console, encourage and cure. This relationship is something unique; it has to be kept unbroken, until the goal is reached.

Devotees who are attached to Me have a special responsibility. Vice-Chancellor Dr. Gokak referred in his speech to My direction that no one shall collect funds for any endeavour

connected with My name. I want that you must replace *Dhana-yearning* with *Dharma-yearning*. Yearn for *Dharma*, not riches. Do not extend your hand before man, but ask of the Lord, and he will fill it with priceless treasure. Have that faith and carry on.

I may make mention now of a letter written to Me by Dr. K. M. Munshi. (A great follower of Gandhi, one of the architects of free India; a famous Gujarathi writer, founder of the Bhaaratheeya Vidhya Bhavan, dedicated to the revival of the permanent values of Indian Culture). He has written that he came, he saw and he was conquered. Of course, what really happened was that his love merged in Mine; his *Aanandha* (Bliss) merged in Mine, and he is happy beyond expression. He has suggested in that letter that, just as there are some days which are celebrated all over the world as holy days, My Birthday must be an all-world holy day; he has asked Me to bless this plan of making this day, a day of *Sathyanaarayana puuja*, the world over. I appreciate his attachment and devotion, but I do not encourage this adoration of just one name and one form, and that too, My present name and My present form.

Unfurl the Prashaanthi flag on your own hearts

I have no wish to draw people towards Me, away from the worship of My other names and forms. You may infer from what you call My miracles, that I am causing them to attract and to attach you to Me, and Me alone. They are not intended to demonstrate or publicise; they are merely spontaneous and concomitant proofs of Divine Majesty. I am yours; you are mine, for ever and ever. What need is there for attracting and impressing, for demonstrating your Love or My compassion? I am in you; you are in Me. There is no distance or distinction.

I am now hoisting the Prashaanthi Flag on this Prashaanthi Nilayam. The flag is a sign that is significant for each one of you. It is a reminder of your duty to yourself, and so, when I hoist it on this building, you must unfurl it on your own hearts. It reminds you to overcome the urge of low desires, of anger and hate when your desires are thwarted; it exhorts you to expand your heart so that you embrace all humanity and all life and all creation in its compass; it directs you to quieten your impulses and calmly meditate on your own inner reality. It assures you that, when you do so, the lotus of your heart will bloom, and from its centre will arise the flame of divine vision, which guarantees *prashaanthi* (infinite peace).

I must also tell you of certain preliminary disciplines' Practise when you are here the three disciplines of silence, cleanliness and forbearance. In silence can be heard the voice of God, not in the revelry of noise. Through cleanliness you earn purity. By forbearance, you cultivate love.

You have come today to your own home. This is your home, not Mine. My home is your heart. So, do not try to have your lunch elsewhere but in your home, where you get this day food consecrated by Me, the *prasaadh*.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1968

For each person, there is a code of conduct laid down in the ancient scriptures, according to age and status, the profession adopted, the stage of spiritual attainment reached, the goal of life accepted, etc.

Do not carp at the behaviour of others, or at the efforts they make, to get consolation and courage amidst the turmoils of life, for the

path that one has chosen, the Name and the Form of God he prefers! Also do not give up your code Of duties and take up that recommended for some one else.

Shri Sathya Sai

Vol. 11, 51, 1972. The three bodies

MAN is engaged in ceaseless search for happiness; but, he is incapable of defining what exactly is the essential component of happiness. So, he flits from one objective gain to another, ever discontented with himself, ever bothered by disappointment. He tries to possess, to accumulate, to acquire more and more of external junk, which cloud his vision and dulls his appetite for gains for lasting value. When can a man say, "I am fully happy; I need no more?" What is the nature of joy or comfort that external objects can give? Man does not pause to inquire. He is unaware that he himself is the embodiment of the highest and the most lasting happiness or *Aanandha* (Bliss). That flaw has led him into disaster and disease.

Before seeking happiness through the senses, the mind and the intellect, man has to examine whether he is a bundle of senses, or a mind playing with them or an intellect that rationalises the mental cravings. The body is the gross body; the water which it is intended to contain and carry is the subtle body; the reality of the potter who shaped it and willed it is the causal body. The three bodies which each has are called respectively *Sthuula* (gross), *Suukshma* (subtle) and *Karana* (causal). Physical and vital sheaths are *sthuula*, mental and the intellectual sheaths are the *Suukshma*, and the Blissful or *Aanandhamaya* sheath is the *Kaarana* or Causal body of man. Behind the *Aanandha* is the spring of *Aanandha*, the *Aathma*.

Three stages of Wisdom related to three bodies

There are three stages of wisdom correlated to those three bodies: *Jnaana*, *Sujnaana* and *Vijnaana*. Knowledge that is gained by the analysis of the objective world and the similarities of the behaviour of its components is *Jnaana*. When this knowledge is further studied and practised to subserve the best interests of the individual society, it becomes *Sujnaana*, or beneficial wisdom. The intentions and urges that arise from the purified consciousness saturated with the Divine qualities emanating from the sage is *Vijnaana*, the Highest Wisdom. It is to be noted that the word *Vijnaana* is often misused to indicate mere *Jnaana*, or co-ordinated information, analysed information about sense perceptions arising out of contact with the material objective world. *Bhaaratheeya* Culture uses the word for the Supreme Wisdom, which denotes the seer, the saint.

Intelligence, intellect, intuition---these three govern the thoughts and actions of man. One leads to another. This is the significance of the prayer with which Gandhi awakened the urge of liberation in this vast country, liberation not only from alien rule but also from alien tendencies and trends of thought. He caused the reverberation all over the land from a million throats of the prayer, *Sabko sanmathi dhe Bhagavaan*---"O Lord! Grant every one the equipment of beneficent intelligence." Once that is assured, progress is certain.

Lessons to be learnt from Hanumaan's mission to Lanka

Once the intelligence is purified and dedicated to spiritual effort, there should be no slipping back whatever the obstacle, whatever the temptation. Hanumaan, charged with the mission of discovering the place where Raavana had confined Seetha, decided that he should take a leap over the sea towards Lanka to search for her in that island of Raam that he carried in his heart and on his tongue. A mountain immersed at the bottom of the sea felt a strong urge to do him some little service, for, he was the instrument of God, and engaged in an exhausting adventure! Its name was *Mynaaka*. It rose above the waters and called upon Hanumaan to rest awhile on its

crest, and refresh himself with the fruits upon the trees that grew thereon. Hanumaan declined to delay his landing in Lanka; he was engaged in a Divine Mission, which brooked no rest, no delay, no dallying. He turned a deaf ear to the importunities of *Mynaaka*, and sped forward to fulfil the command of the Lord.

Ponder over this incident: Consider the compassion and the eagerness to serve which the 'inert' massive mountain felt! Consider the steadfastness, the un-deviating faith, the single-pointed loyalty of the monkey, Hanumaan! Do they not teach invaluable lessons to man---lessons of heart that melts at suffering, a head that refuses to swerve from the path of duty?

The whole duty of man is to engage himself in good acts with the gross body, scatter good thoughts and good influences around him with his subtle body, and earn self-realisation and Bliss through his causal body.

Birthday Discourse, Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1972

To search for God with the instruments of the laboratory is like trying to cure pain in the stomach by pouring drops into the eye. There is a technique and a special instrument for that purpose, which the pastmasters in that science have developed and spoken about.

Equip yourselves with a clear eye, through detachment and love, sharpen your sense of discrimination, viveka, so that it has no prejudice or predilection; then, you can see God in you, around you, in all that you know and feel and are.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 12, 21, 1973. Choose your God

THE times have gone awry. Relations between man and man, man and God, man and the human community; and man and those entrusted to rule over groups of men are getting tainted by hatred and anger. The people of this land are accepting wrong as right, and discarding right as wrong; they are journeying blindly along wrong roads. And, they are proud of this too; they believe they are progressing!

Happiness and misery are the consequences of the attributes one cultivates and foster--the three chief ones being *Saathwik* (selfless equanimous and tolerant), the *raajasik* (marked by activity, ambition, passion, emotion) and the *thaamasik* (marked by indolence, ignorance, inactivity, sloth, dullness). When *Saathwik* predominates, one is happy; when *Raajasik* predominates, one is discontented. When *Thaamasik* qualities are supreme, there can be no joy and no happiness. When the attributes pursue the path of attachment and pleasure, man is bound to the wheels of pain-joy, death-life. If they seek liberation and simplicity, they lead him to love, light and freedom from the birth-death wheel. Man is today caught in doubt and deviation; he does not know which road to follow, and with what preparation. He loses his precious heritage, degrades himself, and denies his Nature which is really Divine.

Mind has to be regulated and controlled by reason

People determine the nature of the Divine through the categories of logic and dialectics. But, intellect cannot grasp it; reason cannot delve into it. For, both are shaped by one's prejudices and predispositions. We appreciate only what we like; we see only what we would like to see. "When prayer is answered and one gets what one desires, God is real; when they are not answered, God is a fake, a figment of the imagination!" Arjuna acclaimed Krishna as the omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient God, when the foe was defeated, day after day. But when his son Abhimanyu was killed in the conflict, he raved in his grief that Krishna had not guided him properly and guarded him efficiently. His mind wavered with every wind of fortune. To many, the mind is master of the intellect also. One must be vigilant and preserve the impartiality of the instrument called reason or intellect. Clarify reason; then it will reveal God everywhere, even in you. Once you accept God as the core of the Universe and yourself have that faith strong and steady.

Of course, it is difficult in the atmosphere of "faithlessness" to light the lamp in one's heart and keep it burning, straight and sturdy, without falter or flicker. Today, the wife has no faith in her husband, the husband has no faith in his wife; sons doubt the father; father suspects the sons; students have no faith in the teachers, teachers cannot rely on their students; so, how can faith grow in one field only, the field of religion? This calamity has happened since man has allowed his reasoning faculty to be blunted by passion and prejudice. Krishna says in the Geetha, "I am *Buddhi* (intellect) among the faculties." "I shall confer the discipline of *Buddhi* on you," He tells those devoted to Him. Reason is the instrument by which the mind has to be regulated and controlled; it should not be subordinated to the whims of the mind.

Reasons for God's incarnations

Talking of the Geetha, I shall mention one problem that might confront you therein. Krishna declares, "*Samoham Sarvabhuutheshu*" "I am equal in all beings. I behave equally with all. I have no love or hate, no partiality or prejudice. Joy and grief are brought on by you on

yourselves, not by me on you, through attachment or want of it." When such is His declaration a doubt may arise in your minds' Why did He also announce that He would be incarnating in every age, in order to foster the good and punish the wicked? How is it that He talks of good and bad men? Does it not mean that He likes some and dislikes others? Are not all parts of Him? Are not the waves parts of the ocean?

Yes. All are parts of Him. The hand is yours; the fingers are yours; the nails are yours. Why then do you pare and trim the nails? Urine and faeces are in you, of you, but yet you have to get rid of them, to maintain health. Under certain circumstances, one has to cut off a limb in order to save the body. In fact, the Kauravas were dangerous viruses that had caused a spreading wound; Krishna had to operate them off, through major surgery, with Arjuna as His 'assistant operator,' in order to save the 'body politic' of Bhaarith.

When one is sunk in the slime of 'desire' one cannot distinguish with clarity between 'good' and 'bad.' In order to achieve this, the intellect has to be pure and clear, sharp and straight. There should not be the slightest trace of egotism, envy or greed in the make-up of man; for these will drag the arguments at a tangent. Vacillating minds, wandering eyes---these cannot help the intellect to decide correctly.

Give importance to ideals of tolerance and love

When one chooses a life-partner now-a-days, the first consideration is paid to external beauty and charm. Next, the economic position is taken as the basis. How rich is he or she? How much does he or she earn? Questions like, how far they are educated, what is the social status of the families to which they belong are asked later. Carried off by mere external frills and foppery, people enter into wedlock, and get entangled in misery or a destructive 'family life. The family cannot be stable if it is built on such slender foundation. Prime importance has to be paid to the fundamental requisites of a good character, high ideals of tolerance and forbearance, love and service. When beauty fades or wealth wanes, the bond too becomes less strong.

It is same with the God whom you choose, adore, and yearn to live with. You should not choose God for the benefits He can shower on you Do not expect God to satisfy your worldly or materials ambitions; and when they are not realised, do not desert the Path towards God. "Baba, appear in my dream this night," you demand, and if it does not happen He is not Sai Baba, he is Rai Baba (stone Baba) and you go in search of some other God who will be at your beck and call. You must hold on. to your faith, whatever might happen, success or failure, appointment or disappointment. When God is your very core, irremovably fixed in your consciousness, there will be no room for elation or dejection. God is bliss, and when God is the undying spring in you, you will have bliss forever.

The two paths of *Bhakthi Yoga*

Man has to engage himself in activity, for his upkeep, as well as for the sake of happiness. But he has to choose his activity intelligently and without over-involvement in its consequences. Use the activity to earn what is really good. Seek something supreme, something of the highest value, something that is beyond diminution and decline--that is true *bhakthi* (devotion). *Bhakthi* is the love and longing directed to the attainment of such a-goal. The means adopted for this are Karma (activity). They are known as *Karma Yoga*; for *Karma* becomes *Karma Yoga*, when activity is disciplined, dedicated and demarcated with skill. True love directed towards God can reveal His reality, and grant the highest *Jnaana* (Supreme Wisdom).

A tree has a trunk and the trunk branches far and wide, into boughs, with leaves and flowers. *Karma Yoga* is the trunk for the tree of life; the branches, leaves and the fragrant flowers symbolise the *Bhakthi Yoga*; and the ripe fruit and the sweetness, therein, is the *Jnaana Yoga*, the Wisdom. If the tree yields no fruit and if the fruit is not sweet, then, it could as well not grow at all.

Bhakthi can flow along two paths- *Saguna Bhakthi* and *Nirguna Bhakthi*. When you feel that God is far away, far higher, far beyond you and when you plead for mercy, petition for Grace, and pray for boons, it is *Saguna*---you adore Him as Lord and Master, as Guardian and Saviour; you go through the ceremonials of praise, propitiation and prostration, submission and service. But when you practise the discipline of seeing Him in all beings, as the core of every cell or atom, alive and aware, and experience Unity with all Creation (for Creation is but His body and you are also in it and of it) then, it is *Nirguna*. The *Nirguna* is the contemplation on the sugar; the *Saguna* is the adoration of some one sugar doll, which has caught your fancy and attracted your love and loyalty. Among the ceremonials we have the *yajna* (sacrificial rite), the chief feature described in the *Vedhas*.

Meaning of rites performed in Yajna

An important rite in the *Vedhic Yajna* is called soma-pa. In order to grasp the tuner significance of the *Vedhic* or other ceremonials, one has to spend some thought on symbolism. For example, let us take this Soma-pa itself. Pa means 'drinking' and the rite is generally supposed to indicate the drinking of a juice called soma.

No! *Soma* means the Moon; and the Moon cannot be swallowed or drunk by man. It also means the 'mind' ---"the changing mind that waxes and wanes, is never the same for long," That is why the *Vedhas* say that the mind was mothered by the Moon. So, drinking the Moon means the process by which the mind is controlled, made defunct and harmless. That is the purpose of the *Yajna*---the sacrifice of the whims of the mind for gaining the realm of the Universal Eternal Truth. With the mind left intact, no *Yajna* is fruitful, for it has a thousand tricks by which it can drag you into perdition.

Fix the mind on the name (the sound symbol) of the Lord; then, it cannot wander away. The Divine is the flame of the lamp ever burning in the altar, namely the body. Keep the flame safe from the guffs of wind, namely the gusts of passion and desire, that blow from all quarters. Sit in a quiet place, away from crowded groups of men or sensations or thoughts that distract. When you have reached the stage when you can be wholly engrossed in the Name and the Form it represents, isolating yourself from distraction is not required. But, that does not mean that you can parade your spiritual practices in the market place as some crazy people do now. Do not yearn for approbation and appreciation from the public. Pray that God may approve, accept and appreciate your toddle and your prattle.

Soak every moment in Love, in God

Cleanse your emotions, passions, impulses, attitudes, reactions. That is the essence of spiritual discipline, as laid down in all 'faiths. Examine your mind, your thoughts; do not seek the fault-ridden person. See only purity. Speak ill of none; and if, you slip into slander, repent and resolve not to give vent to the habit another time. Do not humiliate any one; respect persons for the good in them. Their grief at your behaviour will haunt you during your last moments.

Let every act of yours stand as your credential when you quit the world. Let no single act be a drag, or a debit. Soak every moment in Love, that is to say, in God. Of what avail is it to spend hours in *dhyaan* (meditation), if, when you rise and move amongst men, you spread anger, inflict resentment by your words and deeds? The Geetha asks you to be '*sathatham yoginah*'---"ever controlled, ever restrained, ever yoked with the Divine." So, be vigilant, be steady, be earnest. The steady person earns wisdom. By the absence of careful tending, a spark can be nursed into a huge conflagration; by vigilant care, even a conflagration can be reduced to a splutter.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1973

Vol. 12, 52, 1974. Four steps to freedom

THE culture of this ancient land is as deep as it is vast, it is built on strong and sustaining principles of human development. But, Indians at the present time are neglecting its lessons and entangling themselves in the search for material joys and pleasures. They ignore the true and eternal values. They turn a deaf ear to the call of the Divine; they respond to the siren voice of the worldly. This is the twentieth century, the Age of Science and Technology. There is plenty of material comforts and sensual pleasure easily available. So driven by an insane urge for the temporal and the trivial, man rushes into ruin, and loses the precious heritage of *Aathmic* (pure spiritual) treasure which the culture promises him. In fact, if only man knew the purpose and plan of Life, he would not waste his years and his skills in the pursuit of mere time-bound joys. That he is everywhere engrossed in these endeavours is a pitiable fact, which can be attributed to his misfortune or his ignorance. Of course, man has lost faith in himself; so, there is no wonder that he has lost faith in God also. Only those who know themselves and have confidence in themselves can acquire knowledge of God and confidence in God. Know thyself, first; then, your attempt to know the world will be rendered simple.

Wisdom can come only through work as worship

Indian Culture has laid emphasis on four *aashramas* (stages of life) for individual development in order to assure everyone with the education needed to know himself. For *Aathma vichaarana* (enquiry into the Self), *Aashrama dhanam* (code of duty) is very essential. Through adherence to the regulations and prescriptions of conduct and study-assigned to each stage or *Aashram*, the earning of knowledge and wisdom is made easy and automatic. Wisdom can come only through work as worship; the *Aashrams* guide man to sublimate all activity into worship.

Just as we have four stages: childhood, youth, middle age and old age, we have four corresponding *Aashramas*: *Brahmacharya*, *Grahashtya*, *Vaanaprastha* and *Sanyaas*--studentship, householdership, recluseship and monk-ship. During the years of childhood and teenage, man has to equip himself with the information necessary to share in the work of society and to derive health and happiness thereby, and acquaint himself with the tools of knowledge and the paths along which wisdom can be garnered. As a householder, raising a family and sustaining a society, he has also to uphold the ideals of justice and truth, and promote them by his actions. He must feel the innate majesty of mankind and live in *accordance* with that high status. As a recluse and monk, in old age, he has to be the guide and teacher of the people around him, imparting to them the fund of wisdom he has won through his experience.

The *Shaasthras* (spiritual sciences) lay down the lines along which man has to direct his thoughts and activities. Sincere adherence to these laws and limitations alone can guarantee *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom). Otherwise, man drifts aimlessly along the crosscurrents and whirlpools of life and ends up ignorant, both of the nature of *loka* (world) and the glory of *Lokeshwara* (God).

Forces of atheism have gained strength now

The higher paths must be trodden from childhood; it cannot be adopted at an advanced age. The child must learn to be truthful in word and deed, and avoid the cowardly habit of falsehood. Later, boys and girls have to become conscious directors of their senses, instead of being automatic slaves. Heads of families have to adhere to the schedules of rites and worship prescribed for them; they have to supervise the behaviour and conduct of the members of the household; they have to render hospitality to guests and deal charity to the poor; they have also

to equip their sons and daughters with processes by which they can have mental peace and equanimity, under all conditions. Because these obligations have been neglected for some generations, the forces of atheism have earned strength now.

When the seeds are ridden with defects, how can the tree yield richly? When parents and elders do not provide good examples to the children growing under their shade, how can the country prosper and be free from anxiety and fear? You cannot separate the rind, the pulp and the seed that a tamarind fruit has, when it is still green. But, once it has ripened, the separation is quite easy. So too, until a person becomes ripe in experience and can be pronounced wise, he cannot discard his identification with the body, the senses and the mind. He will not be able to differentiate between *Aathma* (spiritual Self) and *non-aathma*, *kshethra* (the body) and *Kshethrajna* (the controller of the body). *Prakrithi* (Nature) and *Paramaathma* (Supreme Self), *Guna* (impelling characteristic quality) and Trans-guna, and such other entities.

Man's restlessness affects society too

Let me tell you a small example: Krishna killed the Kaaliya serpent that was poisoning the Kalinidi river and destroying all trace of life for miles around, by means of deadly fumes. No sooner was Kaaliya killed than the 'wives' (serpents) of his harem, prayed to Krishna for succour and surrendered to Him. This story is according to the Bhaagavatha. Now, what does this signify? In the Mind-lake (the *Maanasa-sarovar*) of man, there lurks a poisonous serpent, desire. When that is destroyed, the various frailties and frivolities, triumphs, trials and failures, pains and pleasures, that desire brings in its train, surrender to God.

Desire can be killed, only when faith in the *Aathma* as the very core of being is firmly established. Since all efforts are now directed to the accumulation of material goods and the satisfaction of sensual desires, man is tossed about on the waves of fight and faction, falsehood and greed. The individual is intimately related to society and so, his restlessness affects society too.

The individual Will is ultimately responsible for the welfare and well-being of the world. The world is but a mental image of the individual. How this happens is a mystery. One can only say, that just as sleep is the cause of dreams, *maaya* (Worldly illusion due to basic ignorance) is the cause of Creation. Doctors ascribe dreams to various reasons: indigestion, the compulsions of thought, the confusions of mental pictures, etc. But, we can be certain only of one reason, namely sleep! Dreams are nullified when the person becomes a *jnaani* (one aware of the Truth). At that stage, one gets rid of the night-dream as well as the day-dream.

The four *Aashramas* have been devised in order to awaken man into the *jnaani* stage. Education today, in all grades, is a process of packing information in the brain and skills in the hands. It is useful only for parading scholarship, dialectical controversies and mutual recrimination. It does not instil humility, a sense of balance and equanimity. Of course, spiritual training is totally absent. Perhaps, the feeling is that spirituality is a solitary pursuit, which can be undertaken only in the silence of the forest. No! True spirituality is the awareness of the fundamental unity of man in God.

The main mission of man is the march towards Unity

People celebrate the birth of a child; they are happy when the child grows tall and strong. But, the fittest event for such celebration is when the child justifies its birth, by achieving good fame as a benefactor of man or a servant of mankind. Emperor Dhritharaashtra had hundred sons! He

must have celebrated their birthdays, too. But, no one of them did any one good; they were all arrogant, greedy and full of spite. Therefore, they accomplished only the extinction of the entire dynasty and all who were attached to it!

Sons and daughters are now keen to share the properties of their parents and spend their portion as quickly as possible. They do not care for the much more precious wealth of experience that their forefathers have earned for their sake. They waste their years in fallow efforts so much that even their health is destroyed; children wear glasses when barely ten; they dye their hair when barely fourteen; they age fast and show signs of senility when barely sixteen! To praise the habits that people adopt today as 'modern,' or 'conducive to progress' is ridiculous to say the least.

As the ancients emphasised, food habits and recreation habits have to become *Saathwik* (conducive to health of body and mind), that is to say, such as cannot arouse and feed the passions of man, or make him dull and stupid, idle and listless.

Above all, everyone must realise, (and guide himself accordingly), that the main mission of man here below is the march towards the ideal of Unity and Peace.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1974

If you can fill your heart with love, then peace will come into you from outside. Through bad qualities, to some extent, we lose peace. With truthful thoughts, a man will have peace.

If you can get rid of all thoughts, you will become a saint. It is only when you can be free from all thoughts that you can have peace.

Your own bad thoughts are responsible for all your pain and sorrow.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 12, 53, 1974. Never a party

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Aathma! You are celebrating this day as the Birthday of Swaami, and deriving *Aanandha* (divine bliss) through various programmes here, carried on with enthusiasm by you; but, in fact, I have no wish to consider this as a special day because it is the birthday and celebrate it as such. I have come on purpose to reveal to man the mystery of his Reality and the goal of his life; I have not come to set them the task of celebrating the birthday or to get arranged any pompous and personal festivals. I have no such desire, at any time, in this or any other sojourn.

On what day do I celebrate my birthday? On that day when all of you experience genuine *Aanandha*, in your hearts! Now, when your hearts are surging with manifold fears and anxieties, and torn by miseries and losses, and riven as under of grief, declaring this day as-My birthday seems to be barren of meaning!

While on this subject, it is essential that I warn you of another subject also. Do not spend your time trying to understand Me; do not waste your time in the attempt. The reason why I am saying this is: It is beyond any one's capacity to understand Me. So, trying to do the impossible, you are only wasting your time and your effort. It is only when you succeed in knowing yourselves that you can know Me.

Need for establishing colleges by Sathya Sai Trust

I need nothing, however great or small, in this Universe. At no moment has desire affected me for any thing or activity. I am the person come to give, not to receive. And, what you can offer Me is just this: pure, unadulterated love. When you offer Me that, I derive *Aanandha*.

During the recent Dhashara Festival, some announcements were made; if you ask Me what connection I have with those announcements, I reply, the connection is that of the name only. Otherwise, I have no connection with these.

Considering the wrong and undesirable paths that youth is courting and preferring all over the world at the present time, the Members of the Sathya Sai Central Trust have decided to establish Colleges in many States and through these institutions, to provide youth opportunities to transform itself in various ways, to maintain unimpaired the ideals of Indian Culture, and to equip youth with the strength and sweetness that are the common virtues of all faiths and their basic truth. For the realisation of this plan, they resolved to utilise the fiftieth birthday of Swaami and celebrate it with its unfoldment, on a grand scale. They decided thus, as a result of earnestness and depth of devotion. In order to establish colleges, funds are needed; no task can be fulfilled without money, even the smallest and least important. So, they agreed on a method by which each devotee gives as a life-time contribution, the sum of fifty rupees; thus, a corpus can be built up, out of which they could start and develop educational and health services. They were moved by high ideals and pure intentions to resolve thus.

Spending huge sums on any festival is heinous crime

This resolution they placed before Me. I responded to their proposal in this manner: Well. Do not carry out this task in a hush-hush way, swayed by the one purpose of

collecting money. Be frank about it; adopt such means as will remove all doubts from the minds of individuals, of the Government and of the world outside.

Finally, they made the announcement that day. But, many have imposed on that announcement their own interpretations and absurdities, and they have started propagating that it is proposed to spend fifty lakhs of rupees, for the celebration of Swaami's 50th Birthday!

Really, to spend 50 lakhs of rupees for wastefully celebrating either a birthday or any other such festival is a sin which cannot be compared with any other in the degree of iniquity. When people all over the world are affected by manifold miseries consequent on the absence of food and shelter, if someone spends 50 lakhs of rupees on his birthday, it has to be proclaimed a vast misuse, a heinous sin. I can never be a party to such activities.

Not only this. In Prashaanthi Nilayam, no misuse or extravagance can ever happen, for any festival, either *Shivaraathri*, *Navaraathri* or the birthday. Many people imagine that lakhs are spent here for the *dhashara* celebrations; but, all who come, serve their best in the fullness of devotion that dwells in their hearts and so, not a naya paisa is spent for any purpose. The *rithwiks* (*Vedhic* Priests) who officiate at the *yajna*, the lecturers who deliver discourses---all come and share in the joy, out of love and faith; their comforts are looked after by the members of Seva Dhal and the Seva Samithis and by the volunteers, who dedicate their strength and skills to make the Festival a success. No paisa is spent on any item.

Today, you find the Prashaanthi Nilayam area clean and pleasing. What is the reason? How many sweepers have we employed, how many coolies are engaged?. You may wonder. No, not one. Everyone cleans the place where he is staying, and the area adjacent. Thus, cleanliness is ensured, without any cost. It can be asserted that at no place in the world are resources put to such good use, with the least expense, as at Prashaanthi Nilayam.

Always be ready to help the sick and the poor

Prashaanthi Nilayam is holding forth and exemplifying the highest ideals, in the material, ethical, economic, moral, spiritual, worldly, and even political fields. There is no place here for anything contrary. This can be asserted without any possibility of contradiction. In spite of this, some ignorant individuals rely more on their guesses than on facts, and indulge in spreading wrong conclusions. Let Me tell you that if a single person in the whole world points out a wrong step in Prashaanthi Nilayam, he shall be met and convinced. For, the Prashaanthi Nilayam is eagerly bent upon the task of upholding and demonstrating high and holy ideals achieving spiritual realisation. It does not seek these worldly riches; nor does it yearn for earning favours and fame.

Embodiments of the Divine *Aathma*! When you feel the desire to give away in charity, direct your minds towards the development of good educational institutions, the provisions of healing facilities for the sick, and the amelioration of distress among the poor. Not in this place, but, anywhere, the members of our Organisation must be ready and eager to help students, the sick, and the poor. Feel that this work, wherever carried out, is work that pleases Me.

You need not offer Me anything; I only want that you should realise the goal of life by playing your role in the activities that help and cure, carried on by such institutions.

You are all aware of this: I do not allow anyone to bring here even a flower, a fruit or a coconut. However, some persons, carded away by their devotion and dedication, or moved by sudden enthusiasm or exultation, send by post or bring when they come here clothes for Me and place them before Me. From this day, I am directing that this should not be done; observe this as My

command. If anyone brings clothes despite this he shall not be admitted to Prashanthi Nilayam. Such persons will be treated as acting against Swaami's wishes and orders. What you should place before Me as offering is Pure Love; only that.

Therefore, from this day, spend your days and years in activities that help those who are in dire need, and thus make this human existence of yours worthwhile and fruitful. I wish you will conduct yourselves accordingly and I bless you.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1974

Vol. 13, 19, 1975. The message of love

A PERSON who has mastered-Vedhas (ancient spiritual revelations) and *Vedhaantha* (metaphysics of the Supreme Reality) might be honoured as a *Pandith* (learned scholar). Another might be praised for his brilliant writings in both prose and verse. But if such scholars have neither purity of consciousness nor elevating Ideals, their capacities will result in more harm than good. They will promote neither happiness of the people nor peace in society. They will pass through life without the awareness of Its sanctity or sublimity. The Lord blessed the boy Dhruva, appreciating his Innocence and his steadfast faith in Him. The Lord saved Prahlaadha from direct disasters planned by his own father, for the boy had surrendered to Him and placed unshakeable trust in His Mercy. The Lord showered Grace on Kuchela who suffered from agonising poverty because he never once faltered in his devotion to Him. The Lord is the refuge of all who seek refuge, the saviour of all who have to be saved. He is the Embodiment of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being- Awareness-Bliss Absolute). He is now at Puttaparthi as the Effulgent Emperor over the region of Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

Today man's behaviour is really artificial

Life sustained by food is short; life sustained by the *Aathman* (Divine Spirit) is eternal. Do not lay claim to long life, but to Divine life. Do not pine for more years on earth, but for more virtues in the heart. The Buddha knew and made known to the world the truths: Everything is grief. Everything is empty. Everything is brief. Everything is polluted. So the wise man has to do the duties cast upon him with discrimination, diligence and detachment. Play the role, but keep your identity unaffected. Have your head in the forest *ashram* (retreat), unaffected by the aimlessly rushing world. But it is your duty, a duty you cannot escape, to fully engage yourself in your work, unconcerned with loss or gain, failure or success, slander or praise. The Geetha instils this very lesson In you: "Whoever does *upaasana* with no thought other than Me, him I shall have with Me; I shall bear his burden now and forever." The Geetha says, "Keeping Me ever in memory, engage yourself in the battle of Life."

This 'Me' to which Krishna refers is not something outside you or extraneous to you. It is your own Divine Reality which you can cognise in the silence of your own *dhyaana* (meditation), when you shut out of your awareness the distraction of the senses, the mind and the ego. You can take refuge in the calm coolness of your heart where He has installed Himself as the Charioteer. You must only engage yourself in work that is purifying, with an attitude that sanctifies. Most people do not know how to set about on this most rewarding adventure. They waste their lives in sorrow, wading through disappointment and despair, for they cling to something as theirs and treat something else as belonging to others. They grab and grieve, and labour to acquire and lose. Desire multiplies desire, and man sinks deeper Into discontent and distress. The behaviour is really artificial; It does not conform to man's real nature, the prompting of his *Aathman*, which is Divine. In the universal, eternal sea of change, the *Aathman* alone is above change.

All differences are apparent, not real

In creation, in the objective world, no one article is like any other. No two human beings are similar in every respect; there is some twist or turn which distinguishes one from the rest. Each has his own peculiar experiences. Immense diversity prevails. Nor is an individual the same for any length of time. The infant changes into a child, then into a boy, an adolescent, an adult, and soon becomes middle-aged, old, decrepit and, finally, senile.

In one single day the Individual Is changed into a wakeful person, a dreamer and a sleeping log! So man must seek refuge in the changeless, the *Paramaathman* (Supreme Reality), from which all variety emerges, and into which it merges. Then only can be secure peace and contentment. The past is past; do not lose time looking back on the road you have traversed. Look forward, deciding to march on with confidence and courage. Take the first step NOW. Tomorrow may be too late.

Repeat to yourself the truth that the world is as much God as heaven is. There are no two distinct entities or categories called material and spiritual. All distinctions are apparent, not real. Sai has drawn the old and the young to Himself and every one of them has Sai in his heart. The scriptures of different creeds---the Bible, the Quoran, the *Upanishaths* (philosophy of the *vedhas*, the *Zendavestha*---appear different, but their aim is the same: to establish the Brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God as the basis for the peace of mankind. No creed need put on airs of superiority as each is shaped by the compulsions of time and space, of language and levels of experience. You are all members of the Sai Family, bound by the religion of Love. Though ostensibly you profess to belong to different faiths, faith in Sai has removed the barriers in your minds. Love is God. Live in Love.

Love must express itself as service

Your *Aathman*, which you mistake to be your body, your senses, your mind, your intellect, etc., can have no sorrow or Joy. It has no death, no birth. It is eternal and unchanging. What you judge as joy or sorrow is only like a passing cloud which cannot affect the splendour of the Sun or Moon. Know that such emotions follow one another when the wheel of life turns round from moment to moment. The sea has water that cannot quench thirst, but it has also pearl and coral. You have to get toughened by the hammer strokes of Joy and sorrow until you are unaffected by the vicissitudes of fortune.

This year you have named My birthday the 'Golden Jubilee' of the *Avathaar* (divine Incarnation), and gathered in vast numbers from all parts of the world. I am sure you have benefitted by the *Sathsang* (holy company). I do not accost one particular date in the calendar as My birthday, for I consider the day when Divinity blossoms in your heart as My birth-day in you. Therefore each of you should individually celebrate such a day as My birthday. The day when you resolve to practise My advice, to follow My directives, to translate My message into acts of service, and to engage in *saadhana*---that day is My birthday for you. The 23rd day of November which you now honour as the day on which I was born, is only like any other day if you celebrate it in a routine, ritual fashion. Adore man; the adoration reaches Me. Neglect man; you neglect Me. Of what avail is it to worship the Lord and to suppress man, His counterpart? Love for God must be manifested as Love for man, and Love must express itself as service.

Through Love alone---Love acquired through *saadhana*, and shared with all as *saadhana*---can peace be attained, by the individual as well as by the nation. My Life is My Message and My Message is Love. That explains why you have gathered hither in hundreds of thousands.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1975

Vol. 13, 25, 1976. Signs and wonders

THE conflict between persons who accept God and deny Him, those who declare that God is to be found in this or that place and those who affirm that He can be found nowhere, is never ending; it has continued throughout the ages. While considering this situation, one has to remember that while it is unnecessary to awaken a person already awake and easy to awaken a person who is asleep, we cannot awaken, however much we try, a person not wanting to awaken! Those who do not know, can be taught by means of simple illustrations what they do not know. But those afflicted with half-knowledge and proud of that acquisition are beyond any further education.

The two eyes give a picture of a vast expanse of space, but they cannot see the face to which they belong! They are Important instruments of the body, but they cannot see the entire body. When you wish to see your face and back, you have to keep one mirror in front and another one behind you, so that in the front mirror you can see the reflection of your back also. So, too, when you desire to know your reality (face) and your future (back), you have to adjust the mirror of 'Self-confidence' (confidence that you are the Self) in front and the mirror of Divine Grace behind you. Without these two, to affirm that you are aware of your Truth or of your destiny, is sheer fantasy.

Divine *Avathaars* attract by their inexplicable acts

The Divine is now denoted by various words that are common currency in limited human vocabularies. They name phenomena revealing the Divine, 'miracles', 'magic', 'wonders', etc.. Of course, man cannot contain in his mind more than he can hold. He cannot express in words the in-expressible. Only those who have dived deep and contacted the underlying principle of Love, can picture Divinity with some clarity. The Divinity that is Me has not been acquired or earned, nor has it been added or evinced after the lapse of some years in the middle of this life.

The Divine has to reveal Itself through these manifestations, largely shaped and modified by the nature of the times, the region and the cultural environment. The signs and wonders that I manifest are given names that do not connote the purpose or effect. They can be called *chamathkaara*, that lead on to *samskaara* (purification acts), which in turn urge one on towards *paropakaara* (helping others) and finally result in *saakshaathkaara* (divine vision). *Chamathkaara* is any act which attracts on account of its inexplicability. This aspect of attraction is Inherent in the *Avathaar* (divine incarnation). The very name, *Raama*, means 'He who pleases or causes delight. *Krishna* means 'He who attracts, draws towards Himself (*Karshathithi-Krishna*). This attribute of attractions is a characteristic of Divinity.

Attraction is the very nature of the Divine

Why does the Divine attract? Is it to deceive or mislead? No. It is to transform, reconstruct, reform---a process called *samskaara*. What is the purpose of the reconstruction? To make the person useful and serviceable for society, to efface his ego, and to affirm in him the unity of all beings In God. The person who has undergone *samskaara* becomes a humble servant of those who need help. This is the stage of *paropakaara*. Service of this kind done with reverence and selflessness, prepares man to realise the One that pervades the many. The last stage is *saakshaathkaara*. The *Vedhas* (ancient scriptures of Divine Knowledge) proclaim that Immortality (the stage when one is merged in the Birthless, Deathless, Universal Entity), is feasible through renunciation and detachment only, and not through rituals, progeny or wealth.

When man renounces selfish desires, his love expands unto the farthest regions of the Universe until he becomes aware of the cosmic love that feeds all the four processes mentioned above. It is important that you know this underlying urge in all as I do.

Let us consider the *chamathkaara*, acts that attract and cause wonder. You see a flower. You long to hold it in your hand only when its colour or fragrance is attractive. You enter the market and see heaps of fruits. If the fruits are not attractive, you have no urge to eat them and benefit by them. Attraction is the very nature of the Divine.

Reason cannot measure the Divine

Once the person is drawn near, the process of *samskaara* starts. Without this, man remains fallow and feeble. He has no dignity or personality. A worthless steel lump is transformed by skilful manipulation and reconstruction into a watch that is worth several hundred rupees; this is the result of *samskaara*, which turned it into a useful tool for indicating time. Thus man can also be transformed into a noble, efficient, happy and disciplined member of society by the implanting of good thoughts, good feelings, good deeds and good emotions. Such transformed persons will spontaneously engage themselves in the task of promoting human welfare. They will be promoters of the ideals of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God.

Nowadays persons who have no experience or knowledge of spiritual science and no conception of the Divine, make pronouncements on such subjects into which they stray. The eye can but see, the tongue can but talk and the ear can but hear. Each has to accept its limitations and be content. The Divine can be grasped only through love, faith and *saadhana* (spiritual discipline), surcharged with Universal Love. Reason is too feeble an instrument to measure it. Denial of the Divine cannot negate it. Logic cannot reveal it. All the tirades now being made on the Divine are from atheists who are opportunists. So your duty is to preserve your equanimity. Be true to yourselves and do not waver. I am unaffected by praise or blame. My love and compassion envelop all; My Grace can be shared by all. I am declaring this so that you may face all this with fortitude. The more you dig, the deeper the derision; the higher the mound, the taller the praise. People with a disease in the nose cannot appreciate the fragrance of a flower. Those who cannot appreciate or recognise the Divine are suffering from an illness which handicaps them to do so.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1976

There are two statements in the Geetha, both complementary: Sraddhaavaan labhathe jnaanam (the man with steady faith wins wisdom) and samsayaathmaa vinashyathi (he who doubts perishes). The doubt that overpowered Arjuna was removed by the teaching of Krishna and the necessary shraddha was inculcated.

As a matter of fact, the Geetha is a conversation between the Jeeva and Brahman, the limited, or rather the idea of the limited, with the unlimited. The dehavasthra is worn by the dehi: the body is but a vesture of God, who is eternal and permanent.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 14, 14, 1978. Happy Birthday

THE same Divine Compassion that blessed Dhruva, saved Gajendhra, restored Kuchela and stood by Prahlada, has come to the earth as the refuge of the refugeless, as the Lord of peace, harmony and righteousness, as the Lord of all the worlds, as the *Sath-Chith-Aanandha muurthi*, as the *Puttaparthi Sathya Sai Sath-chakravarthi--the King of Kings*.

How fascinating is the face of the baby, resting in the lap of the mother! It has no fear in its eyes; it has joy on its lips. It is full of peace. It is unaffected by those evil forces---envy, greed, anger and hatred---that rob man of his peace and joy. It has no egoistic desire, no anxiety to impress others or to show off. It has no plans for the future, no regrets for the past. Its faith in the love and strength of the mother is so unshakable, that even if the sky were to collapse and fall, its calmness would not be disturbed. Why is it that when the baby grows into adolescence and manhood, this calmness and this joy disappear, giving place to fear, anxiety and hatred? The reason is to be found in the overpowering effect of the senses and their clamour for being catered to. Again, man today tends to see only the 'many;' he casts aside the Vision of the One and encounters, as a result, competition and conflict, disappointment and despair.

Devotees seek the path that is popular

As the child gathers more information and experience and becomes more comprehending, it sees the world as a battlefield of opposing forces and armies, where it needs to struggle for victory by devious means. Each head has its own thoughts, says the *shruthi*, "*Munde munde, mathih bhinnah*" (No two agree; differences breed disputes), and finally, life becomes an arena where ego fights ego. The situation is as bad as in the medical field, where specialists who can diagnose and deal only with the illness of the eye, the nose, the throat, the stomach, the liver, the heart, the skin, etc., forget that these are all unified by the organism called body, and that it is not advisable to study them separately as many distinct parts. The universe, the individual, the *Paramaathman*---all are inseparably unified. Scientists parade the little peeps they have of the universe as big victories. Even the technology that science has encouraged so far is fraught with danger to mankind. It cuts up the cosmos and the force behind it; and specialises it in minute parts, thus presenting false pictures of reality.

Devotees are also caught in this game of seeing many where there is only One. They seek the path that is popular, that will bring them fame, rather than the path that can ensure liberation and illumination. They place their own idea of God in the forefront and fight for precedence and support. The *Vedhic Suuthra (Vedhic dictum)*---*Ekoham bahushyaam* (I am One, I shall be many)---is ignored. It is the One that pretends to be many. So one has to feel the impact of the One rather than of the many, while moving in the world.

Faith is very essential for the pilgrim on the *aadhyaathmik* (spiritual) path. Man is now caught up in temporary and trivial pre-occupations in the too short interval between birth and death, and he deceives himself by placing faith in these rather than on truer and more lasting realities and experiences. He does not hold on to discrimination and deeper realities, and is carried away by every gust of doubt or disappointment.

Man has lost the capacity of faith

The baby is calm and unaffected on the lap of the mother since it has faith in the mother. The mother points out to someone as its father, to another as its grandpa, to another as its sister or

brother, and the child accepts these statements without question. The mother creates the faith in the father for the child. So, too, Mother Nature proclaims that there is a Father who has designed and who is energising and motivating these worlds, but man does not accept this, for he has lost the capacity of faith.

Faith is the basis of every act. You do not run away from the barber because he is armed with a sharp razor. You place faith in him and allow him to cut your hair, quietly submitting to his idiosyncrasies. You give away costly clothes to the *dhobi* (laundry man) since you have the faith that he will return them washed and ironed. You have faith in the driver of your car, in the engineer who built your house. So too, believe in the Inner Motivator, the *Aathman* within, the Voice of God.

Believe in the experience of ancient sages

People are going about now advising that one should believe only things that one has 'seen' and 'experienced.' Something happens somewhere and the news is published in the papers. It is believed without question. So, too, believe in, the experience of seers and sages who had no other purpose than discovering the Truth and sharing It with others who were unaware of It. In India we have had millions who believed in God and in the seekers after God, and who have themselves realised the truth of God. This has made their lives happy and contented.

Of course the seeker has to encounter many obstacles both inner and outer. But each one of them is a challenge which must bring out his latent faith. Where there is no darkness, there can be no appreciation for light. Without the pangs of hunger no one will seek food. It is the possibility of death that makes the mother most carefully nurse her sick child.

That is the reason why one saint advised his followers, "Do not ask God for anything. Let Him deal with you as He Wills." Did Jataayu ask that Raama should come to him and perform the last rites. Did Shabari plead with Raama? Earn the qualifications---holiness, purity, faith, universal love; then He will approach you on foot to console, comfort and save! Purity of heart and mastery over the senses---if you have these two credentials, Grace is your right.

Imagining that Bliss is available in the outer world, men stray away from the inner path and are caught up in misery. They seek it in the family---the wife and children---and to keep up a standard of living for them, take to evil ways. The fundamental flaw is their belief that the body is the be all and the end all of existence. They ignore the Indweller, who has to be recognised, revered and responded to.

Become aware of the Unity of mankind

The *Avathaar* (Divine Incarnation) is the *Aath mashakthi* (power of the Supreme Soul) that has put on the raiment of *kriya shakthi* and *yoga shakthi* (power of action and power of divine communion). Generally, *Avathaarana* (the process of incarnation), is described as a 'coming down' from a higher status to a lower one. But, no! When the baby in the cradle weeps, wails and 'clamours for help, the mother stoops and takes it up in her arms. Her stoop is not to be described as a 'coming down.' If you earn the necessary credentials, the Incarnation will come and save you. If, on the other hand, you multiply your demerits and descend lower and lower, how can you be saved? 'Have love and *aanandha* (divine bliss) in your heart. *Aanandha* comes from pure sight, pure hearing, pure speech and pure actions.

The day you establish yourselves in this aanandha, that day will be My Birthday for you. I must tell you another fact. Swaami's Birthday is being celebrated at Puttaparthi because so many thousands come here from far-off places, in spite of the expense and great difficulty during the journey. Do not be under the impression that because it is Swaami's Birthday, therefore you must come.

I have no desire to have My Birthday celebrated; such trivial thoughts can never enter Me. My only desire is to share My *aanandha* with you, to encourage you to lead lives full of *aanandha*. My Birthday is when you get *aanandha*. My Mission is *Lokaah samasthah sukhino bhavanthu---* "May all the worlds be happy and prosperous." Become aware of the Unity of mankind; promote by love and service the joy and contentment of every one on earth and fill your hearts with that yearning. Then it becomes, verily, the *Sai Mandhir* (temple). From that moment I am where you are.

Since this morning many people have greeted Me 'Happy Birthday!' No one need wish for happiness for Me, since I am always happy, everywhere. For *Aanandha swaruupa* (Embodiment of Divine bliss), why talk of happy birthday? You, too, must ever be happy and not wait for the birthday to recur every year to accumulate *aanandha*.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 2:3-11-1978

Know that Sai Love is the Love of a thousand mothers. Naturally you will find it impossible to gauge the intensity of My Love. And understand this. If you place yourselves outside that Love, you place yourselves outside the love of all mankind. Mine is Love that is pure, free, selfless and unconditional. It is a great good fortune to receive such love.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 14, 43, 1979. The task will triumph

*When the Dharma of the Age is laid aside,
To establish it anew through loving means;
When the world is polluted by conflict and confusion,
To restore the path of virtue and peace;
When good men caught in cruel coils wail,
To save them from pain and shame;
When sacred texts are not grasped aright,
To proclaim the message they teach mankind;
To relieve the earth of the burden of vice,
To fulfil the promise made in Thretha Age,
Achyutha has incarnated on this earth,
Vaasudheva, Shrihari, has come into the world.
Baba*

IN every human heart there resides a gnawing desire to achieve unwavering and lasting *aanandha*. Day and night, throughout his life, man is endeavouring without a moment's rest to attain this stage. And yet he finds it beyond his reach.

What is the reason? The root cause of his failure is his identification of himself with his body and senses, and his belief that physical and sensual pleasure can give him the *aanandha* which will appease his hunger. Man is not aware that he is the *aanandha* he seeks. The *Upanishaths* clear all doubts on this point. They assert: "Flour is rendered sweet by jaggery." Flour, be it of rice or wheat or gram, is not inherently sweet, but when jaggery or sugar is mixed in it, the sweetness permeates all of it. The lesson the *Upanishaths* convey is: The created Cosmos is the flour and the Divine Principle is the sugar. As a consequence, nature charms us and is attractive. Wherever we hear melody, or see harmony, or experience the sublime, it is Divinity that impinges on us and not nature.

Authentic means of acquiring knowledge

God is described as *Aprameya* (not measurable). It means that God cannot be measured like any limited phenomenon. Only the *Vedhas* can give a satisfying glimpse of the Glory. To indicate this, God is designated as *Vedhavith* (known through the *Vedhas*). There are three authentic means of acquiring knowledge as mentioned in the sacred texts. They are (i) *Prathyaksha* (direct perception) (ii) *Anumaana* (inference), and (iii) *Shabdha* (authoritative voice). When milk becomes curd after being treated with yeast, one can see it happening. The phenomenon is therefore accepted as true, as proved by *prathyaksha*. When clouds of smoke rise from mountain range, one infers that the forest is on fire. When someone who has been at Prashaanthi Nilayam describes the place to one who has not, the latter, too, is able to picture for himself the Nilayam and its environs. This is an example of 'authoritative voice' being a means of knowledge.

Shabdha becomes authoritative and acceptable when it emanates from experience and from honest communication of that experience.

Fixed and fundamental attributes of, God

Among the many thousands sitting in this auditorium, there is one who has come from America, a member of Sathya Sai Council for America. His name is Dick Bock. No one, let us say, has seen him so far. Even if he is described as tall or short, old or young, or as having specific physical characteristics people will find it difficult to identify him and spot him. But when I pronounce the sound, "Dick Bock," he will stand up for all to see. God, too, does not easily respond with His Presence when you describe Him and glorify Him. You had no name when you were born, but have since been responding whenever you are called by a 'given' name. Similarly, God is Nameless, but He responds when His Name, any one of the many, is pronounced by the seeker. The *shabdha* (verbal testimony), as a means of proof, has two aspects---the *thatastha* (apparent features) and the *swaruupa* (fundamental nature)---to the permanent unchanging features.

To identify a house which a visitor is searching for we tell him, "That one on which the crow is sitting," and he understands. This is a temporary feature of the house. God, the Eternal Absolute, is pictured, praised and adored as temporarily apparent and is adored in limited regions as Raama, Krishna, Vishnu, Ishwara, etc. These are not basic, fundamental expressions of His Nature. These are only Forms assumed for certain vital purposes like conferring peace on earth, reestablishing the norms of justice and strengthening the ideal of faith in the Supreme.

The fixed and fundamental Attributes are *Sathyam*, *Jnaanam*, *Anantham* (Truth, Knowledge, infinite) This is the *swaruupa* (Natural state) of *Brahman*. These attributes do not change with time, space and the nature of the observer. They penetrate time, space and matter and we perceive them in five aspects; *asthi*, *bhaathi*, *priyam*, *naama* and *ruupa*. Three of these---*asthi* (existence), *bhaathi* (consciousness) and *priyam* (bliss) are basic, while the other two---*naama* (name) and *ruupa* (form), are transitional and superficial. It is indisputable that all these features need a Creator who is Immanent, who is their Author and Contributor.

Nature moves but the Divine does not

The Sun, the Stars, the Moon, the oceans, the earth---all these point to the maker whom we have to accept. There are two causes which together produce any thing: the shaper and the substance. This silver cup must have had a smith who shaped it and silver which he shaped. When you go deep into this process of creation, you will realise that both causes merge into One, the Embodiment of Being, Awareness and Bliss. Since that One is all this, recognising It in all this confers full Bliss.

Every man yearns for only two boons escape from sorrow and attainment of joy. When both are achieved, man is truly free; he has gained *mukthi* (liberation). Not knowing the genuine implications of the stage of *mukthi*, persons who pride themselves as atheists or rationalists declare that they are not interested in it. *Mukthi* is the fulfilment of these two universal cravings of man. Texts and arguments have led man astray and blinded him to Reality. Do we reach *mukthi* along the path of activity, or of inquiry, or of worship? The arguments shall only fog the issue. These paths merely cleanse the mind, clarify the intellect and purify the emotions.

If the *Aathmic* (divine) core of all things and beings is recognised, *Aanandha* will be ever-present and full. The Divine Principle is the reality, the base, the essence, the ocean on which the waves rise and fall. Discard the name and form (which rise and fall) and contemplate on the *asthi-bhaathi-priya* content in each cell and particle. Then you can immerse yourselves in *Nithyaanandha* (*Eternal bliss*). *Aanandha* is Omnipresent. One has only to realise its Universality.

***Aathman* is the bestower of highest bliss**

Embodiments of *Prema* (Love)! Things that move must need have a stationary base. Nature moves but the Divine does not. Buses and cars speed along the road while the road itself lies still without movement. Pictures flit and fly along the screen in a cinema, but the screen does not flit or fly. The body grows or declines, the senses seek one pleasure after another and the mind skips from this thought to that only because the *Aathman* is Immovable and unmoved.

Now, by what trait can we recognise the *Aathman*? By bliss, which is Its very nature. This is the reason why It is described as *Nithyaanandham* (Eternal Bliss Absolute) *Parama-sukhadham* (bestower of highest bliss), *kevalam* (*alone*) *jnaanamoorthim* (embodiment of pure wisdom), *dhwandhwaa-theetham* (beyond all dualities), *gaganasadhrisham* (vast as sky), *thathwa-masyaadhilakshyam* (denoted by *Vedhic* axioms such as Thou are That), *ekam* (the One), *nithyam* (the eternal), *vimalam* (blemishless), *achalam* (unaffected), *sarvadheeh* (all-conscious), *saakshi-bhootham* (all seeing witness), *bhaavatheetham* (un-reachable even by the imagination), *thrigunarahitham* (attributeless), etc.

Generally speaking, the materials in the world will be sought by some, neglected by others and disliked by still others. The reason lies in the mind, not in the matter. One's own likes and dislikes are moulded by one's own activities, thoughts and feelings. If your reaction is good, you will pronounce Me good. If your feelings are bad, I may appear bad. The transformation from one attitude to the other happens in you, not in Me. I am ever the same. Since a form has been assumed, wavering reactions are inevitable. They are human; they do not affect the Divine.

Envious mind will be ever engaged in wrong

Changes in the nature of the reactions and the lines of approach are brought about by the whims of the moment, the turns and twists of desire and the pressure exercised by the environment, the region and the times. Last night you witnessed a play about Jesus enacted by the students. The disciple who was most loved, Judas by name, decided to work against the Master, yielding to the low temptation of a few pieces of silver. Greed for money is a demon that gets hold of the weak. When one is overcome by it, one loses all trace of discrimination and accepts with ease, wrongful ways of satisfying it.

Since the uniquely powerful impact of Sathya Sai has become world-wide, many ignorant persons afflicted with envy and monetary greed are attempting to spin malicious tales to belittle and defame the culture of *Bhaarith*. The envious mind will be ever engaged in wrong. This has been so in every age when the Divine has come among mankind. But despite such tactics, the task will not falter, the Triumph will not be delayed.

All the acts of Jesus were pure and holy

You have to pay special attention to this truth; there exists no such person who can point out any kind of blemish in Sai. Individuals who can probe into the significance of the principle of *prema*

(pure love) of which Sathya Sai is the embodiment, are, of course, very few. This principle is fully selfless, fully pure and fully holy. This principle, with Sathya Sai as its embodiment and exponent, is spreading from continent to continent. Envious persons watch the march of this transforming love and try to obstruct it with falsehood. Since the attention of seekers and aspirants is now being increasingly devoted to the heritage and culture of *Bhaarith*, attempts are made by many narrow and crooked minds to cast aspersions on them.

The success of the task for which I have come will very soon reverberate throughout the world. The truth that all faiths are facets of the One and that all roads lead to the same Goal, is provoking to some persons. You witnessed in the play on Jesus how his emphasis on the basic truths of good and godly life was misinterpreted by even the leaders of religion, who sought to hide their own failings by slander and falsehood. They even plotted to inflict torture on Jesus. All the acts of Jesus were pure and holy, and filled with selfless love. One can have adoration for one's religion, but it should not be defiled by hatred towards other religions. Be engaged, rather, in tasting the sanctifying, sustaining stream of Divine love. That will confer lasting *Aanandha*.

SAI is the ever-effulgent Aathman

In truth, this *Kali* era is the most beneficent of the four, for you have now amidst you the Eternal Embodiment of *Aanandha* in a form which you can approach, adore and learn from. You are singing with Me, conversing with Me and filling your eyes, ears and hearts with My utterances and activities. This is not a mere physical body composed of the five elements, nor this day My Birthday, though you may call it thus. This body might have a birthday, but I have no birth. You say I am fifty-four years old, but I have no age which can be counted.

The Eternal, with neither entrance nor exit;

The One who neither Was nor Is nor Will be;

The Immortal Person free from birth and death

That Ever-effulgent Aathman is Sai for ever.

Adoration is rising on one side of Me like the Himaalayas; denigration is accumulating on the other side as another Himaalayan range. I am, however, unaffected by both. As Gokak said a few minutes ago, upon both these peaks I place My hands, showering My Blessings equally on the opposing responses. Where there is day there must also be night; but it is the same Sun that causes them both. Be equanimous yourselves. Endeavour to benefit most from the good fortune accessible to you.

Engage yourselves in the spiritual discipline of *seva*, which is the most productive of good. Of all the methods of *seva*(service), to the long-neglected rural population is the best. Dedicate your skill and energies to the betterment of your brothers and sisters dwelling in the villages. Service is God. Why has God endowed man with a body, a mind and an intellect? Feel with the mind, plan with the intelligence and use the body to serve those who are in need of service. Offer that act of service to God; worship Him with that flower. Put into daily practice the ideals that Sathya Sai has been propagating, and make them known all over the world by standing forth as living examples of their greatness.

Birthday Message, 23-11-1979

Modern Civilisation is based on competition in which the interests of the individual precede the interest of society. Therefore, fear haunts men wherever they turn---fear of poverty, fear of loss, fear of death and destruction of property.

The mind urges the senses to seek and secure softness, sweetness, fragrance, melody and beauty, not in God whose heart is soft as butter, whose story is sweet as nectar, whose renown is fragrant as the jasmine, whose praise is melodious to the ear, whose Form is the embodiment of perfect beauty, but, in the shoddy contraptions of material things.

So, the mind has to die, so that it may be recast as an instrument for Liberation, through Fulfilment.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 14, 58, 1980. The gift I like most

EMBODIMENTS of Love! For the past five days various activities in Prashaanthi Nilayam have kept you busy. But, none of you noticed the passing of time. The reason is, that you become oblivious to time when your minds are concentrated on Timeless Divinity with all your actions and thoughts merged in the Divine. Just as rivers which join the ocean become one with the ocean, your minds when immersed in the Divine become one with the Divine.

The Universe is the manifestation of God. In every human being exists Divinity, subtle and invisible. Association with good people and saadhana (spiritual discipline) are essential for discovering the Divinity that is latent in the individual. The real purpose of human life will be achieved only when all our time and all our efforts are concentrated on realising the Divinity that is inherent in us. This realisation is possible for every human being.

But, today people are engaged in actions contrary to this objective. They are anxious to know all about what is happening in America or England. They wish to study Geography or Astronomy, but few are keen to find out their own true nature and their real essence. This is due to a defective education. In the present educational system, there is no place for ethical, *dharmic*, spiritual studies with the result that the students do not make any attempt to understand the purpose of human life. One seeks to learn all about the physical world. One learns all about America but does not know the route to Benares. One learns all about geometry, but knows little about the dimensions of his own house. One does all kinds of physical exercises but does not know how to sit in *Padhmaaana* (Lotus posture). One studies Botany, but does not know the uses of the *Thulasi* (basic) plant.

God is the seed of all living things

This is the deplorable deficiency of the existing system of education. If students wish to realise their true divine nature, they have to turn their minds to spiritual studies. *Aathma vidhya* (Spiritual study) is not a separate branch of knowledge. As has been described in the Bhagavathgeetha, it means seeing the Divine in the entire Universe. The Lord says: "I am the seed of all living things in the *Universe---Beejam Maam Sarva Bhoothaanam*." The Universe is a tree of which the seed is the Lord and the fruit is humanity (*Maanavathwam*). Without trying to discover the Divinity that is in the human form, people are wasting their lives. If you examine the great scriptures of the world, you will find that they all emphasize the supreme preciousness of being able to discover one's Divine nature, without which one cannot achieve real bliss. Man seeks worldly pleasures and prosperity but does not seek that inner Divinity which will give him permanent happiness.

Uphold the good name of your country

It is deplorable that people born in this *thyaaga-bhuumi* (sacred land of sacrifice) a *yogabhuumi* (land of spiritual practice, *saadhana*) have become slaves of western civilization and are acting contrary to the genius of their own motherland. To ignore one's mother and develop attachment to others is pitiable. For a child it is the mother who is endowed with a blissful face, however much she may be lacking in good features. That is the natural attitude of a child. But, what shall I say about students who for the sake of making a living, go to foreign countries after acquiring some kind of a degree? Instead of using your knowledge, your attainments, your abilities, your energies and your education in the service of your own motherland, if you go to foreign countries and serve them like beggars, is this not utterly deplorable?

In the *Thretha Yuga*, after the destruction of Raavana, Raama, Lakshmana and Seetha were getting ready to leave Lanka for Ayodhya. At that time, Lakshmana spoke to Raama, "If we return to Ayodhya, I doubt, we will get back our kingdom. Kaikeyi might have installed Bharatha on the throne. We left Ayodhya for the forest in response to the command of our father. Ayodhya may not be in a prosperous condition now. You know that Lanka is more prosperous than heaven itself. Would it not be better for you to be the ruler of Lanka and enjoy all that this country can offer?"

Raama replied: "Lakshmana, however ugly one's mother may be, I am not so insensible as to look upon some other beautiful woman and regard her as my mother. My motherland is the land of my birth. However attractive and prosperous Lanka may appear, with all the treasures of the earth, I have no use for its attractions and wealth." We, who are born in the sacred land of Bhaara, should be prepared to face whatever difficulties and hardships there may be in our country and use all our talents, knowledge and abilities to serve our country to the utmost and thereby uphold the good name of our country.

Greed is the breeding ground of suffering

Our ancients have declared that greed is the breeding ground of suffering. What has happened to those who went to Iraq, Iran or Dubai? Many of them are coming back with barely the clothes with which they left. Wealth is evanescent, like a passing cloud. Money comes and goes. Morality comes and grows. It is unworthy of our people to give up their culture, their way of living, and their principles solely for making a living by selling their services to foreigners. This is totally un-Indian. Is it not possible to lead an honest life by working with your two hands and serving your motherland? Why do you entertain improper desires?

It is insatiable greed which is today responsible for destroying the human quality in man. As long as desire is uncontrolled, you cannot discover the *Athma*. The *Purusha Sooktha* (hymns on the Supreme Person) has declared that "not by action, not by progeny, not by wealth but only by sacrifice can one realise Immortality (*Na Karmanaa, Na Prajaya, dhanena; Thyaagenaekena Amruthathwam aanashuh*). Sacrifice, strength and wisdom are qualities of the Divine. Use all your talents for the service of your country first and then do whatever you can for other countries. How can you conquer the outside world without having established your control over your own house? If you cannot derive satisfaction by utilising your education, your abilities or skills and your intelligence for your country, how are you going to achieve it in foreign countries.

Desire is something alien to Sai

Dhivya Swarupas (embodiments of divine nature) whether you believe it or not, I shall tell you one thing. There is not the slightest trace of self-interest in Me. Whatever I do, whatever paths I pursue, everything is intended for the happiness of all, for the good of all and for the improvement of all. Not a single action of Mine is undertaken for the satisfaction of My own personal desires. Desire is something alien to Me. All My wishes are only to promote the welfare of the World. "*Lokaasamasthaah Sukhino Bhavanthu*" (May all the worlds be happy) is the only objective of Sai.

It is not by plans of one kind or the other that the world can be bettered. It is only when a spiritual revolution takes place in man that the prosperity and welfare of the world can be

achieved. If the mind of man is not reformed and purified, all plans to reform the world will be futile.

As today's youth, are the future citizens of Bhaarith, they have to promote the welfare of the country. Sai's main purpose is to develop the minds and attitudes of these young men on right lines, so that they may work for the progress and welfare of Bhaarith. Students are the only wealth that I cherish. All My hopes are concentrated on them. To reform them and train them to serve as exemplars of righteousness is Sai's sole resolve.

Understand Sai's true nature of Love

It is not easy for people to understand the Universal *Prema Thaththwa* (true nature of Love) of Sai. I shall give a small example. We took the students to Jammu, Kashmir, Delhi and Prayaag. Wherever we went, we looked after the needs of the students and complied with their wishes. I should like to reveal to you how My Love manifests itself so that you may know My true nature. At a time when this great World Conference is being held, I was concerned after the welfare of the students from all the Sathya Sai educational institutions, who had come from Puttaparthi, Ananthapur, Bangalore, Jaipur and Bhopal.

All My thoughts have been concentrated on how to make them happy, how to see that they were comfortable and how to improve their discipline and character. It is not my desire merely to see them in bright uniforms and engage them in activities like drawing water or cleaning the streets. My idea is to develop real discipline and character and at the same time see that they are happy. For this purpose, I brought 50 tailors here to work night and day and for two months to stitch uniforms for the boys.

I did not get any new dress stitched for myself. I do not need new clothes for any occasion. Even the robe which I am now wearing was offered to me by the old students of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai as an expression of their love and so I agreed to wear it. Similarly I do not have any particular desire with regard to food or any other need. My *Aanandha* (divine bliss) is My food and to secure that food I promote happiness in others and derive delight from their joy. That is the significance of my statement, "MY LIFE IS MY MESSAGE." To feel blissful in the enjoyment of the happiness which others experience is a quality of the divine.

The Universe is permeated by the Divine

Let Me illustrate this with a small example. We plant a small seed, which grows into a big tree. The tree bears thousands of fruits in each of which there is the seed of tree. Even so, when the seed of divinity is planted in this vast Universe, the tree of humanity bears fruits in which the seed of divinity is to be found. Just as the fruit of a tree contains the seed from which it grew, this Universe carries the seed of its Creator. "*Ishaavaasyam idham Sarvam*," says the *Upanishath*---the Universe is permeated by the Divine. "*Ishwarah Sarvabhuthaanam*"---the Lord resides in every living thing. When man respects his human character and realises his obligation to discover his divine nature, the divine in him will manifest itself.

Experience of the Divine must be sought in the company of good people. It is an illusion to imagine that you can see God in some temple or shrine or in some kind of meditation. Only in the Divine manifesting in a human form can you experience the Divine. If one cannot experience the Divine in a living human being, how can one experience it in an inanimate stone? It is only when one perceives with love that one realises one's true nature. Those who are in the Sai

Organisations will be achieving their real purpose only when they rise above good and evil, look with equal regard upon all those around them and see divinity in them.

What man does is based on faith

Sai is unaffected by praise or blame. Sai is happy in whatever context Sai is remembered. Let no Sai devotee attach any value to the praise or blame offered to Sai. Here is an example of what happened the other day. A large group came to see Me. They had come to Prashaanthi Nilayam out of curiosity, after seeing some big reports in a newspaper. I told them that, if you have come only after seeing the papers, you are mere paper yourselves. To come or leave after reading newspapers or books means that your devotion is to the paper or the book and not to the Lord. If you wish to be real devotees of *Bhagavaan*, you should seek, for your own sake and not because of what you have read in books or papers.

Embodiments of Love! All human life is based upon faith. No one can subsist for a single moment without faith. Here is a small example. A man lays the foundation stone for a house today. If he does not have the confidence that by next year this house will be ready and that he would live till next year, will he seek to build a house at all? One gets up in the morning, takes up a bag to go to the market to buy vegetables. Without the belief that he will return home after buying the vegetables from the market, will he leave the house at all? From the time of waking till going to sleep, every thing that man does every moment is based on faith and confidence.

How is it, then that there is lack of faith in the Divinity which has given life, which has created this vast world and provided so many objects for man's comfort and sustenance? We develop faith in innumerable petty things, but we have doubts about the most sacred and the most vital requisite for good living viz., God. If we have faith in God all other beliefs are irrelevant. There are in the ocean certain rocks, which remain unshaken however much the waves may dash against them. Likewise, if you are resolute in achieving your aims, objectives or desires, you should never give up your efforts till your objectives are achieved and you should not be swayed by all kinds of passing thoughts. Only then will you be a true devotee!

Birth and death are action and reaction

Embodiments of Love! You are experiencing great joy in feeling that you are celebrating today as My birthday. For Me there is no birthday to be celebrated. It is for your happiness, for your sake and to fulfil your own wishes that I have agreed to take part in various programmes arranged for today. If one has no birth, there is no death. If there is death, then one must have been born. Birth and death are action and reaction. I am beyond both.

The body has no permanence. It is like a bubble on the water; it arises in water, expands in water and merges in water. Man is like the bubble; Naaraayana is the water. Without water the bubble cannot come into existence. All human bubbles are born in Naaraayana, grow in Naaraayana, and ultimately merge in Him. Why rejoice over the birth of the bubble or mourn its disappearance? As long as you have a body, engage yourself in sacred tasks, dedicate all your thoughts, and actions to the Divine.

Embodiments of the Divine! I must ask you to give Me as a birthday offering, only one thing---REDUCE YOUR SELFISHNESS; Abate your wrong desires. Foster your spirit of sacrifice and grow into noble human beings. If you dedicate yourself to these objects, you will have realised

the purpose for which you attended this great World Conference, this Birthday Celebration and derived immeasurable bliss.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1980

*Love your religion, so that you may practise it with greater faith;
and, when each one practises his religion with faith, there can be
no hatred in the world, for all religions are built on universal love.*

*Love your country, so that it may become strong, happy and
prosperous, an arena for the exercise of all the higher faculties of
man.*

*Feel that Delhi or Calcutta is as much a part of yourself as your
own town or village; any pain in the toe is as much a matter of
concern for you as a pain on the top of the head.*

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 15,35, 1981. Awake! arise!

We can easily declare "Not this," "Not that."

But who can declare of Brahman, "This is It?"

For Brahman is Eternal Truth, Eternal Wisdom,

Beyond the power of speech,

To describe or communicate.

Embodiments of Love! Sparks emanating from fire are neither different from it, nor identical with it. So, too the *jeeva* (individualised being) is neither different from *Brahman*, nor identical with it.

How many of those born are humans when born? How many grow into human status, after being born? How many who have lived as humans known the key to fight living and fight action? It is not by physical appearance that man is to be distinguished. The cotton tree bears long green fruits which resemble the mango; there are varieties of wild canes, but they are not all sugarcane; quartz may look like sugar candy but it is not edible. We should not be misled by form. The content is the important criterion, and the content is Divinity.

Jeeva in the Body; God in the Heart,

Both of them do sport some time,

And then they part, each from each.

One there is, the puppeteer behind,

And the puppets---Evil and Good.

They play their pranks and go.

Jeeva and *Brahman* become identical only when liberation is achieved. Until the sea is reached, the river remains as river. It has a different name and a distinct form. So too, the *jeeva* so long as it is involved with the physical case, the senses, the mind and the instruments of consciousness, it does not merge in God. It remains apart.

The *Aathma* is ever self-contained, self-sufficient. The material world exists on account of the other. The *Aathma* is the basic Unity which assumes the appearance of diversity, the world. Its immanence is the unifying Truth, evident as the Divine in all beings. It is the duty of every one to live in the awareness of this Truth.

He who lives on Earth must become Man at first.

Then, he has to learn the way to God

And discover the delight of the Spirit.

This is the Raajayoga path that the Vedhas teach.

Beware of your action belying your speech

The *Aathma* illumines all objects; it needs no other source of illumination to shine. It is the seer of the Universe. For the *Aathma*, the entire Cosmos is an object that is seen, even the eye that

sees without the mind caring to see. And even the mind is an object, for the mind has to be prompted and kept alert by something else that wills and resolves. The warp and woof of the mind consist of "wills and wont's", of reaching out and drawing back." The reasoning faculty is itself a tool of the mind. The Aathma has, as its apparent apparel, the body, the mind, reason, intellect and the inner tools of perception.

Though it seems to be the centre of all activities and agitations, the *Aathma* is unaffected. It is consciousness, pure and unsullied. The body and its accessories and equipment have birth and death, they develop and decline. But the *Aathma* is free from change.

The Eternal, with no birth and death,

No beginning, no middle nor end;

It does not die, it is not born,

It can never be destroyed;

It is the Witness, the Self, the Aathma.

The man who strives to attain the awareness of this *Aathma* has indeed fulfilled the destiny of man. But, out of sheer ignorance, man today has no inclination towards it nor does he proceed in that direction. His march is not steady and straight. Shankaraachaarya once poured out his heart in prayer, to have three errors pardoned by God. "Lord", he said, "Knowing that you are beyond the intellect and even beyond imagination, I am committing the error of meditating on you. Knowing that you are indescribable by word, I am trying to describe your glory. Knowing that you are everywhere and I have been preaching so, yet I have come on pilgrimage to Kasi. My action belies my speech." Beware of this great error that is prevalent---saying one thing and endeavouring to achieve the opposite.

Man does not learn lessons the disasters convey

Man builds a frail nest on the sands, prompted by the delusion of certainty; a monstrous force upsets his hopes, without mercy. A sudden storm plucks the petals of a blossoming flower and scatters them on the dust beneath. Sunk in ignorance, man does not learn the lessons these disasters convey. He clings pathetically to his desires and designs. So the result he reaps is quite contrary to the plans he framed! He can get the success he planned for, only when his efforts and actions are in consonance with the results he seeks. The supremest result of spiritual effort is "beyond the reach of speech, thought and imagination," as the *Vedhas* declare.

The *Vedhas* use two words to indicate that goal: *Nithya* and *Swaagatha*. *Nithya* means that which undergoes no change, in the past, present and future. *Swaagatha* means that which, from one unchanging position, illumines the awareness (*jnaana prakaash*) for all from everywhere. The One sun, from where it is, spreads His splendour in all directions. The lamp, though on one spot, sheds light on the entire home. The *Aathma*, likewise, is only ONE; but it awakens all by the light of wisdom.

The Aathma-principle immanent in all things

The sun has two properties: Light and Heat. The *Aathma* too can be viewed in two aspects: *Swaruupa* and *Swabhaava*---its "It-ness" and "the effect of Its Itness." The innate truth or *swaruupa* is known as *dharmi* and its effect or quality or *swabhaava* is known as *dharma*. When one is aware of the *dharma*, he can be said to have attained the *Dharma-bhootha-jnaana* (the

transformation resulting from the knowledge of the *Aathma Swabhaava* or *dharma*). The sublimation resulting from the knowledge of the essence or Itness or swaruupa of the Aathma is *Dharmi-bhootha-jnaana*.

The *swaruupa* of the Aathma is *Anu* or *atomic*. Its *dharma* or quality is splendour. The *Aathma* is described as *Vibhu*.

Subtler than the subtle anu,

Vaster than the vastest,

Witnessing all everywhere,

Aathma is Brahma, Brahma is Aathma.

This subtlest *anu*, *Aathma*, is in all things and its quality is therefore evident everywhere. It occupies all, but it cannot be occupied by any other. The *Aathma-principle*, the *Brahman-principle*, is immanent in all things in the Universe, but nothing can penetrate it. Since the *anu* or the *Aathma* which has that form is in all things, it is clear that all things are *Aathma*!

There is nothing in the Universe devoid of this *anu* force. This quality of the *anu* is cognisable in all things as the *dharma*. So, the *dharmi* or *aathma* is omnipresent. The human body too is no exception to this. The atom or *anu* is immanent in it and so, we are the embodiments of *Aathma*, of *Aathmic* energy.

(Holding up a silver tumbler in His hand, *Bhagavaan* said): To know this as a silver tumbler is knowledge of the *dharma*, knowledge of the effect; to know this is silver is knowledge of the *dharmi*. This handkerchief too has the *anu* characteristic. Burn it, it becomes ash; ash has atoms; the *anu* persists even when the substance takes another form. That is the reason why the *Aathma* is announced as Eternal Truth by the *Vedhas*.

Visualise the spiritual in the material

The body is composed of many substances but every substance is essentially *anu* in structure. Appearance and nomenclature may change through childhood, boyhood, adolescence, youth, middle age and senescence, but the *dharmi*, the *Brahman-reality*, shines in native splendour without being affected in the least. Ignoring this one Reality, the Truth, man is fully involved in illusory tangles.

Things are not so important; the transcendental truth of the things is of value. You must visualise the spiritual in the material, the gold in the jewels, the Divine in the diversity of character and conduct. Seek to know the *Aathma*. All are equal in birth and in death. Differences arise only during the interval. The Emperor and the beggar are both born naked; they sleep equally silently, they both bow out without even leaving their new address. Then how can their reality be different? There can be no doubt on this score. All are basically the same.

Who belongs to whom? How long does kinship endure? This attitude must not prompt you to escape your duties. The allotted duties have to be fulfilled by each individual. *Brahman* has no duties, no involvement. Though the world rests in *Brahman*, it is not affected in the least. The snake has poison fangs but it is not poisoned by it, the scorpion has poison in its tail but it causes no harm to the scorpion. When you see your own image in a hundred mirrors, you neither fear nor doubt. God knows that everything is His Image; He is not affected thereby.

The Vedhas distinguish three entities---the sea, the wave and the foam. The sea is the *Kootastha*, the Unchanging Base, the Omniself, the *Paramaathma*. The wave that emerges from it and merges in it is the *jeevaathma* (the particularised, individualised form of the *Paramaathma*). The foam that forms on the crest of the wave and dissolves in it is the *dehaathma* (the body-consciousness, producing the illusion of distinction from both wave and sea, though essentially it too is the sea).

Man's love is narrow and centred in the ego

Since the *Aathma* is in *anu* form in the body, body consciousness is termed *dehaathma* consciousness. *Jeevaathma* activates by its presence the individual consciousness. The *Paramaathma* is the base on which everything rests. But, man believes he is the body and ignores the *dehaathma*. He thinks he is a *jeeva* but ignores the *jeevaathma*; he concludes that as an individual, he is separate; he ignores the *Paramaathma*.

Does the tree taste the sweetness of its fruit? Does the creeper inhale the fragrance of the flower? Does the book imbibe the inspiration of the poem? Does the pandit caught in activity experience the joy of detachment? But a guru who has the experience of Truth can direct you along the *saadhanas*. The guru can only inform and inspire; the disciple has to move and act. The mother speaks in order that the child might learn to speak. She cannot put her tongue into the child's mouth! It has to use its own. The scriptures can only inform and inspire.

The wildness of the senses has to be controlled. Many try to do this by limiting the intake of the food, or inflicting, other types of punishment on oneself. But, these are perversions. The most effective means is the acquisition of Truth, the Truth of the Self. Since man is sunk in ignorance, the ignorance of the One Universal Eternal *Aathma* that is the Truth in all beings, his love is narrow, restricted and centred in the ego. How then can he merge in *Paramaathma*? Can an ant crawl over the waves of the sea? But, if he renounces his attachment to his 'narrowness' and resolves to join the sea, he gets the name and the taste of the sea itself. Seek to become vaster, the vastest, the sea, the *Brahman*.

Live in the light of the Truth

Unite---in the One. That is your mission, your destiny. Do not isolate yourself---"I for me," "*He* for him." If you hope to be happy while isolated, take it from me, it is a frail dream. Know that you are the *Aathma*, just as everything else is. The *Aathma* is self-luminous; you do not need a lighted lamp to discover a lighted lamp! You need no candle or lantern to see the moon. You can see the moon through its own- rays. The *Aathma* shines in all; you have only to open your eyes and know it. The scriptures declare, "All this is God," "God is in all." Mere repetition of these truths as slogans is of no benefit; experience the Truth, live in the light of the Truth.

The *guru* initiated the disciple in the *manthra* "*Shivoham*" ("Shiva am I"). He continued repeating it constantly. Some one asked him what the *manthra* meant. He told him, "It means 'I am Shiva'" but he had still no faith in that fact. That questioner had heard of Shiva being wedded to Paarvathi. So, he asked, "If you are Shiva, what of Paarvathi?" The disciple was shocked. He had no courage to face the query and reply that Paarvathi is the *Shakthi-principle* of the Shiva aspect of God. He had not become Shiva nor had he faith that he could become so.

Embodiments of Love! The Divine has no special day, earmarked as Birthday. The day when you cultivate holy thoughts, attitudes and modes of behaviour in your hearts, the day when you

decide upon some activity of pure unselfish service, that is the Day of Birth of the Divine for you. From that day, you can celebrate the Birthday as a festival.

Poornachandra Auditorium, 23-11-1981.

*Death stalks its prey
everywhere, at all times,
with relentless determination.
It pursues its victims
into hospitals, hill stations,
theatres, aeroplanes, submarines.
In fact, no one can escape it or
take refuge from its grasp.
God alone is the giver of life,
the guardian of life, and the goal of life.
Sathya Sai Baaba*

Vd15, 55, 1982 Your birthday gift

You must be thinking about the gift you have to offer Swaami on this Birthday. You can be happy that you have given Swaami a proper gift only when you love your fellowmen, share their sufferings, and engage yourselves in serving them. That is the only gift I wish for. The present given to God has to be pure, steady and selfless Love.

On this birthday I have only one desire. I am desiring this only to promote your *aanandha*. You are planning programmes for the coming 60th Birthday. Even before the 60th Birthday, you must adopt at least 6000 villages and improve them through proper means into ideal villages. Rich people and people in power have plentiful servants. But the distressed, the poverty-stricken, and those who suffer have no one to serve them. Go to such people and be their friends, their kith and kin, their closest well-wishers. Let them welcome you as such.

If you pour spirituality into the ears of those who are tortured by hunger, it will not be assimilated. First, quench the hunger. Give them God in the form of food. Give them God in the form of clothes. Give God in the form of peace to those who are afflicted with anxiety. Give God in the form of medicine to those who are suffering from illhealth. Give God in whatever form which will assuage fear, pain and sorrow. It is only when this is done that spirituality can soak into the heart. If you act contrariwise, instead of spiritual feelings you will be promoting atheism itself.

The Sai-principle has no egoistic urge

Therefore, units of our Organisation have to provide and increase in these 6000 villages, education, medical service, communication facilities. There are villages where people struggle for want of water to drink. The Government cannot by itself provide all these conveniences. Without the cooperation of the people the Government cannot do anything. Government is not a free entity. It is based on people's support. It can work only when the people cooperate actively. Without depending on Government, you must carry on the development of society through your own strength. That is real *saadhana*, real *seva*. Strive to become embodiments of *prema*. Be ready to offer all your capabilities and skills to the Lord of All. It is God's Love that rewards you when you engage yourselves in *japa*, *thapa* or *yaaga* (Repetition of God's name, penance, ritual of sacrifice). What greater achievement can you strive for than receiving Love Divine from God?

However, you must understand well the nature and significance of this Love. You are now experiencing and sharing this Love at the level of your awareness of the Principle. This is a mistake. It is too literal an interpretation. The Principle of Love has no trace of ego or blemish. It is fully free from selfish attachments. Whatever Sai does, whatever Sai thinks, whatever Sai says, whatever Sai observes, it is all for your sake, not for Sai's sake. My only desire is your joy, *aanandha*. Your *aanandha* is My *aanandha*. I have no *aanandha* apart from yours.

You might infer, "Swaami is doing this---is doing that." But it is not for my sake; it is for your sake. Last year on the Birthday, I spoke on this point. For my sake (believe it or not) I do not spend even a naya paisa. Whatever I do, I do for the society only. Though 56 years have passed, I have not got even one shirt or gown stitched for Me. I am now wearing what is given by a student, Radhakrishna of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai. Not today, but since the beginning, the thought that "I must have this or that" has never arisen in Me. It is not arising now. It will not arise at any time. Whatever thoughts arise in Me are only for the peace and welfare of the world, for the progress of youth, and for transforming ideal boys and girls who will lead others along

the path. You must dedicate yourselves for rendering enthusiastic service to the people of the world, recognising that the Sai-principle has no egoistic urge.

The days of victory are coming

When this month is over, I will be journeying all over Bhaarith, blessing those who are unable to come here because they have neither the strength nor the resources to do so. I wish to afford them the chance and give them joy. An important point Instead of arranging programmes for Swaami in towns and cities, have them in villages. Reduce expenses and save money in order to provide facilities in the villages. I desire to move about in every village. But, you have to make proper preparatory arrangements. I can even come on foot but hundreds of thousands of people are bound to gather and you must see that they are well looked after. When you undertake to fulfil this need in a village, I will be coming and spreading the principles and practice of Bhaarithheeya culture.

I am resolved to foster *aanandha* through the revival and re-establishment of the Bhaarithheeya way of life. This will happen without fail. *Bhaarithheeya dharma* can certainly be offered to other countries. There is no need to despair or indulge in self condemnation. The days of victory are coming. We can sound the drum of triumph.

Embodiments of the Divine *Aathma*, you may not be able to see it, but it is clear before My eyes. As days pass, even those who are now not able to recognise the truth of Swaami will have to approach with tears of repentance and experience Me. Very soon, this will be worldwide. Swaami is now restraining this development. When once it is allowed to manifest, the whole world will be transformed into Prashanthi Nilayam. 'So, come forward, all of you, determined to practise in daily living the ideals laid before you. In the coming years, you may not get the chances you are having now. You will not have the opportunity to be so near. Millions will rush to this place and gather here. This will happen soon and so, earn the compassion of Swaami and his Love through *seva* activities and fill your lives with meaning.

Sai movement will advance more triumphantly

The diamond is cut into various facets. Its price increases with each facet added unto it by the cutting, for its beauty shines better and better. Those who cannot tolerate the progress of the Organisation of the Sai-Principle it embodies and unfolds, might decry or defame, ridicule or obstruct; the movement will not falter. It will advance more triumphantly, the greater the obstruction. These will only foster and help the spread and the splendour. Hate springs from an evil nature, from *asuuya* (envy). But the movement is based on the absence of *anasuuya* (envy). Do not pay attention to such things. Vow among yourselves to follow the ideals and the duties that have been laid down and devote yourselves to the Organisation, and its programmes.

Having come to this place and availed yourselves of this opportunity, treasure in your hearts the things you have seen and heard and resolve to plunge into practising them. Your resolution and your practice must happen simultaneously. Have a master plan and start from tomorrow the execution of the programme, drawn in consultation with others. This must happen to all countries. Do not think that only the Andhra State is Sai's. All are Sai's. All are one. We must endeavour by all means to realise and establish this truth in this *Kali Yuga*.

This is the message I am giving you to-day. I am fulfilling all your desires. So you must fulfil this one desire of mine.

I bless that you have long life, good health, *aanandha*, Peace and Prosperity and that you will devote your physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual strength and skills for the services of the country and of all mankind.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1982

The Lord is approachable by all; do not have envy towards others or feel that they are your rivals or your inferiors or even superiors; each has a place in His mansion.

Give your heart over to the Lord and move in society as a dedicated being; then, no harm can come to you. As a jeeva, you may be an individual; but, as Aathma, you are Vaasudeva, the Samashti, Universal.

Sathya Sai Baaba

Vol 16, 30, 1983. Perpetual bliss

*Who can ascribe a form to Him who is beyond all
bounds and shapes?*

*One-can only laugh at those who babble that
He is thus and thus and thus.*

*He has no hands or feet or limbs or parts:
How then can humans picture Him ?*

*His radiance is that of a billion Suns and more:
How can the mind hope to reach Him?*

*'Tis formless Force--to grasp It whole
Who can venture? Who can claim success?*

*'Tis Aathma with no fixed Form, since Time began,
Illumining Space and the boundless vast*

*He, the Ever-existing with no birth, no death,
Sans beginning, middle or end,
Unborn, undecaying, deathless
He is the Aathma, the Timeless, the Etenal Supreme.*

EMBODIMENTS of Love ! Since dawn this day, from every tongue, the words, "Happy Birthday" "Happy Birthdays" have been resounding. What exactly do these words mean? Are the words used with awareness of their significance, or, are they spoken as a conventional form of social etiquette? Such doubts do arise.

The English word "happy" has as its equivalent in Telugu *Santhosham*. We shall probe into the implications of the expression *San-thosham*. '*Thosham*' signifies *prasannatha* (delight). The prefix '*Sam*' denotes that the delight has been won through righteous and honourable means, that is to say, through 'detachment' and 'sacrifice.'

When discontent disappears delight is established

One has to give up desires that enslave and imprison, that bring sorrow in their train. Desires can be grouped under two heads: desire for an object or experience that no one else has earned, and desire that the object or experience one has earned should not be earned by any one else! Both these desires are indeed ridiculous. What is desired is as illusory as one's shadow. The faster you run towards it, hoping to seize it, the farther it is from your reach. When you pursue desire, it flees; when you scorn its hold, it submits like the shadow that follows you when you turn your back on it. Desires are born of greed. When greed is weakened more and more, discontent declines in equal measure. And, when discontent disappears delight is established.

Prahlaadha, as the Bhaagavatha text declares, was rooted in the faith in God Naaraayana and His Universal, Absolute Reality. His father, Hiranyakashipu, however, was drawn by external forms and the limiting names. Therefore, Prahlaadha was rooted in *Aanandha* (Bliss) wherever he was, in whatever set of circumstances. Hiranyakashipu was ever worried and anxious, caught up in the multiplicity of names and forms.

Those who are in such bliss as Prahlaadha had will have an aura around them and an effulgence on their faces. People can derive joy watching their faces and yearn to have that experience again and again. The faces of the worried and the anxious will infect others too with similar feelings.

In deep sleep man is in his native core

Besides, Delight endows one with great power also whereas anxiety robs one of the strength he has. True delight cannot be acquired by effort or produced artificially or maintained by design. No course of *Saadhana* (spiritual effort) can be prescribed to enable one to gain *Aanandha*. For, one is, in fact, the very embodiment of *Aanandha* !But since he has failed to identify his truth, he is seeking it from outside, from the objects around him. For those who have realised that they are the Eternal, the True and the Pure *Aathma*, *Aanandha* is ever accessible.

Aanandha is *Brahman*; the Bhagavathgeetha teaches this truth in many ways. The very name Prahlaadha has *Aanandha* soaked in it. '*Hlaadha*' means *Aanandha* and the prefix '*Pra*' indicates that the *Aanandha* is 'full.' Prahlaadha means 'Full Bliss'---"a person who is full of *Aanandha*." How could Prahlaadha attain that state? He gave up attachment to his name and form and sought the *Aathma* as the only reality and identified that reality with Naaraayana.

Every man is privileged to taste this Bliss during *Sushupthi* (deep sleep). In that state, he is not conscious of his name and form, nor do any of his senses function. So, he is then in full Bliss, his native core, his very birthright. This is the reason why he seeks it so restlessly from the moment he awakes until the moment of sleep, unaware of the inner spring which is its unfailing source, engaging himself in the pursuit of knowledge and skills for earning a living.

Knowledge, wealth, power and status are all capable of granting only worldly pleasure or joy or exultation. Of course, whatever the extent or nature of this joy, it must be realised that it is a *amsha* (particle) of the supreme *Aanandha* of the *Aathmic* awareness, the impact of *Brahma Aanandha* (the Limitless Vast). The mansion of a millionaire may have many evidences of his wealth but each is a particle of the Grace of Lakshmi (Goddess of Prosperity). Men may derive joy from their enormous wealth, deep scholarship, or physical prowess, but each of these is really a ray emanating from *Brahmaanandha*. The ray is reflected differently from different media but the source is One and the primal essence is one.

The yearning to know is the sign of *Chith*

Aanandha (Supreme Bliss) is immanent in every thing in Creation, for *Aanandha* is *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute). Everything is *Sath* (Being), *Chith* (Awareness or Consciousness) and *Aanandha* (Bliss), that is to say, Divine. Everything IS, the IS-ness is the *Sath* (the being) capable of Becoming. Next about *Chith* (awareness) : the capacity to be known and to know, to gain awareness and to grant awareness is *Chith*. When we take with us a child to a fair or market or an exhibition, it asks for answers to endless questions, What is that?" "Why is it so?", "What is its name ?" This yearning to know is the sign of the *Chith*.

In spite of our seeing so many dying around us and hearing about as many more deaths, though we witness the misery and the suffering of so many, we long for a death-less and sorrow-less

life. We spend fortunes to lengthen our lives. That is the urge of the "*Sath*" in us. The other longing to know is the expression of the "*Chith*" in us. The third proof of our innate Divinity is the urge of *Aanandha* in us. Without exception, every one is motivated by this *Aanandha* urge.

Purity of mind is enough to obtain Divine Grace

However, these urges have each two aspects---the impression (internal) and the expression (external). *Sath* has, for example, the *being* and the *becoming*. The process of becoming is what the *Gaayathri* prayer asks for "Awaken my intellect, heighten and expand my awareness (*prachodayaath*)." Becoming is through expanding, manifesting wider and more varied forms. The *Upanishaths* declare, "He is everything that exists both inside and outside." *Antharbahishcha thath sarvam vyaapya Naarayano sthithah* (Naaraayana permeates everything inside and outside all this). He cast His look and it all happened.

The Become is a reflection of the Will that urged the Being; so, the Being IS the Becoming. It changes from Is to Was; it is unstable, while Being is stable. Being is the screen and Becoming, the pictures that flit across the screen. When there are no pictures, who will be drawn to the screen? How can pictures be seen, when there is no screen? The fleeting and the fixed are inextricably dependent on each other.

The objective world is but a series of momentary pictures impinging on the mind. The mind is active in the walking stage of the body. The body is built up by *Anna* (food), maintained by *Anna* and disintegrates through *Anna*. The body has five sheaths, the outermost one, the *Annamaya Kosha* (food sheath). It is known also as the *sthoola* (gross body). The next three sheaths, the *Praanamaya* (vital air), the *Manomaya* (mind), and the *Vijnaana* (intellectual) form the *suukshma* (subtle) body. The subtle body is active in the dream stage also. The fifth and the inner-most sheath is the *Aanandhamaya* (Ecstatic, the Blissful), the *Kaarana* (causal body).

The expression of the urge of *Aanandha* is as Love and Delight. Delight is the product and projection of Love. The expression of *Chith* is awareness. The expression of *Sath* is Becoming. Divinity is the Unity that manifests in Diversity, the One as the Many. The One is the efficient cause as well as the material cause of the Many. The One is inherent in the Many and shines in the Many which It has become. The ONE is the source of the highest and the most lasting *Aanandha*.

***Brahmaanandha* is native to Man, his very source**

The *Aanandha* we get when hunger is appeased by a meal is short-lived. Hunger afflicts us again before long. However sweet and tasty the food may be, it causes nausea when consumed in quantity. The mythological bird Chakora is said to feed on moonlight only but we can be sure a surfeit of that will certainly be unwelcome to it. Even nectar will cloy when one continues to eat it endlessly.

Brahmaanandha, however, is different.. For, it is native to man, his very source and sustenance. The purpose of human striving, through stage after stage of spiritual progress, is to attain that. A fish placed in an artistic golden gem-studded bowl is miserable. It has no *Aanandha*, for it has no water. Water is its home, its real source and sustenance. Man too must reach his original home, however far he may wander. Thyaagaraaja sang: "Birds, big and small, before nightfall seek the tree where they can rest. I hold Your Feet In my grasp; save me, O Raama." The Bhaagavatha makes it more explicit, "For every living being, the best course is to attain the source from which it originated."

Be reminding yourself "I am not different from God"

There exist many flooded streams on the globe. Where has the water come from? The ocean, of course. Consider the impediments the streams have to overcome before they attain the source! The flooded stream of human life has originated from *Brahmaanandha* and it has to attain the source from which it has come away. In order to succeed, man must recollect the ecstasy of *Brahmaanandha* every moment, in every activity.

Thyaagaraaja revelled in the *Aanandha* that poetry, music and scholarship can confer but since the *Aanandha* that learning can confer (*Vidhyaanandha*) was liable to weaken, he considered it only as a particle or foretaste of the *Brahmaanandha* he sought most the *Aanandha* derivable from the Universal Eternal Delight, the Nirguna *Aanandha Brahman*, That *Aanandha* is man's reality, for, man is God.

God is neither distant, nor distinct from you. You are God. You are *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being, Awareness and Bliss Absolute). You are *Asthi* (being), *Bhaathi* (awareness), *Priyam* (bliss). You are all. When do you cognise this Truth? When you shake off the delusions which hide the Truth. If your yearning to experience *Brahmaanandha*, the *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* is sincere and pure, from this day, keep ever in your memory what I am about to tell you:

(1) "I am God; I am not different from God." Be conscious of this always. Keep it ever in mind. "I am God; I am God. I am not different from God." Be reminding yourself of this. Pray that you may not fail in this *saadhana* (spiritual exercise).

(2) "I am the *Akhanda Para Brahman* (Indivisible Supreme Absolute)." This is the second Truth to be established in the consciousness by unremitting repetition and prayer.

(3) I am *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* ("Being, Awareness, Bliss").

Divine Bliss is the goal to be ever kept in view

(4) "Grief and anxiety can never affect me." Develop 'this Faith and convince yourselves of this Truth by repeated assurance and prayer.

(5) "I am ever content; fear can never enter me." Feel thus for ever. Pray that this conviction grows stronger and stronger. Exhort yourself, "O self ! Utter 'Om *Thath Sath*', 'Om *Thath Sath*' "the threefold symbol of *Brahman*. As the physical body is maintained healthy and strong by the five *praanas* (vital airs), these five prayers will endow you with the "awareness of *Brahman*," which is the same as "the status of *Brahman* Itself."

Do not demean or condemn yourself as low or small or weak. The body is but a vehicle for the journey through life. Do not mistake it as your self and impose on yourself its ups and downs. You purchase a car and possess it for the sake of its usefulness, not for keeping it under lock and key in the garage. The body-car should be put to the best use, for attaining *Brahmaanandha*. The four goals of human life---Dharma, *Artha*, *Kaama*, *Moksha* (fight living, fight earning, fight desiring and release from worldly bondage) are the wheels of the vehicle; the wheel inside that steers these four is the mind. The *Buddhi* (intellect) is the switch. The air which fills the tubes in the tyres is Faith and the destination is *Aanandha*.

Aanandha is the breath that sustains life. That is the goal which has to be ever in view, while navigating the ocean of one's life. Even the least trace of *Aanandha* that one derives is but a

reflection of *Brahmaanandha*. One has to keep this in mind. Anything done or said or seen is but the prompting of the *Brahman* that is one's reality. Have faith in this fact.

In order to develop and deepen this faith, certain spiritual practices can be undertaken. Do not feel separate from God and consider Him as the Giver and yourself as the Recipient. This smacks of commerce. It is wrong to plan for getting some wish granted in return for what you offer. God will not pay any attention to your material greed; He watches the heart and its contents. Believers in God have not understood God if they bargain with Him and clamour for worldly goods. Hence, from ages past, they have suffered misery. The Divine seeks and rewards only Divine qualities, virtues and conduct.

The highest virtue is humility, surrender to God

The body is transient and the joy it seeks and gets is equally transient. The *Aanandha* one gets through meditation on the *Aathma* is as lasting as the *Aathma*. When Godhead assumes a body, It too is unaffected as the *Aathma*. Nothing can confer as much *Aanandha* as virtue, neither wealth, nor material power, nor fame, nor scholarship. The highest virtue is humility, surrender to God. People speak of those who have no one to look after them as 'orphans' but God looks after every one. So, no one can be an orphan. God alone is the *anaatha* (orphan), for who can claim that he is God's guardian?

Dedicate thought, word and deed to God. Do not treat some of your activities as done for God and others as done for yourself. They are both like the two halves of a pulse grain. The plant sprouts from the middle of the grain, drawing sustenance equally from both halves. The alert and the inert, the living and the non-living, the moving and the non-moving are all God. Strengthen this faith, live in this faith. This is the prescription for perpetual *Brahmaanandha*.

Bhagavan's Birthday Discourse, Prashanthi Nilayam,

23 November, 1983

The mother must herself prepare food for the home; for, food that is prepared with love and served with a smile is much more sustaining and strengthening than food cooked by a hired woman and served by a disgruntled refractory kitchen boy!

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol 17, 29, 1984. The real birthday

*When we delight as He keeps us close and near
He sows anxiety in the heart, of separation sad;
When we despair and feel His sport is our wail.
He grants us in plenty laughter to split our sides.
When we ride on the crest of the wave of His praise
He pricks our pride by well-timed jeers.
When we roam quite free at the boon, "Don't fear,"
He heaps trouble on trouble and passes "silently by.
We cannot turn away, nor forward proceed.
Thus He who is in Parthi holds the world in thrill;
Who at this time can solve r or us His Mystery?*

IN the cavity of the heart of man, in that sublime *Aakaasha* (space), God resides associated with the Self principle, as sunshine exists associated with shadow. Light and shade are twin birds. Shade is caused by Light; shade includes Light, for it declares the adjacence of Light. It needs the presence of Light. They are fundamentally inseparable. So too are the *Jeevi* (Individual Self) and the *Brahman* (Universal Self) related to each other as One Inseparable Entity. The *Jeevi* as the shadow exists in and through *Brahman* and partakes of the same Divine splendour. Every individual has to become aware of this identity.

The body is a chariot and the charioteer is *Buddhi*

For, the shadows are many and varied, though the light is One. When the One is reflected in the many, in the multitude of *Jeevis*, it appears as the Self in each, which watches unaffected as the Witness. The *Aathma* (Divine Self) is Eternal. The Self is Truth. However, since it is enclosed in .flesh, bone and skin, man deludes himself into believing that the outer covering and not the inner core is the source of bliss, The foremost duty of man to himself is, therefore, to penetrate through these sheaths and imbibe the higher bliss which his *Aathmic* core alone can confer. Everyone must, in his own best interests, strive to attain that unifying principle that is his inner treasure. Of all *Saadhanas* (spiritual exercises) this is the most pertinent--the process of achieving this closeness. For, *Saadhana* means the endeavour and the effort to gain the desired object.

Activities that are devoid of Truth do not deserve to be known as Saadhana. The Aathma is the Universal Eternal Truth and therefore, it cannot be gained by search in the particularised and the temporary world. The Divine shines in your heart and can be won only therein.

The body is a chariot. The charioteer is the principle of *Buddhi* (intelligence). The senses are the horses. The reins that regulate and restrain the horses are the *manas* (mind). When the mind wavers and wanders, not having stability of purpose, the horses run helter-skelter, endangering even the charioteer, *Buddhi* (Intellect).

Experience the unity of speech, wisdom and *Aathma*

Speech is an important function of the senses and it serves the whims of the mind. So, one has to control the mind and not pollute it with greed for sense pleasures. Nor should the mind be tossed about on the waves of 'Yes' and 'No', of acceptance and rejection, of resolutions and hesitations. The mind has to act as the associate of *Buddhi*. Speech subserving the mind and mind subserving the intellect--this is the way to bring about Prashaanthi, the Supreme Peace. And, note this further point: slowly and steadily, instruct the intellect to turn towards the *Aathma*. Speech with the mind, mind with intellect and intellect illumined by the *Aathma*—this ensures for you the genuine goal of man.

The *Aathma* is Eternal; It manifests Truth, which is Eternal, and beyond the limits of Space, Time and Causality. Truth is not affected by the passage of Time from the past through the present into the future. *Jnana* (Spiritual Wisdom) too is not modified or clarified by the passage of Time. In fact, Wisdom is Truth; Truth is Wisdom. So, you should 'direct your best effort to experience the unity of Speech, Wisdom and *Aathma*.

You have no need to run about in search of God, for, you are yourself God. God resides in your heart. "All this is enveloped by God." "All this is God." "All beings are God." He is the All-pervasive motive force. Have firm faith in this fact. Like fire in the matchstick, divinity is latent in man. The fire in the stick becomes manifest when it is struck against the side of the box. So too, when the *Jeevi* contacts *Dheva* (God), the flame of *Jnaana* sheds the Light of Wisdom. How can the man taste the experience of Wisdom? In what form does it emanate? The wise person does not hate any one: he does not belittle or blame or hurt any one. What is it that prompts you to love another? The urge to love and be loved is inherent in every one. So, when you deny love or when you hate, you are hurting not only the person but the Universal Principle, the Divine Nature itself.

Involve in acts that encourage detachment

Know that whatever you feel or do is an offering to God, flows towards God. So, be cautious. Do not offer bad thoughts, words and deeds which He does not accept. Offer instead the holy and the pure. That is your duty. That will ensure Self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction paves the way to Self-sacrifice and Self-sacrifice brings about Self-realisation. The entire process rests upon faith; self-satisfaction, self-sacrifice and self-realisation--all these depend on faith. Faith decides the yearning; the yearning decides the fruit; the act decides the stage that is reachable. "For, the sincerity of the act promotes the purity of the path; the purity of the path determines the validity of the 'wisdom and true wisdom is Divinity itself. The act, the conduct, the way of life these have to be disciplined and elevated. How can a mind encumbered with desires ever rest content? How can it welcome sacrifice? Nevertheless, man has to involve himself only in acts that encourage detachment and renunciation.

A devotee once asked Brahma, the Creator: For whose sake did you raise Meru, the Mountain of Gold? The renunciant would have nothing to do with it; the person who desires gold can never be satisfied with one single Meru! Even a thousand such will only incite him to long for more!" That is the nature of desire; it grows on and on in a never-ending rate. Curbing desire is the only means to achieve mental peace.

Prema is the very breath and sole purpose of life

What exactly is Peace? It is the stage in which the senses are mastered and held in balance. "*Samathwam Yogah Uchyathe*"--*Equanimity* is, it is said, *Yoga*. Life should rest on the four pillars of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shaanthi* and *Prema* (truth, righteousness, peace and love), which hold it firm against the turbulent waves of joy and grief. Of these four, *Prema* is the crucial support. For, it is the very breath, the sole purpose of life. Love God and acquire the strength to meet the upsets of life. Love liquidates the blows of fate. Love blends and binds the parents with the child. Love sanctifies and glorifies the body.

In truth, the subjective world and the objective world are not two; they are only aspects of the One. The joy one derives from the senses to whom does it belong, from whom did it originate? The body? Or the *Aathma*? The senses are but tools. They are operated, put to use by the mind. The mind is named *Indhra*, since it manipulates the *indhriyas* (senses). The mind has to act according to the orders decided by the *Buddhi* and not according to its own whims. The *Buddhi* is illumined when it turns to the *Aathma within*.

Embodiments of Love! Do not pay attention to the day" when the body was born and fulfil selfish ends by celebrating the event pompously. The day when you manifest pure feelings in your hearts, plant firm faith in the Divine Principle in your thoughts and cultivate unselfish enthusiasm to serve others, that day deserves to be celebrated as the Real Birthday. *Seva* can give you the experience of the Omnipresence of God, God as *Vishnu*.

In many States, people are suffering from the havoc wrought by floods and cyclones while in other States, thousands are struck by famine caused by prolonged drought. For example, in the Nellore District, many are caught in great misery and loss. Take up appropriate *Seva* (selfless service) activities there. Devotees from neighbouring districts must also join in this task. Why! Wherever the need, whenever the call, the urge for *Seva* must direct you to offer your *Seva* without stint.

Bhagavan's Discourse at Puurnachandra Auditorium,

Prashanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1984

Dhritharaashtra was blind, because, as that name itself implies, he held on to the raashtra, held on to all things that were not 'he'!, the real 'He', that passes from birth to death, and again gets born only to die, unscathed. Everything that is not 'you' is an object; it is luggage for the journey; the less of it, the more comfortable the journey.

Sri Sathya Sai

Vol. 18, 25, 1985. I will be closer to Devotees

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

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

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

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

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

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

Direct Kama towards spiritual progress

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

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

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

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

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

Man's *Dharma* and duty to be fulfilled

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

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

Man has to recognise his divine core

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

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

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

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

My Love--the Greatest Treasure

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

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

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

"Being with Me earns higher respect"

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

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

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

The Sai Realty will be clear to all

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

Keep a ceiling on desires

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

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

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

The power of Sai Sankalpa

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

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

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

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

Circulation of money should ensure health

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

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

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

Transform into heroic messengers of Dharma

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

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

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

Sai and Sai Sevaks are bound by Love

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

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

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

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

BABA

Vol. 19, 27, 1986. Inherit Sai Wealth : Love

*This great Motherland of ours, which produced high-
souled men who spread its glory across the continents;
This heroic land which won its freedom from occidental adventurers;
This sacred land which achieved eminence in
music, literature and the fine arts;
Being born in this land of beauty resplendent with
artistic achievements,
It is the supreme duty of all ye devotees
To protect the treasure of Dharma bequeathed to
you by Bharatha Matha!*

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine! The land of Bharat resembles an orange fruit. The religions and communities are the pieces in it. The numerous occupations pursued by the people are like the seeds. To be born in a country with such rich variety is itself a blessing. It is a land which should shine in all its glory by manifesting unity.

From very early times Bharat has been proclaiming to the world its faith in God and the godly life. "Let all the worlds be happy" has been the avowed ideal of Hindu society. The good fortune of those who are born in such a country is beyond praise.

Both pain and pleasure are impostors

Man is essentially divine in nature. Owing to various factors man tends to forget his inherent divinity (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*). The veil of ignorance which conceals the divinity in him cannot be removed easily. Neither wealth, position nor scholarship can rid him of this malaise. *Atma Jnana* (knowledge of the Self) alone can provide the remedy.

You should not be misled by the pleasures derived from possessions, position or prosperity. These are transient things, which come and go. Pain and pleasure are incidental to human existence like kith and kin. Man should endeavour to realise his true nature, experience his inherent divinity, and not yield to the temptations of the moment. Both pain and pleasure are impostors. Man should not allow himself to be led astray by them.

The Self transcends time and space. It is eternal and unchanging. Enquiry into the nature of the Self is the message of the perennial philosophy. It is also the primary duty of man.

The sages declared that the body is a perishable rag-bag, teeming with ills. Giving up attachment to it, man should seek refuge in God. The five elements can affect only the body but can have no effect on the Spirit.

Purity and Divinity

The body, mind and *Atma* (spirit) constitute a human being. The three demonstrate the nature of man and enable him to grow to his true stature. They represent the three concepts of Action, Awareness and Realisation. The body is the instrument for practising *Dharma*. It is the means of discharging all one's duties. The mind is the source of good and bad thoughts. The world is

understood only through the mind. It is the instrument for judging between right and wrong, the impermanent and the everlasting. It represents Awareness or understanding. The *Atma* represents the pure, effulgent, eternal and unchanging Consciousness. It shines within man as illuminating flame. The *Sastras* have characterised it as Divine. The Upanishads have declared that God dwells in the cave of the heart. The Bible has declared that the Divine can be experienced only through purity of the heart. The Quran also declares that purity of heart is essential for experiencing God. Guru Nanak declared that only through good thoughts, good speech and good actions can one realise the Divine. All faiths are one in proclaiming the supreme importance of purity of heart.

Man, however, has forgotten his true divine nature and is immersed in the vain pursuit of material pleasures. In the process he has ignored right conduct and is prey to many ills. Men regard *Dharma* as merely ethical conduct in daily life. But this is not *so*. *Dharma* really means recognition of the Universal consciousness that is in each individual and act on the basis of the unity of that consciousness. When this consciousness in man is enveloped in the ego, it assumes the form of three *gunas* (*Satwa, Rajas, Tamas*). When the Divine nature of this consciousness is realized, it is transformed into *Atma Dharma* -- the *Dharma* of the Self. True *Dharma* is the realisation of the unity of the Omni-Self.

Atma-dharma and Para-dharma

All worldly duties and activities bear the imprint of three *gunas*. *Swa-Dharma* refers to *Atma-Dharma* (the *Dharma* of the Spirit). *Paradharma* is *Dharma* (duties) relating to the world. The worldly duties are ephemeral and subject to change. They have been changing all through the ages. These should not be treated on a par with *Atma-Dharma*. Among these worldly duties, there are duties like *Varna-Dharma* (functional duties), *Asrama-Dharma* (duties relating to one's stage in life), and others.

These duties have been laid down to help man in leading his worldly life. But beyond them is the *Atma Dharma*, which has to be observed for Self-realisation. By solely adhering to worldly duties, man remains at the animal level. Through the discipline of the mind, man may rise to the human level. But it is only when the physical and mental duties are linked to the spiritual discipline that *Atma Dharma* is observed. The body performs actions, the mind distinguishes between right and wrong. The *Atma* functions as the Witness. Although these three appear to differ from each other, they are inter-related. It is only when the three are integrated and harmonised that man can achieve self-fulfillment.

Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha--the four Purusharthas---are the aims of life. It is only when *Artha* (the acquisition of wealth) and *Kama* (the fulfillment of desires) are linked to *Dharma* (righteousness) that *Moksha* (Liberation) can be easily achieved. But if *Artha and Kama* are divorced from *Dharma*, there can be no peace or happiness. *Moksha* is freedom from delusion.

"All this is permeated by the Divine"

The word *Manava* (man) means one who is not new. Man has been taking many births and is caught up in the endless cycle of desires, differences and discord. He must get out of this vicious circle by recognising that the Divine is immanent in everything. Society itself should be regarded as a manifestation of the Divine. The Upanishad has declared: "*Isaavaasyam idam Sarvam*" ("All this is permeated by the Divine").

The stars are Brahman; The Sun is Brahman.

The Moon is Brahman; water is Brahman.

Heaven is Brahman; Vaikunta is Brahman

Father is Brahman; Mother is Brahman.

*All wealth is Brahman; Brahman is the
creator, the protector and the destroyer.*

Time is Brahman; The body is Brahman.

Nature is Brahman; Life is Brahman.

This assemblage is Brahman; Truth is Brahman.

The Sai who is declaring this is also Brahman.

Brahman permeates everything in the Cosmos. There is nothing other than *Brahman*. When *Brahman* is immanent in everything, how can we search for Him? Where is He to be found? When the entire universe is his abode, how can you locate the road or the entrance to it? The Lord of the universe is the Lord enshrined in your heart. If you play on your heart strings with ecstasy, the heart will be Vaikunta itself.

The Divine wealth of love

The Lord has endowed you with all his wealth and Divine potentialities. You are inheritors of this wealth. You have to discover what that wealth is.

Sai's wealth is pure, selfless and boundless Love. This is the truth.

It is not the edifices you see here that are Sai's wealth. It is pure, selfless Love alone. You must inherit this Love, fill yourselves with it and offer it to the world. This is your supreme responsibility as Sai devotees.

What is it that you can offer to the Lord who is omnipotent, omnipresent and all-knowing? The various things you offer to God are given out of delusion.

Can the Lord who permeates the Universe be confined in a temple?

To one who has the effulgence of a billion suns, what lamp can you light?

His truth is beyond the comprehension of Brahma and Hara.

How can others comprehend Him?

What name can be given to One who is all things?

What food can you offer to one who holds the cosmos in His stomach?

You become devoted for your own sake. Whatever the name or form in which you worship the Lord, He will respond. He is the provider of everything, who fulfills every wish. Whether the devotee is one in distress or craving for some object, or a seeker or a *Jnani*, God responds according to the measure of his devotion.

Embodiments of the Divine! To realise the divine. Love is the easiest path. Just as you can see the moon only with the light of the moon, God, who is the Embodiment of Love, can be reached

through Love. Regard Love as your life breath. Love was the first quality to emerge in the creative process. All other qualities came after it. Therefore, fill your hearts with love and base your life on it.

Who can be regarded as the greatest conqueror?

Man's thoughts are filled with various types of attachments and aversions. Attachment and hatred are dominant qualities in man. They are the evil planets that bedevil man's life.

Once, Totaka, a disciple of Sri Sankaracharya, asked the *guru*: "Master, in this world, who can be regarded as the greatest conqueror?" Sri Sankaracharya replied: "Only the person who has acquired mastery over his senses is the greatest conqueror--not those who may conquer kingdoms, scale the Himalayas or master all knowledge."

Prahlada told his father Hiranyakasipu, "You want to conquer the three worlds, but you are failing to conquer your senses." One who has not mastered his internal enemies like anger, hatred etc., how can he hope to conquer his external enemies? The inner enemies can be conquered only by one means. love. It is essential to make our life worthwhile by practising love, by subduing the six internal enemies (anger, envy etc.), and dedicating all our actions to God.

The world is in turmoil. At this juncture, it is the duty of devotees to realise the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and counteract the evil forces which are inflicting innumerable troubles on mankind. Resorting to the potent weapon of love, they should try to serve humanity and to eradicate the forces of violence and unrighteousness which are rampant today.

Even if you cannot perform any other kind of worship or *sadhana*, service to society will help you to sanctify your life. Of the nine forms of devotion, *Seva* (service) is most important. Through service, complete surrender of the self can be achieved.

Discourse at Poornachandra Auditorium on 23-11-1986.

Fellow men and the world must be seen ever in the mirror of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Kinship based on this recognition will alone last. That is the Sai kinship.

BABA

Vol. 20, 29, 1987. Ways of the Divine

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Bharatiyas have been able to win independence, but have not succeeded in achieving unity. Freedom without unity is like an electric wire without current.

Sanathana Dharma (Eternal vedic religion) is the great heritage of the children of *Bharat* (India). It is a culture that is sublime, sacred and ennobling. It has testified to the advent of many *Avatars* (incarnations of the Divine). Bharat is the birth-place of numerous sages, savants, men of God, warriors and great women who have upheld chastity.

Like the clouds that occasionally obscure the sun, the effulgent face of Indian culture may have been covered by some dismal developments and modern trends, but it is bound to shine always. Even today great souls are incarnating in this land. In fact, there has been no epoch in India's great history when such figures have not appeared.

Today people from foreign countries are looking at India with a myriad eyes. Foreigners are coming to India not only for studying its philosophy but primarily for getting spiritual insight. But Indians themselves are seeking to give up their cultural inheritance. This is the paradox of the present situation.

Indians must stand out as an ideal to the world

It is unfortunate that despite the unique greatness of Bharatiya culture, Indians, in a craze for worldly comforts and pleasures, are giving up their glorious divine cultural heritage. Doubtless there is need for having material comforts, but, along with these, only if we preserve our spiritual and cultural treasures will we be able to stand out as an ideal to the world. Unfortunately, even the government is ignoring the nation's cultural inheritance. Whatever their brave words and high sounding professions about India's greatness, their vision is turned towards western culture. Indians by and large are enamoured of occidental accomplishments and civilisation and are seeking to imitate the ways of the West. This is a supreme misfortune.

When you have the golden Meru mountain,

why search for silver and gold?

When you have the wish-fulfilling Kalpataru,

why go after other fruits?

When you have the bounteous Kaamadhenu,

why go elsewhere to buy a cow?

There is an old adage that Bharat is a land which contains all that is good and precious not to be found anywhere else. It is a tragedy that a country which is full of so many things good and great should be looked upon with disdain by Indians themselves and be the subject of flippant criticism and comment.

The inner vision

The greatness of India's spiritual and cultural heritage is indescribable. But to enjoy and experience it, one should be duly qualified. One may have scholarship, may be well educated or eminent in other ways, but if he has no spiritual urge, all these are of no avail. Only those who

have turned their vision inwards and experienced the bliss of the Divine are entitled fully to appreciate and understand the greatness of Indian culture.

All Indians are children of one mother and are members of one family, even though they may speak different languages and wear different costumes and vary in their manners and customs. The Bharatiyas should look upon mankind as one family, of which the Supreme Lord is only one. Without earning the grace of that Lord, all other acquisitions are of no value. Love alone can bind one to God, because Love is His being. One who is the very embodiment of Love can be realised only through love and not by any other means. Human beings are also endowed with love. Through that love man should secure God's love, fill himself with love and lead a life filled with love.

Men earn wealth by engaging themselves in business or a vocation. This is not permanent. They should endeavour to acquire spiritual wealth which is enduring and everlasting. This wealth has to be got by loving God and earning His grace and love.

God responds only to *Parama Prema*

Love is like the mariner's compass, which points always to the north. The thoughts of a devotee filled with love are always directed towards God, whatever he may be doing or saying. Such love has been described as *Parama Prema--Supreme Love*. God responds only to such love. It is not easy for everyone to understand the nature of this love. Love in man, if it is based on ego, assumes undesirable forms. If it is directed towards the *Atma* it redeems man and sublimates him. Hence everyone should strive for *Atmic* realisation.

Many imagine that they are engaged in the quest for the Spirit. The very idea of a search for the *Atma* is misconceived. The Spirit is Omnipresent and is the active principle in everything everywhere. There is nothing in the world without the Spirit. But when the spiritual vision is absent, the *Anaatma* (the non-spiritual or phenomenal) appears to exist. Therefore, the quest for the Spirit calls for a change in the vision. Vision does not mean the physical sight. It is the inner vision which seeks to see the One who enables the eyes to see. The spiritual quest is thus an attempt to know the Seer behind the power of sight.

Today all spiritual *sadhana* is being done through the mind. As long as the mind dominates spiritual exercises, the goal of Self-Realisation cannot be attained. The mind is like a thief, who will not allow himself to be caught. There is no use in relying on the mind to realise the Self. When the vision is centered on the Self, the mind fades away.

In the yearning for Self-realisation aspirants seek to obtain *Upadesa* (spiritual messages). But can mere words like *Namo Narayanaya* or *Namah-Shivaya* become spiritual messages? The root meaning of *Upadesa* is leading one to *Swasthaana* (the abode of the Real .or God). By merely reciting names, the divine destination cannot be reached. We repeat the names of Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana. All these names have been conferred by someone and have not emerged *suigeneris*. Such acquired names cannot be eternal. Anterior to all names is the word *Aham* ("I"). Even the *Pranava* ("Om") came after *Aham*. Everyone has to find out who is this "I". When one utters the *Mahaavaakya*, *Aham Brahmaasmi* ("I am the *Brahman*") even there *Aham* is present. Therefore, one has to enquire into and ascertain who this "I" is. When the truth about "I" is known, the *Brahman* will be self-evident.

The *Mahaavaakyas*

Today we are wasting our time on physical and mental exercises for spiritual realisation. The truth is there is 'only one Divine Spirit that is immanent in everything. There is no dichotomy between the worldly and the spiritual. The phenomenal universe is a projection of the Spirit. All that exists in the Cosmos are like sparks from a Divine flame. All living beings have emanated from the Divine and they have all the qualities of the Divine.

Take the other great Pronouncement: *Tat-Twam-Asi* ('What thou art'). What art thou? Unless you know what "That" is, you cannot understand the real meaning of this Upanishad declaration. From a seed, a plant has come, which grows into a tree, with branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. All the leaves, flowers and branches proclaim that they have come from the seed that became the plant. The seed is the basis for everything in the tree. As long as the seed remained a seed, it could not become a tree. It is when a seed gives up its form to become a plant that it can put forth the branches, leaves, flowers, etc.

Man should also realise his essential nature and not be deluded by identifying his true being with the body-consciousness. For all the sorrows and sufferings man experiences, it is the body-consciousness that is responsible. As long as this bodily delusion remains the fruit of *Ananda* (bliss) cannot be got. The seed of bodily attachment has to be given up for the tree of life to grow and yield the flower of *Jnana* (wisdom) and the fruit of *Ananda* (bliss). The Upanishads have declared that Immortality can be achieved only through *Thyaga* (sacrifice) and not through rituals, progeny or wealth.

The One is the basis for the Many

To boast about one's knowledge, scholarship or mastery of the sastras is really a sign of ignorance. The wise man is one who knows his true nature. As long as one is filled with ego, he cannot experience the Divine. The actions undertaken to destroy the ego become *Akarmas* (unattached acts). Love-filled devotion is the easiest path to the Divine. You must love all. The great quality of love is that it is the royal road to unity. All the diversity and manifoldness that we see in the world have come from the One. The One is the basis for the Many. Once we realise the Unity that underlies the diversity, the problems arising out of differences can be resolved.

Develop the sense of human unity

The greatest task facing Indians today is the achievement of unity. Without unity, even the smallest task cannot be accomplished. Proper human relations are not to be found in this nation of 78 crores of people. Every individual is wrapped up in his own selfish concerns. Is this the real worth of a human being? Selfishness and self-interest and differences based on caste and creed should be totally eliminated. Everyone should deem himself a member of the human family. All caste distinctions are based on physical differences, similar to distinctions relating to age or sex. All bodies are made up of the five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) which do not have any distinctions of caste. All the elements are common to all beings. It is from a recognition of these basic common elements that we should develop the sense of human unity.

To promote the feeling of unity, we have to participate in service activities. We must utilise the body for cultivating good qualities, pure thoughts, doing good actions, and experiencing sacred feelings. Only through sacred acts can our life be sanctified and made worthy.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Do not indulge in speculative debates while proceeding on the spiritual path. The spiritual legacy of Bharat is not a product of blind faith. It is the ripe fruit of the spiritual investigations and experiences of sages and saints, which was enjoyed by them and

handed down to humanity for its enjoyment and emancipation. This heritage is the butter got. by the churning of the *Vedas*, *sastras* and the *puranas*. Bharat should not be regarded as a lump of earth and a mass of flesh. It is nectar itself. It is a treasure-house of bliss. It contains the cream of all the *sastras*. Without understanding these truths, it is ridiculous to engage in all sorts of idle talk.

The ways of the Divine

It is not easy to understand the nature of the Divine. Because the Divine is omnipresent, He can undertake any kind of activity. No one is competent to ask whether God can do this or that, whether He can work through one agency or another. There is nothing that is beyond His power. He can make one weep, He can avert one's tears. He can turn a hedonist into a *yogi* and a *yogi* into hedonist. He can drive away madness or cause madness. He can create, He can protect, He can punish, He can destroy. Only the Divine knows what to do, when, how and in what circumstances, with regard to any particular individual. No one has the authority to tell the Divine how He should act. In the case of Hiranyakasipu and Prahlada for instance, God punished the former and protected the latter. God deals with a person according to his past activities and according to the requirements of the prevailing situation.

The Cosmos is the embodiment of the Divine. Differences arise when anyone acts out of selfish motives. But the Divine has no self-interest at all. Hence whatever he does is only for the good of the others. Every act of His is holy. It is *Dharma* (righteous action). It is Truth.

When the Divine is the very embodiment of *Dharma and Sathya*, no one is competent to question the actions of the Divine. Even the great sages, after all their enquiries and explorations, could only say about the Divine: "Not this," "Not this." They could not define what *It is*. It is possible to say what *It is not*, but who has the capacity to declare what *It is*? He is the cosmic stage director, playwright and-actor. He is acting even in your form. He is the critic and the criticised. He is the one who weeps and one who causes weeping. Such being the nature of Divinity, what can anyone declare about the Divine?

Power of attraction through Love

There is one thing, however, that is the unique attribute of the Divine. It is the power of attraction through Love. This magnetic power cannot be found in all. The ocean is vast and deep beyond measure. A tumbler of water taken from the ocean cannot have its vastness. It may have the same taste as sea-water but it cannot have any of the ocean's other attributes. Individual human beings may have some Divine qualities according to their past record, their spiritual and other attainments and what they deserve, but these are strictly limited.

You are witnessing today the presence here of thousands and thousands of persons. What is it that has drawn them here? Were any invitations sent to them? Was there any publicity in the media to bring them here? The only reason for their coming is the attraction of the Divine love. It was this which impelled Thyagaraja to sing,

*Is it not because you had
The bliss-conferring Chintamani,
Oh Rama, that all of them
Gathered round you,*

*With their hearts in unison
To experience perennial joy
From the Source of all Prosperity,
From the Ocean of Compassion
And the embodiment of Intelligence
That you are, with no equal?*

(Swami sang the Telugu song "Lekhana ninnu juttukunnaaru" in His own mellifluous voice, filling the entire gathering with ecstasy).

Heart-to-Heart Love

It is because that wish-fulfilling Jewel (Chintamani) of Love is manifest here that these thousands of people from all parts of the world have come here. Whatever one may say, can anyone point to any person who can attract so many thousands? Elsewhere, even when people are brought in lorries, they choose to run away. Here, even when we try to dissuade people from coming for lack of proper accommodation, devotees will not desist from coming and staying under the trees or in the open. This is the love that flows from heart-to-heart. There is no compulsion on anyone to come here. It is the cord of love that binds them. That is the power of the Divine.

Some may say that Swami is making a *Pradarsanam* (demonstration) of this power or that. It may appear to you as "demonstration." For me, it is simple *Nidarsanam* (manifestation). This is natural for Me. I am doing what is innate for Me. It is the manifestation of Divine love. This is not something all can do. Not *all the sastras and sutras* can enable one to act this way. Only those who have experienced the power of Love can understand this phenomenon. Love is not something that can be bought. It is inherent in you. When you try to experience it naturally, you will realise it.

Chant Rama's name

Ramadas sang ecstatically,
*Oh devotees! Here is the wonderful sweet
That has been prepared from the
Vedas and the Puranas:
The sweet name of Rama.
Come, all ye, and partake of it!
This Rama lollipop is in many colours
And is the cure for all ills. It costs you nothing.
Come and take it, oh devotees!*

To partake of Swami's love, you have to spend nothing except the cost of travel. But even that expense is a sacred offering. Regard the expenses of your Puttaparthi trip not as expenses but a *Prapti* (blessing). Without that expenditure, you cannot get this grace. We have no right to get anything without giving something. Likewise, unless you make some small sacrifice you cannot

have the blissful experience you get here. The Lord's love for the devotee is mutual giving and receiving love.

Develop henceforth the firm faith that whatever the Divine thinks, says or does is for the welfare of the world and not for Himself. There is not the slightest trace of self-interest in it. Whether you believe it or not, all are the same to me. But what each is entitled to receive varies according to his Praapta-anusaaram (what he has earned to deserve reward or punishment). The ocean is full of water. But what anyone can take from it depends on the capacity of the vessel he carries. Likewise the extent of one's *adrishtam* (luck or fortune) depends on his past record and what he deserves now.

Strengthen your faith in God

Today what you have to do is to promote good thoughts. Action proceeds from thoughts. Sadhana is based on action. Character is the outcome of the *sadhana*. Character determines your *Praapti* (what you are destined to get). Hence what you regard as your good fortune or misfortune is based, in the final analysis, on your thoughts. As are your thoughts, so are the fruits. You cannot avoid doing your duty whatever it may be. You have to go on with it. But, even while engaged in the performance of your duties, there can be nothing more rewarding than remembering and meditating on God.

If, however, while entertaining bad thoughts and bad intentions inside, you behave outwardly as if you had good thoughts, you will be guilty of deceiving God. There is no room for playing blind man's buff with wealth. You have to cultivate good qualities, not flaunt your wealth. Strengthen your faith in God. Your life must be based on the principle of surrender to the Divine.

There are some who ask: "I have surrendered everything to God. Why then, am I subjected to so many trials and tribulations?" One who has truly surrendered to God will not raise such questions. To say that "after I have surrendered I am put to suffering" itself shows that the surrender is not real, because where is the place for "I" after surrendering everything? To the person who has completely surrendered, everything that he experiences {good or bad} is a gift from God.

*Oh man! Can you get away from the
consequences of your Karma?
Whether you take your vessel to a well
Or to the boundless ocean
You can fill it only to its capacity.
You cannot get more than what your
Karma entitles you to.
Remember this, Oh man!
Wherever you may go,
Whatever you may study,
Whatever penances you may do,
You cannot get away from the decrees of Karma!*

Power of Divine Grace

However there is one way of getting over the results of *Karma*. If you earn the grace of the Divine, even mountains of sin can be reduced to dust. Only the Divine has the power to confer such grace. A spark of fire can bum down a mountain of cotton. How is the spark to be got into the "mountain" of human predicament? Only through love. Develop love. Serve all with love, ever remembering the Lord's name. Without the name of the Lord on your lips, the mind will be running hither and thither. The mind is the birth-place of unsteadiness. Hence engage yourselves in action, concentrating your thoughts on God.

Embodiments of Divine Love! From this day when you are celebrating the birth anniversary, there are three things that you have to remember and practise: (1) Eschew criticism of others. Cavilling at others is a grievous sin. To cavil at the Divine is an even more heinous sin. Do not discuss other people's faults or lapses. (2) Greet everyone with love. Embark on your duties with dedication. (3) Take up service in the villages whole-heartedly. I have often declared: "*Grama seva* is *Rama seva*" (service to villages is service to Rama). Ramarajya is the reign of love. Keep aloof from the Government.

The three things to be borne in mind

One more thing will have to be borne in mind by everyone connected with Sai Organisations. Whatever activities they may undertake, our organisation should have no connection with the Government. Let the Government do its job. Our activities should be confined to what we can do, to the limits of our capacity, without depending on the Government. There is no need to attempt something big. Even a small bit of service done well is enough.

Bear these three things in mind: First, our service organisations should keep aloof from the Government. Second, plunging into the society, render service. Third, avoid finding fault or talking ill of others. This is the real *sadhana*.

Do not hesitate to reprove those who indulge in back-biting. They should be corrected on the spot, so that they may not persist in that vicious habit. They must be told that it is unbecoming of one born as a human being to talk iii of other fellow-beings. One who indulges in such talk will himself get it back tenfold, When you start developing love, all these evil traits will drop away.

Henceforth, engage yourselves in social service, remembering and worshipping God and recognising your inherent Divinity. This is the way to sanctify your lives.

Be aware of the divinity in you. There is no need to search for God anywhere outside you. The bodily vesture you are wearing should not produce the delusion that you are the body. Shed that delusion and you will realise the *Brahman* that you really are.

Do *bhajans* and have the name of the Lord always on your lips. Do not waste even a single moment. By chanting the name of Rama, Hanuman the monkey, became all-powerful, the embodiment of peace and the exemplar of all noble qualities. Sita was full of praise for him. It is such qualities that you should all try to cultivate.

Discourse at the Poornachandra Auditorium on Bhagavan's 62nd birthday 23-11-1987.

The divine will not consider your status or position, your pomp and show. The Lord is bound only by the devotees' devotion.

BABA

Vol. 21, 33, 1988. Let The Conscience Rule

*More effulgent than the Sun,
Whiter than the purest snow,
Subtler than the subtlest ether,
Immanent in all living beings,
There's nothing in the Cosmos sans Brahman.
The Paramatma is present in the minutest particle.
Being in everything, THAT remains unaffected.
That Universal Consciousness
Illumines and sustains the three worlds,
Pervading everything in Creation,
That Brahman you are, and Brahman is in you,
You and the Brahman are not different.
What greater truth can I tell you
Good people who are gathered here ?
I am in the Light; I am the Light
The Light is in me; The Light is me
He who is aware of this
Is Brahman himself
And Brahman is he.*

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Only a human being can understand God in the human form, not others. Hence the human form itself should be respected. "*Daivam maanusha Rupena*," it is said (God reveals Himself in the human form). God assumes the human form to make His advent in the world, teach humanity the path to Divinity and shower His grace on them.

Man and the Divine in human form

The whole of Nature is a ball of burning fire (energy). This fire is present inside and outside. Likewise the Divine *Atma* principle is present everywhere. The Divine dwells in the entire Universe, from the minute atom to the vastest star. This Divine power is present in everything in creation. Only man has the capacity to recognise this power. But in trying to recognise it, he may create some crude form and consider it as the Divine in his delusion.

Today one can give an amazing scientific discourse on the world, society and many other things. One may appear logically convincing. He may even expound in different ways the nature of the Divine in human form. All these are however, only products of the imagination and not the truth. An eloquent *pandit* may attempt to describe the Divine, but no one has known or can know the true nature of the Divine in its fullness. Man alone can know the Divine in human form. No one

else can see it or explain it in any other form. All other expositions of the Divine are speculative and fanciful.

An elephant may wish to worship the Divine. Basing itself on its nature, it can conceive of the Divine only as a huge elephant. It cannot conceive of any other form. Even a mouse when it conceives of the Divine, can only imagine the titanic form of a mouse as the Divine. Likewise man can conceive God only in the human form. As long as he regards himself only in human terms, man cannot conceive of God, who transcends the human except in human form.

Pandits: description of God create only confusion

A learned and eloquent scholar may describe God in many ways. Some scholars describe God as "*Aprameya, Avaangmaanasa-gochara, Atheetha, Nirguna*" (One who is inscrutable, beyond the reach of the speech and mind, transcendent and attributeless). All these terms are high-sounding but in essence they are just froth. Meanings may be given to these terms and elaborate annotations can be made about them. But they are valueless in terms of personal experience and are fraught with danger. They do not represent the Reality.

Whenever you get a convenient opportunity, put this question to a *pandit*: "What is the meaning of *Aprameya*?" He will answer that He is one who is not amenable to any logical proof. Likewise he may explain that the term "*Avaangmaanasa-gochara*" refers to One who is not recognisable by speech or mind. But beyond this, can he demonstrate the form of the Divine?

In my mind the layman's conception of God is better than the descriptions offered by these *Pandits*. Because these terms can be used even by laymen, but they prefer to remain silent. As a result, there is peace in society. The diverse interpretations offered by the *Pandits* give rise to divisions and confusions in society. These disturb the minds of people. Rather than provoke such disturbance and confusion, it would be better for these *Pandits* to observe silence.

From ancient times to the present all kinds of terms have been used to describe the Divine but no one has been able to demonstrate the real truth about the Divine. The Divine is present in all things and all forms are His. How can such an omnipresent Divine be described or demonstrated? Can anyone declare that something is Brahman and something else is not Brahman? Only the deluded may do so out of human weakness.

Appearances and reality are different

Divinity is present in man like fragrance is present in a flower, fire in wood and oil in sesame, not visible but latent. Unaware of this inner truth, men are carried away by external appearances and consider them as the reality. From early times men have been influenced by such ideas and have been steeped in ignorance. They offer milk to anthills (to feed the cobras which are believed to dwell in them), but kill snakes when they see them. They torture the draught cattle that they use in cultivation, but worship the stone image of a bull (the sacred vehicle of Shiva). This is the kind of "philosophy" that people have practised since ancient times. Causing harm to the living and adoring inanimate objects have been weak traits among the Bharathiyas. Men who do not offer even a morsel of food to a starving man will offer all kinds of delicacies as *Naivedya* (sacred offerings) to the image of the deity. One will drop a bundle of coins in the *hundi* (donation collection box) of Sri Venkateswara, but will refuse a small pittance to the beggar. All this is regarded as part of our ancient tradition. But how much sanctified will one be if he offers food to a starving man? It is essential to realise the basic truth that God is present in the form of

human beings. Is one doing his duty if he inflicts pain on the *jiva* (a living being) and offers worship to Deva (the Divine)?

***Avatars* are based on different aspects of the Divine**

In the world, God has descended as human incarnation in five different forms. These forms are based on the different aspects of the Divine. One is *Nityaavatar*. Second is *Viseshaavatar*. Third, *Aveshaavatar*. Fourth, *Leelaavatar*. Fifth, *Poornaavatar*. *Leelaavatar* is also known as *Amsaavatar*. *Nityaavatara*, *Viseshaavatar* and *Aveshaavatar* have only five to nine *kalaas* (aspects) of the Lord. Only in the *Poornaavatar* are all the sixteen aspects of the Divine present. The ancients regarded only the *Poornaavatars* as the full manifestation of God.

In this context, every human being must be deemed as *Avatar* as he has some aspect of the Divine in him. It is because he has descended from the Divine, he is entitled to be called an *Avatar*. Except as *Avatar*, God does not give a separate vision of the Divine to man in any other form. Honour every human being. Show love towards every person. Love is not a crop that can be grown on land or a commodity that can be purchased in a shop. Whether one is a potentate or a commoner, only when he gives up egoistic pride and is ready to make sacrifice will love blossom within him.

Embark on the journey towards God-realisation

Do not be weighed down by the feeling that the human estate is weak and subject to delusions and ignorance. It is not easy to be born as a human being. If nevertheless one does not realise his true nature and imagines that God is in the external world, it is the mark of utter ignorance. Hence without wasting time, engage yourselves in your duties and embark on the journey towards God-realisation.

If you want to worship God, worship Him in the human form alone. All other forms are artificial and creations of the imagination. They are products of delusion. While *bhrama* (delusion) remains, Brahman cannot be experienced.

Numerous persons are describing God in manifold ways. The scriptures also describe God in many ways. The expounders are content with reciting the descriptions, but do not seek to experience the Divine. What is the form of the Divine? If you wish to see the Divine, the form you envisage will be only a caricature. Consider your own form as manifestation of the Divine. Esteem yourself as divine. Respect others. Love yourself and love others. This is true worship.

It is because this broad-minded attitude to the Divine was not promoted from early times, man has been a prey to all forms of ignorance. There is no such thing as God "descending" on earth or leaving it.

The body is like a water bubble, which arises, grows and disappears in the water. This is the truth. Man is born from Brahman, grows through Brahman and merges in Brahman. Brahman means freedom from *Bhrama* (delusion). It is because of delusion that Brahman is not experienced. Man is dominated by the delusions of *Ahamkara* and *Mamakara* (Ego and Possessiveness).

In what form can you worship the Divine whose form is cosmic? What is it that you can offer to the One who is everything? The world has worshipped Him under different names

Rama, Krishna, Allah, Zoroaster, Buddha and Sai Baba. But all these names represent the One *Atma*. True worship consists in regarding all the forms as one and worshipping the Divine in the

form of Love and Truth. It is subtler than a sub-atomic particle. That is why it is said: "Truth is more fundamental than the atom."

Let conscience rule your actions

There is no meaning in worshipping God as *Sathyaswa-roopa* (the embodiment of Truth), and not adhering to truth in daily life. *Dharma* (righteousness) is born from truth. This righteousness emanates from the heart.

Righteousness promotes self-satisfaction. It is an expression of self-consciousness. Have faith in the promptings of this divine consciousness. No one should act against the dictates of his conscience. Acting in violation of the conscience is evil. Action according to the conscience is righteous. True worship consists therefore in doing what is right as dictated by your conscience. Divorce between thought and speech is ungodly. There should be complete accord between thought word and deed.

God is only One. Your forms of worship, rituals and beliefs are purely personal and do not relate to the universal. "Divinity" means that which is whole, all-embracing. The One Divine is present in all beings. Every being is filled with truth and love. There is no one without love. The love may find outlets in different ways, but it is essentially one. That Love is God. Do not go against that Love.

Though God may be worshipped in various forms, it is essential to recognise the unity that subsumes all of them. Worship may assume any form, but worship itself is one and the same. Likewise the forms of the Divine may be varied but the Divine principle is only one *Atma*.

Only the unchanging Love is true devotion

Today there is only one important thing that you have to take note of give up the delusion that the Divine is in some remote place. Have the faith: "I am God." When you have the faith that you are Divine, you are unlikely to go astray. You will pursue the right path. Believe that God is in every human being as declared by the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. Mere scholarship does not make a man a *Pandit* (a man of knowledge). "*Pandithaasamadarsinah*" (*Pandits are those who see everything with an equal eye*). *Pandits* should be judged by what they practice and not by their external appendages or what they preach or write.

Regard yourselves as children of God. There is really no difference between the *Avatars* and yourselves except with regard to the number of aspects of the Divine present in each one. These aspects can be enhanced by right conduct and by developing Divine love.

That is not true love which wanes from moment to moment and waxes from time to time. Only the love that is unchanging and shines brightly always in the heart is true love. It is unaffected by joy or sorrow, praise or blame. Such love is true devotion. A love that grows or declines according to varying circumstances is not true love at all.

When one derives some great benefit or his prayers are fulfilled, he installs more pictures for worship. But if his desires are not fulfilled, he removes the pictures. Can this be genuine devotion?

Get rid of selfishness by adoration of God

All the Divine principles--Brahma, Isa and Vishnu--are to be found in man. Brahma represents the creative principle. Isa (Shiva) is represented by the heart. The *Buddhi* (intellect) represents

the all-pervasive Vishnu principle. Similarly the three divine *modes*---*yantra*, *mantra* and *tantra* are also found in man. The body is *yantra* (machine). All limbs in a body are parts of a machine. Our breath is a *mantra*. With each breath the *mantra So-ham* (He is I) is pronounced. Our heart is *Tantra* (the directing power).

Have the firm faith that the Divinity is present in the human form. Perform right actions befitting the human form. Eschew selfishness, the attachments and hatred arising from it. The way to get rid of selfishness is adoration of God.

Discourse on Bhagavan's 63rd birthday in the Poornachandra Auditorium, 23 Nov 1988

Vol. 22, 37, 1989. The Cosmic Indweller

*In the centre of the earth is a
Place called Puttaparthi
The embodiment of the Atma
made its advent.
While mankind was seeking
knowledge of science
A University came into existence here.
People of all nations gathered here
to experience peace and joy.
Millions of virtuous aspirants and adepts
have filled this place.
The Sai Lord has come to teach
the world love and the truth of all religions.
Sathya Sai has incarnated as
embodied Love to shower joy on all.*

EMBODIMENTS of Love! "Yatho imaani bhoothaani jaayanthe" (That from which these beings are born). The entire creation comes from the *Paramatma* (the Supreme Godhead), is sustained by Him and ultimately merges in Him. Likewise, man takes birth on account of desires, lives on desires and dissolves in desires. As is the intention, so is the conduct. As is the conduct, so is the fruit. As is the fruit, so is the goal. Hence every man should have sublime desires, experience sublime fruits and ultimately attain a sublime end.

The phenomenal *jagat* (world) is visible to the eye, is audible to the ear, is experienced by the body, cognised by the mind and enjoyed by the heart. This world of perception is known as *Viswam*. *Viswa* means that which pervades. The principle which accounts for pervasiveness is called *Viswam*. Vishnu is the One who pervades the cosmos. The cosmos is the effect, Vishnu is the cause. Cause and effect are expressions of a single divine principle.

The Cosmic principle is also known by other names such as *Viraat*, *Vaiswaanara* and *Vairagasutha*. *Vaiswaanara* is the Divine Principle that produces the consciousness of "I-ness" in every being. The cosmos is thus a manifestation of Vishnu, who pervades everything.

Six qualities are attributed to the Divine. They are: *Aiswarya* (Wealth), *Dharma* (Righteousness), *Yasas* (Fame), *Sampada* (Prosperity), *Jnana* (Supreme Wisdom), and *Variragya* (non-attachment). Wealth has myriad forms--material wealth, physical wealth, the wealth of knowledge and so on. The Divine possesses every conceivable form of wealth.

Swadharma really refers to Atma-Dharma

Dharma (Righteousness) as an attribute of the Divine comprehends every kind of *Dharma*---worldly *dharma*, *vaideeka dharma*, national *dharma*, community *dharma* and so on. Of these, two are important. One is *Para Dharma*, the other is *Swadharma*. *Swadharma* is often treated as *Dharma* relating to one's caste or creed. Thus, separate codes of *Dharma* are ascribed to *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas* and others. This is not a correct interpretation.

Swa-Dharma really refers to *Atma-Dharma* (the *Dharma* relating to the Spirit:). Man's duty is to observe this spiritual code of conduct. *Para Dharma* relates to the body. It embraces the code of conduct that is observed in daily life for earning one's livelihood and leading his life in society. *Para Dharma* is fraught with fear and delusions. There is the fear of success or defeat or the fear of facing blame and censure. In observing this mundane code of conduct man is haunted by fears and doubts of various kinds. In adhering to *Swa-Dharma* (the Spiritual code) there is no room for any such fears. Therefore, man should follow *Atma Dharma*.

As the Divine attributes are found in man also, it is clear that the Divine dwells in all human beings. "*Eko vasi sarva-bhootha-antaraatma*" (He is the One Indweller in the hearts of all beings). God cannot be seen in any one place or at any particular time. He is present in everything but is not attached to anything.

How can One who permeates everything and is present everywhere be subject to any kind of proof or test? That is the reason why God has been described as *Aprameya*--the Transcendental One. As one who is the source of all knowledge and intelligence, God has been called *Manu*. As He is the supreme creator, He is also called *Prajapathi*. He is also called *Atma* or *Brahman*. *Brahman* is the *Chaitanya* (consciousness) that is present in all living beings. *Atma* and *Brahman*, are not different. The Divine has also been termed *Aham* (the "I"). This does not refer to the individual ego. It refers to the effulgence that illumines everything and dispels all darkness totally. Another meaning of *Aham* is *Saakshi* (Witness).

Sat-Chit-Ananda is present in all objects

The *Paramatma* (Supreme *Atma*) who is the witness to everything, is called *Aham*. He is the Lord of all that has gone before, all that is and all that is yet to be born. He is the eternal, unchanging Being who is the master of the past, the present and the future. Hence he is described as "*Bhootha-Bhavya-Bhavath Prabhuh*" (The Lord of the past, the present and the future).

He is also described as *Bhavah*, the effulgent. He is omnipresent. Hence the appellation *Mahanubhava* is applicable only to God, though the term is loosely applied to describe some extraordinary persons. It refers to One who is present in the subtlest atom and the vastest object in the cosmos.

In every object in the universe, *Sat* (Being) *Chit* (Awareness) and *Ananda* (Bliss) are present in a subtle form. There are two other characteristics of every object: name and form. *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda* are derived from the Divine. Name and form, which are subject to constant change, are related to Nature. Even name and form are comprehended by *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*. Man is the embodiment of these three. Forgetting these basic truths about: his permanent Reality, man is leading a life related to names and forms.

Every human being is a manifestation of God. Every object manifests the divine. There is nothing in the world which is not a manifestation of God. Do not have any doubt: that the

cosmos is permeated by *Hari* (God) and everything is contained in HIM. There is not an atom in the universe which is not permeated by the Divine.

Prasad asked for an exposition of the nature of God. Some say "It is not" and some say "It is" and some others say, "It is and it is not". Those who say "It is" do not know what It is. Those who deny its existence also do not know what it is that they deny. Those who affirm and deny are ignorant of both the things.

Believers and non-believers of God

From early times those who believed in the existence of God were called *Asthikas* (theists), those who denied God's existence were called *Nasthikas* (atheists) and the third category were called *Asthika-Nasthikas* (theist-atheists). Theists and atheists are really one though they have contrary names. Atheists are like buds of flowers and theists are like the flowers that have blossomed. The flower that has blossomed offers its fragrance to many. The unopened bud retains its fragrance within itself. Some day the bud may blossom or is likely to drop away before blossoming. Those who spread the bliss of divinity in the world were described as theists and those

who did not do so were regarded as atheists. Those who say "God does not exist" must have some prior idea of God before they can deny His existence. In twilight, a rope may be mistaken for a snake, but the moment light is brought the rope is recognised for what it is. Likewise the *Jnani* (man of wisdom) recognises God when he is free from *maya* (delusion).

The mind and heart are like lock and key

All the myriad differences that one sees in the world are only variations in form of the one basic entity--the *Brahman*. A man who seeks to enjoy the fruit of a tree cannot be content with nourishing only the flowers. He has to nourish the roots, the trunk, the branches and the leaves and the flowers. Likewise the man who seeks the highest *Jnana* (wisdom) has to nourish the body, the senses, the feelings appropriately. For this purpose the nine forms of devotion have been prescribed for seekers.

The mind, it has been said, is the cause of bondage or liberation. The mind is like a lock and the heart is the key. When the key is turned towards God, there is detachment. When it is turned towards the world there is attachment. Thus the mind is the cause of either liberation or bondage. Therefore the mind has to be directed towards what is holy and pure. Then you will lead a free, joyous, blissful life. The man who has developed such an attitude will be in a permanent state of bliss. He will be the embodiment of bliss.

When I came down to the Mandir this morning, the children greeted me with the words, "Happy Birthday!" I told them, "I am always happy, it is you who are unhappy, who should get happiness." It is only when each one realises his inherent divinity and leads a Godly life that all will be happy. Divinity is not confined to any specific place or form. Each one should realise that this all-pervading, all-powerful Divinity is within him. There must be realisation that the Principle that is Omnipresent in the subtlest form and in the grossest form is the Atma or *Brahman*. God is the eternal Reality, without birth, growth or death, without beginning, middle or end, and who is immutable. It is only the bodies that are subject to change. Making use of the body that is mutable, the immutable Divine has to be experienced.

Embodiments of love! In whatever manner you seek to understand the Divine, you have to remember that the Divine is the universal, all-pervading *Chaitanyam* (Consciousness). Only the unchanging Divine can confer on you permanent bliss. This does not mean giving up worldly

concerns. What you have to do is to make worldly life the basis for the realisation of the Divine. Every action should be regarded as an offering to the Divine. You must strive to reach the state where, recognising that God is omnipresent, you realize your own Divinity. To begin with you have to do good deeds, based on good thoughts. People today devote hardly five minutes to the thought of God. How can they hope to have joy and peace when the bulk of their time is devoted to selfish pursuits?

Dedicate yourself to the service of society. Engage yourself in sacred actions. Always remember the Divine name. Chanting the name of the Lord, performing sacred actions, experience bliss in your heart.

Birthday message at Poornachandra Auditorium, on 23-11-1989.

Vol. 23, 34, 1990. Restore the glory of Bharat

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! From the most ancient times *Bharatiyas* considered Truth as God, loved it, fostered it and protected it and thereby achieved divinity. *Bharatiyas* were devoted to Truth, wedded to *Dharma* (Righteousness) and esteemed morality in society as the foremost duty. Today because people have forgotten Truth and Righteousness they are unable to solve national problems or end communal differences. We have the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west and both merge in the Indian Ocean. Likewise, Bharat exemplifies the combination of worldly prosperity and spiritual progress. Bharat is the country, where the unity of the *Jiva* (the individual Spirit) and the *Brahmam* (the Cosmic Spirit) was established.

When we refer to Bharat, the term is not related to any particular individual, country or circumstance. Although many different derivative meanings have been given to the term by different authorities, these are only their individual interpretations. According to some *Puranas*, the name Bharat was given to this country because it was ruled by a King called Jada Bharatha. Another explanation is that the name is derived from that Bharatha, son of Dushyanta and Sakuntala, who ruled over the country. Some others may explain that the name is attributed to India because Sri Rama's brother, Bharatha, enthroned the sacred sandals of Rama and administered the country.

However, when did the term "Bharatha" originate? That name must have existed before Jada Bharatha was given that name, and prior to the naming of Dushyanta's son and Rama's brother. It is obvious that the name Bharat existed from times immemorial.

"Bharat" denotes entire human family

The Goddess Saraswathi is described as Saraswathi, Bhagavathi and Bharathi. Saraswathi means the *Vaakdevata* (Goddess of Speech). Hence every man born with the gift of speech is a Bharata. The name is not associated with any particular individual or country. The term Bharat is applicable to the entire human family. "Bha" refers to the Principle represented by Divine Knowledge. "Self-knowledge" is "Bha." "Bharatas" are those who take delight in Self-knowledge. Hence everyone who shines by his own self luminous power is a Bharata.

The word is also derived from a root which means that a *Bharatiya* is one who is skilled in warfare (*Sangraamam*). What does *Sangraamam* mean? It means conquest of the opposing forces confronting him by his divine spiritual power. "*Balam Bharam Bhavathi Bibhartheh*" are the words used in *Nirukta*. *Balam* refers to *Brahmabalam* (the *Atmic* strength), *Thejobalam* (the strength of inner light), *Sastrabalam* (the strength derived from knowledge of the scriptures). Bharata is one who has these triple kinds of strength. The *Sruti* (Veda) defines *bala* (strength) as *yajna*. It follows that *Bharatiya* is one who has acquired strength by the performance of *yajnas* (sacrifices). Hence *Bharatiya* is one who acquired divine strength by *Atmabalam* (the power of the Spirit). So, whoever one may be, whatever one's country, he has to acquire this strength of the Spirit.

Bharat is a land of plenty

Bharat (India) is a naturally well-endowed country. It is the primary source of all morality, spirituality and worldly wisdom. It is *Annapoorna* (a land of plenty). To regard such a sacred land as a poor country is a mental aberration. We are not a destitute nation. It is a richly endowed

country. If this had not been a wealthy country, why did the Mughals, the Europeans and others invade this country? Though we have been well endowed, we have not been able to safeguard our riches. What is the reason? It is because the people have lacked unity.

Freedom has been won, but unity has not been achieved. It is because there is no unity, Bharat is subject to all kinds of calamities. Ghazni Mohammed invaded the Punjab and took away from the country 700 maunds of gold as plunder. In Nagarakota there was a hall thirty yards by fifteen yards entirely built of gold. The entire hall was taken away by the invaders.

Inspite of being born in such a land of wealth, it is a pity that people do not take pride in their country. Wherever you turn, you see only *swartham* (rampant selfishness). Embodiments of Divine Love! Eschew selfishness. Promote unity. Enjoy the bliss of harmony.

It is high time you realised what a sacred country Bharat is. In this holy land, nothing is lacking. "What cannot be found in Bharat cannot be found elsewhere" is an ancient saying. In spite of these multifarious endowments, this country is being regarded as poor and backward. This is born of delusion. Only when we free ourselves from this delusion, we can experience *Atmic* bliss. We can experience *Brahman* only when we can get rid of *bhrama* (delusion).

When everything is available within Bharat, why go abegging to other countries? Everything has originated from Bharat. Hence, having taken birth in Bharat, strive to promote the glory of Bharat. Every devotee should take a pledge to protect and promote the greatness of Bharat. Like an elephant that does not know its own strength, *Bharatiyas* are unaware of their power. Despite their myriad capacities, they are behaving as weaklings like an elephant before its mahout. You have to get rid of this weakness.

Be aware of the uniqueness of Bharat

Bharat has produced many great sages and saints who have taught profound truths. It is a land of heroes who fought for the freedom of the country. It has been the leader in the knowledge of various arts and sciences, in music and literature. It is most unfortunate that many born in this sacred land are unaware of its unique greatness. Love of the mother is a nectarine quality. What a pity that love of the Motherland should be absent!

You must love the Motherland. Resolve to dedicate your lives to the service of the motherland. Unity is the primary requisite. People celebrate the birthdays of our great ones, but few care to follow their teachings. There is nothing great about celebrating birthdays. Every effort must be made to understand their teachings and act upto them.

Develop the quality of love. Fill your entire life with love. This was the prayer which the *gopikas* addressed to Krishna in the former *yuga*. A life without love is utterly barren. Man is the embodiment of love. Love has to be directed towards what is true. Such love is man's life-breath.

Fill your hearts with the heritage of Bharat

Embodiments of the Divine *Atma*! Esteeming love as the essence of divinity, you have to engage yourselves in loving service to society. You have to restore the glory of Bharat. Bharat has been in the past the preceptor for all nations. All other people are coming to acquire peace and enlightenment. In this situation, it is a great misfortune that *Bharatiyas* themselves are not conscious of their greatness. *Bharatiya* history reflects the achievements of Bharat in the realms of the physical, the mental, the spiritual and all other aspects of life. We have to fill our hearts with this heritage.

Today we are dedicating our lives to material and worldly comforts. Of what avail are all these appurtenances? We have to realise the *Atmic* principle which is the source of enduring bliss. All the knowledge that is acquired, all the positions one may get are of no use if there is no love in the heart. The acquisition of good qualities is more essential than the pursuit of knowledge.

The magnet of Divine love

Why is it that so many lakhs of people have gathered here today? There must be some compelling reason for it. You must be seeking something which you have not found in your native place. There would be no need for you to incur all this expenditure if you could find what you wanted in your own place. Here there is Divine Love. It is this powerful magnet of Divine Love which has been attracting all the iron filings in the form of human beings. Not a single invitation was sent to anyone. No one was asked to come. What has drawn all people here is the power of Divine Love, the bonds uniting hearts. At the root of all this is purity. Where there is purity, there love grows. When purity and love come together, there is *Ananda* (bliss). Whatever work we do, whatever sacrifices we perform, they are not of much use in the absence of love.

In yoga practice, some types of breath control are adopted. The *Kundalini yoga* is also practised. All this is a form of business. In the breathing exercises, inhalation is described as *Purakam*, exhalation as *Rechakam* and holding the breath as *Kumbhakam*. These do not constitute the means to achieve *yogic* power. To breathe in all that is good is *Purakam*. To give up all that is bad is *Rechakam*. To retain in the heart what is good is *Kumbhakam*. Everyone is qualified to practise this kind of *yoga*. This divine type of *yoga* should be practised by every human being. This is the primary goal of every *Bharatiya*.

This Puttaparthi is a small hamlet. How has this village attained this eminent state? Each one can find the answer for himself. This should not be considered as a *yoga* or a great piece of good fortune or a lucky accident. It is due to the power of thought. Every sacred thought has the power to find fulfilment. This is why *Vedanta* declared: "*Yadbhaavam tadbhavati*" (As one thinks, that he becomes). Hence, every man should develop good thoughts. Thereby he gets entitled to the right of fruits.

Adjusting to difficulties is a form of penance

Embodiments of Divine Love! Although in this Prashanthi Nilayam adequate facilities and conveniences are not available, and many of you who are used to various amenities have gathered here, you have submitted yourselves to a kind of *yoga* by which you have adjusted yourselves to all the inconveniences. You should regard this experience as *sadhana* (spiritual exercise). Enjoying all comforts cannot constitute *sadhana*. It is through difficulties that you experience happiness. Happiness cannot be realised without going through trouble. Such difficulties must be regarded as a form of penance. Easy life cannot become a penance. The fact that so many lakhs of people have gathered here, putting up with many difficulties and inconvenience, is striking testimony to their sense of unity.

Human effort is needed for achieving anything. In the improvement of accommodation and various amenities at Prashanthi Nilayam over the past twenty years, what has been accomplished is the work of Joga Rao. As a member of the Central Trust for twenty years, he has laboured hard day and night ceaselessly to bring about these improvements in Prashanthi Nilayam. He is a *Karma Yogi*. He takes delight in work. Moreover, what he has been doing tirelessly night and day during the past twelve months is known only to Me and none else. He is

not Col. Joga Rao. They call him Colonel Jogi, but he is indeed a *Karma Yogi*. For the past one month he has not had a moment's sleep. He is 82 years old. It is because even at this age he has laboured to provide as many amenities as possible, the devotees have been able to overcome their difficulties. To mark their appreciation of Joga Rao's services, the members of the Central Trust decided to honour him suitably. I do not regard Joga Rao as an outsider. But duty demands that a certain thing should be done. In honouring Joga Rao the Central Trust is discharging a duty. (Bhagavan then put a *kadiyams* in gold round the wrists of Col. Joga Rao. The entire gathering cheered as Col. Joga Rao came to receive the *kadiyams* from the Divine hands. Bhagavan told Col. Joga Rao sotto voce that he should carry on the good work with the same energy).

There should be many more *karma jivis* and *karma yogis* like Joga Rao in Bharat in the coming years. Everyone should become a *karma yogi*. That *Karma* gets transformed into *Dharma*. That *Karma* will sanctify human life.

Bharat is not a poor country

It is the duty of everyone to cultivate faith in the Divine, get immersed in *Karmayoga* and divinise his life. No *Bharatiya* should forget the sacredness of Bharat. Bharat is not at all a poor country. It is because this fact is not realised that the country is riddled with strife and disorder. Failing to distinguish between what is transient and what is permanent, people are ruining their lives in the pursuit of fleeting pleasures. For the sake of trivial and momentary benefits, people are sacrificing what is of lasting value.

At the time of attaining freedom, only 13 percent of the population was considered backward. This percentage has gone on increasing over the years and today it is 80 percent! In five or six years, it may become cent percent! This is not proper at all.

Bharat is not made up of backward classes. For the sake of some petty concessions such classifications are being made. Foreign countries are regarding Bharat as a poverty-stricken country. Embodiments of Divine Love! Remember Bharat is a land of plenty. No country is so well endowed with resources as Bharat. Why, then, should we call ourselves a poor nation? Nor is that all. In the fields of education and medicine, we have to develop the spirit of sacrifice.

Make education available free for all

You all know how many students lost their lives (by self-immolation) a month ago. What is the reason? It was a protest against the system of reservation on a communal basis. We must seek to promote a system which will make education available freely to all. Education must be for the sake of learning. When that happens, these problems will not arise among students.

Here we have today the President of India, the Chief Minister and the Governor of Andhra Pradesh and other eminent persons. In the sphere of education, if we do not create new classifications like 'backward' and 'forward' and establish a system of free education for all, without distinctions of rich or poor, the nation will make striking progress. We are wasting crores of rupees. If we ensure the right kind of future for our children, the nation will benefit immensely. Every spiritual organization should also provide free education.

It is well known that the Tirupati *Devasthanam* has plenty of funds. Why should not the authorities there offer free education? How many crores are being wasted? It is because education is not free, not one of the students in the *Devasthanam* educational institutions cares to

visit the temple. How can devotion grow? In the name of the Lord free education and medical relief should be provided.

The aim of 100-crore hospital project

With this object in view, we decided yesterday to establish a big hospital here. Many persons appealed to me to set up the hospital in an urban centre. There are many medical institutions run as a business in several cities. When any educational or medical institution is established, the sole aim is to make a business of it. There are few who are ready to set up such institutions to provide free facilities for the poor. Therefore, from the start we decided to set up a hundred-crore hospital near Prashaanthi Nilayam itself. Even as higher education is free here, "Higher medicine" also will be free. People spend some lakhs to get heart surgery done in the U.S. What is the plight of the poor? Who looks after them? If they go to the cities, they will not get even coloured water (mixtures). Recognising this fact, we have launched this big hospital project. Whether it is heart bypass operation, or a kidney transplant, or a lung operation or brain surgery, everything will be done free. This has been decided upon from the very starting of the project.

The hospital will be opened on November 22, 1991. No one can understand Sai *Sankalpa* (workings of the mind). Thought and action are simultaneous like the light and sound that come out when a gun is fired. Hence it is not easy for everyone to understand Sai's resolve.

The Sathya Sai saga

Embodiments of Divine Love! Do not regard what I am going to say as an exaggeration. There is not a trace of self-interest in Me. Whatever I do is only for the sake of others. I do not regard you as others. All of you are My own people. Such an all-encompassing feeling cannot be found anywhere in the world. Have you seen anywhere else an organization which has grown so stupendously in fifty years?

In the case of earlier *avatars*, their fame grew only long after their passing. In the case of the present *avatar*, in His own life-time, a university, a big hospital, an aerodrome and many other things have been established for the benefit of the villagers and many more will follow in the years ahead. Many persons have doubts as to how all these are being accomplished. The advent (of this *avatar*) took place 64 years ago. All these years, this hand has not been stretched at any time to seek anything from anyone. I have not asked anyone. I will never ask anyone and there will never be an occasion for it. How then are these things happening? For any good work, there is no impediment in Bharat. When you want to do any good work wholeheartedly, money flows in torrents. The narrow-minded who undertake any work will never be satisfied. They cannot understand the actions of those who are large-hearted and broad-minded.

Embodiments of Divine Love! I do not expect anything from you. Only, develop love within you. Regard all mankind with fraternal feelings. Recognize all as the children of God. Bear no ill-will or hatred towards anyone. Do not hurt anyone's feelings. Only such a large-hearted attitude will confer on you limitless bliss. If you are celebrating Swami's birthday, this is all that I desire from you. Have unity among yourselves. Strive to revive and promote the glory of Bharat.

"I am always filled with infinite joy"

As I was coming here, some people greeted Me with the words: "Happy birthday! Happy birthday!" I am always happy. I need no "Happy" greetings. Convey your greetings of "Happy birthday" to those who are not happy. I am filled with infinite joy. I have never had any worry at

any time or place. What is the reason? All things are transient like passing clouds. Why worry about them? We should not be elated or depressed by births or deaths. We came naked into the world. When we leave, we cannot leave our address with "our" kith and kin. How can they be "our kinsfolk?" All these are worldly phenomena. As long as we live, we should spend our lives in harmony and fellow-feeling. All our difficulties can be overcome by contemplation on God. Forgetting God and immersing yourself in worldly concerns, what do you achieve? Have firm faith in God. Don't give room for differences of caste, creed and nationality. All names and forms belong to the Divine. All that you see is a manifestation of the Cosmic Form of the Lord. With firm faith in the Divine, chanting the Lord's name, redeem your lives.

Discourse at Hill View Stadium on 23-11-1990.

Vol. 24, 28, 1991. How to win the Lord's grace

Oh good and noble people assembled here!

May you be filled with mutual affection and unalloyed Joy!

May you be compassionate towards all those who are afflicted!

May you lead righteous family lives and be an example to all;

May you be ever earnest in the pursuit of Dharma and Jnana!

This is my benediction for all of you. What more can I tell you?

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! All the animate beings in the cosmos emerge from the Divine, are sustained by the Divine and merge in the Divine. The Divine is the root cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution.

Man is born out of desire, lives on desire and passes out by desire. Man's life is based on desires or thoughts (*sankalpa*). As are his thoughts, so are his actions. As are the actions, so are the fruits thereof. The fruits determine the goal. It follows that man's destiny is determined by his thoughts.

Embodiments of Divine love! Cultivate sublime thoughts, lead ideal lives, realise the highest fruits and strive to reach the supreme goal.

Man should possess Divine Consciousness

Man's life is based upon his qualities and character. A true man is one who acts according to his *Atma-Dharma* (the integrity of the Spirit) and not according to the impulses of his senses. *Atma-Dharma* is the true *Dharma* of man. Acting according to the dictates of the senses is the code of the animals. Man should elevate from the animal to the Overlord of the animal nature (Pasupathi or Siva). What man should have is *Iswara-bhaava* (the Divine Consciousness) and not the *Prakriti-bhaava* (instinctive nature).

It should also be recognised that all Nature is an embodiment of the Divine. Creation is the primary symbol of the Divine Consciousness. It is called *Prakriti* (Nature). Every man who is a product of Nature should have the consciousness of his divinity and proclaim the Divine basis of creation. Human existence is supremely sacred. It is precious, divine and should be lived befittingly. The divinity in man, who is part of creation, is not something distinct. To demonstrate the inherent divinity of man, *Avatars* (Divine incarnations) appear from time to time.

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! God does not exist as something apart. All of you are embodiments of the Divine. "*Iswaras-sarvabhoothaanaam*", "*Isaavaasyam idam sarvam*" "*Vaasudevassarvam*" (The Divine dwells in all beings, All this is dwelt in by the Lord, Everything is Divine). Men are forgetting these profound, sacred declarations and are wasting their lives in the pursuit of petty mundane pleasures.

Spirituality exists in every aspect of life

It is supreme folly to consider that the spiritual is divorced from the physical and that the material world has no connection with spirituality. Spirituality runs like an undercurrent through

every aspect of life social, political, economic and moral. This basic truth has been forgotten today. People have faith in the transient, the ephemeral and the illusory.

Everything is constantly changing in the world. This ever-changing world is based upon the unchanging Divine. It is only when the *Aadhaara* (Divine base) is understood can one derive bliss from the experience of what is based on it. In whatever action men do and whatever paths they pursue, they should be conscious of the Divine. Men today seek power, position and pelf, but not virtues. Power and position, bereft of good qualities, are of no value. The foremost need of man is virtue. It is in this spirit that man should remember God.

Prakriti (Nature) is not to be despised. When Nature is viewed from the egoistic point of view, it assumes a distorted form. When it is regarded from the spiritual point of view, it presents a sacred aspect. The differences in the role of Nature arise out of men's attitudes.

Everything has emerged from Truth. Truth is the form of the Divine. Everything is based on Truth. "*Sathyaanaasthi Paro Dharmah*" (There is no greater *Dharma* than Truth).

Everything has been created out of Truth

And all creation is embedded in Truth.

There is no place where Truth does not shine.

Realise that this is the Supreme Truth.

Bharatiyas have forgotten their Divine heritage

Goodness is the most important thing for anyone. Whatever be one's wealth, his knowledge or position, the most essential quality is character. Even if one possesses many good qualities, it is only devotion to the Divine that makes them blossom forth. Bharatiyas in the past have had the reputation of having recognised this truth. What greater misfortune can there be than that Bharatiyas should forget their Divine cultural heritage?

In the supremely sacred land of Bharat,

forbearance is the highest wealth.

Of all forms of rituals, the most severe one is

adherence to truth and integrity.

What can be prized greater than the feeling

that 'This is my Motherland?'

Discarding the belief that honour is greater than life itself, men are going after exotic practices, hugging strange concepts of freedom and are forgetting the real source of their strength even like the elephant that is not aware of its massive strength.

Not relying on one's own strength, to depend on the strength of others is precarious. The entire culture of Bharat has been based on reliance on one's own inherent strength and confidence in one's self. Self-confidence is at the root of all achievement. It is because it has lost its self-confidence that India is a prey to all kinds of troubles.

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! When you are embodiments of the Divine, it is a sign of weakness for you to lose confidence in yourselves. Recognise your true nature. Then your

powers and talents will manifest themselves and be a source of joy to you. Self-confidence is essential because it is the source of all prosperity and accomplishment.

Bharatiyas' duty is to serve others

The world today is plunged in strife, disorder and discontent. What is your duty at this juncture? Have you the power to banish this disorder? Do not give room for the idea that one man by himself is powerless to combat this situation. If every Indian goes forward with self-confidence to face this crisis, the country can be rescued from disorder in no time. Because of lack of self-confidence, men are unable to go forward.

Above all, everyone must take a pledge to serve others. Everyone is of Divine origin. If one cannot be loving towards others, he ceases to be human. Everyone should act on this basis, display love towards all and lead an ideal life. Man should not regard himself as a weak and imbecile creature.

What, then, is our duty today? The Government is seeking to provide various amenities in the villages. But, it is one thing to proclaim one's intentions and quite another to fulfil them. Speaking is easy, acting is difficult. Neither the authorities nor the leaders appear to be concerned about the state of the villages. The villagers are also apathetic. Bharat is not lacking in resources. It is well endowed in every respect. Had it not been so, it would not have attracted so many invaders from outside.

Today Bharatiyas themselves are considering the country as poor and belittling its status: This by itself is not a great danger. The greater danger is the development of *Avisvaasam* (a mood of cynicism). It is only when the pessimism among the people is transformed to a robust optimism will the country go forward. The retrograde movement has to be reversed. Material prosperity, which is transient, is not very important. Real and lasting wealth lies in good qualities and morality. It is this form of wealth that should be acquired.

New hospital at Puttaparthi for poor villagers

With a view to setting an example to the authorities, to the community and to every individual, Swami is undertaking activities, small and big, in various spheres. This hamlet of Puttaparthi had a population of barely 800. To conceive of a University for such a village was a fantastic dream. Another amazing phenomenon is the construction of an aerodrome near such a village, when there are no aerodromes even at district headquarters. Puttaparthi has become the cynosure of all eyes in the world. Above all, you should enquire why a highly sophisticated and most modern hospital, which should be located in a well-developed metropolis, has been set up in this rural area. The wealthy can go anywhere and get medical relief with their abundant resources. But the rural poor cannot go far from their villages for treatment. It is for the sake of such poor folk that this Hospital has been established. I told our doctors to examine the heart ailments of the villagers around here. Today an auspicious announcement has to be made. Within fifteen minutes of the inauguration of the Hospital by our Prime Minister, the first operation was begun in the Hospital. Within three hours four operations were performed. One was a very complicated case. There was a hole in the heart of the patient. All the operations were performed successfully and all the patients are doing well.

The hospital will provide relief to villagers

You should know how this Hospital came up. The firm of Larsen & Toubro are known for their big constructions in India and abroad. But nowhere else was such enthusiasm and zeal displayed by the workers engaged in the construction as in this Hospital. Even the smallest worker did the work of ten persons with zeal and joy. All workers performed their jobs with enthusiasm and devotion.

Work on the Hospital began in May after my return from Kodaikanal. Within five months from May to November, work has been done which would have taken five years. This is a gigantic project. It is intended to benefit people for a thousand years. Our purpose is to provide for cardiac cases in the first phase. Then, it will be the lungs. The third wing will be concerned with kidneys. The fourth will be the neurology wing.

This hospital has been set up to provide relief to villagers suffering from these four kinds of ailments. No distinction is made, however, between villages and cities. Diseases do not afflict only villagers. They make no territorial distinctions. Likewise, there will be no differentiation in providing relief. Our intention is to provide relief to all comers.

For achieving anything in the world, a sound body is essential. The body is the primary requisite for the pursuit of *Dharma* (righteousness). The body has to be in good health. Even for the realisation of the four goals of human life--*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*--sound health is essential. Having regard to the basic importance of health for all purposes, Swami had launched such medical institutions.

But what is the purpose of having a healthy body? It should be utilised for healthy activities. Unfortunately, all over the world people are forgetting *Dharma* and *Moksha* and are immersed only in the pursuit of *Artha* and *Kama*. This is totally wrong. Men should pursue equally all the four goals and divinise their lives.

Good health is essential for utilising the body for good deeds. Of what use is a body used for evil purposes?

Divinity experienced through the elements

Embodiments of Divine Love! Esteem the whole *cosmos* as the embodiments of the Supreme. The Lord, who is the possessor of the *Ashtaiswarya* (eight forms of divine wealth), is the creator of this universe. The most vital requirement for man is water. It sustains life. Three-fourths of the earth's surface is covered by water. Water is described in the Upanishads as *Jivam* (the life-force). Hence, the foremost form of the Lord is water.

The second essential requisite for man is *Agni* (Fire). This fire is residing in every man's stomach as the *Jataraagni* (digestive fire). Without this digestive fire, man would be unable to digest the food he consumes and receive the sustaining energy from that food. All the seven secretions in the stomach are caused by the digestive fire. The blood, the muscles, the bones, etc., in the body are sustained by the *Rasa* (vital essences). Hence, the Lord is described as *Angirasa*---One who is present in every *anga* (limb) as *Rasa* (essence). Angirasa has the form of fire.

The third requisite is the earth. The process of birth, growth and dissolution is taking place on the earth. All the food that man needs comes from the earth. Because the earth is a source of joy for man, it is also an embodiment of the Divine.

Air proclaims the truth of Oneness

The fourth is air. Air is intimately associated with life. Every man utilises air in respiration. Human life is based on inhaling ("So"...) and exhaling ("Ham"...). In respiration, this process of *So-Ham* is continually going on. In Sanskrit, *Sah* ("So") means "He" and *aham* means "I". *So-Ham* demonstrates the truth, "I am He." Who is this "He"? It is God. Air thus proclaims the truth of Oneness. In breathing, every day man inhales and exhales air 21,600 times. If there is no air, life will be extinct. Therefore the fourth embodiment of God is Air.

The fifth is *Akasa* (space). It is the basis for all the five elements. Sound is its form. Sound is also the form of the *Brahmam* (Absolute). Sound is all pervading. When one is asked, "Where is *Akasa*?", people point to the firmament. But that is not so. Everything is permeated by *Akasa* (ether or space). Wherever there is sound (or sound waves), there is *Akasa*. It encompasses everything and is present everywhere. Hence it is the embodiment of God.

Sun is the Lord of intelligence

The sixth is the Sun. He is fire incarnate. How does this fire emerge? Heat is produced when hydrogen in the sun is converted into helium. This is borne out by science. In this process, eight forms of energy are noticed' *Yantra sakti* (kinetic energy), *Ushna sakti* (heat energy), *Kaanthi sakti* (light), *Ghana sakti* (magnetic energy), *Vidyut sakti* (electrical energy), *Rasa sakti* (chemical energy) and *Anu sakti* (atomic energy). Scientists have calculated that every second the sun is losing many billion units of energy. Nevertheless the Sun will continue to be a source of energy for millions of years. The Sun is the presiding deity of the *Buddhi* (intellect). He is the lord of intelligence and he illumines the intellect in man. Thus, sun is also an embodiment of the Divine.

The seventh is moon. Moon is the presiding deity of the mind. It is through the mind that sublime ideas are experienced. The world is the projection in form of the mind. Without the mind the world cannot be conceived. The speed of the mind cannot be equalled. For instance, you might have come here from Hyderabad or Delhi. But in one moment your mind can take you to any place. The speed of thought is greater than that of light.

The eighth is *Karma-sakti* (the power of action). *Karma* also is Divine in form. Man is born out of action, is sustained by action, and ends in action. Action is the life-breath of man. This *karma* was described by the ancients as *yajna*. "*Yajno-vai Vishnuh*" (Action or sacrifice is Vishnu). The cosmos is the embodiment of Vishnu.

It follows from this that the entire creation should be regarded as the manifestation of the Supreme Lord who is the possessor of the eight divine potencies.

Man is misusing and abusing the elements

Man today is not using properly the five elements of which the cosmos is constituted. Consequently man is afflicted with a myriad troubles. The benefits to be derived from the five elements (in the form of sound, touch, light, taste and smell) are not being rightly enjoyed. They are being misused. Because man is abusing the God-given elements and faculties he is forfeiting God's grace and is becoming a victim of Divine displeasure. The five elements have also turned against man. They are despising man for the way he is degrading them. The result is the sounds that one hears are a cacophony of scandal and gossip. Are these the sounds that man should produce?

Man should manifest his sublime, perennial, Divine nature. Unfortunately, his entire vision today is tainted. He is filled with bad thoughts. Hence his sight has turned against him.

When you examine man's faculty of hearing, what do you find? He hears all the time scandalous gossip about all and sundry, while his ears turn away from the sweet praises of the Lord. As the ears are abused in this manner, the mind gets polluted by listening to bad things.

Even the air one breathes is polluted. The entire atmosphere is polluted. The food one consumes is also polluted.

If we try to find out what is at the root of all the troubles and worries men experience today, it will be seen that man's abuse of the five elements is the cause. Therefore, see good, hear what is good, and be good. When people behave in this manner, the five elements will shower their benefits on them. It is only when man secures the grace of the five elements that he will experience the grace of the Divine. How can we get the grace of the elements, which nourish and sustain us, if we misuse them?

Travesty of progress in education

This is the kind of progress that the world has made.

*Biting the hand that feeds,
Reviling the preceptor who imparts knowledge,
This is the 'progress' in education today.*

*People seek a good life, position and wealth.
But they will not seek good qualities,
Right knowledge and right conduct.
Wealth has become all-important
And righteousness has receded.
This is the 'progress' in education today.*

*Character and morality are confined to books.
The mind is totally polluted.
All actions are based on selfishness.
This is the 'progress' in today's education.*

Can this be real "progress" at all? Are these the things that should be learnt by anyone? All that is learnt today serves only to pollute the heart. Education is confined to what promotes selfishness and self-interest. What ought to be learnt is how to be helpful to others and how to realise the Self. Education should make one realise the unity of all beings. I cannot find any truly educated person wherever I turn. All appear to be uneducated. Many read books, but mere book knowledge is not education. Degrees do not make an educated person. Without wisdom and good qualities education has no meaning.

How to divinise human life

Education should be for leading a good life and not for earning a livelihood. To learn from a scientist the chemical composition of water is a kind of knowledge, which may help a man to get a job. But how to make the right use of water so that all can share its benefits is knowledge of the Spirit. This higher knowledge elevates life and makes it meaningful. When worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge come together, human life is divinised.

There is a Kannada saying: "For water, lotus is the ornament. For a town, the home is the ornament. For the ocean, the waves are the ornament. For the sky, the moon is the ornament. For man's life, virtue is the ornament." Without good qualities, all other ornaments are worthless. The beauty created by the Divine cannot be excelled by any other ornament. It is that beauty which should be esteemed. Beauty is God. Why attempt to enhance it? When you have natural beauty, why go after artificial cosmetics? True beauty consists in good qualities.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Today we have to recognise the importance of the body. To make right use of the body, good qualities are essential. With a healthy body and good qualities, you can lead ideal lives. When this infinitely precious human life is filled with good thoughts and good actions, the nation will flourish.

Eschewing all thoughts of "mine", "my people", fill every moment of your waking life every day with thoughts of the well-being of others. When all are happy, you will also be happy. Promote the welfare of society, with which is bound up your own welfare.

"All are alike to Me"

Love even your enemy That is Sai's ideal. Indeed, in the entire world there is no one whom I do not like. Some may dislike me or be opposed to me. But I have no feelings against them. All are alike to me. Try to cultivate at least a fraction of that equal-mindedness.

Some devotees bemoan their lot saying, "God is described as an ocean of kindness, the embodiment of compassion, but He has done nothing to relieve me of my woes." The Lord is verily the embodiment of Love and Truth and is an ocean of Compassion. But, to what extent are you carrying out the injunctions of that Lord? Ask yourselves that question. You don't act properly, but seek favours. God's grace will be showered on you only when you put into practice at least a few of the Lord's injunctions.

Today the Gita is being propagated in many ways. But how many are practising even one of the teachings of the Gita? Men are heroes in aspiration and zeroes in practice. Likewise, people are eloquent about the Ramayana and the way Rama adhered to the pledge given by his father. But how many carry out the words of their parents? The Ramayana, Bhagavatha or the Gita are not to be regarded as scriptures for mere ritualistic reading. They are texts whose teachings have to be followed. This applies equally to other sacred books like the Bible, the Quran and the Granth Saheb.

There are some others who spend their entire lives in the quest for knowledge. When will they ever start practising what they have learnt?

Discourse in the Vidyagiri Stadium, on 23-11-1991, Bhagavan's Birthday.

For the consummation of human evolution, and the realisation by man of his highest goal, religion and spiritual discipline are very essential. Religion is the link between the individual and the Universe, between Jeeva and Deva. If that does not exist life becomes chaos. A cow caught on a hill wanting to go to the hill opposite, but confronted with a flooded river in between, needs a bridge between the two. That is what religion is.

BABA

Vol. 25, 38, 1992. Revere The Mother: Serve The Motherland

*By being borne by Kausalya
Rama fulfilled His divine role;
Brought up by the noble
exemplar of womanhood, Sita,
The twins, Lava and Kusha,
achieved glory;
The loving care of Jijibai
made Shivaji a heroic warrior.
Fostered with love by Puthlibai
Gandhi became a Mahatma.
The first letter of the Spiritual
alphabet is "Aatma" (Mother).
Is there anything greater
in the world than the
Spirit that protects all
living beings all the time ?*

Embodiments of Divine Aatma! There is nothing sweeter than maternal love.

Forbearance lends beauty to man. Truth and integrity constitute the hard penance for man. The Divinity inherent in man is not recognised by him. Failing to realise that *neethi* (morality) is greater than one's *Jaathi* (community) and that *Guna*: (virtue) is greater than one's *Kulam* (caste), man is laying waste his life.

The ancient sages regarded human life as something sweet. Man's primary duty is to preserve the sacred sweetness of this life. This can be accomplished only through sacrifice. and not selfishness. To lose the sweet nature of life is to forfeit man's humanness.

Maternal love is Divine

The Divine sweetness in human life is derived from *Maathru bhaavam* (maternal love). For the protection and rearing of her children, the mother is prepared to make every sacrifice. It is this spirit of sacrifice that makes motherhood infinitely precious. The Upanishads have declared that there is no other means than *Thyaaga* (sacrifice) to achieve immortality.

There is no diviner or purer feeling than maternal love. Today people make no effort to cherish this feeling. Sri Rama declared: "The mother and the Motherland are greater than heaven itself."

God is formless and attributeless. The unmanifested Divine is worshipped in various forms. God is not easily accessible to everyone. Nevertheless God is worshipped with faith in various ways and joy is derived therefrom.

Among the sacred aphorisms cherished by Bharathiyas, the foremost are: "*Maathru dhevo Bhava! Pithru dhevo Bhava!*" (Adore the mother as God. Adore the father as God). The mother is the foremost deity for man as the visible embodiment of the Divine who can be directly experienced. Every son is aware of the mother's affection, care and concern. He knows how to please the mother and keep her happy.

No one knows how the unmanifested Divine showers His grace or displays His displeasure, what He desires or disapproves. One can lead a sacred life by adoring the mother, instead of worshipping the unmanifested Divine. The *Chaithanyam* (Aatmic Consciousness) that is present in the Divine is also present in living beings.

Macrocosm in microcosm

If this is the case, a doubt may arise. What is the need for giving a unique place to God? When you look at an array of electric bulbs, they may all look alike. But there are differences in wattage amongst them according to the filament in them. The wattage may vary from 40 to 5000 watts. Likewise, in all human beings the five elements, the five organs of action and the five organs of perception, and other organs are common. But in their thoughts and fancies there are differences. The sacred and remarkable Divine potency in each of them is also different. It is because this Divine potency is present in God in infinite measure that the uniqueness of God is recognised. It has been said: "*Yatha pinde, thatha Brahmaade*" (What is in the microcosm is in the macrocosm). *Brahmaanda*, the macrocosm is regarded as *Viraata Swarupa* (the Cosmic form) and the microcosm is regarded as the atomic nucleus. This is a wrong view. What is present in the atom, is present in the Cosmos. There is no difference between the two. A small seed carries within it the potential of becoming a big tree. The Cosmic Form is not a mere aggregation of various objects. It does not signify the one in the many. The Cosmic Form means that which contains within itself everything.

Illumine your lives by the sunshine of *Vairaagya*

You cannot see the vast tree contained in the tiny seed. Likewise, the atomic principle contains the macrocosm in microcosm. Equally, the divinity present in God (the macrocosm) is present in man in a subtle form like the fire in a match stick. You cannot get fire out of a damp match stick. Man is filled with the fire of Divine wisdom and sacredness. But it is not perceptible in spite of spiritual exercises, severe penance and many good deeds. The reason is the fact that the mind is dampened by *Ahamkaara* and *Mamakaara* (egoistic and acquisitive tendencies). It is only when this dampness is removed by the sunshine of *Vairaagya* (detachment) that an illumined life becomes possible.

Man today is well informed about myriad things. But he is ignorant of his own true nature. Of what avail is all knowledge if one cannot get rid of his bad qualities and realise his true nature? All accomplishments and possessions are of no use to man. Only a godly life can redeem him.

A nation's prosperity does not come down from the sky or sprout from the earth. It is based on man's actions. Man's conduct has to be purified. Men today have forgotten the greatness of the mother and the duties of the son. How can man expect to get the bliss for which he aspires if he fails to discharge his duties, forgets his humanness, turns his face away from God, and goes after worldly pleasures?

Rama's deep devotion to His parents

At his father's behest, Rama accompanied the sage Viswamithra, protected his *Yaga* and reached Mithila with the Sage. After Rama had handled the bow of Shiva, Emperor Janaka, according to his earlier declaration, wanted to offer in marriage his daughter Sita to Rama. But Rama was not willing to go through the marriage without the approval of his parents. Viswamithra tried to persuade Rama in many ways, but Rama deemed the sanction of his parents more essential than obeying the words of the preceptor. Rama did not venture even to look at Sita until his parents arrived and agreed to the alliance.

Bharath today has forgotten this divine message of Rama, revealing his deep devotion to his mother and father. To carry out the injunctions of his father, Rama went into exile and spent fourteen years in the forest. He deemed adherence to Truth as the highest penance. When Rama was in the forest, Bharatha, accompanied by Vasishtha and others, went to him to persuade him to return to the Kingdom. Rama told Vasishtha: "Guruji, life is not more precious than respect for truth. I have entered the forest to comply with my father's command, If I go back to the Kingdom, I will be betraying my father's pledge. I would sooner give up my life than give up my adherence to truth."

The story of Rama has been teaching to the world the supreme greatness of a life based on truth, sacrifice, integrity and morality.

Krishna's lesson to Gaandhaari

That man is to be pitied who has not earned the grace of his mother, who has not enjoyed the loving looks of his mother and who has not tried to please her. This is illustrated by an episode from the *Mahabharatha*. After all the Kauravas had been slain in battle, Krishna went to their blind old father, Dhritarashtra, and his wife Gaandhaari to console them. Unable to restrain her bitterness and grief, Gaandhaari blamed Krishna in harsh terms. Krishna told her: "Gaandhaari! You are making a grievous mistake. From the time of their birth, did you look at any of your children? If the Kauravas did not benefit from your own sight, how can they be seen by me?" This means one who has not received the loving look of his mother does not deserve the gracious look of the Divine. In Bharath today, this *Dharmic* principle has been erased. Immersed in selfish concerns, people are forgetting the Divine and giving up all principles of morality and justice. Looking at the state of things in Bharath today, it is clear that the nation has gone down in moral stature a great deal.

Embodiments of Love! Recognise the truth that morality is the primary requisite of human society. You have to perform your duties and discharge your obligations. You must be united and take part in social service. Union is strength. It promotes the welfare of all. If one does not strive for unity and progress, how can he serve society? Even small ants acting in union can destroy a serpent. Today unity is being undermined in the country. There are differences in every home. Institutions without unity ultimately collapse. A divided nation faces destruction. Hence, for the welfare of the nation, all must live in unity. Distinctions of high and low should be given up. The nation's welfare alone must be kept in mind.

You are well aware of the divisions in every political party. These divisions are breaking the parties into fragments. If this fragmentation goes on, how can the nation progress? The individual who is concerned about the welfare of the nation should eschew self-interest, cultivate

the spirit of unity and work for the progress of the nation. This should be the first motto of the country.

Uphold the culture of Bharath as a true citizen

Those who claim to be citizens of Bharath are oblivious to the honour and prestige of the nation. The man who is not proud of this motherland and his mother tongue is worse than a corpse. If you proclaim yourself a citizen of Bharath, you should uphold the culture of Bharath. You should conduct yourself according to Bharathiya culture.

If unity is lost, what can anyone accomplish? If there are three persons in a house, there can be peace in the house only if the three live in harmony. In every individual, there are three entities in the body that is his dwelling: the *Manas* (mind), the *Vaak* (tongue) and *Kaayam* (the organs of actions). It is only when these three entities function harmoniously that the individual can have peace. When there is discord between them, how can peace be got?

No room for lazy persons in Bharath

Manifest the divinity that is in you. Only then you can be a true *vyakthi* (individual). Practise *sadhana* for this purpose. Jettison your worldly attachments. Develop love so that you may get rid of divisive feelings in you.

It is extremely unfortunate that men should waste their human lives, which are so precious and sacred. Life is short and men should make good use of their divine potentialities without wasting time. Two hands have been given to man for feeding himself and rendering service. There is no room for lazy persons in Bharath. One who does not work has no right to eat. Work, work and work! That is your duty. Consider what is appropriate in a particular situation and act accordingly.

Few try to understand the ways of the Divine. They are beyond the comprehension of the intellectuals. God is omnipotent. This is beyond doubt. The lamp shines because of the Divine. The power of the wind which can blow out the lamp also comes from God. It is ridiculous to expose a lamp to a strong wind and pray to God not to allow the light to go out. The powers of the Divine are to be rightly understood and used in the appropriate way.

Once a devotee asked Swami why He should not convert all sea water into petrol because of the steep rise in the price of petrol. The devotee had read a report of Bhagavan's conversion of water into petrol on one occasion. Swami told him. "You are no doubt intelligent, but your intelligence is not functioning properly. If the seas around India are converted to petrol, what will happen if a witless person like you, walking on the beach, throws a burning cigarette in the sea. There will be a holocaust. Have you thought about this possibility? Have you any concern for the welfare of the country? It is stupid to make suggestions of this kind."

There are many such scatter-brained persons in the world. They are posing as highly intelligent persons. They come forward to criticise God. No one has the right or the competence to criticise God. God can do anything by an act of will. All actions performed selflessly are godly.

God is present in all beings. Everything in the Cosmos is a form of the Divine. The Divine power sustains everybody at all times. Hence every man is an embodiment of God. Once you have that faith, you will not be inclined to follow the wrong path.

Who is Sai?

Everyone should strive to recognise the divinity that is present in all. This effort has to be made by everyone. Human birth has been given for this purpose. It cannot be left to God.

There are many who do not understand the Sai principle. Who is this Sai? Why are certain things happening in this manner? These questions are asked.

I am not a *sanyasi* (renunciant). I am not a *yogi*. I am not a *bhogi* (pleasure-seeker). I am not a *thyaagi* (one who sacrifices). I am I. This "I" is the first name given to the *Aatma*. A renunciant is bound by certain restrictions. The pleasure-seeker is bound in other ways. I have no limitations. Mine is boundless bliss. My name is "I." It is not a name given after one's birth. To understand Me, everyone has to realise that the "I" is present in everyone. The "I" is used by everyone in every context, whether he is a millionaire or a pauper. This "I" is *Brahman*---"*Aham Brahmaasmi*." Everyone uses the "I" from dawn to dusk without understanding its meaning.

Offer every action of daily life to God

Students! As future citizens of the nation you have to conduct yourselves in an exemplary manner. Remember that there is no special merit in so-called spiritual exercises. Every action in daily life calls for *Dhyana* (concentration) and has to be sanctified by performing it as an offering to God. A farmer tilling his field should feel at the same time that he is tilling the field of his heart. While sowing seeds, he should sow the seeds of good qualities in his heart. While watering the field, he should think he is watering the field of his heart with love. In this way, everyone can pursue the spiritual path without the aid of rosary or betaking himself to the forest.

Today, the foremost need is the promotion of unity. Irrespective of physical and ideological differences, the *Aatma* principle is common to all.

It has to be recognised that individuals are integrally related to Society like the different organs in a body. Humanity itself is a limb of Nature and *Prakruthi* (nature) is a limb of God (the Omni-Self). If this integral relationship is understood, where is the ground for hatred? No one should consider himself as insignificant or unimportant. Everyone, small or big, is a vital part of the whole and is essential for its proper functioning like all the parts in a rocket. Any small defective part may cause the rocket to explode. Likewise, in this vast Cosmos every being has a significant role to play to ensure its smooth functioning.

We celebrate many festivals in connection with birthdays or other occasions. It is not the festivities that are important, not the dresses, not the speeches. Feelings are what are important. Without purity of thought, purity of wisdom cannot be got. Seek to purify your minds.

Cultivate selfless love towards all and engage yourselves in social service. I have often declared: "*Graama Seva is Rama Seva*" (service to the villagers is service to Rama).

Enshrine Rama in your heart

It is a mistake to think only of constructing a temple for Rama. In this vast land of Bharath of what use is it to raise a temple for Rama in any particular place? Everyone's heart should be converted into a temple for Rama. The land of Bharath should be cherished as the *Ramarajya* (Kingdom of Rama). What does *Ramarajya* mean? It does not refer to any particular state. Unity in thought, word and deed constitutes *Ramarajya*. Today, there is no unity, no purity, no awareness of Divinity. People are wallowing in the mire of "community." This is not the primary

duty of man. When there is discord between thought, word and deed, humanness is undermined. Unity has to be promoted to foster humanness.

Bharathiya culture belongs to all mankind. Time, place and conditions of life may vary. But the basic principles governing human conduct are the same. If people want to proceed to a higher state, the first requisite is improvement in one's conduct. When the foundation under your feet is shaky, how can you expect to build up the mansion of life? Your conduct is the foundation, Your actions are the means. Develop faith. Without faith life is a waste. Man today believes in everything except God. This is his misfortune.

God is omnipresent. The man who has no faith in God has no faith in himself. Develop self-confidence, which is the basis for any nation's progress. On that foundation of faith erect the walls of *Ananda* (Bliss). Then place the ceiling of *Vairaagya* (detachment) on them. Live under the roof of *thyaaga* (sacrifice). This is the way to Self-realisation. Chant the name of the Lord to secure mental peace and purify the heart. You can then lead a Godly life.

Vidhyaagiri Stadium, Bhagavan's Birthday, 23 Nov 1992

Vol. 26, 36, 1993. Purity, patience, perseverance: steps to Divinity

*In this sacred land of Bhaarath
Forbearance is our best wealth;
Of all forms of rituals, the highest
Is the observance of Truth and Morality;
Of sweetness of disposition
The greatest is maternal love;
Jettisoning the national ideal
That honour is greater than life itself,
What a pity people have
Fallen a prey to exotic practices!
What can I say about
The plight of Bhaarath!
Like the elephant unaware of its strength
Bhaaratheeyas have become docile today.*

WHEN the heart is filled with compassion, the hands are dedicated to 'the service, of others, the body is engaged in constant help to others, the life of such a person is sacred, purposeful and noble.

The entire Cosmos is based on the bedrock of Truth. Wealth and Welfare and all comforts and pleasures are dependent on Truth. Wherever you turn, Truth shines effulgently. The Goddess of Wealth, Lakshmi, dwells in the abode of Truth. The world cannot exist without Truth, just as the rays cannot exist without the sun. Truth is the Cosmos and the Cosmos is Truth.

The entire Cosmos is permeated by the Divine *Eeshaavaasyam idham Jagath*. It is foolish to imagine that the natural, physical and mundane is unreal and there is something else that sustains it. The Cosmos is Vishnu and Vishnu (the Supreme) is the Cosmos. The Cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine.

The Universe is a Divine manifestation

Considering this universe, composed of the five basic elements, as a Divine manifestation, the ancient sages embarked on a spiritual enquiry and realised the Truth. It is because this profound and eternal Truth has been forgotten by man that the world is a prey to all kinds of troubles and difficulties.

Among the five elements, the primary one is the earth. It is all-pervasive. All the mountains, rivers, villages, towns, etc., are based on the earth. The scientists found that the earth is revolving round itself. In that case, all the objects on the earth should also be revolving. But that is not so. The earth has a divine power of attraction. This power of attraction holds all the objects' together. Hence, the earth alone cannot be regarded as the basis for all the objects. If we enquire

more deeply, it will be found that even the earth is supported by something else. The earth is based on a higher power, the Divine power.

The Divine remains steady and unchanging

Thus, the Divine is firm, pure and changeless. Without this Divine power, nature and the physical world cannot function well. If, for instance, the rails on which a locomotive runs, were also to move along with the train, the results would be disastrous. Likewise, if the road were also to move along with the car running on it, there will be accidents. It is the car that moves and not the earth. In this manner, many objects are in motion in the universe, but the Divine remains steady and unchanging.

The next is the water element which is present everywhere. Whether we perceive it or not Life is impossible without water.

The next one is Fire. This fire element is present in every living being including humans, as *Jatharaagni* (the digestive fire). This fire is not only on the earth, but is even in space. When clouds clash against each other, fire is generated in the form of lightning. When two inert flint-stones are struck against each other, fire emanates from them. Likewise when two sticks are rubbed against each other, fire emerges. Thus, fire also is an all-pervading power.

Then, there is *Aakaasha* (space or ether). It pervades everything. There is *Vaayu* (air). There can be no life without air. You experience the presence of air during a storm or a whirlwind. But air is present all the time everywhere.

When the five elements have such immense power, you can imagine what must be the potency of the Divine which sustains them. The five elements are *Paramaathmasvaruupa* (manifestations of the Supreme Omniself). No one can deny Its existence, whether one is a theist, an atheist or an agnostic. Today, these five elements are not being properly used. Instead, they are very much misused. Their misuse is the root cause of all the travails of the world. As the five elements are based on Truth, the ancient *rishis* observed restraint in speech so that they may adhere to truth. Restraint in speech nourishes truth. Excessive speech is the cause of great unrest. It is essential, therefore, for everyone to recognise the basic role of the five elements and live in consonance with that awareness.

Religion is the reflection of belief

The mind demonstrates the nature of the five elements. *Mathi* (belief) has emerged from the mind. *Matham* (religion) is reflection of belief. Religion is not what it is normally understood to be. There are many engaged in destruction of religion. If religion is destroyed, belief or faith will be destroyed and then the mind itself will be destroyed. Religious hatred has to be got rid of, not religion as such. Adherents of all faiths recognise the power of the five elements and worship them.

Bhaaratheeyas have upheld unity in thought, word and deed by their conduct. The *Vedhas* have proclaimed that the Divine is present in all five elements. This truth is accepted by the adherents of all faiths. But while professing belief in this truth and proclaiming it, they are not acting upto it in practice. Only the Bhaaratheeyas practised this truth and experienced the bliss derived from it. Bhaaratheeyas adored hills, birds and trees Adherents of other faiths ridiculed such practices. This is due to thoughtlessness and is not a sign of sanity. All people say that God is in all beings and all things. But to deride Bhaaratheeyas, who act on that saying, is sheer folly. How can one,

who acts according to his words, be regarded as a fool? Should not the one who does not live up to his words be treated as a fool? Let the wise determine the right answer.

The Supreme Reality is one, which is God

Bhaaratheeyas are known to act upto their words. People of other faiths may profess one thing and practise differently. We need 'not criticize any religion.

All religions teach only what is good.

People should lead their lives on this basis.

If the minds are pure,

How can religion do any harm?

People are spoiling their minds. Religion is not at fault. Today what is needed is transformation of minds and not of men. When the minds are reformed, men will automatically change for the better. Men's lives are based on how their mind thinks. Today men should develop mental purity and sacred feelings.

The Supreme Reality is one. It is God. Men of all faiths--whether they are Hindhus, Christians, Muslims, Paarsis or others----have recognized that God is one. It is only when men develop feelings of forbearance, compassion and unity, that men will have fraternal feelings towards each other and foster equality and justice. It is only when men develop *Ekaathmabhaava* (oneness in Spirit) that bitterness and discord will cease. Men must act on the conviction that the same Divine dwells in all beings.

From the body to the Omni Self

The Cosmos is an organism with multifarious limbs. A human being has eyes, ears, mouth, etc. All these organs are limbs of the human body. The body is a limb of society. Society is a limb of humanity. Humanity is a limb of *Prakrithi*. *Prakrithi* is a limb of the *Paramaathma* (Omni Self). This shows the relationship between the sense organs in man and the Divine. Therefore, one should make proper use of the senses, comprehend the nature of the Divine that sustains them and lead a meaningful life.

There is the body. There is the world. There are forests, trees and many other things. In referring to all these, we use the word "is"---that it exists. This term "is," signifying existence, proclaims the fundamental fact about man. There is only one thing that exists. But man forgets this Divine Reality because of his selfishness and self-centredness. The latter reflect his egoism and ostentatiousness. It is only when the last two are extinguished, will man's inner Divinity manifest itself.

The bad traits which are found in man are the result of his food and other habits and do not arise from his *Aathma*. Vices like lust, anger, envy and pride are the outcome of bad food and improper associations and are products of external factors. They do not arise from within. Qualities like love, compassion, consideration for others arise from within one's self. These are human values. Forgetting these values, following animal qualities, men are leading an animal existence. This is wrong. Men should lead lives based on their human estate.

Divine love is permanent and imperishable

Wealth may come and go. Strength may grow or decay. All things in the world may pass away. But there is one thing that is imperishable and unchanging. That is permanent Divine Love. All other forms of love are not real love at all. They are temporary, worldly attachments, based on physical, communal or other desires.

True love is related solely to the *Hridhaya* (heart). Man today is not cherishing such an unchanging and enduring love. He is wasting his life, pursuing temporary allurements. Wandering about aimlessly in the pursuit of evanescent and trivial pleasures, man is immersed in all kinds of troubles. He can discover his true path only by seeking spiritual illumination. Spirituality does not mean performance of ritual worship. It calls for the removal of the animal traits in man. Only then sacred feelings will arise in him. That is real spirituality. Regard all beings as children of God. Bear no ill-will towards anyone. It is because of hatred and ill-will that mankind is plunged in violence and bloodshed. Man's blood is inherently pure, divine and unsullied. To misuse that blood in wrong ways is a sign of animal or demonic nature.

Bhaarath today is in a crisis created by a myriad difficult problems. But not Bhaarath alone, all other countries are also facing similar crises. What is the reason? It is the total failure to remember the spiritual oneness of mankind. Only the sense of spiritual unity will generate universal love. That love alone will bind men together in unity. This love principle should emanate from the heart. Only then true unity will emerge.

Embodiments of Love! Do not be deluded by the belief that life has been given to you for eating and drinking and enjoying other physical pleasures. This is not the reason for human, birth, which is rare blessing. What is the difference between a human being and the animals? It is qualities like kindness, compassion, forbearance and sympathy which differentiate human beings from animals. But man tends to forget these inherent qualities out of absorption in selfish, mundane desires. Those wearing the glass of selfishness can only see selfishness all around them. A defective vision produces an apparent defect in creation. There is nothing wrong with *srishti* (creation). Every defect is related to the defective *dhrishti* (vision).

Perform duties but do not claim any rights

Men must realise that true humanness will be achieved only when the five elements in the universe are properly used. The earth is a sacred base of the Supreme. The other four elements are super-imposed on it. Without the base, the other elements will be functionless. Hence all human beings living on earth should cooperate with each other, engage themselves in socially helpful activities and redeem their lives. Every man has duties to perform, but can claim no rights. Today people tend to assert their rights without regard to their responsibilities (or duties). Duties and rights go together. Today men tend to assert their rights but have no regard for their responsibilities. Absolute unconcern for responsibilities has become a kind of epidemic in all spheres of life today. When you discharge your responsibilities, your rights will be automatically 'ensured'.

In Bhaarath today everybody is clamouring about rights. What is the meaning of "right"? It is that to which you are entitled. How do you get it? Can you get the fruit without sowing the seed? Without a tree can there be a fruit? But you aspire for the fruit without sowing the seed or rearing the tree? What folly is this? No one has any inherent claim to any right. He has only responsibility. Do your duty. Duty is God. Work is worship.

When you perform your duties, you will be acquiring the title to your rights. Every man should discharge his duties. Performance of duty is your *yoga*. It is your enjoyment. It is your sacrifice. Discharge of duty is the basis for everything.

Have respect for the faiths of others also

If duties are performed according to one's respective role---as householder, student, renunciant or ascetic--the world will not suffer from lack of peace or prosperity. People are not attending to their respective functions. They are not carrying out the duties properly. Ignoring their duties, they interest themselves in the activities of others.

This attitude is prevalent in the religious sphere also. Members of one faith consider it supreme and deride the faiths of others. No one is qualified to make such a claim. Even as you prize your faith, you must realize that others are equally entitled to prize their faiths. You may esteem your religion greatly. Adhere' to it accordingly. But do not criticize or despise the religions of other people. Unfortunately men have lost this sense of respect for other faiths. If all people recognise this truth, there will be no room in the world for conflicts and discord.

Man strives for peace in many ways. Where is peace to be found? It is not in the external world. Peace must be found within. Outside you have only pieces. You must seek to manifest the peace within you. There are millions in the world who preach and propagate what is good. But not one in a hundred practises the good teachings. The world will pay no heed to those who do not practise what they preach.

It is the liar who is haunted by fear

Whether others esteem or not, you must be content to act according to your conscience. The inner conviction that you are acting righteously is your best witness. There is no greater *Dharma* than adherence to Truth. You need have no fear as long as you adhere to truth. It is the liar who is haunted by fear.

Therefore, go forward to render social service with faith and fortitude. Eschew religious hatred, which is the cause of conflict. Respect every religion.

People today talk about protecting the nation. The nation does not need protection. If you protect and foster truth and righteousness the nation will be automatically protected. In the name of protecting the country, arms and bombs are piled up which are ruining the nation.

At the root of all troubles is human selfishness. Some amount of concern for selfish interests is justified. But when anything is carried to excess, it proves calamitous. Man is endowed with the discriminating power to control his desires. This power must be used to decide whether any action is right or wrong.

"Be," "do" and "speak" what is good

All of you are embodiments of the *Aathma* (Spirit). You are all the manifestations of the Divine. The Indwelling Spirit is one and the same in all beings irrespective of their external differences, like the current that illumines bulbs of different wattage and colour. Fill your hearts with love. Then you can experience real bliss. With a narrow mind and heart, if you indulge in magniloquent words, no one will care to listen to you. First of all "Be"--be good yourself. Then you "Do"--act likewise. Then "Speak"--tell others about what is good. Only thus you will be setting an ideal example.

Do not entertain bad feelings about anyone. They do you more harm than to others. As the saying in a Telugu poem goes: "One's own anger is one's enemy and one's peace is one's friend and kinsfolk. One's happiness is heaven and one's sorrow is hell." Develop sacred and pure feelings. We claim to celebrate the birthdays of people. But the birthday is truly celebrated when there is the birth of pure ideas in one.

You celebrate the birthday of Bhagavaan. But do you follow the teachings? You will experience the fruits of celebrating the birthday only when you follow the teachings. Jesus said: "Love everyone." Christmas is celebrated, but how far does one practise love? None at all.

There is love in everyone's heart. Share it at least with ten persons every day. This is seldom done. People are more keen on receiving than on giving. They are willing to give away only things which they do not relish. There is no sacrifice in this.

This was the message given by Vyaasa in his eighteen *puraanas*. "It is meritorious to help others. It is sinful to inflict harm on them."

You should not be concerned with how many have come for Svaami's birthday but how many are following Svaami's teachings. If every devotee is able to influence two persons, soon the whole world will be reformed.

Pray for the welfare of all countries

Embodiments of love! There is only one thing you have to offer to Me today. Pray that people in all countries, may the entire humanity, should be happy and at peace. "*Lokaas samasthaas-sukhino bhavanthu*" (Let all the worlds be happy). Then alone there will be real unity. Do not wish merely for the peace and prosperity of India alone. Pray for the welfare of all countries. All are our brothers, whether they are in Pakistan or America or elsewhere.

Whether you believe it or not, realise that I am able to attract people from so many countries because of my all-embracing love.

If every person observes three things, he will be one with Svaami. You will experience the Divine in you. As the following three are in Me, I can declare firmly about them. They are three P's: Purity, Patience and Perseverance. These three are in Me and around Me. Anyone with these three qualities will be unafraid wherever he may be.

The most important quality is purity. Today everything is polluted. Water, air and all the five elements are polluted. As a result the mind of man is also polluted. How is purity to be achieved? Fill your minds with thoughts of God, dedicate all your actions to God and consider God as the inner motivator. Contemplation of God is not a matter for derision. You need have no fear on that account. You must have full faith in God, who is the universal sustainer. He is the protector, but not the punisher. The punishment you get is the consequence of your own actions.

Therefore, chanting the name of God, doing *bhajans* and performing good deeds, engage yourselves in service of your fellow-beings. Nourish love in your hearts. Love will drive away all bad-thoughts. It will promote the spirit of forgiveness.

Birthday discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 23-11-93.

When the sun rises, all the buds of lotus in the lake do not open out in full bloom. Only those which are full grown can blossom; so the rest have to bide their time and grow.

BABA

Vol. 27, 31, 1994. The *Avathaar* and the devotees

*More effulgent than the Sun,
Purer and Whither than snow,
Subtler than space,
The Supreme Self pervades everything,
From the minutest particle.
Holding everything within Him,
Illumining everything By His Consciousness.
The Divine (Brahman) is in you
And you are in the Brahman.
There is no difference
Between you and Brahman.
What greater truth can I convey
To all of you assembled here?*

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Aathma, When the Lord (Naaraayana) incarnates in human form, He cannot avoid abiding by the regulations set by Him. You should not forget that even if the Lord is the Director of the "Cosmic drama, in His human form he is playing a specific role. If He does not act according to the role assumed by Him, either overdoes or underplays the role, departing from what is appropriate, He will be falling in His purpose. When the Divine assumes human form, He has to serve as an example by ideal actions.

Hiranyaaksha and Hiranyakashipu, impelled by their hatred, embarked on many enquiries in search of Naaraayana. They felt after their prober that Naaraayana was not in any of the five elements. But the tide of time and circumstances led to situations in which they faced the Lord in His most dreadful forms and met with their end.

When Krishna made His advent on earth, He also had to play His part according to His role. While Sishupala was railing at Krishna, He allowed him a long rope and destroyed him, when the appropriate time came. The Bhaagavatham relates the story of how Krishna retreated repeatedly in His encounters with Jaraasandha. How can the All-knowing, All-powerful, Omnipresent Lord flee from anywhere? Where can He hide Himself? This is utterly fanciful.

When one has faith in the ways of the Lord and abides by the will of the Lord, the Lord can be understood and experienced.

For instance, there is the example of Dhraupadhi in the Mahaabhaaratha. In the court of Dhuryodhana, although she was humiliated and dishonoured by Dhuryodhana and Dhusshaasana, Krishna, in accordance with the role He had to play, did not intervene, as both of them were destined to meet with their death at the hands of Bheema.

During Krishna's life-time, He was the target of attacks and accusations by many wicked persons. But the Divine has no likes or dislikes. The wicked persons suffer from the consequences of their own actions according to their deserts.

What one gets in life is dependent partly on what he has earned by his actions. This is called *Praarabdh* (fate). This is by its nature temporary. What is got as the fruit of a past action will not last long. Forgetting this fact and forgetting also his *Svabhaavam* (true nature) man is carried away by the transient and acts according to his whims.

When an actor in a play is assigned a certain role, he studies the entire play, but while acting his role, he has to play his part alone in each scene as required in the play and not all the roles that he knows. He has to suit his actions to the demands of his role in each scene in the play. Likewise, the Lord, when He has assumed a role in the Cosmic play, has to act in each situation according to what is appropriate to it and according to the rules of the game.

Mankind's fall from righteous conduct

From ancient times, in accordance with the spirit of Bhaaratheeya Culture, Bhaaratheeyas have been according the Highest place to *Thyaaga* (renunciation or sacrifice). They adored *Dharma* (Righteous Conduct). They were pledged to upholding justice. They adhered to Truth. People today have ignored these values of Bhaarith's ancient culture. They have fallen a prey to worldly and sensuous pleasures, believing that only earthly existence is real.

People in the world today are taking to evil ways and cherishing evil thoughts the like of which have never before prevailed. Men are consumed by a limitless passion for wealth and power. No doubt money is necessary for meeting one's daily needs. But even here there should be a limit. The vast ocean, when it swells beyond its bounds, causes disaster. The food that is required for sustaining the body is conducive to health only when it is consumed within limits. Over-eating poisons the physical system. Food may give satisfaction or cause illness. By his food habits man is becoming a prey to disease. Food is essential, but it must be taken within limit for it to be wholesome. Likewise wealth is essential but within limits. When there is excessive wealth, many dangers ensue. With excessive wealth man turns arrogant and loses the sense of discrimination between right and wrong. He becomes a Dhuryodhana who exemplified greed rather than a Karna (who was noted for his generosity).

Wealth and sacrifice should grow together

Together with the growth of one's wealth, one's spirit of sacrifice should grow commensurately. Increase in wealth should bring about an increase in generosity. These days wealth increases but not magnanimity.

Of what use is wealth if one cannot be happy?

Even if a river is overflowing,

A dog can only lap a little of it.

For a greedy man, there is no contentment

Even if he has large hoards.

Today, when a man's riches increase, he becomes increasingly miserly. As a result, he forgets his true nature.

When money earned by honest means does not always confer happiness, how can you get happiness through money earned by dishonest means? Hence, it should be realised that excessive wealth can never confer peace or happiness. When you have large wealth, offer it for good causes to help others. Thereby you will derive satisfaction.

In the pursuit of power men sacrifice morality

The second evil is the passion for power. From the villager to the topmost man in a city, everybody is after power. Power carries with it limits and obligations. There are five kinds of power--the power of knowledge, intellectual power, the power of fame, the power of character, and the power of sacrifice. Only the person who has all these five attributes should aspire for a position of authority.

These days men conduct themselves in positions of power without any understanding of how to exercise authority. Every man aspires for positions of power from that of Panchaayath President to the head of the government of the country. In the pursuit of power, men are prepared to use any means, sacrificing morality and justice. All sorts of corrupt practices are being resorted to for securing power. Law and order are being undermined.

In this manner, the true nature of man is being forgotten. This is a highly dangerous situation. Those who seek positions of authority should recognise their obligations. They should exercise power with due regard to the restraints to be observed. "*Nasshreyo Niyamam Vinaa*" (Nothing great can be achieved without restraint). Thus both wealth and power have to be used with restraint. But these restraints have been violated at present.

Divine bides for proper time to play His full role

All the troubles and disorders the country is experiencing today are due to these violations. Men are failing to recognise the nature of the Divine. Even though the Divine has come down as an actor on the world stage, He is biding for the proper time to play His full role. A fruit takes time to ripen. When the fruit is ripe it falls down of its own accord. Likewise when the time is ripe for one to reap the fruits of his actions, he must be ready to gather them according to the nature of the actions. It is one's own actions which lead to bad or good results. That is why the scriptures have declared that man's mind is the cause of his bondage or liberation.

Hence, the mind has to be turned towards the sacred path. It should be concentrated on actions of service to others. It should be devoted to concern for the welfare of the world. Only then the purity of the mind expresses itself.

For all the confusion and conflict prevailing in the world today, it is the feelings and thoughts of people that are responsible. To rake offence when some one criticizes you or to think of retaliation when one does some harm to you, is not the right way of reaching to them. Consider whatever good or bad that happens to you as the consequence of your own actions. Do not attribute them to acts of the Divine.

God is like a postman. The postman delivers one letter to one address and the people in the house rejoice over the good news contained in it. He delivers another letter at a second house and there is lamentation over the sad news contained in the letter. Is the postman responsible for the joy or the sadness of the recipients, of the letters? No. It is the content of the respective letters that is responsible. What you experience by way of joy or grief is a consequence of your own actions. God is only a witness.

Earn God's grace by getting rid of ego

In human society today, egoism is rampant. Ostentation is ubiquitous. Can peace and security be ensured in such a milieu? Can God's grace flow in such a state? No. Whatever one's scholarship or wealth, as long as there is *Ahamkaara* (egoism) God's grace will not flow. Grace, like water,

flows from a higher to a lower level. God's grace will be showered on those who have humility and discipline. Humility is essential for securing God's grace. Revere elders. Be content with what you have. Develop goodwill towards 'all. Bear no ill will towards anyone. When you desire that all should love you, you should equally love all.

The history of Bhaarith bears testimony to the pacific attitude of Bhaarithiyyas. They defended themselves when the country was invaded by outsiders, but they never embarked on wars of conquest. The ancient Bhaarithiyyas never resorted to wrongful or unrightful policies. Adherence to peace and truth was natural to them. Unfortunately today; in the pursuit of power people are giving the go-by to morality and integrity. In western countries many leaders resorted to violence to capture power. In Bhaarith also, there have been many examples of Muslims who killed or imprisoned their own fathers or kinsmen to seize the reins of power. This greed for power converted men into demons.

But look at what happened in the Raamaayana. To carry out the promises of his father, Raama renounced the kingdom and chose to live in exile for fourteen years in the forest. He did not aspire for power or position. He cherished *Dharma* (the code of right conduct).

Raama's example for cherishing *Dharma*

Shortly after their entry into the forest, one day, when Raama and Lakshmana were sitting under a tree, they heard the neigh of horses and cries of elephants. Raama asked Lakshmana to find out the reasons for the unusual presence of horses in the forest. Lakshmana climbed to the top of a tree and surveyed the scene. He noticed the advancing of a huge army, but only the flag fluttering high over the haze could be seen clearly. Lakshmana concluded from the emblem on the flag that it was Bharatha who was coming with the army.

Lakshmana got down and asked Raama to get ready with his bow and arrows. "What for?" asked Raama. Lakshmana said that at the instance of his mother, Bharatha was coming with his army to seize them. Amused at Lakshmana's naivety, Raama told him smilingly: "Bharatha is not such a person. He will do no such thing. He is coming to see us because he did not find us in Ayodhya when he came back to the city." Lakshmana retorted: "If he is coming to see us, why should he bring the army with him?"

Raama said: "To allay the feelings of the people, Bharatha is coming with all the citizens. Lakshmana! You have failed to realise that no one born in the Ikshvaku line will ever shed blood to ascend to the throne. Those who seize the throne by the sword cannot be righteous rulers. No such Kings will ever be born in the Ikshvaku dynasty. The rule of conduct for the Ikshvaku Kings is to inherit the throne by righteous means and rule with the consent of the people. The spirit of service should inspire who seek positions of authority. Without knowing how to serve, one cannot become a true leader" Raama allayed Lakshmana's apprehensions in this manner.

Meanwhile, Bharatha came running towards Raama, crying "Oh Brother!" and fell at his feet. Watching this scene, Lakshmana regretted his misjudgment and sought Raama's forgiveness.

Thus, from ancient times, the rulers in Bhaarith never resorted to violence or unrighteous means to ascend the throne. They were dedicated to the practice of *Dharma*. "*Sathyam Vadhha: Dharmam Chara*" (Speak the truth, follow Righteousness). These were the two basic tenets of the ancient Bhaarithiyyas. They esteemed them as their two eyes. Today the rule has been reversed---*Sathyam Vadhha* (Kill truth) *Dharmam Chara* (Imprison Righteousness). Today it is

the reign of falsehood. Unrighteousness is the prevailing moral code. It is because of these tendencies. Bhaarith today is a prey to disorder.

Every individual should try to practise and protect truth and righteousness. This is the bounden duty of every citizen of Bhaarith. This is the service they have to do to the nation. The nation will not be protected by an army or by the most modern weapons. If the people safeguard truth and righteousness, the latter will protect the nation and the world.

Svaami's encounter with intellectuals

Once, more than two decades ago, Sri K.M. Munshi convened a conference of intellectuals in Bombay to be addressed by Svaami. The so-called intellectuals today seldom have any intelligence. They are filled with conceit. The intellectuals in the gathering were proud and arrogant, gloating over their scholarship and book knowledge.

Bhagavan was the Chief Guest at the meeting and Munshi was seated next to Svaami. Munshi requested Svaami to clarify the doubts of intellectuals regarding spirituality and right conduct. Many questions were put to Svaami and Svaami answered all of them clearly and convincingly.

One member of the audience asked Svaami whether it was not necessary for India to equip itself with atom bombs in view of the fact that both affluent America and Communist Russia had huge piles of atom bombs. Svaami replied- "What folly is this! When there are millions in the country who lack food, clothing and shelter, the provision of these necessities is the most urgent task and not the manufacturing of atom bombs. Of what use are bombs when you cannot feed the people? Crores are being wasted on armaments. I cannot agree to such wastage."

Then another member asked- "How are we to meet an attack from outside?" Svaami replied: "Our country's name is Bhaarith. For this country the Mahaabhaaritha is the authentic guidebook. The heroes in this epic are the five Paandava brothers. Among them, Arjuna and Bheema are incomparable warriors. Nevertheless, they submitted themselves to Dharmaja, the eldest of the brothers. If India upholds *Dharma*, America and Russia will have to respect Bhaarith. Confronted by *Dharma*, anyone however powerful, will be cut to size. Therefore, the most vital thing for Bhaarith is *Dharma*."

When Svaami gave this reply, the entire gathering cheered Svaami for fifteen minutes. Thereafter Svaami told them. "It is not enough to clap your hands; open the taps of your minds. Take to the path of *Dharma*. There is no use merely applauding my words."

There are many in the country who worship the Raamaayana as a sacred text. How many of them honour the words of the father? Of what use is it to recite the Raamaayana without following its precepts? You have discourses on the Geetha in every street. But is anyone acting up to even one of its reachings? If you go on learning for years, when are you going to start practising the lessons? The endless study of books is sheer folly; to put into practice a single word is better than such studies. Today Bhaarith is full of such foolish persons.

Love is Sai's most potent weapon

Many of you have been coming here for over twenty or thirty years. You have listened to Svaami's discourses many times. Svaami has been repeatedly declaring that immortality can be achieved only by sacrifice and not by deeds, wealth or progeny. How many are making any sacrifice? How many are putting Svaami's teachings into practice? Why are you gathered here? It is all useless unless you practise at least one of the reachings. What is My directive? What is it

that will please Me? What is it that I desire? Only one thing: Love, Love, Love. That is Sai's most potent weapon. Was any invitation sent to any of you to come here? So many of you have gathered here attracted solely by the power of Svaami's love. There is nothing that cannot be achieved in the world through love. Some things may be achieved by other means, but through love even the Divine can be held in the palm of one's hand.

Saavithri, Chandhramathi, Seetha and Dhamayanthi stood out as exemplars of Indian womanhood. People read books about them, but do not follow their example. The reason is that people are swayed by evil thoughts. These bad qualities are due to bad habits relating to food and recreation.

Eschew meat, liquor and smoking

Today, let it be anyone, whether one deems himself a devotee or not, he should give up meat eating. Why? Meat eating promotes only animal qualities. It has been well said that the food one consumes determines one's thoughts. By eating the flesh of various animals, the qualities of these animals are imbibed. How sinful is it to feed on animals, which are sustained by the same five elements as human beings! This leads to demonic tendencies, besides committing the sin of inflicting cruelty on animals. Hence, those who genuinely seek to become devotees of God have to give up non-vegetarian food. Calling themselves Sai devotees or devotees of Raama and Krishna, they fatten on chicken. How can they be deemed Sai devotees? How can God accept such a person as a devotee? Therefore, whether they are devotees in India or outside, they should give up from this instant meat eating.

Next, there is the question of drink. The water that one drinks is life-giving. It issues from the head of Shiva. It is sacred. Instead of such wholesome drink, it is wrong to drink intoxicants. It makes a man forget his true nature. Alcoholic drink is utterly obnoxious. It degrades the addict. It makes him forget God. The drink addict is not conscious of what he says or does. The very sight of such a person is revolting. The drink evil has ruined innumerable families. Alcoholics have caused misery to their wives and children by wasting all their money on liquor. Of what use to the world are such derelicts?

In addition to liquor, many are addicted to smoking tobacco. Today cigarette smoking is the cause of many diseases like asthma, lung cancer, eosinophilia and heart ailments. The evil effects of smoking can be easily demonstrated. If a whiff of cigarette smoke is blown at a handkerchief, the cloth turns red at the spot. If smoke can cause such damage to a piece of cloth, how much damage will it not do when it gets into the blood stream? It ruins one's health and shortens one's life-span. Therefore, those who aspire to become true devotees of God have to give up meat, liquor and smoking.

Each one has to reform himself

Drink addiction is the cause of many evils. But no Government can stop this. The change must take place at the individual level. This can take place only through a mental transformation and not as a result of preaching by others. Each one has to recognise the truth and reform himself.

Embodiments of Love! You are deeming this day as the sixty ninth birthday of Svaami. I have no desire to celebrate such birthdays. As I was coming I was greeted by many wishing Me "Happy Birthday" I am always happy. Why should anyone wish "Happy Birthday" for Me? Be happy yourselves. Your happiness is My happiness.

Today, as an offering to Svaami, give up meat eating, consuming liquor and smoking. By renouncing these three, you will benefit yourselves as well as society and the nation. Svaami's sole aim is to promote the welfare of the family, the society and the nation. If you wish to carry out Svaami's aim, renounce from this moment itself these three bad practices. Do not put it off to tomorrow. Take the resolve from this moment. Expecting that you will carry out Svaami's wish and thereby promote the well being of your family and the nation, I bless all of you.

Discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 23-11-1994, Bhagavaan's Birthday.

Vol. 28, 36, 1995. Love and sacrifice will save mankind

*The Embodiment of all forms ever tranquil,
Bearing all names, ever auspicious, Shivam
Sath-Chith-Aanandha Ruupam, Adhvaitham
Sathyam, Shivam, Sundharam*

*More effulgent than the sun,
Purer and whiter than snow,
Subtler than the firmament,
Immanent in all beings,
There is no particle without the Self.
The cosmic consciousness
Is within you and you are the Brahman.
What more can I tell you;
The good people gathered here?*

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Sathyam (Truth) has manifested itself in the cosmos. Without Truth there can be no universe. Everything has emanated from Truth. "The lord created everything out of truth. There is no place anywhere without truth. That is the pure absolute self," says a Thelugu poem.

All wealth, all pleasures come from Truth. The *Vedhas*, the Upanishaths and all scriptures have their origin in Truth. Truth is the proper abode of God. Truth and God are inseparable.

God is present in subtle form everywhere

Truth is God. The Upanishaths declare: "*Raso vai Sah*" (God is all sweetness). This means that God 'is' present in subtle form everywhere, like sugar in sugarcane and butter in milk. Although it is difficult to have a direct perception of God, His presence can be experienced in many ways. The sweetness in sugar, the sourness in lime fruit, the bitterness of the margosa leaf, all testify to the presence of the Divine. When you see a mountain or waterfall or a forest you feel happy. All these proclaim the presence of the Divine. Light shines, the stars twinkle, the sun blazes, the planets revolve in their orbits. All these-phenomena are manifestations of the Divine. By understanding the nature of a flame you can understand the nature of fire. By examining a drop of water you know the nature of the Ganges. Likewise by understanding *Maanavathvam* (the true nature of humanness), you can understand *Dhaivathvam* (Divinity).

Despite all the activities in which man is engaged from dawn to dusk, he has no understanding-of his true nature. He identifies himself with the body,, the senses and the mind, forgetting that his

true self is beyond all these. They are only instruments. *Vedhaantha* calls man to know himself. The insignia by which a man is identified in ordinary life are not the indicators of one's true self. There are two entities in a man *Dheha* or *Kshethra* (the body) and the *Dhehi* or *Kshethrajna* (indwelling Spirit). To know the *Kshethrajna* is to know one's true Self.

The Trinity and the three *gunas*

In this human body, constituted by the five elements, God dwells in the form of the three *gunas*. Bhaaratheeyas adore the Trinity--Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshvara. The Trinity are not embodied beings. No one has ever seen them. Nor is it possible to experience them in any way. The trinity dwell in the human body as the three *gunas*: *Sathva*, *Rajas*, and *Thamas*. The three qualities are forms of the Divine. Brahma is responsible for creation. The process of creation is subtle and cannot be perceived by any of the senses. This transcendental process is taught by the mother. All are creations of the mother. Hence, the Upanishath declares: "Revere mother as God." The mother is to be adored as Brahma, the Creator. Revere the mother, serve the mother and trust the mother. This symbolises worship of God.

Next comes the father. He protects the child, takes care of his upbringing and leads him to God. This protective function is attributed to Vishnu. The father symbolises Vishnu as the protector. Hence the injunction: "Revere the father as God." Thus the mother and the father are images of Brahma and Vishnu.

Then there is Eeshvara. He is called Bholaashankara. He gives whatever one prays for. He never says no to any suppliant. Such an embodiment of truth cannot be hidden. To experience this embodiment of auspiciousness (Shiva), *Thamas* is the mean. The *Thaamasik* quality is usually associated with slothfulness and indolence. But this is not the proper meaning of *Thamas* (as an attribute of Shiva). Shiva's role is to lead man on the right path to realise his divinity.

The Trinity, in the form of the three *gunas*, are present in every human being. This is borne out by the scriptural aphorisms: "*Eeshvaras-sarvabhoothaanaam*" (the Divine dwells in all beings), "*Eeshaavaasyam idham jagath*" (the Lord is the indweller in the cosmos). When the significance of the three *gunas* is understood, the nature of the trinity can be understood.

Body, mind and conscience

God is not somewhere outside. He is the indweller in the body. Sin is the result of one's own actions. Hence it is folly to seek God elsewhere. Man wants to know all about the world and ventures to explore outer space. But he is unable to know his own true nature. How is he to know his self? The self is called conscience. The spiritual quest means making use of the vibrations from the conscience to understand the truth. Today man follows only the body and the mind and becomes a prey to all kinds of troubles.

Man has to discover his divinity. The answer was given by Raama in the Raamaayana. Without troubling to find out where God is, it is enough if one worships the mother and the father who are the living embodiments of God. By pleasing and acting according to their wishes one can get their blessings. To ignore the deities who are directly visible, in the form of one's parents, it is delusion to search for an invisible God.

Raama exemplified this truth when he told king Janaka that without the consent of his parents he would not consent to wed Seetha, although he had won her hand by lifting Shiva's bow. Similarly; when Bharatha and Vashishta came to the forest to appeal to Raama to return to

Ayodhya to rule over the kingdom, Raama firmly declared that he had to fulfill the pledge given by his father to Kaikeyi and complete his term of exile in the forest. Honouring the words of the parents is the highest virtue. This has to be observed by one and all.

Brahma and Vishnu are therefore to be worshipped in the physical forms of one's parents. The two deities have no forms. The forms seen in the paintings of Ravi Varma are the products of his imagination. They have no basis in reality.

The formless divine has to be experienced in the respiratory process which proclaims the oneness of the individual and the cosmic Self in the sound *So-Ham*. In breathing in with the sound 'So' and breathing out with 'Ham,' the life-breath is declaring: "I am God," "I am God."

Disastrous consequences of lust, greed and anger

For Bhaaratheeyas, the Raamaayana, the Mahaabhaaratha and the Bhaagavatham are the most sacred texts. The Raamaayana points out the disastrous consequences of *Kaama* (lust). The Mahaabhaaratha teaches that *Lobha* (greed) brings utter disaster. The Bhaagavatham shows the consequences of *Krodha* (hatred) towards God (Hiranyakashipu's example).

The world reveres Raama but despises Raavana. Why? Raama is the repository of all virtues. He is described as "*Sarva bhoothahithe rathah*"---one who rejoices in the well-being of all living creatures. He was the fountain of all wisdom. He exemplified the quality of equanimity in all situations. Raavana was the embodiment of arrogance. His lust and pride destroyed him.

Lust, greed and anger are demonic qualities. When *Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas* are cultivated in the right way, they can help man to realise his higher nature.

Let your love embrace the whole world

Embodiments of love! You have supreme duty to revere the mother, and the Motherland. Wherever you may go or work, never forget the Motherland. Students today should follow the good teachings of our ancient sages and seers and lead ethical lives. "Let us live together, strive together, bear no ill-will towards each other." This was the message of the *Vedhas*. Let your love embrace the whole world. Treat all man-kind as one family. All nations should be happy and prosperous.

You must realise that life is like a two winged bird. The two wings are Love and Sacrifice. With these two you must aspire to reach the supreme goal.

What is that men should do to promote the welfare of society? People claim to render social service, but their motives are self-centred. On the contrary, they should be conscious of all that they owe to society and render service in a spirit of selflessness. They should recognise their identity with society. You should recognise your true spiritual reality and engage yourselves in helpful activities. Make service the badge of your life.

In this conference, people from many countries have taken part. What is the foremost message of this conference? Rendering service whenever it is needed, you must be prepared to dedicate your life for service. You can become a leader only when you are filled with the spirit of service. Today you pray to a river: "Oh river! overflow with water." Don't pray to the river. Address your prayers to rain. When the rain responds, the rivers will get filled automatically. Likewise, when you serve society as the Divine, automatically your desires will be fulfilled.

Svaami belongs to you

Devotees expect all kinds of things as a result of their devotion to God. Today, on the seventieth birthday of this body, you 'have to take note of one thing. Svaami needs nothing. Do not offer even a small robe. Svaami belongs to you. He is not separate from you, nor are you separate from Svaami. This is an inextricable relationship. Promote the well being of the backward and poor villages.

You must have listened to the list of offerings of gold ornaments by some devotees. What is the ornament for Bhagavaan? Only bliss. Why cover Him with a shower of jewellery? A sculptor carves a beautiful idol. Why submerge that beauty under clothes, jewels and garlands? All these are artificial. Natural beauty alone gives real joy.

Don't take the trouble to bring such ornaments. You should not entertain such thoughts at all. Let not the devotees feel otherwise. Bhagavaan has told the central Trust to put up for auction on this stage itself all the ornaments given by devotees. The money raised thereby should be used by the Trust. These jewels should not be taken even to Prashaanthi Nilayam. I have not sought anything from anybody. But I will be happy with any kind of service you render. Spend your money to help the needy. Assist in the provision of water. Meet the educational needs of the people and provide medical relief. Do everything for the good of society and not for the sake of an individual. Have the nation's welfare in your mind.

In addition to jewels, offerings of money have also been made. All these funds will be used for the completion of the drinking water project. The water problem of Raayalaseema will have to be completely solved. This is a dry area. There is not enough water to drink. How can trees be grown in such an area? But without trees, the people cannot have a sufficient supply of oxygen. Water, therefore, is essential for life. I had been considering this problem for a long time. For health, the heart is important. For knowledge the head is important. For the body, water is essential. All these three should be provided free. They should not be commercialized. All these come from God.

Like oil for a lamp, Love is essential for life. Without oil or love, darkness will prevail. Render loving service to all. Recognise that the Divine is within you and you have all the potency for great deeds.

Serve *Dharidhra Naaraayana*

From today, our organization should grow from day to day and encompass the whole world. Set aside private interests. Let welfare of society be your primary concern. Wherever you may be, in whatever country or place, take part in the service activities there.

Today devotees from 137 countries have gathered here. How much work is being done in these countries? That is the test. In all countries there are people who are hapless. They are embodiments of *Dharidhra Naaraayana* (God in the form of the poor). What need is there to serve *Shriman Naaraayana*? He has a host of persons to serve Him. You must serve the poor *Naaraayanas*, who have nobody to serve them.

"Your welfare is your gift to Me"

Sow the seeds of such noble thoughts, let them grow into giant trees and let people take shelter under them. This is the only birthday gift I seek from you. Your welfare is your gift to Me. Become exemplary persons. When you return to your countries from this conference, you must

develop your centres without hindrance, from day to day. Make good use of the Divine Trinity in you. Recognise the Divine in your mother, father and preceptor and revere them. Develop the conviction that the Divine you adore, who is your favourite deity, is within you. That Divine is *Sathyam, Shivam, Sundharam* (Truth, Goodness and Beauty). Plato (the Greek philosopher) declared that Truth, Goodness and Beauty are God. Irrespective of the country, these three are the eternal verities. With these truths in your hearts, embark on service and bring a good name to Bhaarith.

Raayalaseema should be ensured water supply all through the year. Today it is a "Raallaseema" (a stony region). This region must be transformed into a "Rathnaalaseema" (a region glittering with gems). This is the collective responsibility of the people concerned.

Make yourselves into a garland and I shall be the thread holding all the flowers together. Consider yourselves the children of one mother, belonging to the human family. Do not give room for differences of race, creed and nationality. All belong to the caste of humanity, the religion of love and the language of the heart. The same object, water, is called by different names in different languages. Likewise God is one, whatever the name that is used - whether Allah, Jesus, Buddha or Raama - have that faith. Don't criticize any religion. By developing this universalism, bring joy to Bhagavaan.

Many overseas devotees greeted me in the morning with "Happy Birthday." I am always happy. It is enough if you are happy True happiness consists in union with God.

From today you have to take to a new path. You must spend your lives in harmony, co-operation and mutual esteem. See the Divine in all things. That is the source of true and lasting bliss. It can be got only through Love.

Discourse in the Vidhyagiri stadium on 23-11-1995.

What is the happiest day in your life? All are happy days to a person of true knowledge. Happiness is an internal conscious experience which comes as an effect of the extinction of mental or physical desire. The less the desire, the greater is the happiness, so that perfect happiness consists in the destruction or satisfaction of all desires in the Absolute being.

BABA

Vol. 29, 52, 1996. Fill your hearts with love

*Whether one is a great scholar
Or a ruler living in a mansion,
Or a hero who has won great victories,
Or a destitute grovelling in poverty,
Without love in his heart, he is nothing.
A devotee with love is more worthy of veneration.*

*Of what use are men in Bhaarith
Who can make the stones sing in joy,
Men who can play with the heads of the enemy,
Men who can wield power over the land,
If they have no awareness
Of the wail of the oppressed,
When will they respond
To the cries of the poor?*

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The cosmos is filled with love. Love is Righteousness. Love is Truth. The universe is based on love. Lost in the transient pleasures of worldly life, man is forgetting this supreme Love Principle.

What is the reason? Selfishness has grown and selflessness-has declined. Narrow-mindedness is widespread. Broadness of heart is on the wane. Desires have increased. Ideals are vanishing. Human life is dominated by selfishness and self-interest.

The ancient sages enthroned *thyaaga* (sacrifice) on the highest pedestal. They adored Righteousness. Today these sublime ideals are forgotten in Bhaarith. As a consequence the country is racked by every kind of trouble.

A heart without love is a cemetery. Love demonstrates the existence of the Divine. It is all-pervasive. It is the basis for human unity. Only when selfishness goes and faith in the Divine grows will human unity be achieved.

Hence, every human being should fill his heart with love.

*God is love; Love is God.
Love is linked to love.
When one is full of love
He is fit for oneness with God.*

It is most vital for everyone to recognise and practice this Love Principle. At all times love has existed among the good and the bad, in the forest or in a palace, in attachment or in separation, in one's conduct as well as in one's speech, in the mind as well as in action. It is all-pervasive.

The power of love

The most powerful weapon to destroy the forces of evil rampant in the world today is love. Unfortunately men are not pursuing the right path to acquire this sacred love.

Love is the seed of love. It is also the branches, the flowers and the fruit. To enjoy the fruit of love, one has to practise Love.

Instead of seeking to know the true nature of love, man is engaged in the pursuit of wealth and power. No doubt wealth and power are necessary, but only within limits. The vast ocean, when it swells beyond its bounds, is censured for its misbehaviour. The human body and mind will be healthy only when food is consumed within limits. Excessive eating causes various disorders.

Everything in the world is governed by the bounds set for it. However, love has no limits. "*Anirvachaneeyam Prema*" (Love is beyond the power of words), declares the sage Naaradha.

The flow of love is the life-giving water for everyone. How is this love to be secured by one? Not by *Japa* (chanting the Lord's name) or meditation or by studying the scriptures. God does not dwell in the *Vedhas* or the *Puraanas*. God dwells in the heart and should be sought there. People should close their mouths and open their hearts. Then they will experience the divine bliss.

Today love has been almost totally banished. Where love should prevail hatred has taken its place. Petty jealousy has usurped the place of compassion. Man can experience true happiness only when the appropriate qualities reside in their allotted places.

Transform your entire life into a saga of love. You will then lack nothing to make you happy. All wealth and position will be added unto you. Love conquers all.

Have a feeling of total surrender

What is the nature of this love? When praying to God, you should have a feeling of total surrender. If you are really keen about realising God, if you are hungering and thirsting for God, then you should cultivate this all-absorbing love. Mere expression of desire is not enough. You should endeavour to experience union with the Divine. If your heart is full of selfishness, how can you experience the Divine merely by a wish?

There is love of sorts today. It is related to the body consciousness and not to the Self which is the basis. Spiritual love begins with the concept of *Dhaasoham* (I am your servant) and culminates in the concept of *Soham* (He and I are one). Without the feeling of *Dhaasoham*, you cannot experience the feeling of *Soham*. ;*Soham* is the expression of divine oneness. "The *Aathma* and I are one."

That Aathma is Brahma. That is love. That is Truth. That is Righteousness.

Men have been concerned with the four goals of human life--the *Purushaarthas*---*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha* (Righteousness, wealth, sensuous desires and Liberation). But there is a fifth goal: Love. Only when love is achieved will the world become an earthly paradise.

Where love prevails, there will be no room for hatred or envy. Love can have no truck with evil thoughts and actions. Love should be steadfast and unwavering. If one goes on hopping from one Svaami to another, from one form of worship to another, he will never experience love of the Divine. "One word, one path"----that should be the aim.

Today thousands of people have gathered here. What has brought them together here? Love is the main cause. Without love few of you would have come from such distant places. How does this love express itself? It is a process of give and take. You have. to receive God's love. And you have to offer your love. But both are one and the same love. God's love is reflected in your bodies. That is the meaning of the Geetha declaration: "A fragment of mine is present in everyone in the cosmos."

Use the Divine element for the benefit of others

That Divine element in you should not be misused. It should be used for the benefit of others. The Divine principle of love is being treated with narrow ideas. From ancient times the sages welcomed this Principle with open arms. Naaradha declared: "*Ya-labhdhvaa pumaan siddho bhavathi, amrutho bhavathi, thriptho bhavathi*" (Having gained Divine love, *Parama Prema*, a person becomes perfect, immortal and contented).

He considered Divine love as supreme over all things. Just as without sugar, no sweet will have sweetness, without love nothing in life can have any value. Your heart is inherently filled with love. But you are ignoring this plenitude and going after the trivial. Your real sustenance will come from this Divine love and not from other petty pleasures.

Every cell in the human body is filled with love. It is this microcosmic love that fills the entire cosmos.

Investment in devotion

You have no need to go in search of love elsewhere. It is all within you. A man makes every effort to accumulate wealth. An equal effort is needed to acquire the wealth of love. Men today invest their assets of love in pitiful ventures. Instead they should invest all their love in the Divine bank of devotion. This deposit is not only safe but will yield you increasing returns in terms of bliss. Your heart is the bank where your love for God should be deposited. Deposits elsewhere are insecure. Deposits of money may be in danger of being lost. But the deposit in your heart is immune from any kind of theft or loss. Make your deposit safe by "insuring" it within your heart. It is totally safe, though it has no bolts, doors or locks. This love has been characterized as *Amritha-svaruupa* (the form of eternal nectar). Nectar pleases only the palate. But Divine love confers eternal bliss which is sweeter than nectar. Everyone should resolve to acquire this nectarine Love.

Today your foremost duty is to enthrone *thyaaga* (sacrifice). Only when sacrifice reigns, love will come into its own. All your latent potentialities will then manifest themselves. You will succeed in all your legitimate undertakings. When love becomes the ruling principle, sorrow and disappointment will disappear. That was why the *Vedhas* declared that sacrifice alone is the key to immortal bliss. "God is love. How can you hope to realise God without love?" (Thelugu poem).

How to manifest that love that is within you? You have to engage your hands in clapping as you chant the names of Raama, Krishna and others. Recite the names of the lord with your mouth. If you really desire to experience God-, you must remember the name of the Lord always like

Prahlaadha: "*Om namo Naraayanaaya.*" Sing the praises of the Lord like Raadha and Meera. Worship the Lord like Jayadheva, Gauraanga and Thukaaraam. Shed tears in devotion before the figure of the lord like Raamakrishna Paramhansa. Then you will experience the Lord. People shed tears over petty things, but do not shed a single tear for the Lord. There are two kinds of tears: tears of joy and tears of sorrow. What you have to shed for God are tears of joy.

Power of the Lord's name

When Krishna was being weighed in a balance, all the jewels of Sathyabhaama could not balance His weight. Rukmini then came and declared that the mere chanting of the name of Krishna would be equal to His weight. By the additional offer of a leaf, a flower or a little water, the scales will be tilted against Krishna. So saying she placed a *thulasi* leaf on the scale. And lo! it went down. The tulasi leaf carried the full weight of Rukmini's boundless love for Krishna. All the jewels of Sathyabhaama were of no avail. But Rukmini's invoking the name of Krishna and offering a *thulasi* leaf with a love-filled heart tilted the scales against Krishna. Such is the power of the Lord's name and a love-filled offering to the Lord. The Lord is not swayed by wealth or scholarship, power or position. Love alone can move Him.

If you wish to sway the lord, you must offer love and love alone. Today unfortunately love has become scarce. Even material love is disappearing. But God's love is boundless. In whatever manner you may love Him, He responds in equal measure. But without love, you have no right to seek His love. Filled with bad feelings and thoughts, if you pray to the pure and unsullied Lord, how do you expect to win His grace? If you remain pure at least in your shrine, you may acquire some fragment of divine love.

There are any number of able exponents of spirituality. But of what use are their discourses if they do not practise what they preach?

Manifest your love

Embodiments of the Divine! If you are really filled with devotion, manifest your love for God who is the very embodiment of love. If you are genuinely hungering and thirsting for God, partake of Divine love to appease your hunger and quench your thirst.

Divine love is the only panacea for all your troubles and miseries arising from insatiable desires and frustrated ambitions. God's love is like a lighthouse beacon. It shows you the right path. Divert the boat of your life towards the lighthouse of Divine love. You are then bound to gain the shore of bliss.

You do not need any special type of penance or meditation. Meditate on love. Fill your mind with love. Even while attending to your daily chores, regard all of them as offerings to the Divine. God is omnipresent. See God in everything and every being. Let love grow in your hearts like the waxing moon. Divine love will not wane like the moon. Let such steadfast love be enshrined in your heart. As Thukaaraam said: *Dhil me Raam, haath me kaam* (Raam in the heart and work in the hand).

The duty of everyone from today onwards is to cultivate true, unsullied love. With love of God you can secure anything. Without that love, you will only be steeped in misery.

Do not divorce yourself from Nature

Let the Buddhist prayer be your guide. First, take refuge in your intellect---*Buddham Sharanam Gachchaami*. Divert that intellect to the service of society--*Sangham Sharanam Gachchaami*. Then you will find refuge in Bliss--*Aanandham Sharanam Gachchaami*.

Do not divorce yourself from Nature. "*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath*" (The cosmos is permeated by the Divine). Hence recognise the Divine even in your enemy. His heart is bound to change. When you love even the one who has harmed you, he is also bound to change. Do not allow your love to be affected in any way.

When people pray to God, sometimes doubts may arise as to whether and how the Lord will respond. Such doubts arose even in the mind of Raadha..But all doubts disappeared when she realised that the whole universe was the mansion of God and there was no need to keep any door open or closed. All that was needed was complete surrender to God. The mystic significance of the songs of the saints and devotees like Raadha and Meera should be rightly understood. (Bhagavaan sang a Meera Bhajan, "Chalo re man" to explain the esoteric meaning of the song).

Sing the glories of God

God is moved by the devotee's heart-felt song. He becomes one with the devotee. No other form of worship has the same effect of God. It is enough if you do the singing within yourself. (Bhagavaan demonstrated by singing the opening lines of a song, "Raama nannu kaapaadu", how a melodious prayer can move the heart of anyone). Make music the passport to merger with the Divine. Music is the gift of God. Only the gifted ones can sing sweetly, appealingly and delightfully. We have here M.S. Subbalakshmi. From her early years, she dedicated herself to music, which filled her heart. This kind of soulful music cannot be acquired by anybody. It can come only through God's grace.

When you sing in public you can give delight to many. But if you cannot do so, you can sing to yourself. It will delight your heart and sweeten it. Immerse yourself in all work with love. Whatever you do, consider it as gifts from God. When you have malaria, you have to take the bitter quinine mixture. But that is the medicine for your ailment. Likewise, when adversity confronts you, treat it as a kind of medicine for your good. God has to be melted and beaten to make a jewel. A diamond is cut to make it more brilliant. Likewise troubles in life serve to refine a person. Love should enable you to welcome even hardships as meant for your own good.

Today this body enters on its seventy first year. This body is made up of the five elements and is essentially impermanent. Do not attach much importance to the body. Take to heart the Love Principle that is being conveyed to you. My entire life is filled with love. I have never put anyone at any time to any kind of suffering. I have never done any harm to anyone. I have hated no one. I have no aversion to anybody. What is the reason? It is my love that is transforming others. I am now 71. But no one can know what accounts for my condition. I may act as if I am angry on some occasions, but the anger does not stem from the heart but is confined to the tongue. From head to foot I am filled only with love. It is this love which has attracted the whole world.

I do not desire anything. I have three P's. One is Purity. Second is Patience. Third is Perseverance. It is these three which have secured the world's regard. No invitations were issued to those who have gathered here. Svaami's love alone attracted them all like a magnet. Some may ask why they are not attracted to Svaami if that magnet is so powerful. The reason is that these persons are like rusted iron which no magnet can attract. Let them remove the rust and dust and

they will be drawn to the magnet. Their hatred and desires, their envy and greed are the rust and dust covering them. If you cleanse yourselves of these, wherever you are, you will be mine and I will be yours. The hapless and the forlorn, wherever they may be, are the concern of Sai. Promote sacred love in your hearts. That love will not only redeem your lives but will promote the well-being of all around you.

You need not offer anything except love. In Prashaanthi Nilayam no offerings are permitted. Only love is allowed entry.

Discourse on 23-11-1996 in Sai Kulwant Mandap.

Vol. 30, 32, 1997. Recognise your Divine Identity

Neither merit nor sin, neither joy nor sorrow;

Neither manthras nor pilgrimages;

Neither charity nor yajna;

Neither eating, nor food, nor consumer of food.

I am none of these.

I am the Eternal Bliss Divine,

The One Absolute. I am Shiva.

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

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

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

The "I" Principle

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

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

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

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

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

The seer and the seen

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

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

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

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

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

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

Role of the Mind

Man today has failed to recognise his Divine identity.

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

A bent branch may be straightened,

A rock may be softened,

But can a perverted

Mind be reformed? (Telugu poem)

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

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

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

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

God has no form or name

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recognise the omnipresence of God

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

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

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

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

*The Divine is ever blissful,
confers supreme happiness on others,
is the very embodiment of the highest wisdom,
has transcended the opposites, is vast as space,
cloud-like in complexion, with perfect features.
(Sanskrit verse)*

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

Understand the spiritual basis of "I" principle

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

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

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

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

God is closer to you than any mother

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

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

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

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

There are four mottos, which all devotees should follow:

- (1) Avoid bad company
- (2) Welcome association with good persons.
- (3) Remember always the transient and the permanent.
- (4) Ceaselessly engage yourself in meritorious acts.

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

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

Advice to Devotees

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

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

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

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

Fourth: "Do not waste energy." Energy enters into every one of our actions. When you see, speak, hear, act or think energy is expended. In every one of these activities you should see that you do not waste your energies unnecessarily.

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

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

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

Avoid bad company

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

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

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

Sathya Sai is the devotee of devotees

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

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

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

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

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

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

Baba