37. Let love prevail

Whom the Mohammedans adore as Allah,

The Christians as Jehovah,

The Vaishnavites as the Lotus-eyed Lord,

The Shaivites as Sambhu,

That God, who confers on all

Long life, health and prosperity,

Is one only--have this conviction.

The Lord is all love;

Love is His Divine form;

That-Lave is the redeeming Manthra

For all beings in this world.

Without experiencing a fragment

Of that Love how can you experience

The Divine, Oh man?

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

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

Love and life are inter-related

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

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

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

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

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

The martyrdom of Jesus

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

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

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

A fine diamond even if it is in a heap of garbage

will not lose its brilliance or its value.

A pumpkin, even if it is grown beside a hedge,

will not lose its sweetness.

A peahen's egg, even if it is hatched in a crow's nest,

will not lose its colours.

Love is an expression of the Divine effulgence

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

Can the sweet juice of the

sugar be had for

Making sugar without the

cane being crushed?

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

Devotee should first give up selfishness

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

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

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

Three types of traducers of God

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Develop the sense of oneness with God

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

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

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

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

Activities of "Messengers of Sathya Sai"

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

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

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

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

Follow the women's example

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

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

Service should be your watchword

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

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

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

Follow the message of Sai

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

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

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