

SATHYA SAI SPEAKS

Volume 42

Discourses, 2009
SATHYA SAI BABA

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SATHYA SAI SPEAKS

VOLUME 42

**Discourses of
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
delivered during 2009**



**SRI SATHYA SAI SADHANA TRUST
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Publisher's Note

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been giving divine discourses and sharing His divine wisdom for the benefit and well being of the entire humanity for the past several decades. Seekers have sought His teachings and guidance even when He was a lad of 14 years.

Several hundreds of His discourses have been brought out in a series under the title "Sathya Sai Speaks" for the benefit of humanity that has been thirsting for solace, inspiration and true guidance to get relief from the difficulties faced in daily life.

The Publications Division of Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust is happy to bring out Volume 42 in the above series, containing eighteen chapters of precious discourses given by Bhagawan Baba during the year 2009. We have used bigger fonts and avoided use of phonetic spelling for non-English words, as was done in earlier volumes, so as to enable smooth reading. We are sure that all those who read this book will immensely benefit from Bhagawan's divine wisdom.

May all those who read His teachings and practise them in life in a prayerful attitude receive Bhagawan's grace and blessings in plenty.

With salutations at the lotus feet of Bhagawan,

13.06.2010

Convener

Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust

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Editor's Note for this EBook Edition

This “ebook” version of Volume 42 of “Sathya Sai Speaks” enables the reading of Sathya Sai Baba’s first recorded discourses on Ipads, Kindles, Nooks, and other electronic platforms. Now, the reader can choose the type face and the point size (based on the parameters given them by their electronic platform).

In addition, it is easy to access a Sanskrit word in the glossary. When reading a page, just press on a Sanskrit word, and usually, but not always, the page shifts to the glossary page where that word is defined or explained. (Your electronic platform should have a button or arrow to press to get back to where you were reading.). We hope that this “hypertext” feature will make it easier to use the glossary.

We have also eliminated more Sanskrit words and replaced their phonetic spelling by more traditional Sanskrit spelling. These discourses should now be readily accessible to all.

This book represents our second attempt into the EBook realm. It is preliminary, and there may be changes, based on what you, the reader, like or dislike about it. Because of this, the book does not yet have its own ISBN number—that is expected to come later. We expect to continue on this venture and publish EBook versions of all of Sai’s discourses and also His *Vahinis*.

Sathya Sai Baba in 2009



1. Know Thyself! You Will Know Everything

The sun appears serene and peaceful
The days have become shorter and
The cool wind is blowing,
The fields are ripe with golden crops,
Marigold flowers are blossoming like
Garlands of pearls on the banks of rivers.
The farmers are rejoicing and singing;
The sweet festival of *Sankranthi* has come in the
Pushya month, filling the granaries in our homes with the freshly harvested grain.
(Telugu song)

Embodiments of Love!

This is the *Sankranthi* festival time. *Sankranthi* is a great festival. It is a day on which the farmers bring home the harvested crops consisting of all varieties of food grains and pulses needed for the household. The farmers, having finished a hectic schedule of harvesting the crops and becoming free from agricultural operations, enjoy good food and rest in their homes. They spend a leisure time, happily with their family and friends indulging in fun and frolic. They invite the newly married sons-in-law to their houses, present them with new clothes and the entire house abounds with joy. In this context, there is a folk song in Telugu depicting the festival atmosphere in the villages:

As *Sankranthi* is the festival of festivals,
Oh, newly wedded bridegroom,
Visit your in-laws house;
Come, spend your time in fun and frolic with
Your brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law,
The entire household and the neighbourhood
Will honour you with love and affection.

In the earlier days, the means of transportation were not much developed. The sons-in-law used to visit their in-laws' houses by walk or on bullock carts. Hence, the entire village used to shower a lot of affection on them and respect them by attending to their needs. They used to be fed with a variety of tasty dishes.

The *Sankranthi* festival is also an occasion when the bullocks are decorated elaborately and taken to various houses in the village. The bullocks are worshipped and fed sumptuously as an expression of gratitude for all the hard work they have done in the fields. Even the bovine members of the household are feted. A symbolic marriage is performed between a pair of bull and cow, naming them as Rama and Sita. They are taken along the streets and made to dance to the delight of everyone. The cow named Sita is asked, "Rama is black. Do you like him?" Sita would swing her head in disagreement. Then, she is counseled, "Please do not say no; Rama is great. He is handsome and respectable!" Then, Sita would nod her head in agreement. An elder brother watching this beautiful show invites his younger brother to witness this symbolic marriage and offer gifts to the 'couple', thus:

Oh, my dear brother,
Here comes the *Gangireddudasu*.
Come, let us go and see him.
He wears a silver medallion and a waist belt.
He carries a decorated staff and
He wears special marks on his forehead.
He brings with him richly caparisoned
Sacred cow and bull and performs their marriage.
Let us see the marriage and offer our gifts.
(Telugu folk song)

Thus, the *Sankranthi* festival is celebrated in the villages with a lot of religious fervour and fun. The festivals like *Sankranthi* and Sivarathri are meant to contemplate upon and realise one's innate Divinity.

People say, "This is my body (*idi na dehamu*)," very casually, but people well-versed in Sanskrit language would interpret the expression *na dehamu* (my body) in a different way. They explain that 'na' means 'not' based upon the literal meaning and conclude *na dehamu* means "I am not the body." Similarly the Telugu expression *na manasu* (my mind) can be interpreted as "I am not the mind." Same is the case with intellect (*buddhi*). The sum and substance of all these expressions is "I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not the intellect," etc. In the same logic, one has to maintain a state of perfect equanimity unaffected by pain and pleasure at all times affirming, 'These sorrows and difficulties as well as happiness and pleasure are not mine. I am beyond these dualities.'

The need for ceiling on desires

"It is my body" means "I am different from the body." When you consider yourself as separate from your body, why should you feel the pain out of it? The situation, however, is that you are unable to bear the pain caused to the body. Hence, you remain at the level of a human being only. You are unable to come out of the delusion of body attachment. As long as you are attached to the body, these sorrows and difficulties as well as pain will haunt you. These are all your own making.

Suppose you get angry. From where did this anger come? This has come from you only. Similarly, jealousy is a quality that manifested from your mind. Thus, each one of these bad qualities are the result of your own thoughts. Hence, only if you are able to control your thoughts properly will you be able to achieve anything in life. The mind, intellect, and consciousness are reflections of *Atma*. The mind has no stability. It is the repository of thoughts and desires. It is said, "The mind is the root cause of either bondage or liberation (*Manayeva manushyanam karanam bandha mokshayoh*)." Hence, one has to keep the mind under proper control by putting some ceiling on desires.

Attachment of oneself with the body results in ego

Both the body and mind undergo change constantly. However, there is one entity inside, which is changeless, that is *Atma*. It has no form, but it has a name: *Atma*. Self and *Atma* mean the same. *Atma* is also called *Aham*. One should not confuse oneself in this context that this *Aham* is ego (*ahamkara*), which is identified with the body. God has no name and form, and He is always referred to as Brahman. If God were to reveal His true nature, He would say, "I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*)." The same Brahman Principle (*Brahma Thathwa*) permeates all

beings as *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*).

We say, “So and so is my wife; so and so is my son; so and so is my daughter-in-law;” etc. These are all illusory and bodily relationships. They are acquired by us and are not God-given. Similarly, God is not granting you either pleasure or pain. All are only your own making. They are due to your body attachment. As long as you are attached to the physical body, you will experience pain. Once this physical body is consigned to flames, nothing comes along with you.

Atma, Self, I — these are different names given to the same. The identification of One (Self) with the body is done by the individual, thereby resulting in ego (*ahamkara*). That is why Jesus advised people to cross the little I (ego), so that they may become God himself.

Who are you?

Your own Self (*Atma*) directs all your activities from within. This Self has no birth and death, just as Brahman has no birth and death. It is eternal, true, and changeless. We have to attach ourselves to such an everlasting principle; not to the constantly changing and ephemeral objects. Suppose you marry a girl; you call her your wife. Prior to the marriage who was she? Who were you? There was absolutely no relationship between you. Only with your marriage did you become husband and wife and acquire a marital relationship. The relationship is acquired by you. God has nothing to do with these worldly relationships. Yet, He is the eternal witness to all that goes on in this world.

Meditation (*dhyana*), constant repetition of God’s name (*japa*), and yoga are of no help in realising the *Atmic* principle. Nor are the nine forms of devotion like listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His Lotus Feet, salutation, worship, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender (*sravanam, kirtanam, Vishnusmaranam, Padasevanam, vandanam, archanam, dasyam, sneham, Atmanivedanam*) of any help. They are different forms of spiritual exercise, which we ourselves have taken up. They are not God-given. How many ascetics in this world do severe penance? How many people constantly do constant repetition of God’s name? Even when they are sleeping, the rosary beads (*japamala*) rotates in their hand. Do all these spiritual exercises confer liberation (*moksha*)? Never!

One has therefore to constantly contemplate on the *Atma* Principle. If someone asks who you are, you should be able to reply ‘I am God!’ with all the faith and confidence at your command. The *Atma* embodied in all human beings is one and the same. It is eternal and changeless.

I have told you several times about the story of Alexander the Great. Though he conquered large parts of the world, he could not take with him even an iota of property that he accumulated. He had to leave this world with empty hands. In order to demonstrate this truth to the world, he instructed his ministers to take his dead body in a procession through the streets of his capital keeping both his hands in a raised position pointing the sky. When the ministers were curious to know the reason for this strange request from the Emperor, Alexander replied, “I have conquered several countries and accumulated great wealth. There is a vast army under my control. Yet, none will accompany me at the time of my leaving this mortal body. I will be going with empty hands. This truth has to be demonstrated to all people.”

Have pure resolve to attain Atmic wisdom

We may acquire a lot of wealth and deposit in the banks or lend it to others for interest. Yet, we cannot take even a handful of earth along with us at the time of leaving our body. Nothing of this world comes along with us. We are unnecessarily struggling and planning several schemes constantly thinking about them day and night. In spite of all our struggle, what has to go out of our hands will go.

The body is like a water bubble. The mind is like a mad monkey. If you follow this mad monkey, you will get into trouble. If you believe in the body, you do not know when this body, which is like a water bubble, will burst. Nothing is permanent. Only the *Atma* is eternal and immortal. That is God. The 'I', 'Self', 'God' are all the different names by which Divinity is referred to. The *Atma* that is referred to as 'I' is donning different names and forms.

God incarnated as Rama, Krishna, etc. Rama underwent several difficulties and demonstrated greatest ideals. Krishna demonstrated several divine plays (*leelas*) and attracted several people. Finally, He left His mortal coil. The physical bodies of the *Avatars* undergo changes, but the divine *Atma* in their bodies remains the same. The *Atma* is omnipresent. However, in order to attain *Atmic* wisdom (*Atma jnana*), your resolves have to be pure. You have to constantly contemplate upon the divine *Atma*. Your thoughts and actions may change, the methods of your repetition of God's name, austerities, and yoga may change, but Divinity will not undergo any change. That is why Divinity has been described as attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness (*nirgunam, niranjanam, sanatana nikanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam*).

Good character is very essential

People pray, "Oh! God! Grant me your divine vision (*darshan*)."

 Even if He grants you His divine vision, it is only momentary. It comes and goes like a flash. In fact, God is very much immanent in your own heart. He is hearing all your prayers. He is answering your prayers. Even when your physical body ceases to exist, the *Atma* remains. That *Atma* (Self) is eternal. It assumes different forms. We witness several objects in this universe, like the stars, the sun, and the moon. Though they appear to be static, even they undergo changes. Only Divinity, which is the basis of all these, remains changeless and eternal.

One should always maintain purity. In fact, this land of Bharat (India) has earned great name and fame for purity and character:

This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women, like
Savithri, who brought her dead husband back to life;
Chandramati, who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth;
Sita, who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed, and
Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity.
This land of piety and nobility attained plenty and prosperity and
Became the teacher of all the nations of the world because of such women of chastity.
(Telugu poem)

Good character is very essential not only for ladies but for gents too! If only one has character, you can call them a man or a chaste woman. Today, we find boys and girls moving very close and behaving as though they are husband and wife. But for how long? Only for a short period. Thereafter, the situation changes. Once they

are married, the boy will be somewhere and the girl will go somewhere else. However, there will be no change at all in the divine nature. It is customary to exchange diamond rings between a boy and girl when they marry. The diamond ring, which is a permanent object, is symbolic of Divinity, which is changeless and is available to people at all times. We should safeguard our character like a diamond. It is the custom of even overseas people to exchange diamond rings at the time of marriage. Thus, there is a meaning in every custom and tradition not only in India but in all countries.

What is educare?

As I have already mentioned above, you say that this is “my body (*na dehamu*)”. Here “*na*” refers to self in Telugu language. But in Sanskrit language, “*na*” refers to “no”. Hence, it means “I am not the body.” Thus, there is a lot of meaning in every expression. God is described by “The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet (*Sahasra seersha Purushah sahasrakshah sahasra pad*).” You have only one head, whereas God has thousands of heads. What does it mean? All heads in the entire creation are His! Likewise, it is not correct to say that Swami has seen a thousand full moons (*Sahasra chandra darshan*). I have seen not just one thousand full moons but crores and crores of full moons. As the *Veda* declares, “The moon is the presiding deity of our mind (*Chandrama manaso jatah*).” You all have a mind each. I have been seeing all your minds. I have been seeing the minds of crores of people all over the world. Thus, it amounts to seeing not merely one thousand moons but crores and crores of moons.

The boys sang a song a few minutes ago:

Neeku maku unnadi oke bandhamu, Ade Prema Bandhamu.

The only bond that unites us with You is the bond of love.

You should ensure that this bond of love lasts forever. Outwardly, we may display several qualities. But the inner thoughts or values are only five: truth (*sathya*), righteousness (*dharmam*), peace (*santhi*), love (*prema*), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*). These are innate qualities, not super-imposed from outside. They cannot be purchased from any shop. They are very much ingrained in the core of our personality. Our duty is to manifest those qualities and reflect them in our daily life. That is “educare”. On the other hand, education refers to acquiring knowledge relating to the physical and secular world.

Love your neighbours

Truth is eternal. It has to manifest from within. Same is the case with righteousness. It is said, “*Dharma* forms the basis of the world (*Dharmamoolam idam jagat*).” In fact, it is, “Truth forms the basis of the world (*Sathyamoolam idam jagat*).” Truth is righteousness. All other values are contained in and originate from truth. Love is another quality that is innate in human beings. It should be manifested and shared with one and all. Where there is love, there cannot be hatred. Love transforms itself into nonviolence. A person is suffused with love cannot indulge in any kind of violence. Where there is no love, people cause harm to one another. From truth emerges righteousness. When these two qualities go together, peace is the result. Peace manifests as calm and serene behaviour. A person in that state says “I am peaceful.”

Several people, when asked about the purpose of their spiritual practises, reply “to attain peace of mind”. But where is peace? There are only pieces in the outside world. A mother loves her child. She will not forsake her child under any circumstances, even when provoked to get angry. Love drives it away. If nonviolence is to reign

supreme in the world, the quality of love must be cultivated by all.

It is not enough if you love yourself. You should love your neighbours too. You must develop the feeling that everyone belongs to you and the same *Atma* resides as the indweller in all people. For example, there is only one moon in the sky. The same moon is reflected in a thousand pots. You will see the moon reflected in each of the thousand pots separately. Can you therefore say there are thousand moons? No! Similarly, there are no separate suns in different countries like India, USA, Japan, etc. Only one sun illuminates the entire world. However, the time at which the sun rises in different parts of the world differs. Now it is 6 o'clock in the evening for us, whereas it is 6 o'clock in the morning in America. In Japan, it is 12:00 noon. On the basis of this difference in time, you cannot say that there are more than one sun in the sky. Only one sun illuminates the entire world. Similarly, only one God resides as the indweller in different people. Each one worships Him in their own way ascribing a particular name and form to Divinity.

Several people are trying to ascertain from Me the birth place of Lord Rama. During the past several years a number of people approached Me and pleaded with Me, "Swami! Please tell us where exactly Rama was born." I told them, "Rama was born in the womb of mother Kausalya." In fact, do you search for yourself in the outside world? No! Your true nature is to be found in yourself only. You are you only. Similarly, it is futile to search for God, enquiring 'Where can I find God?' God is omnipresent.

With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything,
He permeates the entire universe.

*Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvatokshi Siromukham,
Sarvatah Srutimalloke Sarvamavrutya Tishtati.*

Hence, there is no use asking, "Where is God?" Try to know about yourself, in the first instance. Then you will know everything. Unfortunately today people are trying to know about everything in the outside world, without first knowing about themselves. No purpose will be served by such an exercise. Know thyself! Then you will know everything. Remind yourself, "I am the embodiment of divine *Atma*; the *Atma* is immanent in me."

People often say "This is my....; this is my..." But, who is that 'my?' To whom does it refer? The feeling of 'my' is illusion (*maya*). However, people do not make any effort to understand this. Since you are an individual, you say 'My....' But God is not confined to a particular name and form. He is the principle of 'I', which is all-pervading. Several names and forms are ascribed to Him, but He is one and only one! "Truth is one the wise say it in different ways (*Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti*)." The different expressions like 'I', 'I am God', 'I am Brahma', 'I am Vishnu', etc. refer to only one God. Unfortunately today people are 'dividing' the 'Divine'. You should treat Divinity as only one.

Do not differentiate between people, saying, "This man is my brother, this person is my son-in-law etc." All are brothers and sisters only. When you consider all people as your brothers and sisters, where is the feeling of difference between individuals? Spirituality teaches exactly this feeling of oneness among human beings. People say that they could realise God by doing repetition of God's name, meditation, and such other spiritual exercises. But when and where? How? They will not be able to see even the person standing right in front of them when they close their eyes. How then can they see God in meditation? All these spiritual practices are meant to control the mind.

The mind is very unsteady. It is always affected by bumps and jumps. How then can you control such an

unsteady mind? It is not possible. There is only one way the mind can be controlled, that is by constant contemplation on God. We often see people changing the names and forms of God for contemplation, frequently. One day they contemplate on Rama; the next day on Krishna, and yet another day on Venkateswara, etc. Mind control is not possible by such contemplation. If you consider Rama as the God of your liking, then stick to that name and form till your last breath. Then, surely, you will have the vision (*sakshatkara*) of Rama.

Install the form of God in your heart; develop oneness with Him

Great painters like Ravi Varma portrayed Rama in a particular form. But, Rama and Krishna are not confined to such forms only. In fact, God has no particular form. He assumes a particular form at a particular time, for the sake of devotees. Thereafter, even that form vanishes. Several pictures and paintings of God in a particular form are sold in the market. They are done by painters like Ravi Varma. Did Ravi Varma actually see Rama or Krishna? No; he only heard stories about Rama and Krishna and painted their forms based upon his imagination. These pictures and paintings only remind you about Divinity. Neither Ravi Varma nor any other person actually saw God. You are God, verily! Do not think that God is somewhere in a distant place. You yourself are God. Develop that confidence. However, when you consider yourself as God, you must develop divine qualities. Then only are you entitled to consider yourself as God. Since no one has ever explained the nature of Divinity in this manner, people have fallen into dogmatic theories.

Spirituality will reveal your true nature

God is immanent in every human being, nay, all living beings. There is no place where God is not present. Wherever you look, God is present there. In fact, you need not come over here to see God. He is very much present in the place where you reside. Without realising this truth, people are spending a lot of money and going on pilgrimages. That is not what you are expected to do. Develop the quality of love in you and share it with all. Then all people can become one. All are one, be alike to everyone. No living being can ever live without love. Living is possible only with love. Hence, develop a loving nature. When you go home, close your eyes and contemplate upon God. You are sure to find Him in your own heart. When you open your eyes to the outside world, you see all and sundry. What do you think is the purpose for which you are endowed with eyes? It is only to see God.

If you go to a doctor complaining about some problem in your body, he will take an X-ray of your heart, liver, kidney, etc. and decide about the particular malady from which you are suffering. Spirituality is like an X-ray photo that will reveal your true nature. Install the form of God in your heart and contemplate on Him incessantly. Never change that form for any reason. You are sure to realise God. You need not search for Him elsewhere. If you wish to see Swami, install the form of Swami in the altar of your heart. You can surely visualise Swami there. If you develop a feeling of oneness with Him, everything will turn out to be good for you. This is what you have to realise today. Festivals come and go. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday — days roll on like that. Saturday lapses into Sunday. But God will never change. He is eternal. Realise this truth.

New Year Message, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-01-01

You can win the Grace of the Lord only by *dharma*. *Dharma* induces the spirit of self-surrender and develops it. Without the training that the practice of *dharma* gives to your senses, your feelings and emotions, you cannot have steady faith and

steady detachment. The Lord is *Dharma* conceived as a personality. Rama is known as Righteousness personified (*Vigrahavan Dharma*). If you step across the bounds of *dharma* and play foul, you cannot win the game of life.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. Money Comes And Goes; Morality Comes And Grows

Bharat (India) is the motherland of many noble souls who earned great name and fame in all the continents of the world.

This is the land of valorous people who vanquished the foreign rulers in the battlefield and attained independence.

This is the land that excelled in music, literature, and other fine arts.

Having been born in this great land of Bharat, oh, boys and girls, it is your sacred duty to protect its rich cultural heritage.

(Telugu poem)

Dear students!

Be prepared to uphold the honour and glory of this country of Bharat (India)! You are sure to come out victorious in this effort. Today, people are able to achieve great progress in secular and scientific fields, but they are unable to march forward in the field of spirituality. One has to progress in spirituality more than in other fields. People used to give great importance to progress in the spiritual arena in ancient times. In fact, it used to be the goal of their life. However, there is a decline in the spiritual outlook of people in recent times. In these days a lot of effort is made to achieve progress in secular, physical, and worldly matters. Whatever achievements made in these areas are only temporary and transitory; they are not permanent. While people are able to make giant strides in secular areas all over the world, there is decline in the importance given to spiritual and moral progress. This tendency is in sharp contrast to the culture of Bharat in ancient times.

This land of Bharat (India) has given birth to many noble women like

Savithri, who brought her dead husband back to life;

Chandramati, who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth;

Sita, who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed; and

Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity

This land of piety and nobility attained plenty and prosperity and

Became the teacher of all the nations of the world because of such women of chastity.

(Telugu poem)

Signs of Kali Age

Savithri, a great woman of chastity brought her deceased husband back to life by the power of her chastity. Such women brought great name and fame to the country of Bharat (India). Can you find parallels to her anywhere in this world? No doubt, whoever is born must die. But is there a woman in any country in the world who could bring her dead husband back to life except in Bharat? The whole world is falling to abysmal depth due to transgression of the righteous path, lack of character and bad behaviour.

Once, Arjuna was narrating to King Dharmaraja a few strange incidents he observed while going on a tour of the kingdom. A farmer reported to Arjuna, "Swami! Yesterday I left the implements in the field itself after ploughing, since it was getting dark. Today when I went to the field to pick up those implements, they are not to be found

there.” On another occasion he noticed some ladies putting locks to their houses and going out. On enquiry they informed him, “Swami! We wanted to go out on some work and unless we lock our houses, we will not be able to keep our belongings safe.” This was stunning news to Arjuna, since no house in the kingdom used to be locked in those days, unlike in present times, and people were able to move very freely without any worry. Later, when King Dharmaraja himself went on a stroll, he observed a lady talking to a man in public standing in the middle of the road. Such type of behaviour went against the custom prevailing in the country. Dharmaraja was taken aback at these developments and felt that the age of *Kali* (the age we are now in) had begun. He therefore decided that it was time for the Pandavas to leave for their heavenly abode. Ladies and gents engaging themselves in conversation in full view of the public was a taboo in those days.

Peace emanates from one’s heart

Bharat is a land where noble thoughts and feelings are cultivated right from childhood. In fact, Bharat (India) is the spiritual teacher for the entire world. Even now, you will find *Bharatiyas* (Indians) do not go astray in their behaviour, as is happening in some other countries in the world. They are decent and courteous in their behaviour at least in public. Even an aged son dare not talk to his mother standing in front of her. In the earlier days of Swami, the Raja of Venkatagiri used to visit Puttaparthi. He used to bring the heir apparent and his other son along with him. Before their departure, the sons took the blessings of their mother, who used to sit behind a screen and stretch her legs for her sons to offer their obeisance to her. Such were their noble feelings and exemplary character.

Today, you will find boys and girls moving together even in public places. If someone makes enquiries, they reply that so and so was their classmate. Such acts in the old days were considered highly improper. In fact, the term ‘classmate’ itself is a wrong expression. Do not use the word ‘classmate’. You should say ‘a fellow student in the class’. The rules of conduct in the earlier times were very strict. The situation has changed now. Boys and girls visit each other’s houses without any inhibition and even dine together. This is highly improper. Before doing such things, one has to ask oneself. “Am I a human being or an animal or a beast?” Animals have animal qualities. But you are a human being. Hence, you should possess human qualities. You say you are a human being. Therefore, you have to ask yourself, “Do I possess human qualities?”

What are those human qualities? Never hurt anyone. Do not speak harsh words against any individual. Have compassion and a charitable disposition. Only such a person can be said to be a human being. Truth (*sathya*), righteousness (*dharma*), peace (*santhi*), love (*prema*), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*) are the five qualities a human being should possess. Giving a go-bye to truth and righteousness, people pray for peace. Is it possible? Can anyone get peace outside? Peace is a state of mind that is very much inside one’s own self. It emanates from one’s heart. People are now searching for peace in the outside world.

Follow your inner voice; that is real education

There is reaction, resound, and reflection for everything in the world. Only when you develop the quality of hatred in yourself will you see hatred in others. Even when no one causes any harm to you, you try to hurt others. Whatever you do to others, surely you will experience the result of that action. Whatever you hear, whatever you experience, it is all due to the reaction, reflection, and resound of your own actions and feelings. Others are not responsible for it. You forget this simple truth and lament, “So and so is accusing me; so and so is causing pain to me; so and so is hurting me”, etc. No one is responsible for either your good or your bad. Neither is it God’s

creation; for, God is attributeless, unsullied, the final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and the embodiment of sacredness (God is *nirgunam, niranjanam, sanatana nicketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam*).

You go on fighting with others and try to hurt them. Then you are not a human being at all! Always help others; do not hurt anyone. “Help Ever, Hurt Never.” It is said,

“One attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them (*Paropakara punyaya, papaya parapeedanam*).”

“Whoever you salute, it reaches God (*Sarva jiva namaskaram Kesavam pratigachhati*).”

“Whoever you criticise, it reaches God (*Sarva jiva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigachhati*).”

You think you are accusing someone or making fun of someone. It is all your illusion. In fact, you are accusing yourself and making fun of yourself in the process. Everything has reaction, reflection, and resound. You yourself are responsible for either good or bad. If you wish to enjoy good things in life, do good to others in the first instance.

Today’s education is information-oriented. It is bookish knowledge. It is not real education. It is not the type of education that you should pursue. You have to pursue ‘educare’. Educare manifests in one’s own heart. Education relates to gathering information by reading several books and storing them in your brain. Whatever you remember out of that knowledge, you will reproduce in your examinations and acquire degrees. You call that education. That is not real education. You have to follow your inner voice. That is real education.

In the recent sports day, you played many games; you displayed beautiful gymnastic skills; you sang several songs. These are all activities relating to the body, which is the result of your past actions (*karmas*). However, do not repose absolute confidence in the physical body. The body is given to you for discharging your duty as a human being. Do not misuse your body. It is the responsibility of teachers, headmistresses, principals, vice chancellors, and chancellors to teach the students the value and purpose of human birth.

Treat your parents with love and respect

Your duty is to follow your conscience. Your conscience helps you manifest noble qualities. But you do not pay heed to the voice of your conscience and go against the human values. Hence, you should never ignore your conscience. Your conscience is your most valuable property. You do not have to repeat the name of the Lord, meditate, do yoga, etc. You will achieve a lot of progress in your spiritual exercises if you only listen to your inner voice. Whatever comes from the depth of your heart will do good for you. Whatever goes against the dictates of your conscience is worldly, whereas inner voice or conscience is spiritual. “Help Ever; Hurt Never,” is the cardinal principle of spirituality. Whoever follows the inner voice will always be safe. Never go against that inner voice. That is true spirituality.

Spirituality does not mean just conforming to worship and meditation. These practices have degenerated into several undesirable activities these days. The underlying principle and the purpose of these spiritual practices are totally forgotten. It is said, “Those are the noble ones whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect harmony (*Manasyekam vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam*).” Unless there is perfect accord between your thoughts, words, and deeds you are not a human being at all!

You get very angry against someone and slap them. But think for a moment, for it is a great sin to hurt others. In the process, you are hurting not your enemy but God verily! All are divine. Hence, never hurt anyone. It is natural to help those who help you, but you should be able to help even those who harm you.

There is nothing great in helping
Those who have helped you.
He is a noble one who helps even
Those who have harmed him.
(Telugu poem)

It is only Sai in this world who helps even those who try to harm Him, ignoring their faults. I never mind the harm done to Me by others. We must always be calm, serene, and peaceful under all circumstances. If only you maintain the quality of peace, you can achieve anything in life. Wherever you see in the outside world, it is only pieces and pieces! Do not hurt the feelings of others, come what may. Always treat your parents with love and respect.

Money is not important; your mind is important

In fact, your parents are your first teachers. Respect them. Any amount of your good work by inconveniencing your parents is of no avail. That cannot be considered good work at all. Though it may appear to be yielding some benefits temporarily, the end result of all this work will turn out to be very bad. Hence, you must ensure that you do not cause any inconvenience or suffering to your parents. The more you inconvenience them the more you will suffer. With regard to charity, the more you give in charity to others, the more benefit you will receive later. Therefore, try to help others, always. Do any kind of selfless service which you are capable of. When you thus go on doing help to others, you will be progressing in the path of truth. As you travel in the path of truth, righteousness (*dharma*) will automatically follow. Where truth (*sathya*) and righteousness go together, peace (*santhi*) will reign there. Then love (*prema*) will follow. Where there is love, there cannot be hatred. You will not have enemies then. It is only when the spring of love gets dried up in your heart that you will try to cause suffering to others. Hence, develop love for all. Truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence (*ahimsa*) are human qualities.

Today, there is rampant violence everywhere in the world. People are afraid to stay alone even in their houses. Several changes are taking place all over the world. Earlier, the United States of America was considered to be a super power and a wealthy country. But now all that glory is gone. As a result, people who were going to their workplaces in cars earlier are now walking. We think money and wealth can do anything, but money is not important; your mind is important. If only you can control your mind, everything will turn out to be good for you.

Always remember society and its welfare

Dear students!

Whatever work you undertake, do it with a sense of dedication to God. “Do all actions to please God (*Sarva karma Bhagavad pretyartham*).” Always remind yourself that God is the doer and you are just an instrument in God’s hands. You can achieve anything in life only when there is the will of God. Perform your duty and remain a witness to all that goes in the world. It is said, “Any action resulting in the good of others is noble and should be followed (*Paropakarayaya punyaya papaya parapeedanam*).” Always follow the principles of, “Be good, do good, and see good.” Let your tongue speak only the truth. Let all your deeds be helpful to others. Whoever undertakes

service in society with such a motto will always be happy.

Pride, jealousy, etc, are all bad qualities. They drive away good qualities. They do harm to you as well as to society. Hence, be good and do good to others. If someone is in a difficult situation, go all out to help him even at the cost of your own work. This is the foremost duty of a human being. “Help Ever, Hurt Never” should be your motto. It is enough if you remember these two commands always. Do not cause harm even to your enemy. Hurt never. Do not cause even the slightest inconvenience to others. This is true education.

You make your parents suffer in the house, come to the office, and show your egoistic power on your subordinates and draw a huge salary for your so-called work and responsibility. This is a great mistake. As you go up in your career and life, your ego and jealousy must come down. Then only will you earn respect from one and all. Always remember society and its welfare. You are a member of society, so you have a social responsibility. You owe your very existence to society. Similarly, society is not separate from you. The individuals make up society. You and society are inseparable and mutually dependent. It is only when fellow members of the society prosper that you too will prosper.

Develop faith in your motherland

Dear students!

You all have done well in your studies, getting good marks and securing ranks. You brought good name to the Institution in the fields of education, sports, and cultural activities. Yesterday, you witnessed a play on Bhakta Potana. He did not feel bad, in spite of criticism and belittling from his brother-in-law, Srinatha, also a great poet. Since Potana was a great devotee of Rama and surrendered himself totally to the Lord, Rama Himself composed the great epic *Bhagavatham* on his behalf. Potana always believed that his poetry, his life, and even his very existence were all the gift of Lord Rama. He was a true devotee. When Potana was suffering from acute poverty and finding it very difficult to make both ends meet, his brother-in-law advised him to dedicate his works to the king and make a comfortable living with the money and jewelry gifted by the king. Potana refused to do so, saying that he would take refuge only in Lord Rama. Instead, he decided to live by cultivating his small piece of land.

One day, while Srinatha was going by the side of the fields in a palanquin, he saw his brother-in-law Potana working in his field. He derisively passed a comment on Potana addressing him as “*Haalika!*” meaning, ‘Oh farmer! Are you OK?’ Potana gave an apt reply saying, ‘What does it matter if I am a farmer? I feel it is better and nobler to make a living by farming than dedicating my poetry to earthly kings and living upon their charity. That gives me great satisfaction!’

The earth is the basis for all the objects and all activities in the world. Whoever reposes his faith in the land will never undergo any difficulties. Hence, I advise students to develop faith in their motherland and pursue their vocations in this great land of Bharat (India) itself, instead of dreaming to go to other countries like America and earn lakhs and lakhs of rupees. Earn name and fame in your motherland itself. Earning money is not something great. Even a beggar can earn a lot of money. “Money comes and goes; but morality comes and grows.” Cultivate that morality. Whoever has morality will never undergo any difficulty.

Sankranthi, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-01-14.

The Lord is a wish-fulfilling tree (*kalpavriksha*); you have to approach Him and develop attachment to Him. You must win His grace and be ever near Him, keeping back all the forces that draw you away from Him. Even if you commit some technical faults in singing about Him or in worshipping Him, it does not matter. Devotion makes every error excusable.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

It requires all the strength one can collect to carry a load uphill. The gear and the accelerator have both to operate to haul a car up a steep hill. The guru who taught you cannot do anything to haul it; he can only guide. Control of the senses, changing the mode of life, the habits of thought have to be done by you. The senses say, "Why struggle? Eat, drink, and be merry while you can," but the guru says, "Death lands on you without notice; overcome its fear now, before he calls." "Now" is the true friend; "yesterday" has deceived you and gone; "tomorrow" is a doubtful visitor. "Today" is the fastest friend; hold fast to it."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3. Lead Your Life With Self-Confidence, Faith, And Devotion

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat (India). Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance.

The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling of love toward one's mother.

Character is valued far higher than the very life itself.

People have forgotten the basic principles of this great culture and are imitating western culture.

Alas! *Bharatiyas* (Indians) are not aware of the greatness of their cultural heritage, just as a mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength.

(Telugu poem)

Creation emerges from truth and merges into truth.

Is there a place in the cosmos where truth does not exist?

Visualise this pure and unsullied truth.

(Telugu poem)

Wherever you look, truth (*sathya*) is present there. It is present in every stone, every pebble, every tree, every boulder, and every rock. Everything is the manifestation of truth. Truth blossoms in various ways and various forms. Though truth is everywhere, it cannot be seen because it has no form. Everything in this world is the manifestation of God's glory! Try to recognise this truth.

Higher education at Muddenahalli for instilling self-confidence in students

Embodiments of Love!

I have come to Muddenahalli after a long time. When I first came here, excellent arrangements were made for the convenience of the people who had gathered here in large numbers. The organisers very patiently and peacefully made them sit comfortably to enable them to listen to My discourse.

The purpose of My present visit is to provide facilities of higher education to the students who are studying here. At present, this institution provides facilities to the students for studying up to 12th standard. They have to go to distant towns if they want to pursue higher studies. The places are far-off and the expenditure is too high, which they cannot afford. Moreover, living in a town is also full of difficulties. Therefore, I have resolved to provide education up to postgraduate level so that the students can pursue courses like B.A., B.Sc., M.A., etc. here itself (*loud applause*).

People are endowed with all types of powers, but they suffer because they have too many desires. All powers have become meaningless because of this excessive greed. Greed is the real cause of sorrows and difficulties. People are losing peace of mind because of excessive desires. Therefore, reduce desires and attain knowledge of the Self (*Atma Jnana*). People can get rid of all their worries when they engage in the quest for knowledge of the Self. It is My wish to provide ideal education to the students in this institution so that after passing their B.A., B.Sc., B.Com., etc. they can lead their lives in the vast world with self-confidence.

Value-based education to be imparted to students

There are many facilities in villages today, but spirituality has gone into oblivion. People have given up the practice of reciting the various names of God, like Rama, Krishna, and Govinda. Therefore, I have decided to arrange for imparting the teachings of the sacred texts like the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharatha*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* to the students so that they can imbibe these teachings themselves and share them with others. It is for this purpose that I am starting a new campus of this university. You may have seen the university building at Puttaparthi on top of a hill. It is My wish that a grand building like that should be constructed here and that value-based education should be imparted to the students of this region also.

People know the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, but they do not put them into practice. What is the use of that knowledge when it is not put into practice? One should put these teachings into practice, share them with others, and inspire them to make these as part of their life. The very purpose of My coming here is to encourage and inspire you in this regard.

Today, I laid the foundation of the building. My resolve is that when I come here again next year, the building should be ready. Nobody else can declare with such authority that the work of this magnitude would be completed in such a short time. It is not only with regard to this campus of the university; I did the same for our super speciality hospital at Puttaparthi also. I declared on 22 November 1990 that the hospital would start functioning on 22 November next year, and it did start functioning on that day. Do you know how the implements required for the hospital came? On 21 November night at 11 O'clock, a big van arrived, full of all the required equipment. As declared by Me one year before, four heart operations were performed on the day of inauguration. The operations were successful, and the patients were discharged within five days.

I am laying the foundation of this building on 14 February 2009, and this campus will start functioning next year. Everything will be ready next year by this time and all the facilities will be provided to the students.

You can achieve everything with self-confidence

Students should develop self-confidence. Many of you might have read the story of Abraham Lincoln, who lived in penury during his student days. While other boys went to school in costly clothes, Lincoln could not afford even a proper dress when he went to school. One day, his friends made fun of him and humiliated him. He came home crying and told his mother how he was being insulted and humiliated. His mother consoled him, saying, "My dear son, do not get affected by praise or blame. Develop self-confidence. Have firm faith in God. Then everything will become good for you." These words made a lasting impression on the tender heart of Lincoln. He acquired self-confidence with the encouragement of his mother. Ultimately, he rose to the position of President of America. He expressed his deep gratitude to his mother when he became the President of America because it was due to her teachings that he rose to such a high position.

Nothing is impossible in this world for a person who has self-confidence and courage. One can accomplish anything and everything. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen self-confidence. Do not bother about what others say. Do not be afraid even if they make fun of you. Why should you have any fear when God is with you? He is the resident of your heart. He is none other than your *Atma*. Call it God, call it *Atma*, call it Consciousness — all are different names of the same reality. If you take gold to the goldsmith and ask him to make a ring, he will make a ring out of it. The same gold can be melted and made into a bangle or a chain. The ring, the bangle, and the chain are made of the same gold. Likewise, the same is present in everyone though it takes various forms. It is not

possible to divide the *Atma*. One *Atma* dwells in all beings (*Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma*). Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti*). Nobody can attribute any differences to the principle of the *Atma*. If we perform our task with this type of self-confidence, we can achieve anything. We will then be victorious in all our endeavours.

You should all become great leaders. Today the country is passing through a critical situation. People are very much concerned as to who will become their leaders. Therefore, you should become good leaders, go to the masses, provide necessary encouragement to them, and set society right. You are all aware that many evils have crept into our society. Many educationists have been saying that they will work for the welfare of society, but none of them has done anything. Society can be set right only by those who have firm faith in God. Sacred teachings should be imparted to the students, and they should be encouraged to take part in the service of society. Only then can there be peace in the world. It is not enough if you merely pray, “May all the beings of all the worlds be happy! (*Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu*)”. You should serve the world. Serve all, *bangaru* (My dear golden students)! Considering yourself the servant of all, and develop the spirit of selfless service.

Present-day leaders come and go. Once they become leaders, they forget their duties. These leaders may become MLAs today, MLCs tomorrow, and ministers thereafter. But they all come and go. None of them is stable in their position. Do not become like that. Only those who have self-confidence can become real leaders. Therefore, develop self-confidence and serve society. Develop compassion toward poor people and try to protect them. Offer food and clothes to them, and show them the right path. You need not do what is beyond your capacity. Whatever little you can afford to do, do it in such a way that it gives maximum results. I am starting this institution with these expectations and bless you all to achieve the same. Next year, I will come and open this new campus of the university.

Students should earn a good name

Do not be worried about the funds. So far, I have never asked anybody for money. Where is the need to ask anybody for money when the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi, resides in My heart? Therefore, do not ask anybody for money. I will provide everything. I do not beg from anybody. I am not a beggar. Whatever may be the expenditure, I will bear all of it Myself. You will see the results yourself. Even the people from Bangalore will be wonderstruck when they see the work done by Me.

Students! Lead your life with self-confidence, steadfast faith, and devotion and study well. Think that God is always with you. In fact, He resides in your heart. Don't consider that He is separate from you. Your parents may be away from you, but God can never be away from you. Therefore, develop devotion for God. You may forget anything, but never forget spirituality. The power of spirituality is greater than any other power. There is no other power greater than that.

Our Narasimha Murthy is also sitting here. He should stay here for some time and set everything right. (Saying this, Swami created a gold ring for Sri Narasimha Murthy and put it on his finger.) He should help in selecting good teachers who can fulfil the objectives of this institution. Narayana Rao! You and all your teachers should work together in unison for the growth and progress of this campus. If you need anything, ask Me. Do not ask anything from anybody else. I will meet all your requirements.

Is My long discourse causing inconvenience to you? (Sri Narasimha Murthy and others said that it was their

great good fortune to listen to Swami's discourse.) Of course, you are all very fortunate. Dear students! You are indeed very fortunate that you have been blessed with the opportunity to experience the bliss of Swami's sight, touch, and conversation (*darshan*, *sparshan*, and *sambhashan*) from your early age. "The vision of the Lord destroys all sins; His touch destroys the bondage of *karma*; conversation with Him destroys all troubles (*Darshanam Papa Nashanam*; *Sparshanam Karma Vimochanam*; *Sambhashanam Sankata Nashanam*)." Not only that, all the worldly sufferings are cast away by these three.

Share your experience with your parents also. Try to correct them if they have any bad habits, so that they can get rid of them. Earn a good name, so that your parents may proudly say, "Our boy is studying in a Sai institution, which has brought great transformation in him." Do not earn a bad name, as a result of which they may have to express regret, "Our boy is studying in such and such school where he has taken to bad ways." Earn a good reputation. When you earn good reputation, you can attain any high position in life.

(Here, one of the listeners exclaimed, "Swami! Today, it seems that we have been transported into heaven." Swami then said) Very happy, very happy. Be always happy. (Bhagawan sang the song (*bhajan*) "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama, Rama, Ram...*" and continued His discourse.)

Never hurt your parents

When you meet any of your friends, do not say, "Oh friend! Hello, hello ... How are you?" Instead, address him lovingly, saying, "Brother! How are you?" and offer your salutations to him.

Whomsoever you salute, it reaches God,
Whomsoever you criticise, it also reaches God.

Sarva jiva namaskaram Kesavam pratigachchati,
Sarva jiva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigachchati

Therefore, respect everyone. Love your parents deeply. It is your parents who have given you life and nourished you. In fact, all that you have has been given to you by your parents, while they took all your sufferings upon themselves. Therefore, never cause any hardship to your parents at any time. When you conduct yourself in this noble manner, God will bless you with wealth and prosperity. When your parents become weak and debilitated, support and help them. Children should see to it that they do not put their parents to any suffering. Never make them shed tears. If you make your parents happy, your children will also make you happy. Never harm anyone. Always offer help to all. Help Ever, Hurt Never.

Many overseas devotees are also getting transformed by following the teachings of Swami. I declare before all of you that the whole world will become like one family within next 18 years. Soon Bharat (India) will have a great name as spiritual leader of the world, and *Bharatiya* (Indian) culture and spirituality will spread to all corners of the world.

Sathya Sai Grama, Muddenahalli, 2009-02-14

The Name is enough to give you all the results of every type of spiritual effort.
This is accepted by all the spiritual texts (*sastras*) and all spiritual aspirants who

have left accounts of their struggle and success. Moreover, the Name is capable of being recited and meditated upon by all, equally. Of course, the Name is a limitation (*upadhi*) of the Universal; it identifies the unidentifiable, through one of its aspects. Take the limitation as a means of saving yourself; take it as a boat that will take you across the sea of birth and death.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The demonic persons (*rakshasas*) had already attained liberation, for they had the vision of God when they drew their last breaths. “The monkeys (*vanaras*) came down to be My instruments, so they have no death – neither are they born, except at My command,” said Rama. Man too must become His instrument in order to escape death and birth. He has come, imprisoned in the ego, and he has to liberate himself. This can be done only by making him aware of the Universal basis. Like a man sunk in poverty, dwelling in a hut that is raised over a vast underground treasure, man is suffering, with a spring of joy inside him, of which he is unaware. I have come to give you the key of that treasure, to tell you how to tap that spring, for you have forgotten the way to blessedness. If you waste this chance of saving yourselves, it is just your fate.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4. Develop Self-Confidence To Gain Success In Life

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat (India).

Of all rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance.

The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling of love toward one's mother.

Character is valued far higher than the very life itself.

People have forgotten the basic principles of this great culture and are imitating western culture.

Alas! The *Bharatiyas* (Indians) are not aware of the greatness of their cultural heritage just as a mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength.

(Telugu poem)

The elephant, unable to realise its innate strength, meekly submits to the commands of the mahout, who works for a paltry sum of a few rupees. It gets up and sits down as per the commands of the mahout on account of the training it received from him. Similarly the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) today are blindly following western culture, forgetting their own rich and sacred culture. The culture of Bharat (India) is very sacred, strong, and ancient. It is eternal, and a beacon light that guides all the countries of the world. How then can the *Bharatiyas* forget their own great culture? The culture of Bharat enjoins all people to revere and respect *their* mother and father as God. It exhorts, "Mother is God; father is God (*Matrudevo bhava and pitrudevo bhava*). Not only this; it also exhorts, "Teacher is God and guest is God (*Acharyadevo bhava and atithidevo bhava*). If you tend to ignore the words of your own mother, whom else will you revere and respect?"

Embodiments of Love!

As we go on talking for hours together, we tend to forget what we really intend to communicate. So many deviations and distortions creep into our speech. Today, the entire world is filled with negative feelings. Whoever you come across, whatever you see, negativity is widespread. All are reflections of your inner thoughts and feelings. But beyond all these, there is one entity called *Atma*, that is the embodiment of the divine Self. There is only one *Atma*, which dwells in every individual, nay every living being. The *Bhagavad Gita* declared, "The eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of My Being (*Mamaivamso jeevaloke jeevabhutah Sanatanah*)." There is no scope at all for any doubt or duality in this aspect. "The *Atma* or Brahman is one without a second (*Ekameva adwiteeyam Brahma*)." That is why it is said, "A man with dual mind is half blind."

Divinity is described in the *Vedas* as "The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet (*Sahasra seersha purushah sahasraakshah sahasra paad*)." The import of this statement is that the one Divinity expresses itself through millions of individuals and that all are divine. We tend to forget this great truth and consider each individual as separate from the other.

Develop faith in the Atma Principle

The strife and conflicts between human beings started the moment humanity forgot its fundamental unity. It is time that this trend is reversed and that the fundamental unity among humans is re-established. Along with the

unity, there should be purity. Where unity and purity go together, there is Divinity. The combination of unity, purity, and Divinity will result in realisation of the *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*). The *Upanishads*, especially the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, dealt at length with this *Atma* Principle. If only one develops faith in this *Atma* Principle, one will succeed in all his endeavours.

The *Atma* Principle, or divine consciousness, permeates the entire universe. Not a blade of grass can move without this divine consciousness. Everything in this universe is the reflection of that *Atma* Principle or divine consciousness. The same *Atma* Principle dwells in all human beings regardless of religion, caste, creed, and nationality. This is true even in the case of *Avatars*.

The *Avatars* of Rama, Krishna, etc. may be different in names and forms; but the *Atma* Principle in them is only one. They all lived in their human vestures till the completion of their *Avataric* mission, and once their task was completed, they disappeared. Hence, the physical bodies are not permanent. In fact, nothing in this ephemeral world is permanent, not even the great *Avatars*. *Atma* is the only entity that is eternal. It is beyond birth and death. It is changeless. There is a beginning and end for everything else in this universe, except *Atma*. Hence, one has to develop firm faith in this *Atma* Principle.

Unfortunately, today we tend to forget this true and eternal *Atma* Principle and develop faith in the ephemeral world. We weave a web of imagination around the pleasures that this transient world would offer. Ultimately, we land ourselves in sorrow and difficulties. The *Atma* Principle is the only entity that is true, eternal, and changeless. Everything else undergoes change from time to time. Even in the case of the human body, it passes through different stages like childhood, adolescence, youth, and old age, but the individual remains the same through all these changes.

Today, people adapt themselves to continuous changes in time, situations, and environment. One who changes oneself thus is not a human being in the real sense. Who is a real human being? One who does not undergo a change; one whose faith in the *Atma* Principle (Self) is firm and steady. That is self-confidence. One who develops that self-confidence can find a place for himself permanently in the history of the world.

Respect the commands of mother and follow them sincerely

You all know about Abraham Lincoln, the past President of the United States of America. He was a perfect example of such self-confidence. He came from a very poor family and could not afford to have a decent dress and books. He was so poor that he had to study under streetlights. His mother used to support him with the meagre amount of money she earned by mending old and worn-out clothes. One day his classmates, who were rich and wearing fine suits, boots, and hats, made fun of him and heckled him, saying that he did not deserve to walk along with them on that poor attire and that he may walk on the footpath. He came home crying and poured out his agony to his mother, explaining how he was insulted and humiliated. His mother consoled him saying, “My dear son! Do not get affected by praise or blame. Understand the situation at home. Your father cannot afford spending money on your education. Develop self-confidence. That is your property.”

These words made a lasting impression on the tender heart of Lincoln. He acquired self-confidence and self-respect, with the constant support and encouragement of his mother. He even did some odd jobs and earned some money to support himself. The good name he earned for himself in the society commanded the respect and love of his fellowmen for him.

In due course, his friends and well-wishers advised him to contest the elections. They assured him of their support and votes. On their advice, he ran for election and won. He became President of America. Thus, Abraham Lincoln, the son of a poor artisan, with little spare money even to pursue primary education, became the President of America by sheer hard work and self-confidence infused by his mother. People cannot reach great heights without self-confidence. Not even the nine forms of devotion — listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His lotus feet, salutation, worship, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender (*sravanam, kirtanam, Vishnusmaranam, padasevanam, vandanam, archanam, dasyam, sneham, Atmanivedanam*) — can help.

Any amount of spiritual exercise without self-confidence will be of little use. Hence, I wish that all of you should develop self-confidence. Face your examinations with self-confidence. Without self-confidence, not even your friends can help. Do not forget to follow your mother's advice, for "Mother is God (*Matrudevo bhava*).” She will always protect you, wherever you are. One who respects the commands of their mother and follows them sincerely will come up in life, as in the case of Abraham Lincoln.

Unfortunately, people today do not give due respect and recognition to their mothers. They do not hesitate even to denigrate her before others, when they are holding high positions. Whenever some guests or officer colleagues visit their houses and ask about the mother, they reply that she is a servant. This type of behaviour is totally against the *vedic* injunctions, which exhort people to treat the mother as God, verily. She is, in fact, the living divinity. She is the first guru to a human being. She is the only person who selflessly works for and wishes for the welfare of her children. Those who disregard the advice of their mother will never be successful in their life. Even in foreign countries, people like Abraham Lincoln attained high positions by obeying the commands of their mothers and by developing self-confidence.

We consider foreigners as great, but not all the foreigners can be considered great. Only those who respect their mothers and follow their advice are great. If you ignore the advice of your mother, you are sure to face difficulties in life. Follow her advice wholeheartedly. Develop the quality of implicit obedience to the wishes of your mother, without a second thought. Only then will your life be peaceful.

Sustain the rich spiritual legacy of Bharat

The women of Bharat (India) earned great name and fame for their sterling quality of chastity. They are not to be treated lightly. A few examples of such noble women are always worth remembering and emulated. Savithri could bring her deceased husband back to life, by the power of her chastity. Sita was a great woman who entered the fire to prove her chastity and came out unscathed. There were several such examples in this country of Bharat, which shone as a beacon light to the entire world. Bharat is a holy and sacred land.

How fortunate you are to be born in this great land of Bharat! Therefore, you must sanctify your lives by following the rich and sacred culture of this country. Bharat is a holy land where the qualities of magnanimity and sacrifice flourished. The spiritual outlook of Bharat is unparalleled. In fact, it is this spiritual outlook that sustained this country since times immemorial and took it to great heights. The people of this country are enjoying peace and bliss even today, while the whole world is passing through difficult times. It is for this reason that people from all other countries visit this country and find solace here. We have to sustain this rich legacy of spirituality.

Develop self-confidence to become successful in life

Whenever a student is asked what they are doing, they reply that they are concentrating on their studies.

But the real meaning of concentration is fixing one's mind on a particular object. Contemplation is the next step. The final step is meditation. Thus, concentration, contemplation, and meditation are the three steps in spiritual practice. Meditation is not simply silent sitting, closing one's eyes. Maintaining an unwavering and steady mind is meditation. People think concentration is a great exercise, but it is the first step in spiritual practice, the others being contemplation and meditation. Concentration is like the primary school education. Contemplation is the high school education and meditation is the college level education. Only after one reaches the college level is one eligible to acquire a degree. All our ancient sages reached up to this stage and meditated upon Divinity. When one reaches the stage of meditation, there is no scope for any wavering and one's faith in Divinity becomes steady. You have to attain that stage. You may study a number of books and pass your examination in the school or college, but only one who reaches the meditation stage passes the test prescribed by God.

Dear students!

Do not be proud of your achievement in getting a first class or a rank. It is not the marks that count. You should see that you do not get remarks, which is the result of your losing self-confidence. Hence, develop self-confidence to become a real success in life.

(Bhagawan sang the *bhajan*, "*Bhajan Bina...*" and continued His discourse.)

Embodiments of Love!

Constantly meditate upon a name and form of God that is to your liking. It does not matter which name and form you select for your repetition (*namasmarana*). All names and forms belong to the one God. God is the embodiment of divine *Atma* (*Atmaswarupa*). He takes upon different forms and is worshipped by various names. It is only God who can fulfil the desires of devotees. It is He who grants you powers and positions. Without Him, you cannot achieve any position. All are zeros only! With God's grace, one can become a hero!

Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-02-21

5. Love God and Meditate on Him

Bharat (India) is the motherland of many noble souls who earned great name and fame in all the continents of the world.

This is the land of valorous people who vanquished the foreign rulers in the battlefield and attained independence.

This is the land which excelled in music, literature and other fine arts.

Having been born in this great land of Bharat, oh, boys and girls, it is your sacred duty to protect its rich cultural heritage.

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

We are spending nights daily ever since we are born, but not all those nights can be termed as *Sivarathri*. People meditate upon, sing, and listen to the glory of the divine name and experience the divinity of Lord Siva. Since the whole night is spent in meditation and singing the glory of the divine name of Lord Siva, this night is called *Sivarathri*. Not only this night, whenever you spend the entire night meditating upon the divine name, that night is also *Sivarathri*. Lord Siva is not a separate *Avatar*.

Vishnu and Siva are beyond description

In fact, Hari and Hara (Lord Vishnu and Lord Siva) are beyond one's contemplation. They are beyond the physical body. Many people contemplate upon them as *Avatars* with a physical body and worship them in a particular form. They develop a deep urge to visualise them in a particular form. But who is it that ascribed those forms to Divinity? Surely, they did not incarnate in those forms. Some painters like Ravi Varma who, based upon certain descriptions in the *sastras* and *Puranas*, painted them in a particular form as per their imagination. That is all! In fact, Vishnu and Siva are not limited to a physical frame. They are beyond description. They are formless and attributeless. God is attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and the embodiment of sacredness (*nirgunam, niranjanam, sanatana nikanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam*).

God is formless and attributeless

Devotees are also accustomed to contemplate upon and worship those forms since millennia. They wish to visualise God in those forms. God is beyond description and is not limited to a particular form. No painter, however great they may be, can ever paint the picture of God. How can a painter paint the form of God, who is formless? However, God assumes different forms as per the wishes of devotees. Whoever wishes to visualise God in whatever form of their liking, God manifests in that form. It is for that particular moment only. It is not permanent. All forms attributed to God are only temporary. Divinity is beyond name and form.

Once Goddess Lakshmi came to Parvathi and wondered:

Oh, Gauri! You are very young and Sambasiva is old;
He has matted locks and wears a tiger skin;

He rides a bull and is constantly on the move;
He is adorned with snakes;
How did you court Him?
Don't you know all this?
He has no house of His own and sleeps in the burial ground.
(Telugu song)

Parvathi was deeply disturbed by these remarks and approached Lord Siva and asked, "You do not have a house of your own. You do not belong to a particular caste or lineage. Further, you are androgynous (*ardhanaareeswara*). How then can you call yourself God?" Lord Siva replied that God is beyond names, caste, and lineage. He turned to Lakshmi and asked, "Oh! Mother Lakshmi! Are you aware of your own husband's antecedents? He is constantly on the move to protect His devotees and has no time for food and sleep. If at all He settles down to take food, at that moment some devotee like Droupadi prays, "Oh! Lord Krishna! I am in great trouble. Please save me." Immediately, He rushes to rescue her, leaving His food. Thus, He is constantly on the move to protect His devotees like Narada and Prahlada. How then did you court such a Lord, who has no time even for food and rest?"

The formless God manifests as per the wishes of the devotees

Siva then clarified that God has no name and form; He is changeless; He has neither birth nor death, neither beginning nor end; He is eternal and the embodiment of *Atma* (*Atmaswarupa*). He also emphasised that it is illusion to ascribe a name and form to God. The formless God manifests with a particular form and name as per the wishes of the devotees, to fulfil their aspirations. God is formless and attributeless. It is the devotees who attribute some names, forms, and attributes to God and feel satisfied. All names and forms are evanescent and false (*anithya* and *asathya*). The only eternal and true form of God is *Atma*.

Everything in the world may change; but the *Atma* will never undergo a change. The entire universe is contained in the *Atma*. This is also called divine consciousness or *Atma* or Brahman. People misunderstand this eternal truth, ascribing several names and forms to it. When the formless God assumes a form, it is natural for human beings to meditate and worship that form. People derive great satisfaction and experience bliss by doing so. It is alright as long as that form remains. Once that divine form ceases to exist, what will you do? The happiness and bliss derived from the worship of a particular form of God are born only out of your illusion.

Never consider the physical body as permanent

The physical vestures last for a particular period and then cease to exist. Divinity takes different forms later. For example, you are now attached to this physical body. You worship this body and derive great satisfaction and bliss thereby. But, after sometime, this body may disappear like the earlier *Avatars*. Then you should not feel sad. When the divine *Atma* embodied in this physical body reaches its eternal abode, it is a matter of joy, not sorrow. In the *Thretha Yuga*, the Rama *Avatar* came. He went into exile in the forest and destroyed several demons, including the great demon king, Ravana. Finally, having fulfilled His *Avataric* mission, He went into the Sarayu river and disappeared. The same is the case in the *Dwapara Yuga* with Lord Krishna, who left His mortal coil after having been hit by the arrow of a hunter in the forest. Thus, the physical vestures are always temporary and untrue.

Meditate upon Divinity, which is true and eternal

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later,
But the indweller has neither birth nor death.

The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness.

Truly speaking, the indweller, who is in the form of *Atma*,
Is verily God Himself.

(Telugu poem)

Hence, never consider the physical body as permanent. The bodies appear according to the time and circumstances. Once the prescribed time is over, they just disappear. Even the experiences gained by the physical body vanish. Considering the physical bodies as true, if you wish to have the vision (*darshan*) of Lord Krishna of *Dwapara Yuga* now, how is it possible? As long as He walked in that body, He appeared in Mathura, Brindavan, Gokul, Dwaraka, etc., and made people happy with His sight, touch, and conversation (*darshan*, *sparshan*, and *sambhashan*).

Take the example of an electric bulb. Each bulb has separate wattage, which remains for a limited period of time. The *Avatars* are also like these electric bulbs. Over a period, God has incarnated as several *Avatars*. You should not be attached to the physical form of a particular *Avatar*; rather you should be attached to Divinity as the formless, attributeless Supreme Self (*Parabrahma*), which manifested as different *Avatars* in different ages.

You were born as a child and grew up as a boy, youth, and an elderly person. All these different stages in life are for a limited period only, but you, the individual, are there in all the different stages. *Avatars* come, fulfil their mission, and disappear. Therefore, you must meditate upon Divinity, which is true and eternal.

There are three aspects in spiritual practices: concentration, contemplation, and meditation. At the moment, you are fixing your gaze on this form; that is concentration. When this form moves away after sometime, you still look at this form with your mental eye; that is contemplation. As a result of this exercise, this form gets imprinted in your heart permanently. That is meditation. As you go on meditating thus, the form remains in your heart permanently. At present, you are confining your spiritual practice to concentration and contemplation only. These two stages are only transitory. It is true that the first step in your spiritual practice is concentration. Concentration has to be transformed into contemplation and later into meditation. In this final stage of meditation, you will continue to visualise the form of God even if you close your eyes.

The ancient sages adopted this form of meditation. That is why God manifested before them whenever they wished, talked to them and fulfilled their desires.

The formless, attributeless Supreme Self (*nirakara*, *nirguna Parabrahma*) is changeless and eternal. It represents the ultimate reality. It is known by different names like Rama, Krishna, Sai, etc. Do not make any distinction between the names, for it is beyond names and forms. Install that ultimate reality on the altar of your sacred heart and constantly meditate upon it.

Some people tend to misinterpret the *Sastras* and *Puranas* to suit their convenience and selfish ends.

A small story. Once an impostor posing as a renunciant stood before a house and begged for food saying, "I am hungry, please give me food!" The housewife heard his plea and came out. She told him, "Sir! Please go to the river and have a bath and come back. Meanwhile, I will keep the food ready for you." The impostor quoted

a line from the *Puranas*, “constant chanting of the name of Govinda is as good as taking a bath (*Govindeti sada snanam*).” The housewife immediately realised that the person standing in front of their door begging for food was not a true renunciant and replied, “Dear Son! Constant chanting of the name of Govinda is as good as a meal (*Govindeti sada bhojanam*). You may go.”

It is said that the face is the index of mind. It reflects our inner thoughts and feelings. If the so-called renunciant in this story really believed in the glory of the divine name, he should have taken a bath before asking for food. He was lazy. He wanted food to satisfy his hunger but was reluctant to take a bath before the meal. Never believe in such impostors.

Some people sit silently, closing their eyes. They say they are doing meditation. That is not meditation. They may be sitting silently, but their mind may be wandering thinking about all and sundry. Only the stage wherein the mind is unwavering and firmly fixed on the higher reality can be called meditation. Meditation is the stage next to contemplation.

A small example: you may have scored first class marks in the half yearly examination, but you will not be eligible to get a degree. It is only after passing the final examination that you become eligible to receive a degree. Contemplation and meditation are comparable to the half yearly and final examinations. Thus, spirituality represents a higher stage in life. Today, people are engrossed in the pursuit of physical and worldly objects, forgetting moral and spiritual goals. How then can they attain spiritual progress? If one wishes to have a spiritual experience, one has to acquire the necessary strength to face the final examination.

To say that this is my body, my house, my property, etc. represents the physical aspect. When you say, “this is my body,” it means “my” is separate. That is, you are separate from your body. Similarly, when you say “my mind, my intellect, my subconscious mind,” etc., it means they are all separate from you. Hence, your true nature, “I”, is separate from all of those. You have to sacrifice all the fruits of your actions (*karmas*). That means that you have to “perform all actions in a spirit of surrender to God (*Sarva karma Bhagavad preetyartham*).” Only then will you become immortal.

If you wish to attain the true and eternal state, you must realise the *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*). Only the *Upanishads* delineate on the *Atma* Principle extensively and not the epics like *Bhagavatha* and *Ramayana*. The same *Atma* Principle, that is, the Supreme Reality, incarnates from age to age to restore *dharma* whenever it is on the decline, as stated in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

Oh Arjuna! Whenever there is a decline in *dharma* and rise in *adharma*,
I incarnate from age to age for the establishment of *dharma*.

Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya Glanir Bhavati Bharata,
Abhyutthanamadharmasya Tadatmanam Srujamyaham.

(Sanskrit verse)

Peace brings love

Install God on the altar of your sacred heart and meditate on Him constantly. In spite of sorrow, difficulties, calamities that you may encounter, hold on to Him firmly. They trouble your body, not you; for, you are separate from your body. The body is like a box in which the mind, intellect, subconscious mind, and senses are packed.

We cultivate qualities like anger, jealousy, envy, pride, etc. due to our contact with the outside world. Only when we get rid of these qualities do we enjoy peace. We have to start our spiritual practices with truth (*sathya*) and righteousness (*dharma*). When truth and righteousness go together, peace (*santhi*) will reign. Peace brings love. Where there is peace, there cannot be hatred. When we develop hatred against someone, it means the spring of love is dried up in our heart. When there is love in our heart, we do not get angry, even if someone accuses us. Normally, we do not care for anyone when we are angry.

Many people speak ill of Me, accuse Me, and even heckle Me, but I am not disturbed. I am always happy and blissful. That is real love. Where there is anger, hatred, and jealousy, it means that there is no love. Hence, we should always follow the motto of “Love All, Serve All!”

The basis for following this principle is truth and righteousness. Always speak truth and follow righteousness. As against this principle, people are now lecturing so much about *dharma* without themselves treading the path of *dharma*. *Dharma* cannot survive in such circumstances. It is said, “There cannot be a greater *dharma* than speaking truth (*Sathyannasti paro dharmah*).” *Sathya* and *dharma* are like the two hands, two legs, and two lips in a human body. Only when the two lips work together can a human being speak. Similarly, only when *sathya* and *dharma* go together does peace reign. Where there is no *dharma*, there love cannot be. Thus, *sathya* and *dharma* are the basis for all other values like peace (*santhi*), love (*prema*), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*).

(Bhagawan sang the song, “*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho ...*” and continued His discourse.)

Do not indulge in excessive talk

Embodiments of Love!

Always meditate on the divine name —don’t not just contemplate, meditate. Meditation should be with love for God. Without love, your meditation will not achieve the desired result. Your love for God should be continuous through day and night. It is possible that when you pray to God to fulfil some desire and things go contrary, you may get angry and develop hatred against Him, but that has nothing to do with spirituality. Your innate nature and love for God should never undergo a change. You should continue to attach yourself to the divine name. That is real meditation. When you are in deep meditation, nothing in the external world should be visible to you even if you open your eyes.

You also need to be careful about your speech. Too much talk is very bad. Do not indulge in excessive talk. Try to mend your nature. Observe silence as far as possible and be quiet. Talk as much as is needed. Just answer to the point. If you talk more, you will be branded as a chatter-box. Too much talk is not good, even from the health point of view. This is very important, especially in the case of children. You have to keep your mind steady right from the young age. What is important is not studying textbooks but steadying your mind. Textbooks you can always study; in the classroom, in the hostel, etc.

Are you all happy? (All the students in one voice replied that they were happy.)

Be always happy, happy, happy!

To earn the grace of God, you have to pray to the Personified Power with Name and Form; it is your yearning that decides in what form the Lord appears. You call, and He answers. If you are not earnest, if you feel indifferent and say, "Let Him come when He wills, in the form He likes and with the name He prefers," He will not come at all. Call on Him with anguish; He will respond.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Peace of mind will not descend on you because your room is air-conditioned or your sofa soft cushioned. It does not depend on your bank balance or on diplomas you have collected. It can come only when you deny the demon (*dhanava*) in you all the chances of moving you, when you encourage the Divine in you to manifest Himself. The demon is the prompter of the demonic traits mentioned in the *Gita*.

Everything in the universe is divine; it exists; it shines; it is lovable. It is being, awareness, beloved (*asthi, bhakti, priya*); it is being-awareness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). For it is the same as the universal, eternal Absolute, which is also being-awareness-bliss.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. No Society Can Exist Without Morality

Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest (*Jantunam narajanma jantunam durlabham*). Why is it said so? Everybody wants progress, prosperity, and welfare of society. There are three main principles through which this can be achieved. They are: love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society (*Daiva preeti, papa bheeti, and sangha neethi*).

Safeguard morality

For morality to prevail in society, the individual should fear sin. Someone will fear sin only when they develop love for God. Therefore, it is necessary to develop love for God. When one develops love for God, one will have fear of sin and will adopt the right path in life. That will bring about morality in society. A man without morality cannot be called a human being in the real sense of the term. But modern people are immersed over head and ears in sin. Then how can they have love for God? One can have love for God only when one fears sin. One should, in fact, consider love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society as one's three main limbs —like feet, stomach, and head.

Due to the absence of
Fear of sin and love for God,
Humanness has declined in human beings.
This is detrimental to universal peace.
(Telugu Poem)

Love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society are interdependent. One will have fear of sin when one develops love for God. One will develop morality when one has fear of sin. Conversely, a person devoid of morality will have no fear of sin, and one who has no fear of sin can have no love for God.

People desire many things in life; they perform many types of yoga, meditation, and penance. But all these are useless if they lack fear of sin. Therefore, for morality in society, the individual should have fear of sin. One can earn respect and attain a place of honour in society only when one has morality. No society can exist without morality. Therefore, spread morality in society. Society that is based on morality will promote love for God. On the other hand, if society is without any moral base, there will be neither fear of sin in its members nor love for God. Therefore, it is the foremost duty of people to safeguard their morality.

Selflessness is the noblest virtue

A true human being is one who is endowed with humanness. First of all, one should have love for God. If you engage yourself in selfless service (*seva*) without love for God, it amounts only to selfishness. As long as one has selfishness, one cannot realise the Self. In fact, a fish is better than a selfish person in the sense that the fish cleans the water in which it moves. Selflessness is the noblest virtue. You consider yourselves human beings, but do you have humanness and human qualities? If you lack these, then where is the difference between a man and an animal or a beast? The animals at least help people to grow crops, but people today have become so selfish that they do not help anybody.

Therefore, we should ask ourselves this question: Are we human beings, animals, or beasts? Of course, we are not animals or beasts; we are human beings. When we know this, we should develop befitting human qualities. Everybody should think and ask themselves, “Do I have human qualities or not?” The human values of truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence (*sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa*) are like the five life-breaths of the human. You can call yourself a human being only when you possess these five human values. If you lack these five values, then whatever other qualities you may have, they cannot make you a real human being.

An animal has hunger, lust, and anger. It leads its life without any restraint. It lacks kindness and compassion, which are the main qualities of a human being. Lust, anger, delusion, greed, pride, and jealousy are common to a man and an animal. One who has no control over these animal qualities is verily an animal. One should keep them under check and develop truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence instead. One should have kindness and compassion for all.

First of all, one should have love. We can have peace only when we have love. We can have fulfilment in life only when we combine peace and love. When we have both peace and love, we will have no hatred and we will not hurt anybody. If we hurt others, it shows that there is anger in us. Sorrow is the reaction of anger. Therefore, we should develop love.

If at any time the feelings of anger and hatred arise in us, we should check them. That is the quality of a human being. That is why we should have fear of sin, love for God, and morality in society. When we develop love for God, all our sins will be totally burnt to ashes. Therefore, if we want all our sins to be destroyed, we should develop love for God.

Anger and jealousy are worst enemies of humans

Man is divine (*Manushyanam daiva swarupam*). That is why *Avatars* take human form. Since you have human form, do not give room to animal qualities. Even if they arise in you, drive them away. When you have animal qualities, you will have no fear of sin. Therefore, always have love, love, and love alone!

Anger and jealousy are the worst enemies of man. One who has these two cannot be called a human being. Such a person can never attain divinity. One who flies into a rage from moment to moment shows lack of humaneness. It shows only their animal quality. Therefore, first of all control anger and jealousy. This is what all our sacred texts like the *Gita* and the *Upanishads* teach. These two are more powerful and fierce than even a lion and are always waiting to overpower you. The anger of a lion is short-lived; the lion can kill anyone in a few minutes. But people harbour anger and jealousy for months and years and do not give them up easily. Therefore, anger and jealousy are the most fearful enemies of humanity. They destroy the feelings of unity and forbearance.

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat (India).

Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance.

The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling of love toward one's mother.

(Telugu Poem)

Real sweetness lies in the love for the mother. We should consider love and forbearance as our mother and father, but, unfortunately, these two are nowhere to be seen in people today. When you acquire these two virtues, you are nothing but God. Therefore, it is essential to have love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society (*Daiva preeti, papa bheeti, and sangha neethi*). What does *fear of sin* mean? It is the fear of hurting and insulting others.

Sin does not necessarily mean killing somebody. Hurting the feelings of others also amounts to killing. Therefore, see to it that you do not cause any mental hurt to anybody. To refrain from all this is *fear of sin*. Rama went to the forest and killed those who indulged in sinful deeds in order to wipe out sin. Vibhishana also came to Rama and helped Him to annihilate sin.

Always speak sweet words

Vibhishana was Ravana's younger brother of. They were three brothers: Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhishana. Vibhishana was always calm and composed and was free from hatred, jealousy, and anger, unlike his elder brother Ravana. The third brother, Kumbhakarna, was eating and sleeping all the time. The very name Ravana signified anger, jealousy and hatred, whereas the name Vibhishana indicated peace and quietude. A person's name influences their nature.

Certain names create pleasing feelings when you hear them, but some names create the feeling of fear and repulsion. For example, when we hear the name cuckoo, it creates sublime and sweet feelings in us. We hear with great pleasure when the cuckoo sings. There is a pleasing feeling in its very name. On the other hand, people throw stones at the crow when it opens its mouth. We should give names to our children with proper consideration. That is why people name their children after taking into account the star of their birth. We should have names that are good. Never have a name that is not proper. The name should be such that it gives rise to feelings of peace and sweetness.

Sathyanarayana is the name of this body. How sweet it is! This name was given by Kondama Raju, the grandfather of this body. He also changed the name of the mother of this body from Namagiramma to Easwamma, which means "the mother of Easwara (God)". That is how the name Easwamma has become famous in the world.

Words like snake and scorpion create in us a feeling of fear because of their poison. A snake has poison in its fangs and a scorpion has it in its tail. Their poison is localised in certain parts of their body. But people today are filled with poison from head to toe. Not only speech, but all actions are also poisonous. Some people have so much poison in their speech that whatever words come out of their mouth are full of poison. They hurt the feelings of others by such words. We should keep our speech free from such poisonous words and should always talk sweetly.

Always have a smiling face

Some people have poison even in their smile. But there is no poison in love. We should have a smile that is full of love. Swami always smiles lovingly. His smile radiates bliss. You should always have a smiling face. Never put on a "castor oil face"; it reflects anger, hatred, and jealousy. Always have a smiling face. Keep smiling even if somebody abuses you. Then the other person will also stop abusing and start smiling. When you ask someone, "How are you, brother?", he will also say, "How are you, brother?", even if he is your enemy. As is your action, so will be the reaction. As is the sound, so is the resound. When you lovingly ask someone, "How are you?", they will also ask, "How are you?" Everything has a reaction, reflection, and resound. Therefore, our speech, our actions, and our conduct should be good. This is the main quality of a true human being.

Be humble and courteous in speech. Do not cause fear in others. In this lies true humanness; otherwise, people will brand you as a person without human quality. Our speech and actions should be pleasing to others. A

person who gives a speech cites their experiences as an example. We should narrate only good experiences. When you call yourself a student of Sri Sathya Sai University, your conduct should be in accordance with the reputation of the institution in which you have studied. You should respect and honour your elders. See no evil. When you conduct yourself in this manner, everybody will call you, “Good boy, good boy.” You should earn such a good reputation. Only then will the saying, “Out of all living beings, human birth is the rarest (*Jantunam nara janma durlabham*).” become meaningful.

(Bhagawan sang the song, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukh Santhi Nahin ...*” and continued His discourse.)

When I went to Chennai some time ago, some people asked Me, “Swami! People aspire for peace and happiness. Where do peace and happiness lie?” I answered them through this song, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin* (There can be no happiness and peace without chanting the name of God).” *Bhajan* means to contemplate on God. That alone gives us peace and happiness. Peace and happiness are not separate from each other. They can be attained only through *Hari bhajan* (contemplating on God).

Someone may ask you, “Sai Baba speaks of peace and happiness. Where do they exist? What have you understood?” When you give them the reply, “There can be no happiness and peace without chanting the name of God (*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukh Santhi Nahin*)”, there will be no further questions.

Humanness will blossom only when there is love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. You will be victorious in the entire world when you have these three. These three are enough; you do not need anything else. Sing the glory of God. Then, you will set a great example for all.

Chala santosham (Very happy).

Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-02-25

To all of you I say, “Let mountains fall, let the sea overwhelm the land, but do not give up your spiritual practices. And, remember, spiritual practice is a waste unless you grow at the same time in virtue and uprightness.” If you give up all and surrender to the Lord, He will guard you and guide you. When you complain, “Oh! He has not guarded me,” I reply, “You have not surrendered.” The Lord has come just for this very task. He is declaring that He will do so; that is the very task that has brought Him!

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Develop Love And Consider All As Brothers And Sisters

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the name of Rama.
Constant repetition of this sweet name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself.
Therefore, contemplate on the name of Rama incessantly.
(Telugu poem)

Bharat (India) is the motherland of many noble souls who earned great name and fame in all the continents of the world.

This is the land of valorous people who vanquished foreign rulers and attained independence.

This is the land that excelled in music, literature, and other fine arts.

Having been born in this great land of Bharat, oh boys and girls,

It is your sacred duty to protect its rich cultural heritage.

(Telugu poem)

THE *Bharatiyas* (Indians), today, do not know their greatness, just as the elephant does not know its own strength. It obeys the command of the mahout and sits when he asks it to sit and stands when it is asked to do so. In the same manner, the *Bharatiyas* are imitating western culture under the influence of western education.

The *Bharatiyas* are endowed with great potentialities, and their hearts are full of devotion. There is none among them who does not chant the divine name from their very birth. They name their children after the various names of God, thereby remembering God all the time. Every village in Bharat (India) has a temple of Rama. Villagers of all small hamlets, even, set up a shrine for Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita in a little hutment or some rustic abode for regular worship.

Right from the beginning, *Bharatiyas* gave more importance to spirituality than to worldly and material pursuits. The main factor that is responsible for the peace and progress of Bharat is the devotion of *Bharatiyas* for God. At present many countries of the world are in the grip of great problems and difficulties. But Bharat is by far free from such difficulties. The people of Bharat may have some financial problems, but they are happily leading their lives totally surrendering to the will of God.

Bharatiyas place their trust in the Self as the basis of their life rather than material possessions, property, and wealth. In fact, their entire life is based on this trust, and they have achieved progress in spite of many difficulties and deprivations. Having based their life on the trust in the Self, how can *Bharatiyas* give any importance to worldly and materialistic pursuits? Even in their day-to-day conversation, they refer to their Self, saying, “Only the Rama in my heart (*Atmarama*) knows this.”

Do not limit Rama or Krishna to a particular name or form. These names were given to them after their birth. They were not born with these names. *Bharatiyas* have realised the truth that God is the resident of a person’s heart. That is why they are able to withstand all difficulties and sufferings and lead their lives happily. “One should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat (*Sukhadukhe samekrutwa labhalabhau jayajayau*), says the *Gita*. Pleasure and pain are part of human life. Whenever they have to encounter sorrows and difficulties, they consider them as the harbingers of happiness. They have attained exalted positions

due to such noble feelings. Their faith in God is unshakable even in the face of mishaps such as bomb blasts, floods, and plane crashes. Those who base their life on faith in God will never encounter sorrows, suffering, and difficulties. Their difficulties will come and go like passing clouds. One who is born in this world is sure to die one day or the other. Nothing is permanent in this world. Only one thing is permanent, and that is the *Atma* or the Self. People aspire for liberation, heaven, and Vaikunta (Vishnu's heaven), but even they are not permanent. The only thing that is permanent is the *Atma*, and that is the only truth. You may see so many forms in this world, but none of them is permanent except the *Atma*.

The story of Ramayana

Let us now dwell upon the *Ramayana*. Dasaratha had three wives: Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi. Kausalya first gave birth to a female child, who was named Santha. Dasaratha gave her to one of his friends, who adopted her as his daughter. She was married to Sage Rishyasringa, who conducted Dasaratha's *Putrakameshti Yajna* (a special sacrifice for the sake of having a child). When oblations were offered in the sacrificial fire with the chanting of related mantras for the *yajna*, an effulgent being came out of the fire and handed over a vessel containing sweet pudding (*payasam*) to Dasaratha, with instructions to distribute it equally among his queens.

Accordingly, Dasaratha distributed the pudding to Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi. Kausalya and Kaikeyi took their share of the pudding to their respective worship (*puja*) rooms. Each of them was happy, thinking that her son would be the future king of Ayodhya. But Sumitra had no such claims. She was a paragon of virtues. Her name 'Sumitra' itself signifies that she was a good friend to one and all. She carried her bowl of pudding to the terrace and placed it on the parapet wall while drying her hair in the sun. Suddenly, an eagle swooped down and carried away the bowl. Sumitra rushed down and told Kausalya and Kaikeyi about what had happened. Kausalya and Kaikeyi came to her rescue and shared their pudding with her. Kausalya gave half of her share to Sumitra, and so did Kaikeyi.

The intimate relationship of the brothers

In due course, Kausalya gave birth to Rama, Kaikeyi to Bharatha, and Sumitra to Lakshmana and Satrughna. Kausalya and Kaikeyi had one son each, whereas Sumitra had two sons. The sons of Kausalya and Kaikeyi happily played in their cradles while Sumitra's sons cried all the time and were not taking milk. Sumitra was at a loss to know the reason for their crying. Ultimately, she went to Sage Vasishtha and told him about her predicament. Sage Vasishtha closed his eyes in meditation. His *yogic* vision enabled him to know the truth. He said to Sumitra, "Since you partook of the sacred pudding given by Kausalya, you gave birth to Lakshmana, who is a part of Rama. Similarly, Satrughna is born out of the share of pudding given to you by Kaikeyi, so he is a part of Bharatha. Keep Lakshmana by the side of Rama and Satrughna by the side of Bharatha. Then they will rest peacefully."

Sumitra did as instructed. Both Lakshmana and Satrughna stopped crying and started playing blissfully in their cradles. This was the basis of the intimate relationship between Rama and Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna. Both sons of Sumitra, namely, Lakshmana and Satrughna, were always in the company of Rama and Bharatha. In this manner, all four sons of Dasaratha grew up in an environment of love and happiness. Sumitra was very happy because she thought her son Lakshmana would serve Rama and Satrughna would serve Bharatha when they grew up.

Where was Rama born? Many people have many doubts about the place of His birth. He was born in Ayod-

haya. Was the city of Ayodhya built by some ordinary mortal? No, no. It was built by *Viswakarma* (divine architect) himself. He built it in such a way that no enemy could enter it.

The divine marriage

When Rama won the hand of Sita by stringing the bow of Siva in the court of Janaka, His marriage with Sita was performed in Mithila amidst great rejoicings. The people of Mithila were beside themselves with joy and sang merry songs.

Welcome to all for Rama's wedding; together we shall witness the joyous scene.
Many have gathered already, decked up in all their finery; with necklaces the ladies are adorned of jewels pure and gleaming.
Rama shall tie the knot today to beautiful Sita; oh, what a fine match they make.
Father Dasaratha has made ready bounteous feasts.
All learned sages are assembled with Vasishtha presiding.
Oh, what a multitude has assembled to rejoice, hearts with joy overflowing.
Wedding of the holy pair Rama and Sita, such a sight is indeed rare.
The sight shall confer great merit.
Rama looks the cool full moon, and Sita is a matching double.
The compassionate Rama who loves all will confer his grace on us all.
Come quickly to see the holy wedding of Rama and Sita.
(Telugu poem)

It seemed as if the entire population of Ayodhya had come to Mithila to witness the marriage of Sita and Rama. Dasaratha, all his ministers, and all family members prominently participated in the marriage. After the marriage function, all left for Ayodhya.

The encounter of Rama with Parasurama

On the way home, they heard a deafening sound. When they looked around to find where the sound had come from, they were confronted by Parasurama, who looked very fierce. All of them were perturbed, and they began to think, "What is this great impediment after the glorious celebration of the marriage?" Good and bad always follow each other. After experiencing great joy in Mithila, they were confronted with a difficult situation on their way to Ayodhya. Dasaratha and others became fear-stricken.

Parasurama came forward and asked, "Who broke the Siva bow?" "I did it," said Rama. "If that is so, let us see if you can bend my bow." Saying so, he gave his bow to Rama. Rama strung and armed that bow with an arrow with His left hand. Seeing that, Parasurama offered his salutations to Rama and went his way. Experiencing the joy of victory, all of them reached Ayodhya and participated with great joy and enthusiasm in the festivities held there. The people of Ayodhya held joyous celebrations.

Like his mother Sumitra, Lakshmana's wife Urmila was also a woman of great virtues. When Lakshmana went to inform her that he was accompanying Rama to the forest for fourteen years, she said, "It is your greatest good fortune. Consider Sita and Rama as your mother and father and serve them. In Ayodhya you have Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi, but in the forest you have only one mother, and that is Sita. Forget even me and serve Sita and Rama with total dedication." Lakshmana was happy to hear Urmila's words and said to himself, "What a

virtuous wife I have!”

Rama follows the command of his father

After the departure of Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita to the forest and the death of Dasaratha, Bharatha came back to Ayodhya. When he was offered the crown of Ayodhya, he refused to accept it, saying that it was the right of only the eldest son, so he would go to the forest and pray to Rama to come back and rule Ayodhya. When he went to the forest to appeal to Rama, Rama told him, “We have to follow the command of our father. Without that, our life itself is a zero.” Rama promised Bharatha that he would surely return to Ayodhya after the period of 14 years of his exile. Then Bharat requested Rama to give His sandals, which he would place on the throne and worship them. On his return to Ayodhya, Bharatha did not enter the palace. He lived in a small hut and led the life of a renunciant just as Rama was living in the forest.

During the sojourn of Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita at Panchavati, Ravana came in the guise of a mendicant and abducted Sita. Rama was put to great difficulties, but He faced all difficulties smilingly. Hanuman went in search of Sita to Lanka. He could cross the ocean with the power of the divine name of Rama. In fact, any stupendous task can be achieved by contemplating on the name of Rama. It was with the power of Rama’s name that the monkeys had made the bridge over the ocean so that Rama and His army could reach Lanka.

Rama rescues Sita from Ravana’s prison

Rama had to fight with Ravana, the king of demons. In the course of his battle, Lakshmana was hit by a missile and became unconscious. Rama was very much distressed and lamented, “I may get a wife like Sita, but I cannot get a brother like Lakshmana.” Hanuman brought Sushena, the medical expert of Lanka, who said, “There is an herb called *sanjivini* on a mountain in the Himalayan region. If you bring that herb, Lakshmana can be revived.” Hanuman was sent to bring the *sanjivini* herb to revive Lakshmana. Hanuman did not know how to recognise that particular herb. Therefore, he lifted the whole mountain on which the herb existed and placed it before Rama.

With the help of the herb, Lakshmana was revived. Then Rama hugged him and said, “Lakshmana, My life is meaningless without you. You have always been with Me and protected Me in many ways. There is nothing more dear to Me than you in this world. In fact, you are verily My life.” Rama ultimately killed Ravana and rescued Sita from his prison.

Bharatha welcomes Rama for coronation as king

Meanwhile the period of 14 years of exile of Rama was over. As the end of fourteen years drew near and Bharatha could not see any signs of Rama’s return to Ayodhya, he got ready to give up his life by immolating himself on a pyre. As Rama had anticipated the situation, he sent Hanuman in advance to inform Bharatha that He was on His way back to Ayodhya. Bharatha was overjoyed on hearing this good news. All the people of Ayodhya as also Bharatha and the entire family were eagerly awaiting the arrival of Rama in Ayodhya. When Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita alighted from Kubera’s chariot (which they used to travel home), Bharatha and all the people of Ayodhya offered them a hearty welcome. Soon after their arrival, arrangements for Rama’s coronation were made. People of Ayodhya were full of enthusiasm at the prospect of Rama becoming their king.

The students just now sang this song,

*Kausalyatmaja Rama Charan,
Vaidehi Priya Rama Charan,
Hanumatsevita Rama Charan,
Bharatarchita Sri Rama Charan,
Ahalyoddharaka Rama Charan,
Lakshmana Sevita Rama Charan,
Prasanthi Niketana Rama Charan.*

Always worship the Lotus Feet of Rama, son of Kausalya,
which are dear to Sita and worshipped by Bharatha and
is in the abode of peace,
is served by Lakshmana and Hanuman, and
which redeemed Ahalya).

Lakshmana was overjoyed on hearing the kind words of Rama. Rama had great love for Lakshmana, more than anybody else. Similarly, Lakshmana loved Rama most dearly. He never disobeyed Rama's command. In fact, all the brothers — Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Satrughna — had great love for each other. They ruled over Ayodhya with great unity. It was not Rama alone who administered the entire kingdom; all his brothers helped Him in conducting the affairs of the kingdom.

The *Ramayana* teaches us many lessons in morality and ethics. In fact, all the characters of this great epic set great ideals for mankind to follow. Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the name of Rama. Is there anything greater than *Ramanama* (repetition of the name Rama)? We should understand this truth and contemplate on His name day in and day out.

Great epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha* teach us many moral and ethical values. Truth is the highest among these values. "There is no righteousness (*dharma*) greater than adherence to truth (*Sathyannasti paro dharmah*)." *Dharma* is born out of truth (*sathya*), and from *dharma* emerges peace, and from peace emerges love. Where there is love, there can be no hatred. One who has love will adhere to nonviolence. Truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence are the five cardinal human values. One who practises these human values is a human being in the true sense of the term. Even if one lacks one of these, one cannot be called a perfect human being. Therefore, we should develop all these five values.

Unfortunately, when we look at the present scenario, we do not see truth anywhere, and we don't even hear the word *dharma*. Therefore, people today are beset with unrest. People want peace, but what they get is only pieces! Due to the lack of peace, love has become non-existent in humanity. Therefore, we should develop peace. Then only will love develop in us. When love takes root in us, we will have no enemies. Then all will become our friends. Hence, one should develop love and consider all as brothers and sisters. This is the main essence of the *Ramayana*.

It is only to demonstrate this principle of love that I have done this housing project in Orissa. We should love and help each other. The calamity that has befallen them can happen to anyone. When you make them happy, you will also be happy. Therefore, we should all be united.

Let us all move together,

Let us all grow together,
Let us all stay united and
Grow in intelligence together,
Let us live together with
Friendship and harmony.
(Telugu poem)

Only when we grow in intelligence together can there be unity. We should move and work with unity. No one should hate anybody. If any thought of hatred comes to you for a moment, brush it aside and develop the feeling of unity from the very next moment. It is only love that unites all.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the song (*bhajan*), “*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram*”).

Sri Ramanavami, Prasanthi Nilayam 2009-04-03.

Of course, you only talk of surrender (*saranam*), of placing all at the Feet; but you withhold a great deal. Your minds are wayward like monkeys that skip and jump from bough to branch. Give them to Me; I can make them steady and harmless. When I say, ‘sit,’ they will sit; when I say, ‘stand,’ they stand. That is what Sankaracharya offered to do; he told Siva that he would hand over the monkey that was his mind to Him so that it might be tamed and used for His delight. But it must be a complete handing over, with no reservations.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8. Students Should Set Ideals For Others

Since ancient times, women have been performing their duties, serving their husbands, praying to God, and observing high moral principles in their life. In this country Bharat (India), honour is considered more valuable than life itself. But, today, in the name of freedom, people are imitating western culture. In the *Bharatiya* (Indian) culture, decent dress, vermilion mark on the forehead, and proper hairstyle are very important for women. But women today have given up their dress code and have started wearing pants and shirt like men after getting their hair cut. This is totally against *Bharatiya* culture.

Since ancient times, *Bharatiya* culture has been held in high esteem, and it has been a source of joy for all. But such a sacred culture is being forgotten today. Not only men and women but students are also affected by this modern trend. Students are supposed to conduct themselves with dignity and honour, secure high marks, and make their parents happy. Not only to their parents, they should give happiness to society also.

God has no form

What are the reasons for the ills of modern society? The reasons are lack of love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. You may forget God, but, God will never forget you, because God is in you. It is very difficult to know God. No one can say what is God and where He is. You think that God has a form, but in reality, He has none. If you question God, “Who are You? What is Your name?” He will reply, “I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*).”

It is because of your delusion that you ask Me who I am. I am Brahma (God), and you are in *bhrama* (delusion). Since you identify yourself with the external form, you are unable to realise the truth contained in the axiom, “God is in the form of a human being (*Daivam manusha rupena*).” You attach great importance to the body, but, in fact, this body is only like a bag, which contains many subtle organs like mind, intellect, subconscious mind, and ego. All these organs are present in you. You think that these are all associated with the body, but in fact it is not so. Though they are within the body, they do not belong to the body. However, when all these leave the body, it cannot remain even for a moment; it becomes useless and is burnt on a pyre. Therefore, do not put your faith in the body.

All of you worship Krishna, Vishnu, Siva, and many other deities. Where have these forms come from? They are only the creation of artists like Ravi Varma. Whatever pictures such artists make, you consider them as pictures of God. When you see the picture of Krishna, you consider it as the form of Krishna. No, no, it is only a symbolic representation of Krishna. Who is Krishna? Krishna is Divinity in human form. Whichever form you attribute to Divinity, contemplate on that form. When you worship that form, your mind may waver quite a bit in the beginning.

One-pointed focusing of the mind on a particular form is called concentration. When you practise concentration, the wavering of the mind may somewhat reduce. That is the state of contemplation. In contemplation also, there is some wavering of the mind. When the mind becomes totally steady, then only can you call it meditation. Gradually, you forget yourself. That is the state of *samadhi* (superconscious state) in which you transcend all forms. Then, you will experience the attributeless *Atma*. If you merely sit with closed eyes, it is not meditation.

See your reflection in all beings

God is one, and He is the only reality. There is no second. When you think of Him as Krishna, He will manifest before you in the form of Krishna. When you think of Him as Vishnu, He will manifest as Vishnu. But all these forms are your own imagination. They do not correspond to reality. It is all your mind's work. You think God will manifest before you when you undertake spiritual practices like worship, rituals, and sacrificial practices. It is only your imagination. Your mind is the cause of this imagination. Continue your spiritual practices till you transcend the mind. Mind is always indulging in imagination. Go beyond the mind. Focus only on the *Atma*. It has no form. Understand that the formless and attributeless *Atma* is the only truth. It pervades the whole universe.

Creation emerges from truth and merges into truth,
Is there a place in the cosmos where truth does not exist?
Visualise this pure and unsullied truth.
(Telugu Poem)

Wherever you look, truth is present there. Divinity is the life force that is immanent in all beings, including insects, birds, and animals. Therefore, whomever you come across, offer your salutations to him. What does it mean? It is not the person to whom you offer your salutations but to the *Atmic* principle present in him. Hence, even if you come across a mad person, offer your salutations to the *Atma* present in him. Except God, there is no other entity in the world. God is one without a second (*Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma*). One *Atma* dwells in all beings (*Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma*).

When you fill a thousand pots with water, the reflection of the sun is seen in all of them. Does it mean that there are different suns in all the pots? No. The sun is only one. All bodies are like pots. The same *Atma* is reflected in all of them.

Everything is reaction, reflection, and resound. You hear the echo of your voice. You see your own reflection in a mirror. You should, therefore, see your own reflection in all beings. If you love someone, it means you are loving yourself. If you hate someone, it means you hate yourself.

You think everything that happens is done by God. In fact, you yourself are the cause of everything. If you hate or love someone, God has nothing to do with that. God is always steady, pure, selfless, changeless, and attributeless. It is your ignorance if you imagine that God has attributes. Therefore, do not attribute any particular form to God to worship Him. Focus your mind on the principle of the *Atma* present in you and consider it as your God.

Morality is the very life-breath of man

When you put a step forward, there is God in it. When you look at something, there is God in it. It is the same current that makes the bulb shine, fan rotate, and mike function. God is the divine force that makes everything function. When you put off the main switch, all the electrical gadgets stop functioning. God is like the main switch. When you forget God, it amounts to forgetting everything. Therefore, always love God.

Kill the demons of your evil qualities. Strive for the progress of society. Who can develop society? Only those who have good qualities can develop society. Those who have love for God are endowed with morality. Morality is the very life-breath of man. Without morality, one is lifeless. The whole human race (*jathi*) will be doomed without morality (*neethi*). What is *jathi*? People think that *jathi* is community. But it is not so. *Jathi* denotes the human race. This is its real meaning. *Jathi* does not refer to any particular caste. It refers to humanity

as a whole.

You say, “I am a *brahmin*, you are a business person (*vaisya*), he is a protector (*kshatriya*), you are a labourer (*sudra*).” This division of people into these four castes is your own creation. It is not given by God. What God has given is only one thing, and that is love. When you develop love in you, you will love everyone. When you don’t have love in you, you will hate others and become distant from them. This is not good. Love All, Serve All. You will achieve great progress when you preserve this truth in your heart. Those who perform good deeds, help others, and do not cause any harm to the poor — only such people are truly endowed with morality. It is not good if you respect a few and ignore others.

Cut the ego and rise to the level of Divinity

The entire universe is the creation of God, and every being is the embodiment of Divinity, including small insects. Do not observe any difference between the ant and Brahma. Thyagaraja propounded the same truth,

Oh Rama! In Your pure and unsullied form of love, You dwell in all beings from an ant to Brahma as also in Siva and Kesava. Please be my protector too.

Cheemalo Brahmalo Siva Kesavaadulalo Prema Meera Velasi Unde Birudu Vahinchina Rama Nannu Brovar.

Therefore, God is present in every being. Do not hate or deride anybody. Do not quarrel with anybody. When you lead your life in such a manner, you will be able to realise your Self.

You say, “I, I, I”. What does “I” mean? It means ego. As long as you have ego, you will not be able to understand your reality. When you cut the “I” from the middle, it becomes cross (†). The cross symbolises cutting of ego. When you cut your ego, you rise to the level of Divinity. If you have the feeling of “I, mine, and thine,” it will develop duality in you. Duality is not correct. The *Upanishads* do not approve of it. All the *Upanishads* teach oneness of the principle of *Atma*. The principle of *Atma* is without any differences.

In the realm of Atma all are females

The body has been given to you to lead your life in this world and to discharge your duty. Duty is God. Perform your duty. After marriage, you have a wife. Wife has to be treated as wife. But in the realm of the *Atma*, all are females. You say, “He is my son, he is my son-in-law.” This relationship is of your own making. Truly speaking, nobody is your son and nobody is your son-in-law. It is you who create differences, but, in reality there are no differences. Therefore, consider all as one. The *Ramayana* also states this principle of oneness.

Welcome to all for Rama’s wedding; together we shall witness the joyous scene.

Many have gathered already, decked up in all their finery.

With necklaces the ladies are adorned of jewels pure and gleaming.

Rama shall tie the knot today to beautiful Sita.

Oh, what a fine match they make!

Father Janaka has made ready bounteous feasts.

All learned sages are assembled with Vasishtha presiding.

Oh, what an assembly of multitude to rejoice, hearts with joy overflowing!

(Telugu Poem)

Who is Rama? One who pleases everyone is Rama. When you get happiness from the *Atma* within you, you become Rama. Sita symbolises the *Atma* and Rama, the *Paramatma* (God, Supreme *Atma*). Therefore, the marriage of Sita and Rama symbolises the union of the individual soul (*jiva*) and God (*Deva*). When the marriage of Sita and Rama took place, all the people of Ayodhya came to see it. After the performance of the marriage of Sita with Rama, Viswamitra went to his dwelling place. Not only did his name Viswamitra denote “friend of universe,” he actually was so. He imparted knowledge to everyone.

The principle of love

So many of you have gathered in this hall. Why have you come? You have come to see this form. Any number of people may come here, but their vision is focused only on this form. Whatever you do, do it for the sake of attaining God’s love. In this regard, I wrote a song:

Sathya Dharmamu Santhi Premalato

Nee Nitya Jivana Yatra Saginchu

Perform the journey of your life,

Adhering to the principles of truth, righteousness, peace, love.

Truth is permanent. Truth is one, not two. Similarly, righteousness is one; it is the image of truth. When truth and righteousness come together, peace manifests there. Peace is not something available outside in the bazaar. Outside you get only pieces. When you have peace, you do not hate or hurt anybody. Only then do you develop love.

The principle of love is present in all. When people develop love, there will be no conflicts in the world. Therefore, you should develop love. Never resort to untruth under any circumstances. If you follow untruth, you will never be able to develop love. Therefore, always adhere to truth. Develop love at all times.

You can develop love only by following truth and righteousness. These two qualities are most essential for man. This is the essence of all *Upanishads*. All the *Upanishads* teach the same truth in different ways. The sum and substance of all the teachings of the *Upanishads* is that the principle of Divinity is one. “God is one without a second (*Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma*). God is one, not two. It is due to your delusion that you see duality. Never give scope to such delusion. You will have true devotion when you do not have even a trace of delusion.

People are important, not money

Many beggars come to a rich person. Some ask for food, some for clothes, some for money, and some for house. They are all beggars. In the same way, if you beg this and that from God, you become beggars. Do not beg anything from God. God is in fact in you only. He will give you whatever you require. You need not beg anything. Today, everybody in this world has become a beggar. Politicians beg for votes. They give notes for votes. They win elections by buying votes. This world is all a drama of beggars. Society is ruined and polluted because of such beggars.

Today, there is pollution, pollution, pollution everywhere. There is pollution in water, pollution in food, and pollution even in air. The milk you buy is also polluted. So, everything has become polluted today. Nowhere is there anything pure. Even pure water is not there. It has also become polluted. You are aware that the river Ganga comes down from Rishikesh. In our country Bharat (India), the Ganga is revered as mother. But people are pol-

luting such a sacred river also. A *brahmin* standing in the Ganga to perform worship may find even human limbs flowing with water. Similarly, everything is being polluted. Students should develop pure mind to get rid of this pollution. Then only will they become the emancipators of the country. Pure mind is without any doubts, unsullied, steady, and selfless.

What is the use of merely acquiring so many degrees? There are so many who are sitting unemployed in their houses after getting degrees. In what way are they benefited by their degrees? The subjects they have studied in their classes are totally unrelated to their day-to-day life. They strive hard to earn money with the help of these degrees. They do not make any efforts for anything higher in life. Wherever you go, money is being considered all important. If you want to travel by bus, you need money. If you want to have coffee, for that also you need money. Even for water, you need money. If you want to go to a temple, even then you need money. All this world has become a play field of money.

But what is important is the human and not money. You will attain everything if you protect humanness. All problems arise if you lack humanness. You are yourselves responsible for all these problems.

Humility and obedience are the hallmarks of a student

It will be good if our students put into practice what they have learnt in this university and set a high ideal for others. All of you should lead your lives with humility and obedience. Destroy all your evil qualities such as pride, ego, and wickedness. When you drive away all these evil qualities, you will become a pure human being. Wherefrom does humanness come? It comes from your heart. Here, the heart referred to is not the physical heart but the spiritual heart, which is free from all blemishes. Like fragrant air, your purity should spread everywhere. Share with others the pure thoughts and the pure feelings that emanate from you. Whatever you do, it should be helpful to others. Help Ever, Hurt Never. If you imbibe these two qualities, everything will become good for you. Then only will you become a student in the real sense of the term.

Students today indulge in hurting others. It is not good if you do not help others. You are not a student at all if you do not develop humility and obedience. These are very essential for students. But, today, educated people have become highly egoistic. They are proud of their Ph.D. degrees. What does Ph.D. mean? The letter 'P' stands for person, 'h' for help and 'D' for divinity. Hence, one with Ph.D. degree is the person who helps others and attains divinity. On the contrary, if he does not help others, then the letter 'P' will denote that he is a *papi* (sinner).

However high an education you may acquire, always remain humble and modest and respect your parents. Even if your parents are too poor to provide two square meals to you in the house, you should still love them. Your mother brings you up putting up with so many difficulties. If you forget such a mother, it is a great sin. Your father also looks after you and helps you in every way. Therefore, never forget and forsake your parents. Love them till your last breath. That is the true quality of a student. Serve your parents and satisfy them. You will find fulfilment in life only when your parents are satisfied.

Sri Sathya Sai University Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-06-04

Little children must be taught with the help of big letters scrawled on boards and slates. Temples, images, and crystal stones (*saligrams*) are the slates and boards for children in spiritual progress, But, even if you play with a toy elephant, you cannot

get the experience of contacting a live elephant, can you? The formless God-head can be understood by you only when you have rendered yourself formless! When you are in the world of qualities (*gunas*), you have to attach yourself only to a God with attributes (*saguna* Lord).

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

People come into the world burdened with illusion (*maya*) and its instrument, the mind. The mind expresses itself through attraction and repulsion, affection and hatred (*raga* and *dwesha*) toward the external world. Affection is *rajasic* (passionate) in its effect; it can be used for one's uplift, as Narada used it to fix attention on the Lord. Hatred is *thamasic* (negativistic), as Dhurvasa expressed it in his dealings with Ambarisha and others.

Without affection and hatred, the mind cannot function at all. If these two are removed, there can be no mind and no illusion, and you get fixed in spiritual knowledge (*jnana*). Let affection and hatred go and let Rama enter; then there will be no mind or illusion (*manas* or *maya*).

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. Three Assets That You Must Safeguard

Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu,
Guru is Maheswara.
Guru is verily the supreme Brahman.
So, salutations to the Guru.

*Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu
Gurur Devo Maheswara;
Guru Sakshat Param Brahma
Tasmai Sri Gurave Namaha.*
(Sanskrit verse)

BRAHMA, Vishnu, and Siva are three different names and forms of the same Divinity “All are one, be alike to everyone.” Though the names and forms of the physical body are different, Divinity in all beings is one only. Brahma is the Creator, Vishnu is the Protector, and Siva is the Destroyer. Yet, all three aspects represent the one Divinity. The one God when engaged in creative aspect is referred to as Brahma, while protecting and sustaining the living beings as Vishnu, and, finally, in the act of dissolution as Siva. In order to avoid the confusion created by ascribing different names and forms to Divinity, God is referred to as *Atma* or the Absolute Brahman (the nameless, formless, attributeless Divinity). The one *Atma* permeates all living beings.

Religions are different, path is the same;
Clothes are different, cotton is one;
Beings are different, *Atma* is one;
Nationality and lifestyle are different,
Human birth is the same.

Every human being has to develop three qualities: love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. It is only lack of fear of sin that is responsible for the present state of lack of morality in society. Love is the cementing factor that unites people. Where there is love, there society will be united. Devoid of morality, one does not deserve to be called a human being. Hence, morality is important for everything. Though God showers His love on one and all, it is the human being who has lost the precious quality of fear of sin. People today are committing several sins with the belief that God is kind and will ultimately forgive these sins, with the result that they are indulging in more and more of sinful acts. People have developed a sort of complacency in this regard and think that they can escape punishment. But, the fact is otherwise. Though God is compassionate and may forgive all sinful acts, human beings have to necessarily pay for their sins. Hence, every human has to develop these three qualities of love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. Where there is no fear of sin, there will be no morality in society.

When the mind is sound, love for God can be developed

People are behaving most irresponsibly and are undertaking several undesirable activities with unbridled ego. They have no fear of sin. They don't even think for a moment of the consequences of their acts. One has to restrain oneself from seeing evil, speaking evil, and doing evil. If not, the consequences of these evil deeds will boomerang on that person later, if not today. It is also possible that the results of all these sinful acts will come

back to that person all at a time with a bang. If one is really interested in the welfare of the society one must work for the development of morality in society.

One lacking morality is not a human being at all but is an animal, verily. Speaking untruth, doing injustice to others, and indulging in unrighteous acts and bad practices is very bad. One has to lead one's life by following the three principles of love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. It is said that one who has no morality is worse than a monkey. In fact, a monkey is better than such an individual. No one will respect an individual who indulges in immoral acts in this world. Only a person who follows moral principles will command respect from one and all. Even those who try to harm such people will be restrained by others with a warning. "They are good people. Do not try to meddle with them." Those who lack morality are looked down upon in society as worse than dogs. Hence, one has to develop morality and lead a life of moral principles at all times.

There are three spiritual practices by which love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society can be developed. They are devotion to God (*bhakti*), the path of wisdom (*jnana*), and detachment (*vairagya*). Activity (*karma*) is a natural and essential attribute of the physical body. Only when the body undertakes good activity will the mind function well. When the mind is sound, love for God can be developed. Thus, devotion, wisdom, and detachment are interlinked with love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. They are like the three blades of a fan. Only when the three blades rotate can we have refreshing air; otherwise we feel uncomfortable.

Purity of conscience is of utmost importance

People today question why we have to develop love for God. Love for God enables one to develop fear of sin, which in turn will develop morality in society. Everyone has to discriminate between good and bad, sin and virtue. Having analysed, one must try to do good only. Be good, do good, see good — this is the way to God. Devoid of these three, any number of rituals, worship, chanting the divine name and penance will be of no use.

The nine forms of devotion are: listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His lotus feet, salutation, worship, servitude, friendship, self-surrender (*sravanam, kirtanam, Vishnu-smaranam, Padasevanam, vandanam, archanam, dasyam, sneham, and Atma-nivedanam*). The first step is listening. Then one has to analyse whether what has been listened to is good or bad. If you think that it is a bad suggestion and therefore not to your liking, how can you implement it? It is possible today that one can get one's work done by speaking untruth and score victory over others by false and unjust means. Hence, one has to enquire into the sanctity or otherwise of every act that he undertakes. One should not be complacent about the consequences that would follow; sooner or later, the result of a sinful act would accrue. It may happen now or a little later, at any moment. Hence, be ready to undertake only good and noble acts with a pure mind. More than anything else, purity of conscience is of utmost importance. That is the *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*).

Nobody can understand what *Atma* is. Since the bodies and forms are many, some names have to be given in order to distinguish between them. However, *Atma* or Brahma has neither birth nor death, unlike the physical bodies. Hence, no one can identify it as such and such. *Atma*, though beyond one's comprehension, has been described as eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness (*nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam*). It is, unsullied, and the eternal abode (*niranjanam, sanatana nicketanam*). There is only one *Atma*, which is immanent in all beings. That is the essential nature of the *Atma*.

A small example; when you place one hundred pots filled with water under the sky on a moonlit night, you

will find one moon reflecting in each of those pots. The body is like a pot. It is bound to perish at any time. Then, where does the moon (*Atma*) go? It does not go anywhere. It is there. However, since there is no water, it is not reflecting in the water. In the same manner, the *Atma* is present in every human being.

If one does not have good character, there will be no morality in that person. If there is no morality, one does not deserve to be called a human being. We have to earn honour and respect for ourselves in the society. However, these days, we don't find anyone concerned about good name in the society. But people are very particular about who is rich and who is poor. Money comes and goes but morality comes and grows, is the adage. Therefore, it is not correct to aspire for wealth, power, and such other worldly things. All these possessions are transitory. You may try to hold on tightly to them, but they just slip away even without your noticing them. The *Atma*, however is eternal. There is no coming and going for *Atma*. It always remains an eternal witness to everything that goes on in the world. We have to develop faith in such eternal *Atma*. Those who develop faith in the *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*) will not be disturbed by injustice, wrong and bad practices.

If you want to transform society, there must be purity in your heart

People say that if you want to transform society there must be purity in your heart. You say, "My body, my senses, my mind, my intellect," etc., but "you" are none of these. For example, you say, "This is my book." This book is in your hands at this moment. The next moment somebody wishes to have a look at it. It goes into their hands. Similarly, you hold some currency in your hands. After some time it will go into someone else's hands. It just comes and goes. But, morality comes and grows. Morality has no form. If someone wishes to improve society and the world, morality has to be developed in the individual first.

Several political parties come forward these days saying that they will improve the society. They propose to transform society, but they invariably fail because they try to garner the votes of people for their selfish ends. They do not at all bother about society. If you want to transform society, there must be purity in your heart. First, the individual; then, society. For the individual to be transformed, there must be love for God and fear of sin. Then comes morality in society. It is the individuals that make a society. Hence, if unity among people is developed there will be purity and Divinity. Unity, purity, and Divinity cannot be attained by mere education.

Real meditation is forgetting oneself totally

Suppose you sit for meditation, closing your eyes. However, the mind goes on wandering everywhere. You try to bring it back to the starting point. It is all practice. It is only when the wavering mind is stilled that meditation is possible. This process of making the mind steady is called concentration. Meditation is possible only after concentration. The proper order is concentration, contemplation, and meditation. Don't believe someone who claims that they are meditating the moment they sit. That is an artificial exercise, not meditation. Real meditation is forgetting oneself totally. It is forgetting the feeling of identification with the body (*dehatma bhava*) completely. One has to totally give up attachment to the senses. Then only will the mind be steady.

Once, there was a father who had four sons. Each one wanted to follow a different vocation to earn money. One son wanted to take up business. Another wanted to open a small grocery shop. The third son wanted to take up employment, and the fourth another vocation. Though earning money was the common objective, each one wanted to go in a different path. Finally, it is the means that are adopted for earning money that result in accumulation of virtue or sin. People commit a sin even without their knowing that they are doing so. The sins committed

by people will continue to haunt them.

Some time ago, there were heavy floods in the State of Orissa. They ravaged several villages in four districts. The houses, trees, standing crops, and even animals and some people were swept away by the surging flood water. Hundreds of villages were inundated and people were marooned. They were fear-stricken at the fury of nature. I sent a telegram: “Don’t worry. Be happy. I will build your houses.” The people of Orissa came to see Me, by arranging a special train. The government was there, MPs and MLAs were there, who were expected to come to their rescue in that hour of need and provide succour to them. But none came forward. I sent ten crores immediately and arranged for distribution of relief material and building of pucca houses for the affected people.

I am not interested in accumulation of money. I want only your love. Be happy. Develop your morality and love for God. If you develop love, that love itself will drive away the demonic qualities in you.

Good or Bad, one gets the fruits of one’s actions

Before the Rama-Ravana war commenced, Hanuman entered Lanka, as part of his mission, to search the whereabouts of Sita. After he found Sita, he was on his way back to pass on the information to Sri Rama. He was caught by the demons and brought to the court of Ravana. Ravana was infuriated on seeing Hanuman, who destroyed the beautiful grove of Asoka trees while he was returning. Ravana questioned Hanuman, “Who are you? How dare you enter this impregnable city of Lanka?” He underestimated the power of Hanuman and derided him addressing him as an ordinary monkey.

In the same tone, Hanuman replied as an equal to Ravana, “The Lord who cut off the ears and nose of your sister has sent me.” Ravana was very angry since no one dared to talk to him in such an undignified manner. In fact, Hanuman used the same language as Ravana did. Ravana felt insulted. Hanuman was not bothered in the least, for he was always chanting *Ramanama* (chanting Rama’s name), which gave him the courage and strength to face any situation.

Ravana could not tolerate the impertinence and arrogance of Hanuman, so he ordered Hanuman’s tail to be set on fire after wrapping it with clothes dipped in oil. Immediately, clothes soaked in oil were wrapped round the tail of Hanuman and it was set on fire. Hanuman did not keep quiet. With that burning tail, he jumped from one building to the other and thus set the entire city on fire.

Beautiful and palatial buildings studded with precious stones went up in flames within no time. Even Mandodari’s palace was engulfed by flames. She came out. People ran helter-skelter here and there. Not a single building was spared from the raging flames. Hanuman then advised Mandodari, “Mother, the sin committed by your husband is responsible for this devastating fire and consequent loss of so many lives and property. Please tell your husband not to commit such heinous sins hereafter. If you can thus save your husband, it amounts to saving yourself and the demon (*rakhasa*) clan.”

People have to suffer the consequences of their actions. God is only a witness. Good or bad, one gets the fruit of one’s actions. Hence, first and foremost, one has to develop morality, which is based on developing human qualities first. If human qualities are to be developed, one should have love for God. Thus, love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society are interdependent. When there is morality in society, all people will be safe.

One important point has to be remembered in this context. You may hide your actions from society, but the omnipresent God knows everything. You will have to suffer the consequences of your actions. It is an immutable

law. Hence, if you can help others, it is alright. Otherwise just keep silent. Do not harm others. Do not commit a mistake by thought, word, and deed. Sometimes, you may not get the result of your actions immediately. It will take some time. But, surely the result will follow. People study spiritual texts like the *Bhagavad Gita* but fail to realise their own innate nature. The *Upanishads* exhort one, “Dear son, you try to realise your own nature first. Know thyself! If you can do that, it amounts to knowing everything.” The knowledge of the Self (*Atma Bodha*) entails realisation, “I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not the intellect,” etc.

The mind is like a cloth consisting of threads woven together. How long will this cloth last? As long as the threads are intact. Once you remove the threads, the cloth loses its shape. Or, if you put the cloth in fire, it will be reduced to ashes. People say, “This is my wife, this is my child, this is my son-in-law, this is my son,” etc. These relationships are only illusion. Who are all these people? All are God’s property. Everything in this world is God’s property; nobody has any right, whatsoever. People fight between themselves claiming rights, thus wasting their time. Time waste is life waste. In fact, it is not the time we are wasting; we are wasting our precious life.

In conclusion, I stress once again that you should cultivate love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. These are valuable assets, which you must always safeguard. If you safeguard these values, they will in turn protect you. You think you have to realise the Brahma Principle (*Brahma Thathwa*) today. In fact, Brahman has no name and form. God is attributeless, unsullied, the final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness (is *nirgunam, niranjanam, sanatana nikanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam*).

The *bal vikas* children from Tamil Nadu are waiting to present a cultural programme. Witness that programme. I will continue My discourse tomorrow.

Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-07-06

To earn the grace of God, you have to pray to the Personified Power with name and form; it is your yearning that decides in what form the Lord appears. You call and He answers. If you are not earnest, if you feel indifferent, and say, “Let Him come when He wills, in the form He likes and with the name He prefers,” He will not come at all. Call on Him with anguish; He will respond.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Who takes the role of educator from the beginning of your life? The mother, is it not? Nature (*prakriti*) is the mother, the feminine principle, the illusory energy (*maya*). She is the great teacher. If you do not learn the lessons well, nature punishes you, boxes you in the ear, hits you on the head. She is a stern merciless instructress. But if you learn well, she will lead you proudly to the presence of the Supreme Person (*Purushottama*). Obey nature and be well trained by her; then you can inherit the glory of *Purushottama*. If you disregard Her teaching, the mother gets disgusted with you and the father too will disregard your entreaties. The commands of nature, given for your good, are called righteousness (*dharma*). Have that *dharma* as the witness of all your thoughts, words, and deeds. Be guided every instant by the dictates of that *dharma*, and success will be yours.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. Be Exemplars Of Selfless Service

Embodiments of divine Atma!

In the morning there was no time to talk about these people. Ever since our hospital started functioning, Appa Rao has been working there as an auditor. For fourteen years, he worked hard, day and night. I am pleased with his work. He came here with the sole intention of rendering selfless service, and not with any other motive. Those were the initial stages of the super speciality hospital, so there was plenty of work, day and night. He alone had to attend to everything — receiving parcels of medicines, checking them, and noting them down. In spite of being a non-medical person, he worked untiringly taking care of patients also. He is meticulous in checking all details. He has worked with full satisfaction.

All these fourteen years, he never aspired for anything. He did not accept even a one paisa. These days, everybody in the hospital earns twenty to thirty thousand rupees, but he has not taken any money. He had to climb up and down the stairs many times every day, while looking after the stores, patients, nurses, and doctors as well. He looked after so many things, all alone. He never complained to Me also. He has been adjusting himself. He has never been deficient in his work. I Myself used to see him now and then to enquire about the work. We should express our gratitude to such a dedicated worker. With much compassion toward him, I told him, “Appa Rao, now the number of patients coming to our hospital has increased by thousands. Mentally of course you are quite alert, but physically you are weak. Therefore, take rest at home. You have come to serve Swami. There was no shortcoming whatsoever in your service.”

His wife also supported him and has been taking good care of him at home, looking after his food and other needs meticulously. He has no habit of taking food outside. So, if and when necessary, she used to send his food to the hospital. Appa Rao has also been taking care of poor people in many respects. He rendered help in many heart operations to the poor people. He used to send free medicines to the homes of those heart patients even after they were discharged. He worked very hard. My heart melted at his service. How can we leave such a person who worked so hard? Everybody, including students, sought his help. I tell our students often, Help ever, Hurt never.

We do not take even a paisa from anyone for rendering medical services. Our hospital always gives and never takes. He rendered selfless service with the feeling, “This is my hospital, my Swami’s hospital.” He considered the hospital as his own and served it selflessly. Even when I was away physically, I helped him in all that he did. Since this is our first Super Speciality Hospital, he had to work very hard for its development. Subsequently, another Super Speciality Hospital has been established in Bangalore. There is an orthopedic division also in our hospital here. Appa Rao has been looking after all this. I liked his work. Before this, he worked for the government. There also, he rendered good service. As he utilised all his experience for the benefit of our hospital, today we have gathered here to honour him.

His younger brother Murthy is an electrical engineer. He is also working with us. Whenever there is any electrical problem he is called by telephone and he attends to it immediately. Even at night, he is ever ready to do service. The youngest brother, Lakshminarasimham, worked in our university as Registrar. He is also growing older and needs a little rest. He has not married, so there is no bondage. He has been totally dedicated to our university. He first joined in service volunteers (*seva dal*). He did a Ph.D. with the intention of joining our col-

lege. These three brothers have been rendering good service. They have been very helpful to us, in spite of many troubles they had to face.

Nanjundaiah has been controller of examinations. He has been very kind to all students. He has been working day and night in order to declare the results well in time. He never used to take rest even for a while. He would engage himself in correcting papers even while suffering from fever. Everybody was depending upon him. He had to take much trouble in sending results to Anantapur and Bangalore colleges. We were very much concerned at the troubles he had to face. His wife also has been taking good care of him at home, providing timely food and looking after other needs meticulously.

Hard work earns Swami's guidance and protection

The University has now grown very large. We are receiving a larger number of applications as compared to other institutes. All big officers to small clerks in all India have great regard for our institutions. Be it the hospital or the university, there is no habit of taking money for the services rendered in our institutions. We know only to give. In Sai Organisations, there is only giving and no taking.

Recently, we appointed a committee to oversee the working of the hospital and provide necessary help and guidance. We procured some new machinery also. We have even imported necessary equipment from abroad. We have in our stock a variety of books.

The University has produced many Ph.Ds. This year also, fourteen researchers got Ph.D. degrees. The students have great faith in these two people (Lakshminarasimham and Nanjundaiah).

These two (Appa Rao and Nanjundaiah) have been very helpful to us in hospital services and educational activities. All the responsibility was shouldered by them. They used to send me letters while I was not present here. I used to discuss every detail with them. I used to ask Nanjundaiah about the examination results. The results were always good. We have now decided not to burden them with these responsibilities any longer. Today, I am thanking and blessing them. These two are foremost among those who have strived hard for our Institutes. Therefore, wherever they are, Swami is always with them, guiding and guarding them. They came here only for the sake of Swami. Therefore, I wish to provide them with houses and keep them here only. Just as they had looked after the patients and the students, I wish that hereafter also they both extend necessary guidance and help to the new comers in the respective areas.

There is much to learn from these two people. What is this Organisation doing for society? How is it doing? What is their responsibility in this regard? Such details should be accorded to the new comers and necessary zeal and motivation should be inculcated.

The university was started first with undergraduate courses only. Now, studies up to the Ph.D. level are available. Our university and hospitals are now regarded as the best in India. I am very happy that you have contributed much for this name and fame. You always belong to Me. You have never thought that you are working for the hospital or the college. You have been working with the feeling, "This is ours, this is our Swami's." That is why we got all first prizes for the colleges and high reputation for hospitals. Even this information is known only through newspapers; we never proclaimed it in any manner. Our hospitals and university have become very famous indeed.

The students have learnt many things from such people and have grown up to great heights. Many of them,

who are Ph.D.s, have been appointed here so as to lead these institutions. Now, many novel subjects have been introduced along with the conventional faculties like B.Com., B.Sc., M.Com., M.Sc., Ph.D. Many deserving students are unable to get admission in other schools and colleges and are looking at us with great hope for help. I told our authorities to take such students also into our fold. We do not have any selfish motive. It is only a consideration of their parent's anguish. They have given us the responsibility of looking after the welfare and progress of their children.

New responsibilities for the two

Appa Rao and Nanjundaiah must both be given the job of keeping watch with vigilant eyes on the affairs of these institutions. In other institutions, new entrants have to pay money and take receipts. But our hospitals and university have never given any scope for such things. Here everything is free, free, free. People wonder how we are managing these institutions with so many entrants, like this, without taking even a paisa? They just come in their clothing when we admit them here. We are admitting all, including those who obtained average marks, and we are developing them into 'First class' students.

In other hospitals, patients have to spend thousands of rupees toward heart operations. But we do not charge them even a paisa. For us, love and devotion are important and not other things. "Love to love, heart to heart." We seek only this. They are all deriving great joy. Many patients are coming from Nepal and Bhutan for free treatment. In this endeavour, the students also must extend necessary help to the doctors and other officials. Our hospital and institutes have been fostered in this manner for the past twenty years. This trend has to continue in the future also. Without begging anybody, we have made fixed deposits to the tune of twenty or thirty crores for each institute; and they are running on the interest accrued from these deposits. I have made necessary arrangements in this regard. We are paying salaries at par with the government. Students of our institutes or patients in our hospitals need not worry about anything. We take care of everything.

Parents should not be sent to old age homes

You must strive to keep everybody happy. Make parents happy. Help your parents. The parents are being admitted into old age homes when they are short of money. This is not correct. You must provide necessary support to the aged parents. It is your own responsibility to look after your parents. Swami is taking care of your education and other necessities, but the aspect of parent's care is your own responsibility. Parents should not be sent to old age homes. You must keep them with you and serve them. You must work hard and take good care of them. You need not prepare special items for their sake. It is enough if you can give them whatever you are eating.

As soon as the students pass the exam and acquire a degree, they go in search of jobs.

When all women go out on jobs, who will look after chores of their homes?

When they go out for teaching other children, who will teach their own children?

When husband and wife go to offices, who will take care of their children?

(Telugu Poem)

Give priority to the fostering of children

Some people are deprived of homely food because there is no one at home to cook food. So they eat what-

ever they get. Thus, they are spoiling their own health. There is no happiness for a woman who is employed in an office. They spend their valuable time in some clubs. They do not have any consideration for their children in the house and about their timely food. One should give priority to the fostering of the children.

An officer gives a phone call to his house and tells the cook, “We have arranged a tea party at home today. Make all arrangements for the party.” But there is no tea powder, no sugar, no material for making chapatis or pakoras in the house. This is the kind of situation they have at home. Also, the children’s health gets spoiled because of inconsistent food habits and lack of parental care. They drink contaminated water and spoil their health, because there is no one at home to guide them. Why should the wife go out and work? When she goes to school to teach other children, who will teach her own children?

It is your own duty to take care of your children. It is equivalent to earning a good salary if you can teach your own children and bring them up well. One feels sorry at the state of a woman who fails to take care of her husband and children. It is enough if you are able to provide proper timely food to your children and take care of their health. If you take up jobs leaving your children at home, your entire earnings will go toward cooks, baby sitters, and cleaners. The house gets mismanaged. What you spend for the cook, caretaker, and others will work out to be more than what you earn. You can save so much money if only you attend to your own work. This is the way of life all women must adopt.

The children should also learn to render necessary help at home. As soon as you come home, find out what is available and what is not available. What is needed immediately? When there is shortage of water, the boy should not keep quiet. He should immediately rush out with a container and fetch water from the available source. He should not feel, “I am educated. Why should I carry water?” Family life involves such domestic chores.

Students must learn how to make parents happy. Parent’s duty is to take care of their children. This is the education that is essential for one and all. After having obtained a Ph.D., one need not go far away for the sake of an extra thousand rupees. If you take care of your children and do service to parents, that itself is great wealth. Today, parents are being treated like servants. It is enough if you take care of your parents, your children, and the family. That is real education. Getting a first class and struggling for a job is not a wise thing. Whatever job you take up, you must help your parents. This is what you must learn.

The students must emulate people like Appa Rao. “Help ever, hurt never.” These are the good qualities that you should learn in the Sri Sathya Sai College. Whenever any poor person comes to you, feed him first, even foregoing your meal if necessary. Instead of going to a club and spending money there, it is better to use that money for the sake of the poor. It is necessary that you learn good qualities and habits so that you may improve the society.

First set your house in order

First of all, develop love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. Bad qualities have to be curbed and ethics must be fostered in the society. When morality is lost, what is the use of any amount of social service you do? These are the lessons that you must learn. When you follow the path of elders such as these, you can reap immense joy and goodness in life. It applies to girls also. You must learn from parents the aspects of service and put them into practice. If you make your parents happy, your children will make you happy.

What is meant by morality? It is not just earning money and depositing in the bank. You must refrain from

troubling your parents. When you have love for God, you will have fear of sin. After acquiring morality you may proceed to serve the society at large. When you are unable to attain God's love, how do you expect to win people's love? You must earn name in society in a way that people talk of you as a good and helpful person. You must learn from parents how to help.

How can morality be acquired while one is engaged in acts of sin? When you come across elders, always respect and serve them. Today I am honouring such good people, so that you will try to emulate them. This is what gives Me happiness. First take care of your children at home, and extend happiness to your parents. How can you be happy while your parents are not happy? If today you love your parents, tomorrow you will receive love from your children. You can be called educated only when you learn these two things. You may acquire big degrees, but who will love you if you do not love your parents? Society will love you when you take good care of your parents. First set your house in order and then think about the progress of society. It is with this purpose that I am honouring today these experienced elders. You should take a lesson from this and follow in the footsteps of the elders.

Gurupurnima, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-07-07

Equanimity of outlook (*samathwa*) is just a matter of origin and essence; water in lakes, pits, wells, and rivers is rain water, though the taste, colour, name, and forms are different, based on where the rain has fallen and how pure the container is. Divine grace is like rain – pure, pellucid, falling on all. How it is received and used depends on the heart of the person.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. Realise the Atma Principle by Constant Practice

Embodiments of Love!

Everyone asks, “Swami, where is *Atma*?” They do not understand what *Atma* is. The *Upanishads* have dealt at length with the principle of *Atma*. Unfortunately, today people have not been able to interpret the teachings of the *Upanishads* properly. The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Ramayana*, and *Bhagavatha* have their origin in the *Upanishads*. Our sages in the ancient times did intense penance (*tapas*) to understand the nature of *Atma* and finally declared that *Atma* was the fundamental basis of everything in the universe. When it assumes a physical body, even while the body undergoes constant change from birth to death, *Atma* remains as the eternal and changeless principle. The *Atma* is the source and sustenance for everything. It has no birth and death.

Brahman permeates the entire universe

People celebrate different festivals with great enthusiasm. For example, they celebrate the festival of Mahasivarathri. Does it mean Lord Siva was born on that day? No; the name *Siva* signifies auspiciousness. The Siva principle is omnipresent.

With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything.

*Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvatokshi Siromukham,
Sarvatah Srutimalloke Sarvamavrutya Tishtati*
(Sanskrit verse)

Whatever is seen by the eyes and heard by the ears, even the words that are spoken — everything is Brahman. There is nothing in the universe that is not Brahman. That is why it is described as:

Embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light,
speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion, and wealth.

*Sabda Brahmamayi, Characharamayi, Jyotirmayi, Vangmayi,
Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi, Sreemayi*
(Sanskrit verse)

Mind originated from Atma

No one can say, ‘this is Brahman and this is not.’ For example this handkerchief is also Brahman. From where did this handkerchief originate? It is made out of threads. The threads in turn originated from cotton. Since the threads are woven together, it has assumed the form of a cloth. The cloth thus woven out of cotton threads can be made into a *dhoti* or a sari or a shirt.

Some people say that the mind is the origin for the entire universe. This is not true. Even the mind has a source on which it depends. No doubt the mind is very strong and powerful, but even such a mind originated only from *Atma*. The mind directs all activities in the physical world. It is very unsteady and is changing continuously. That is why it is called “monkey mind”.

Atma is the source and sustenance for the body, mind, intellect, consciousness (*chitta*), discrimination (*vi-*

veka), higher wisdom (*vijnana*), and the science of consciousness (*sujnana*). All originated from only *Atma*. All these assume a particular form at a particular time, like an infant, a child, a boy, a young man, and an old person in the life of a human being. These different forms at different stages have no independent existence. It is a transition from one stage to the other. However, the *Atma* is the source and sustenance for all these entities. It is the fundamental principle.

Divinity has no name or form

In order to understand this fundamental principle, people ascribed different names to it. Some called it *Aum*, the primordial sound. Others called it “That Thou Art (*Thathwamasi*).” Yet others called it Brahman. Some others gave it names like Rama, Krishna, Allah, Easwara, Jesus, etc. These different names and forms are given only for the purpose of identification.

Divinity, however, has no name and form. The names and forms ascribed to God are based upon one’s liking for a particular name or form. Some people desire to worship God as Venkateswara and realise Him in that form. Who created that form? The human mind pictured God in that form — for example, painters like the famous Ravi Varma. He painted God in different forms — Rama, Krishna, etc. These are all man-made, but not original. You may worship God as Rama, Krishna, or Siva and realise Him in that form. But, fundamentally, God is one and only one. He is formless, nameless, and attributeless Brahman. This fundamental truth has been explained in the aphorism, “God is one without a second (*Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma*).” Yet, different people at different times are deluded by names and forms. One can say it is all their imagination. In fact, that imagination itself is the root cause for all the troubles in the world. Though names and forms are different, God is only one.

The process of meditation

You think a man is bad, and he looks bad. On the other hand, if you think that he is a good person, he will really appear good. It is your feeling toward him that makes all the difference between good and bad. These are all born out of your thoughts, for which the mind is the source. Hence, you have to take things as they are.

You think you are meditating on a particular form or object. Really speaking, it is not meditation. The form or object on which you are supposed to be meditating may change after some time. Hence, it is not meditation in the real sense. It is not concentration either. It is just contemplation, for a particular time frame. When the object stabilises after regular practice, you can meditate. It is not possible for anyone to meditate the moment one sits for meditation. No one ever succeeded in such an attempt. People say they are meditating; but it is artificial. Artificial meditation is really bad.

There are three steps in the process: concentration, contemplation, and meditation. It is a gradual process achieved by systematic and regular practice (*abhyasa*). This *abhyasa yoga* and the consequent peace attained by a person has been beautifully explained in the *Bhagavad Gita* thus:

Better indeed is knowledge than practice.
Better than knowledge is meditation on God.
But better than meditation is renunciation of the desire for the fruits of actions.
For there, peace follows immediately
Sreyohi Jnanamabhyasat,

*Jnanaddhyanam Visishyate,
Dhyanat Karmaphala Tyaga,
Tyagat Santiranantaram.
(Sanskrit verse).*

Reason for depression

A newborn child does not become an adult immediately but gradually grows into an adult. It is a mistake to think that whatever you wish becomes fruitful. If it were so, there would be no human effort at all! There would be no meaning for human existence. Hence, first and foremost, concentrate upon the “I” principle. Constantly contemplate on the aphorism, “I am *Atma*.” You and *Atma* are one only, not two different entities.

Today, every action of a human being is leading to confusion, which in turn leads to depression. What is the reason for this sequence of events? Your own unsteady nature. In fact, the entire environment in the world is undergoing change. There is change in water, air, clouds, and even food. When everything around you is changing, naturally it will have its effect on you. Your mind is also undergoing change in tune with the changes around.

How to develop faith in the feeling of Oneness

There is only one changeless principle: constant integrated awareness (*Prajnanam*). The *Upanishads* declare, “Brahman is Supreme Consciousness (*Prajnanam Brahma*).” If you wish to attain that state, you must develop the feeling of Oneness (*Ekatmabhava*). Though the bodies are different, only one *Atma* dwells in all living beings. Human bodies are like the pots, and the mind therein is water. The one moon is reflected in all the pots. It is only reaction, reflection, and resound, everywhere.

Dear children!

You will not be able to understand the *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*). *Atma* is not merely a word comprising two letters. It connotes developing the feeling of oneness.

“All are one, be alike to everyone.” How can you develop faith in this maxim? A small example. You are doing a particular work. Your neighbour has undertaken a different job. Though you both undertook different jobs, the environment in which you are performing the jobs is the same. *Atma* is the consciousness that pervades everywhere. That all-pervading principle is Truth.

*Creation emerges from Truth and merges into Truth,
Is there a place in the cosmos where Truth does not exist?
Visualise this pure and unsullied Truth.
(Sanskrit verse)*

The entire universe is permeated by Truth. It is above, below, and on all sides. That Truth (*Sathya*) is *Atma*. It is eternal and changeless. The epic *Bhagavatha* enjoins on us to speak truth and to speak sweetly and softly. “Speak truth, speak pleasantly, and do not speak unpleasant truth (*Sathyam bruyat, priyam bruyat, na bruyat sathyamapriyam*).” Truth is the source and sustenance for everything in the universe. Where there is truth, there will be righteousness. Where truth and righteousness go together, peace is the result. Where there is peace, there cannot be anger, agitation, envy, jealousy, and conceit. Such peace devoid of these bad qualities transforms itself

into pure love.

Once, Hanuman entered the city of Lanka in search of Sita, who was abducted by Ravana and kept in confinement there. He searched for Sita in every street and every building but could not find her. However, he could find the demonic (*rakshasa*) ladies in awkward postures. He decided for himself that Sita was a noble lady and would not stoop down to such a level. Unable to find Sita anywhere, Hanuman lamented, “I have searched for her in every house and even in flower gardens. I am yearning to see her.” Then he went into the grove of asoka trees and found Sita sitting under a tree. He felt extremely happy to find her and, in that joyous mood, started pulling down fruit-bearing trees and deforming the beautiful garden. This act of impertinence of Hanuman infuriated the demons, and he was taken to Ravana’s court duly bound by ropes.

The law of karma is immutable and inescapable

In the royal court of the demon king, Ravana, Hanuman picked an argument with him over the propriety of his heinous act of abducting Sita. He addressed Ravana in a most humiliating manner. Ravana could not tolerate the impertinent and arrogant behaviour of Hanuman. He became very angry and warned Hanuman, “You monkey! No one, not even kings, dare to address me in such humiliating language. I will see that your mouth is shut right now.” Hanuman retorted, “You are a demon, whereas I am servant of an Emperor who rules the fourteen worlds (*lokas*). You cannot do anything to me.”

Ravana could not contain his anger any more and ordered Hanuman’s tail to be wrapped with clothes, soaked in oil, and set afire. Immediately, the demons brought some old clothes, wrapped them round his tail, poured oil on them, and set fire to the tail. Hanuman then jumped from one building to the other with the burning tail and set fire to all the buildings in Lanka. Very soon, the flames spread everywhere, and it looked as though the entire city was going up in flames. All the residents in the city came out into the streets in great panic. They were wondering and discussing among themselves: “Who is this monkey? Wherefrom has it come? Who sent it? Our entire city is burning. Where can we go now?”

Even Mandodari’s palace was not spared. The entire city including the buildings and personal belongings of the residents were reduced to ashes. Only one house in Lanka, that of Vibhishana, was safe. Thus, the residents of Lanka had to pay for their sins. The law of *karma* is immutable and inescapable. People have to suffer the consequences of their evil deeds. Whatever one does, whether good or bad, will come back to one.

How to keep away from indulging in bad deeds

When a man emerges from the womb of his mother, he does not find any garland around his neck.

There are no jewels made of pearls, nor are there glittering gold ornaments.

There are no necklaces studded with precious stones like emeralds and diamonds.

But there is one garland around his neck.

Brahma strings together the consequences of his past deeds into a heavy garland and puts it around his neck at the time of his birth.

(Sanskrit verse)

Thus, the results of our past actions (*karmas*) haunt us. Suppose you have eaten pakoda in your house; after

some time, you will get the belch of pakoda only. Similarly, you get the results of your past *karmas* only. Hence, your actions must always be good. In order that one always undertakes good actions, one must cultivate love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. If one can cultivate these three, one will be able to keep away from indulging in bad deeds. Love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society are all interdependent. One follows the other.

Repetition of God's name (*namasmarana*) would help cultivate these noble qualities. That is why I repeatedly exhort you to do *namasmarana* incessantly. *Namasmarana* is the means by which one can cross the ocean of worldly life (*samsara*).

How to realise the Atma Principle

If one has to realise the *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*), one must seek refuge only in *Atma*. Once you realise the *Atma* Principle, you will yourself become *Atma*. You have to constantly contemplate upon the *Upanishadic* declaration, "I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*)." You have to remind yourself, "I am not a human, I am not a demon, I am *Atma*."

I wish that students should gradually give up loose talk and unnecessary activities. Your speech should be good; your vision should be good; your thoughts should also be good. Only when your thoughts, words, and deeds are good and in perfect harmony will you become a good person. The sacred texts like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharatha*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* teach the same. First and foremost, develop love for God. Love for God amounts to having everything.

Constant practice enables you to reach the goal

If you wish to attain the *Atma* Principle, you have to constantly contemplate upon *Atma*. Once you experience the *Atma* Principle, you will yourself become Brahman. In order to get that experience, there should be regular practice. One does a lot of practice even to attain simple things in daily life. Without practice, nothing can be achieved in life; you will commit mistakes.

First and foremost, learn to live like real human beings, constantly reminding yourself, "I am a human being, I am not an animal, I am not a cruel beast." From humanness, you have to rise to the level of Divinity. Do not degenerate to the level of an animal or beast. In fact, all *Avatars* come only to raise the level of consciousness of human beings to that of Divinity, only to transform humans into divine beings. When you follow God's instructions meticulously and undertake activities that would please Him, you will surely become God, verily. It is not a difficult task. Constant practice will enable you to reach your goal. On the other hand, if you follow bad people, you will also become bad. "Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are", is the saying. As is your company, so you shall become.

Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-07-20

12. Vinayaka Principle Is All-Pervasive

Bharat (India) is the motherland of many noble souls who earned great name and fame in all the continents of the world.

This is the land of valorous people who vanquished foreign rulers and attained independence.

This is the land which excelled in music, literature and other fine arts.

Having been born in this great land of Bharat, oh boys and girls, it is your sacred duty to protect its rich cultural heritage.

(Telugu poem)

THE festival of Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated the other day. Our students also had a celebration, which was full of beauty, splendour and bliss.

All can experience the Vinayaka Principle

Embodiments of Love – Students!

First of all, you should know who Vinayaka is. Vinayaka is the leader of the universe; there is no leader above him. He is the leader of all and master of all. It would be your misfortune to forget such a leader and master. He eats only simple food, which is cooked without oil. The food he eats is called *kudumulu*, which is prepared by grinding various types of food grains, making the mixture soft by mixing it with water, and cooking it in steam. He eats only such simple food. This preparation is also called *undrallu*. Those who eat such food will not suffer from even a minor illness at any point of time.

Vinayaka has two consorts, Buddhi and Siddhi. Being in the constant company of Vinayaka, they have acquired all types of knowledge from him. They also eat simple food like Vinayaka.

Vinayaka is omnipresent. He teaches through silence and conducts himself in an exemplary manner. Some people think that Vinayaka is worshipped only in Bharat (India) but the Vinayaka Principle is all-pervasive and is worshipped by all. People may follow different paths, but all can experience the Vinayaka Principle. This Vinayaka Principle is present in everyone in the form of breath. It would be sheer foolishness to limit your worship of Vinayaka to idols made of clay and metals. In fact, Vinayaka is your master, who is in you, with you, and around you. By constant contemplation on Vinayaka, all your sins will be destroyed.

Inner meaning of immersion of Vinayaka idol

Yesterday, our students brought the idols of Vinayaka in decorated chariots and took them out for immersion in a procession. What is the significance of immersion of idols in water? When the idol of Vinayaka is immersed in water, it loses its form, and the Vinayaka Principle becomes all-pervasive. If you put sugar in water, it will mix with water, permeating its every molecule. Likewise, the merger of the idol of Vinayaka with water signifies His all-pervasiveness. Vinayaka is the divine parent of all and loves all His children. He considers them as His only property. Emulating his example, all parents should consider their children as their property. Similarly, the children should also have utmost regard for their parents. Never forget your mother, never forget your father.

Vinayaka is the bestower of intellect and spiritual attainments (*buddhi* and *siddhi*). If your intellect (*buddhi*) is good, everything will become good for you. Therefore, when you commence your studies or start any new work, first offer worship to Vinayaka. Even before eating your food, pray to Vinayaka. All *Bharatiyas* (Indians) pray to Vinayaka before undertaking any new venture. When they construct temples, they usually install the idol of Vinayaka in the front. It is a tradition of the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) that whenever they have to start some work, they do it only after offering worship to Vinayaka. A singer wanting to present a concert first offers prayer to Vinayaka. Our students also dedicate their first *bhajan* (devotional song) to Vinayaka when they start their *bhajan* programme. Vinayaka is the master of your life. There is no leader other than him.

Vinayaka is the Master of the Universe

Worship of Vinayaka should not be limited to Vinayaka Chaturthi day only. You should worship him at all places and at all times, whether it is the fourth, eighth, or ninth (*chaturthi*, *ashtami*, or *navami*) day of the new moon or any other day. “Everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God (*Sarvada sarva kaleshu sarvatra Hari chintanam*).” However, there is a special significance of worshipping Vinayaka on Vinayaka Chaturthi day.

As it will be difficult for people to perform this elaborate ritualistic worship regularly on all days, a certain number of days have been fixed for the special worship of Vinayaka like three, five, or ten days. Moreover, it is difficult for people to prepare the food offerings (*naivedyam*) to Vinayaka on all days, although the food of Vinayaka is very simple and easy to prepare. His food is cooked only in steam without putting it directly on fire. Such food keeps us healthy and free from diseases.

Though Vinayaka has a big belly, it does not mean that he eats much. He takes only limited food. When people sing songs in praise of Vinayaka, they describe him as “one with big belly”. But he does not eat all that is offered to him. He sanctifies those offerings and confers his blessings.

Vinayaka is ever on the move to bless his devotees. God is like that only.

Vinayaka is the leader of all beings. He is the controller and sustainer of the entire creation. If Vinayaka does not sustain and control creation, there will be total destruction. It is only Vinayaka who protects creation from destruction. He is present everywhere. Whether you are aware of it or not, he is always with you, in you, around you, above you, and below you.

Vinayaka and breath control

People cannot live without air. It is their life principle. Vinayaka permeates the life principle of humanity. People celebrate Vinayaka Chaturthi with great joy and prepare a number of delicious dishes. But Ganesha is not interested in eating all the delicious items offered to him. He is happy to live on air.

Here, air symbolises the life principle (*prana*). There can be no life without the life principle. You can see that you breathe in and breathe out. You cannot live without breathing. When you take the breath in, you experience the sound “*So*”, and when you breathe out, you experience the sound “*Ham*”. In this way, one’s breathing signifies “*Soham* (That I am, or God I am).” In the science of breath control (*pranayama*), the inhalation of breath is called *puraka*, exhalation is called *rechaka*, and retention of breath is called *kumbhaka*. You can attain the state of meditation only when the durations of inhalation, exhalation, and retention are equal. Inhalation, exhalation,

and retention are the three main aspects in the practice of breath control, which can be learnt only by the grace of Vinayaka. These processes of inhalation, exhalation, and retention are directed by the will of God. But people do not understand the secret behind this and celebrate Vinayaka Chaturthi in a ritualistic way.

Vinayaka bestows intellect and spiritual attainment

Vinayaka is called *Siddhi Vinayaka* because he bestows *buddhi* (intellect) and *siddhi* (spiritual attainment). Both of these are very essential for people.

Vinayaka has the head of an elephant, which has a great significance. Since the elephant is considered very auspicious, all big temples keep their own elephants for ceremonial processions. The elephant is the biggest of all animals. The footprints of all animals like lion or tiger will be erased when an elephant walks over their path. When an elephant passes through a thick forest, it creates a path even for cars, buses, and chariots to pass through. Likewise, Vinayaka makes the path for all to follow. When people were going from Ayodhya to Mithila for Rama's wedding, the procession was headed by elephants.

The grand procession was led by elephants, horses, and chariots.
The entire army of Dasaratha followed the elderly Sage Viswamitra.
King Dasaratha was accompanied by his ministers and vassal kings.
It appeared as though the entire Ayodhya moved en masse toward Mithila.
It was a wonderful and blissful sight to behold.
(Telugu poem)

The elephant is so powerful that when it trumpets, all barking dogs will be silenced. Without understanding the real significance of the elephant head of Vinayaka, we make an idol with a trunk and take it out in a procession

Not only Vinayaka, but all gods transcend physical forms. There can be no birth and death for the one who transcends physical form. God has no form. If you ask God, "Who are You?", He will reply, "I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*)."
Who is Brahman? He signifies inhalation and exhalation, which have no form. Nobody can question who begot Brahman? Where is He? Likewise, the primordial sound *Om* has no form. It has no beginning, no end. How can there be an end of something that has no beginning?

Inhalation and exhalation are two related processes. Similar are happiness and sorrow, merit and sin. God is beyond all these. One who is born will also die. But God has neither birth nor death. Never forget this divine principle, which signifies the unity of the entire creation.

The answer to the question, "Who is God?" is that God is the principle of oneness in the entire diversity of the creation.

Therefore, students! It is your delusion to limit God to the idols of Rama, Krishna, and Vinayaka and worship them. Did you see Krishna anywhere? Where is He? You have seen the picture of Krishna made by artists like Ravi Varma and created His idol accordingly. Did Ravi Varma see Krishna before painting His picture? No. He imagined the form of Krishna by reading the description given in the sacred texts and made the picture. No one has seen God. However, the physical form in which God incarnates has a great significance. God does not assume physical form without a reason. Therefore, never forget His physical form. God assumes the physical form to strengthen the moral fabric of the world.

I was very happy to see the enthusiasm of our students yesterday when they brought decorated idols of Vinayaka here. It was heartening to see that our students understood the real significance of Vinayaka Chaturthi and celebrated it in its true spirit. It is not possible to experience the divine principle without understanding the spirit behind these celebrations. Therefore, try to know the inner significance of celebrating festivals. When you understand that Vinayaka is the omnipresent divine principle, you will be celebrating this festival in its true spirit. In fact, all festivals should be celebrated with proper understanding of their significance.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the *bhajan*, “*Vinayaka Vinayaka*”.)

Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-08-26.

Righteousness (*dharma*) is the code of conduct that will promote the ideals of each stage of the human being – learner, householder, earner, master, servant, spiritual aspirant, renunciant, etc. When the code is distorted and people undermine their earthly careers, forgetting the high purpose for which they have come, the Lord incarnates and leads him along the correct path. That is to say, He comes as a person to restore the principles and re-establish the practice of *dharma*. This is what is referred to as *Dharma-samstapana* in the *Gita*. Among these forms assumed by the Lord, there is no higher or lower.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

If you have faith and if you keep the name of Rama as constant companion, you are in Vaikunta, Kailas, or Heaven, all the time. These are not distant regions that have to be reached by tortuous travel; they are springs of tranquility that are in your own heart.

You cannot have this chance of the proximity of the greatest of all sources of joy in any other place. Here it is so near, so easy to attain, so full of grace. If you fall back, you will seldom get the chance again. Ask and get what will save you, not what will bind you.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

13. Uphold Ethics And Morality

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later, but the indweller has neither birth nor death.

The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness.

Truly speaking, the indweller, who is in the form of the *Atma*, is verily God Himself.
(Telugu poem)

The Indweller (*Dehi*) has no bondage. The Indweller is also referred to as *Atma* or Brahman.

Embodiments of Love!

People worship God in several ways and develop faith in Him. However, God has no name or form. He is one and only one. Yet, people call Him by different names like Rama, Krishna, Allah, Jesus, etc. These are all their individual fancies, but God has no particular name. God is one. “Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam Sat viprah bahudha vadanti*).” The one God is referred to and worshipped by various names and forms. These forms ascribed to God are the result of one’s imagination and as portrayed in some paintings. In fact, no one has ever visualised God. In whichever form one contemplates on God, He will manifest in that form. God is one, not two!

Game of dice leads to loss of empire and wife

Every individual refers to himself as ‘I’, ‘I’, ‘I’. This ‘I’ refers to the individual ego, born out of attachment to the body. When this identification with the body (*deha bhava*) is removed (crossed), one becomes the Indweller (*Dehi*). You become God, verily. Divinity transcends name and form. People, since time immemorial, have contemplated, worshipped, served, and longed for such a transcendental Divinity.

People have many desires in this material world. Emperor Dharmaraja had only one desire, that is, playing the game of dice. He was very fond of this game. The Kauravas noticed this weakness of Dharmaraja. They contrived to trap him by making use of this weakness. Their maternal uncle Sakuni instigated and advised them, “Invite Dharmaraja for a game of dice.” Sakuni was an adept in this game, and he could easily defeat his opponents by foul means. Duryodhana and his brothers were on one side, and Dharmaraja was on the other. The dice used in this game were manipulated to enable them to win each time the game was played. As a result, Dharmaraja lost every game. He lost his empire, his brothers, himself, and even Droupadi.

The Kauravas annexed his empire and took control over Dharmaraja’s brothers and wife Droupadi. They dragged her to the royal court. Droupadi then posed a question to the honourable members and elders in the assembly whether Dharmaraja pawned himself first and then lost her or vice-versa. If Dharmaraja pawned himself first and lost the game, he had no right to pawn Droupadi. Moreover, Droupadi was the wife of not only Dharmaraja, but all five brothers. Did they give their consent to pawn Panchali (the wife of five brothers) by Dharmaraja in this game of dice? No one in that august assembly dared to answer the subtle points raised by Droupadi. They did not open their mouth.

Dronacharya, in his youth one day went to King Drupada to ask for the gift of a cow. As the king refused to

make the gift, Dronacharya in his anger left Panchala with his belongings and wife and child. As he was walking toward Hastinapura, he encountered the Pandava and Kaurava children playing in a field near a well. Coming near the children, who had surrounded the well, Dronacharya asked, “My dear children, what is the matter? Why are you all standing around the well in this manner? What happened?” The children replied in one voice, “Swami, our ball fell into the well.” Dronacharya then pacified them saying, “Don’t worry, I will take the ball out.”

So saying, He pulled an arrow and shot at the ball. The arrow stuck to the ball. Then he shot another arrow, which stuck to the first arrow. In this manner, he released a number of arrows one after the other and finally with the help of the arrows made into a pole, he pulled out the ball and handed it over to the children. Seeing this wonderful feat of Dronacharya, they fell at his feet. They realised that they had at last found someone who was an expert in archery. They conveyed this news to Bhishma, who appointed Dronacharya as the teacher of both Kauravas and Pandavas.

Nobility of Droupadi

Among the children, Arjuna particularly learnt the skills of archery fast and became an expert in a short time, winning the affection and admiration of Guru Dronacharya. In fact, he made his guru proud and famous by his skills. This had made Aswathama, the son of Dronacharya, jealous. From then on, he bore a grudge against the Pandavas, particularly Arjuna. During the *Mahabharatha* war, he joined the Kauravas and fought against the Pandavas. One night, during the war, he stealthily entered the camp of the Pandavas and massacred the young children of Pandavas mercilessly under the cover of darkness. As he was about to escape, he was tracked down by Arjuna, who dragged him into Droupadi’s presence . Instead of becoming angry and cursing the evil doer and pronouncing punishment on him, she fell at the feet of Aswathama, the son of her husband’s most revered guru, and said:

It is at the feet of your father Dronacharya that my husbands learnt all that they know.

Being the son of Dronacharya, is it proper to kill my innocent children?

How could you have the heart to kill them, who were unarmed, young, quietly asleep,
were not having any enmity against you and were not contemplating any harm to
you?

(Telugu poem)

When Droupadi was thus pleading with Aswathama, Bhima could not bear to see this. Exploding with anger, he roared:

This Droupadi is a stupid woman, for she pleads for the freedom of this wretch.

She feels no anger against this murderer of her sons.

This assassin is not a *Brahmin*; do not release him, kill him.

If you do not do that, I will myself kill him with my powerful fist.

(Telugu poem)

Aswathama was trembling with fear and felt helpless. Consumed with rage, Arjuna was about to attack Aswathama. Droupadi then raised both her hands and pleaded with Arjuna thus:

Oh, Phalguna!

It is not righteous to kill a person who is afraid or has lost courage, who is asleep or

intoxicated, who seeks refuge or is a female.

Do not kill Aswathama, for he is the son of your preceptor.

(Telugu poem)

Droupadi fell at his feet and reasoned with him. “Arjuna, will my sons be revived by killing Aswathama? His mother would experience the same kind of sorrow that I am now undergoing. Having studied the *Vedas* and *Sastras*, why are you not able to maintain your tranquillity?”

Thus, Droupadi pleaded with Arjuna to forgive Aswathama for his heinous act. Arjuna retorted, “You are preventing me from keeping up my vow.” Droupadi replied, “Tonsuring his head and removing the crown jewel from his head is equivalent to killing him.” Arjuna agreed to her pleadings and, as a token of punishment, shaved off Aswathama’s head, took his crown jewel, and set him free. “There is no use brooding over the past. Past is past; forget the past,” is the advice given by Droupadi to Arjuna. On the advice of Droupadi, Arjuna suppressed his emotion.

Saving life is superior to accumulation of wealth

Just now, an economist who participated in the conference mentioned the theme “Ethics and Finance”. Arjuna followed ethics and saved the life of Aswathama, forgetting the loss of the Pandava children. To save the life of a fellow human being is far superior to accumulating wealth. Several such incidents of nobility are to be found in the *Mahabharatha* and the *Bhagavatha*. There are many such noble women like Droupadi. She was broad-minded and of noble character. It is only because of such women that the country of Bharat (India) has achieved great progress from age to age and attained the preeminent position of today. Unfortunately, the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) have forgotten their glorious past. In the supremely holy land of Bharat, tolerance is the towering quality of our character.

Follow the greatness of your culture and your conscience

What is the real beauty in a human being? It is not the beauty of the physical body. It is the quality of tolerance that confers real beauty on an individual. Our culture of Bharat has given utmost importance to the quality of tolerance. This has been our tradition since ages. One has to therefore uphold one’s rich tradition of purity and tolerance. A true *Bharatiya* is one who protects these two qualities. One who lacks morality is not a human. Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows. Hence, one has to protect one’s morality. That is the real quality of a *Bharatiya*. Only one who is endowed with a noble character is eligible to be called a *Bharatiya*.

Just as an elephant is not aware of its innate strength and meekly submits itself to the commands of the mahout, the *Bharatiyas* of today forget their innate strength and purity and are imitating the western culture. Though they are endowed with great strength and have mastered the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the scriptures, they are aping western culture and forgetting their own greatness. It is not proper for the people of such a great nation. You have to realise the greatness of your culture and follow your conscience. Unfortunately, people today do not follow their conscience. It is not out of ignorance but innocence! If you continue to imitate western culture, your own strength will gradually diminish. Therefore, do not imitate others.

Observe restraint. For example, the lion attacks an animal only when it is hungry. It does not go about killing every animal that it comes across. Thus, even a wild beast like the lion has the capacity to restrain itself. Hence,

it is necessary for every human being to observe restraint and certain limits. Limitless ego, anger, and desire will only lead you astray. You have to divert your mind from such a situation and follow the noble path so that you do not cause harm to others nor do you suffer in the process. Do not utilise your strength and power indiscriminately. You see modern children enjoying unrestrained freedom. Freedom no doubt is good and permissible but should be within a limit. Only then does it acquire value. Trying to amass wealth and being over smart will only lead you to danger.

You must have seen in newspapers as to how America indulged in colossal wastage of its money and resources in waging wars against Iran, Iraq, and other nations. What could America gain out of this? Today the American economy has slowed down and there is recession in the country. It is all due to their improper usage of resources.

Take for example, Lord Easwara. He is mighty and all-powerful. Yet, He uses His all-pervading power only to the extent necessary. He does not use His power indiscriminately. One must emulate His example and make proper use of one's strength and resources only to the extent necessary.

Watch your thoughts and see that they do not go astray

Do not waste your thoughts, for it makes your mind unsteady and wavering. (Showing His handkerchief) What is this? This is a cloth. No, this is not a cloth but a bundle of threads. Not even threads, it is just cotton. Without cotton, there can be no threads, and without threads there can be no cloth. Likewise, the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. Therefore, put a check on your thoughts. Even the wealth you acquire and the food you eat must be within a certain limit. Food is God; do not waste it.

You should help others, never hurt them. "Help Ever, Hurt Never." These are some of the guidelines for a purposeful living that you must follow. The one is blessed who conducts oneself in such a way that one does not hurt others nor gets hurt in the process. You have to learn these skills, which are not available in the textbooks. Watch your thoughts and see that they do not go astray. Each time a thought arises in your mind, analyse it. "Is it good or bad?" If you feel it is bad, do not allow it to persist. Just let it pass. If it is a good thought, put it into practice so that you and others also will be benefited.

The three principles to be cultivated in order to earn a good name

In the conference held yesterday and today, certain guidelines for the efficient functioning of the banks in the country have been deliberated upon. Whatever actions you perform must be in a spirit of self-improvement. Do not be under the impression that you are serving the organisation; rather you are serving yourself by your sincere efforts. Do not at all give room for ego and pride.

By depositing your savings in the bank, it is not the bank but you who will benefit, for it will come back to you only. In the same way, you will be benefited by the good you do to others. You are doing it for your own good life. If you want to earn a good name in society, cultivate three principles: love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society (*Daiva preeti, paapa bheeti, and sangha neethi*). If you foster morality in society, people will gather around you, treating you as a good person.

First and foremost, develop love for God. The next is fear of sin. It is only when you cultivate this quality that you will become a person of character. When you have a noble character, the entire society will love you. None will hate you. Maintain good character and love all. Love is everywhere and God is everywhere. Hence, love all.

The more you love others, the more your reputation will go up in society. If you commit a mistake or indulge in an evil deed, others will try to imitate you. Hence, be good, do good and see good. This is the way to God. It is only when you conduct yourself in such a manner that you will earn a good name in society.

You cannot learn these things from a textbook. It is not textual information. It relates to the purity of heart. You should develop such sacredness. Unfortunately, there are only secrets but no sacredness anywhere. This is not good. If you smoke a cigarette, your friend too will come to you and say, “Hello, you are a good boy. Give me also one cigarette.” As is your company, so will be your behaviour. “Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.” If your company is bad, you become a bad person. If you are good, others will follow your example and become good.

Today, you find that several companies have closed their operations. What could be the reason for this? If one company is following foul methods, other companies also follow suit. It is a common thing that bad habits spread quickly and easily. You have, therefore, to be cautious and strive for good things to happen. Do not be hasty to imitate bad things. “Haste makes waste, waste makes worry, so do not be in a hurry.”

Mother is very important

Dear children!

You are all very young. Start doing good work right from this age. Set an example to others. Do service to society. It is society that protects you. Even before you start doing social service, there are four persons whom you should revere and respect. They are mother, father, preceptor, and God, in that order.

First and foremost, the mother is very important. Make her happy. If your mother is happy, your entire life will be happy. If you make her unhappy, you will suffer. Hence, keep her happy and contented at all times. The happiness of the mother is your happiness. She will protect you always. It is the mother who gave birth to you and brought you up. She may reprimand you and even beat you when she is angry with you, but her anger is only momentary. Do not feel for it. The temporary anger will not last long. Realise the fact that anger, ego, jealousy, etc. are all temporary phases. Even lust is momentary. These are all temporary and hence they come and go. They are not permanent. But one principle is everlasting: the *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*). Develop love for one and all. Love, Love, Love! “Love All and Serve All.” Love is your only property that lasts for ever. There is nothing greater than love, and you don’t need anything greater too.

Plunge into service with a feeling, “Service is God; service is my life.” Service should not be undertaken with an expectation of remuneration. “Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows.” Do not be elated when you get money nor depressed on losing money. The difference between money and morality is: money comes and goes whereas morality comes and grows.

Dear children!

Today is a very happy day. Pray that occasions like this should reoccur wherever you may be.

God is your sole refuge wherever you may be.

In a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of a deep sea.

(Telugu poem)

God is always with you, above you, behind you. He will always protect you. Develop this firm faith in your heart. God's grace is not transitory. It will always be with you. You are all good children, I know. Conduct yourself as good children always.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with two *bhajans*, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukh Santi Nahin...*” and “*Subrahmanyam, Subrahmanyam...*”)

Conference on Ethics And World Of Finance, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-08-29

Every life is a new chance, a fresh opportunity for realising the Truth. Yesterday is gone; today is the fresh chance, the new opportunity is now; tomorrow, you cannot be sure of.

In fact , every minute is to be welcomed as unique and valuable, precious. Do not pine over the chunks of time you have wasted; seize the moment that has come within your grasp.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14. Live Up To The Expectations Of Emperor Bali

Man is born out of, grows in, and finally departs from this world due to *karma*.
Karma is verily the embodiment of Divinity for humanity.
It is only due to *karma* that happiness and sorrow occur in this world.
(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

DEAR devotees of Kerala! Emperor Bali used to rule the state of Kerala in ancient times. He used to treat his subjects as his own family members and provide several conveniences for their happy and comfortable living. He used to develop sacred feelings among the people and create a proper environment to foster them. In order that the people tread the right path and to set an example to them, he started a ritual-sacrifice (*yajna*) by name ‘Viswajit’ once. Several people gathered to witness the event. Emperor Bali performed the *yajna* on a grand scale by donating land and money to several people and gave away gifts to a number of people on the occasion.

During the *yajna*, his family members were also seated on the *yajna* stage along with him. While everyone was watching the grand spectacle, a handsome boy entered the sacrificial hall holding a small umbrella made of palmirah leaves. As He was approaching the altar, Emperor Bali’s daughter Ratnamala saw Him. She was captivated by the beauty and effulgence of that charming young boy. Immediately, she was lost in deep contemplation, thinking, “How fortunate it would be if I had a child like Him!” The boy went straight to the altar.

The dialogue between the emperor and the divine boy

While everyone present in the *yajna* room was watching Him happily, Emperor Bali welcomed Him, washed His feet reverentially, offered a garland, and made Him sit on an ornate chair. He then asked the young boy, “Who are You? Where did You come from, and for what purpose?”

The young boy replied, “I have heard that Emperor Bali is doing several acts of charity. I too have a desire to be fulfilled.” The Emperor then asked, “What is it?” The boy replied, “I don’t need anything much. I will be happy if a small piece of land measuring three feet is given to Me in charity.” Emperor Bali wondered, “What! Such a small request! I thought You would ask for some big things. I am surprised at your small request. Is that enough? You may ask for something more.” The young boy replied that it would be enough if His request was fulfilled.

He covered the entire earth with one step, the sky with the second, and was waiting to take the third step. But there was no space left for the third step. Emperor Bali then told the boy, “Dear one! You covered the entire earth with one step and the sky with the second. Now, there is no space to keep the third step. Hence, please keep Your foot on my head, if You wish.” So saying, he bent his head before the boy, who was none other than Lord Vishnu come in the form of Vamana *Avatar*. The moment Vamana set His foot on the head of Emperor Bali, Bali was pushed down under its weight to the nether world! That was how he was liberated by Lord Vishnu.

The origin of Onam festival

The people of Emperor Bali’s Kingdom were very sad at the developments. They expressed their forlorn

feelings thus: “Oh God! Our Emperor is no more with us. He used to rear us like his own children. He is our protector. How can we live without him?” Their helplessness and agony over the separation from their beloved King were very painful. The happy event of *yajna* that was being celebrated on a grand scale came to an abrupt end. This is an example of the saying “Pleasure is an interval between two pains.”

As the people were thus grieving, Emperor Bali declared from the nether world, “Oh, my dear children! You are all very dear to me. I will always look after your welfare, wherever I am. I will see that you do not undergo any trouble. I will protect you. You need not feel that I am away from you in a different world. Every year on this day, I shall come and see you. Commemorate this day of my coming as a festival. Take a bath, wear new clothes, and enjoy a feast with a variety of dishes on this day.” From then on, the people of Kerala celebrate that day as ‘Onam festival’ in remembrance of their most beloved King and protector Bali.

Kerala, the land of nature’s bounty

Emperor Bali used to do a lot of good work for the benefit of people and make them happy. This is why the people could not bear the separation from their beloved King.

Even today, Kerala remains a land of plenty and prosperity. Nature showers its bounty on the people of Kerala. In fact, the rains start in Kerala and then spread to the entire country. There is no dearth of food grains and drinking water in Kerala, which is nature’s gift to the people of Kerala. It is customary to see people in other states worrying about arrival of the monsoon saying, “Oh! The rains have not yet started in Kerala.” It is a land where the omnipresent God had incarnated as Lord Vamana. He may incarnate in one place but is present everywhere.

God is omnipresent, though at times He incarnates in a place with a form. God is only one, not two, though people refer to Him by different names and forms. “Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti*).” It is only our illusion to ascribe different names to God like Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Allah, Jesus, etc. The sun is only one and it appears in different parts of the world at different times. It is now 9.00 a.m.; but it is night in the U.S.A. Similarly, the one God dwells in different people in different forms. Do not be under the impression that God has different forms. He is beyond names and forms. “God is one but manifests as several beings (*Ekoham bahusyam*). Divinity is present everywhere — in every country and every individual. It is omnipresent. Since your perceptions are different, you ascribe different names and forms to the one God.

Good qualities of the people of Kerala

The land of Kerala is the gift of God. The people of Kerala follow the commands of the noble Emperor Bali even today. That is why the state has developed in several ways. There is no dearth of food and amenities for a happy living in Kerala. Emperor Bali provided all comforts to the people before he left for his abode. It is a small state and densely populated. Whatever may be the size of population, people enjoy a lot of comforts, peace, and happiness in Kerala.

Of course, changes in people’s aspirations and lifestyle are taking place in recent times due to the impact of the *Kali Yuga* (the present era). But the core of their hearts and feelings remains the same. They still follow the *vedic* injunctions “Speak truth and follow righteousness (*Sathyam vada, dharmam chara*).” They respect the elders and serve them with love and affection. What could be the reason for this? Love for God. It is a land where love for God exists even today. They have fear of sin. Those who have love for God naturally develop fear of sin.

Consequently, such people will have a high degree of morality in society, which is very important for its orderly functioning. Thus, the people of Kerala scrupulously observe the three principles of love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. They respect elders and give due recognition to them.

One should have morality and integrity. The same principles have been enshrined in the *vedic* injunction, “Speak truth and follow righteousness.” The people of Kerala follow these two principles scrupulously in their daily lives.

Love your mother and show due respect to her

It is not enough to celebrate the Onam festival with a lot of religious fervour and devotion. You have to live up to the expectations of the noble emperor Bali. It is said, “Revere your mother, father, preceptor, and guest as God (*Matrudevo bhava, pitrudevo bhava, acharyadevo bhava, atithidevo bhava*).” First comes the mother in that order. She gives birth to you, brings you up, and teaches you good things in your formative years. Then begins the role of father. He is your second guru. Then the teacher (guru) educates you to enable you to make a living in the world. And finally God takes command. Thus, your life in this physical world begins with your mother and culminates in God.

Hence, do not under any circumstances forget your mother. Love your mother more than anyone else and show her due respect. You will find that the people of Kerala respect the elders very much, particularly their mothers. They lend a helping hand and take good care of the elders. They keep the elders happy always. How fortunate are the people of Kerala to have an emperor like Bali, whom God Himself accompanied to Vaikunta (Vishnu’s heaven)!

The celebration of Onam

What is Onam? It is a day on which people take a good bath, wear new clothes, and pray to God with a pure heart. The people of Kerala prepare a variety of tasty dishes, particularly with banana. They in fact prepare twelve varieties of dishes with the banana fruit. It is a unique celebration. They prepare these dishes with a pure and loving heart. Hence, they will be very tasty. They offer these preparations first to God wholeheartedly, with a lot of devotion, and then partake of it along with their family members and relations. They serve these dishes one after the other. Both the cooking and serving the dishes is done with a pure and loving heart in the true spirit of Onam celebrations. They keep their houses clean and maintain a sacred atmosphere for God to manifest. They consider them not merely as houses but temples of God.

Only in Kerala does such a sacred atmosphere prevail. Even if some people have some misgivings about the festival of Onam, they got them cleared and the festival is celebrated in its true spirit as a day on which Emperor Bali conferred blessings on his people from Vaikunta (the abode of Lord Vishnu), where he reached ultimately. It is a penance (*tapas*) for the people of Kerala to remember the words of Emperor Bali on this day and lead their lives accordingly in a spirit of love and service. “Love all and serve all”! There can be no greater penance for anyone.

Whomsoever you come across, offer your salutations. Even if you encounter enemies, offer your salutations to them first. Surely, they will reciprocate your noble gesture. Thus, people have to conduct themselves with mutual love and unity. It is only such people that deserve to be called human beings. They are, in fact, the people

with morality. You have to develop such morality today. Love for God enjoins one to develop morality in society.

Hence, you have to develop love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. Do not ever forget these three principles. Those who have no morality are not human beings at all! Can a nation or race exist without morality? No! You also must develop the qualities of humility and obedience, besides morality. This was in fact, the message of emperor Bali to his people. If you can cultivate and develop these qualities, your life will be sanctified.

Onam, Prasanthi Nilayam. 2009-09-02

The *Atmarama* (Divinity) in every one prompts one to stick to truth and to the moral code; you have only to listen and obey and get saved. Some hear even its whisperings; some listen only when it protests loudly; some are deaf; some are determined not to hear. But all have to be guided by it, sooner or later. Some may ascend a plane, others may travel by car or board a bus, some may prefer a train journey, others may like to trudge along – but all must reach the goal some day or other.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

To get angry is but the effort of a moment, but to get peace, to become unaffected by the ups and downs of life, is the result of years of training in *Vedanta*. It can be well established only on the basis of the belief that all material things that fall within the range of sensuous experience are fundamentally non-existent. They are products of illusion (*maya*), of the tendency to see many where only 'One' exists. You see corpses proceeding one after the other to the graveyard, but you move about unconcerned. You feel you are eternal. In fact, you are. That is the real you, I mean. Just as the water you drink is eliminated as perspiration, the *karma* that you accumulate is eliminated through *karma*, gladly borne. So, bear both 'mirth and moan' with equal calm. Like the space in the pot merging with the space outside the pot, silently, fully, with no trace of separation or distinctness, merge with the Universal. That is real surrender, salvation, liberation (*saranagathi*).

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

15. Respect Mother – First And Foremost

AEONS ago, there was darkness everywhere. There were no human beings or any other creatures. It was pitch darkness all over. Then there was torrential rain for years together and as a result of this deluge, oceans were formed and mountains arose. Gradually the stars appeared in the sky. The sun too shone and shed its rays on the earth. The oceans and the sky became blue. The colour blue is indicative of the vastness of oceans and the sky. God is also vast, and hence He is portrayed as blue in appearance. Gradually, forests and hills, insects and creatures, birds and beasts grew on the earth. Millions of creatures of different species and also humans started inhabiting the earth.

Bhagawan's concern for devotees

Once several years ago, I visited Anantapur. I was very young then. I stayed in the bungalow of the district collector. He came to Me and asked, "Swami! There are a number of deer here. Please take two of them with You and keep them in Your ashram." The Prasanthi Nilayam building was not built yet. I brought those two deer and kept them in Bangalore first. Gradually, they multiplied into hundreds. There was not enough space for their movement there. Hence, they were shifted later to Prasanthi Nilayam and kept in a separate deer park. Thus, God's creation multiplies day by day.

It is raining outside. I find some ladies getting drenched in the rain. Allow those ladies to come inside. The gents too! I am sorry that so many devotees on the ladies and gents side are standing in the rain to have the *darshan* of Swami and hear His discourse. No one can fathom the mystery of God's actions.

When I was studying in the middle school in Kamalapuram, a small town near Kadapa, a district headquarters in the present state of Andhra Pradesh, I was very young and short. A village fair used to be held on a grand scale every year in a place called Pushpagiri, which was located between Kamalapuram and Kadapa.

One day the drill teacher in our school told us, "There will be a grand cattle fair in Pushpagiri next week. Several people from all over the district and neighbouring villages will come to participate in that fair. We have to send volunteers from our school to regulate the crowds and also to do some service to them."

The drill teacher was also our scout master. He insisted that all the boys of our school participate in the scout camp and help the people visiting the fair. He particularly told Me, "Raju! You must be the leader of this scout camp." I protested saying, "Sir! They are all older in age than Me. How can I control those boys? I cannot." Then all the boys and teachers unanimously supported the idea of My being the leader of the camp.

The next day, our drill teacher called all the boys and instructed us to wear a khaki shirt and knickers, along with a leather belt and a whistle. He also insisted that we wear boots and carry a stick and a torchlight. How could I procure all these items? I did not have even a paisa in My pocket.

Two of My classmates, by name Ramesh and Suresh, and Myself used to sit on a three-seater bench in our classroom, with the two boys on either side of Me. Ramesh was the son of a wealthy revenue official. He was of the same height as I was. He went to his father and asked him, "Father! I like the khaki dress very much. Please get two pairs of khaki shirt and knickers stitched for me." He did not, however, reveal the fact that he proposed to give the second pair to someone else. The next day he brought one pair in a cloth bag and put it under My desk

along with a small chit. He wrote, “Raju! You are my brother. If You don’t mind, please take this dress. Do not return it to me. If You do so, I will feel very bad and commit suicide.”

My policy is that I do not accept anything from anyone. I strongly felt that friendship based on giving and taking (things) would not last long. I therefore returned the clothes with a note, “If you and I are to continue as good friends, take these clothes back.” Ramesh was literally in tears at My insistence. He took the clothes back, very reluctantly.

Selling books to meet Pusphagiri camp expenses

All the boys volunteering for the scout service were to start for Pushpagiri, the next day. It was a journey of eleven miles by walk, since no buses plied on that route in those days. The boys contributed five rupees each for meeting expenses during the period. But I had no money, not even a paisa. I, therefore, thought of a plan. I used to keep My books always neat and tidy. In those days, very few boys were in a position to purchase new books when they were promoted to a higher class. Hence, they used to purchase second-hand textbooks at a reduced cost.

A poor boy approached Me to buy My textbooks. There used to be a heavy syllabus even for lower classes in subjects like history, geography, civics, etc. The cost of My books totalled eighteen rupees, and My books looked brand new. The boy was not in a position to pay that amount. Hence, I told him “Don’t feel sorry. Just pay Me five rupees and take the books.” The boy felt very happy and immediately paid the amount.

In those days, currency notes were rare. Therefore, he paid the entire amount in small coins packed in a piece of cloth. It was tied in an old cloth, which gave way, unable to bear the weight of the coins. The coins were strewn all over the room, making a big sound. On hearing the sound, the lady of the house came there and asked, “Where did You get all this money? Did You steal from my trunk?” She began admonishing Me. I explained to her, “No, mother! I sold My books to this boy. He gave Me the coins.” The poor boy witnessing this incident told her, “Mother! I gave those coins to Raju toward the cost of His books, which I purchased from Him.” The lady did not believe his words and punished him too. She took away all the coins and I was left with not even a paisa.

Long and lonely walk to Pushpagiri

The boys participating in the scout camp were all rich and well-dressed. They came to My house to take Me along with them. In the circumstances in which I was placed at that time, I was not in a position to go along with them. If I tell them I am suffering from fever, they will bring a thermometer and read My temperature. If I tell them I am suffering from some ailment, they will take Me to a doctor and get Me examined by him. Hence, I told them, “I am suffering from stomach ache. I cannot accompany you today.” The boys felt sorry and reluctantly left for the scout camp without Me.

I started alone the same night in the moonlight. I walked and walked and reached Pushpagiri at daybreak. I was very tired, having walked for eleven miles at a stretch. I was hungry and thirsty. I wanted to wash My hands and mouth and looked around for water. There was no water anywhere near. There was a masonry tank nearby in which water was stored for bathing cows and buffaloes. The water was very dirty. Feeling helpless, I washed My face with that dirty water itself and drank some to quench My thirst.

Then, I noticed there on the tank that someone had left behind a packet of beedies (country cigarettes) and one anna coin. The beedies were, of course, of no use to Me, so I threw them away. I took the one anna coin and

exchanged it for four smaller coins (*bottu*).

As I was returning, I noticed a person sitting on the roadside playing cards spread over a cloth, inviting passersby to bet on the cards, shouting, “Club, spade, diamond, etc.” He invited Me, saying, “Raju! You are a lucky boy. Come, come! Bet some amount on any card of Your choice and I will give You double that amount, if You win.” No doubt it was a sort of gambling, but I was helpless at that time. I started putting one coin on a different card each time. Every time I was winning the bet and getting double the amount I put. Thus, I played the game till I could make sixteen annas. Then, I decided that that was enough and left the game and returned with the money I already earned.

Since I was feeling hungry, I purchased three *dosas* with one *bottu*. In those days, *dosas* were available at the rate of one for a *dammidi* (1/3 of a *bottu*). Thus, I managed with two *bottus* a day eating *dosas*. Though I was attending the service activities normally just like any of the other boys, in My heart of hearts I was aware of the fact that betting (gambling) was a bad practice and I should not have resorted to it. I knew the story of Dharmaraja losing his everything including his wife, brothers, and kingdom in the *Mahabharatha*.

The fury of Seshama Raju

At the end of the scout camp, I was left with one *bottu*. I purchased some sweets, fruits, flowers, kumkum, and some bangles for My sister-in-law. Seshama Raju, the elder brother of this body, had gone for a course of teacher training and had just returned. As soon as I stepped into the house, I noticed that he was drawing lines in a notebook with the help of a wooden ruler. He was very angry that his wife had to fetch water during My absence of three days and, therefore, was very much tired. When I offered her the sweets and fruits brought by Me from Pushpagiri, she threw them on the floor. She refused to accept even kumkum, which is a sign of auspiciousness.

Seshama Raju was furious after this incident. He took the ruler in his hands and beat Me on the forearm with the ruler, which broke into three pieces. My hand was swollen. I did not reveal this incident to anybody. I tied a bandage Myself with a wet cloth to the swollen hand.

The next day, Seshama Raju’s son died. He sent a telegram to father to come immediately. In those days, there was no post office or telegraph office in Puttaparthi. The telegrams were sent to Bukkapatanam and from there a messenger would take it to Puttaparthi. Pedda Venkama Raju, the father of this body, used to go to Bukkapatanam regularly to purchase necessary items in the village fair. He saw the telegram there and immediately rushed to Kamalapuram. He spoke to the members of the family first and then asked why My hand was swollen and bandaged. I tried to explain away the incident as a very insignificant one and told him that I hit a door in the house accidentally and nothing serious had happened. The lady in the neighbouring house intervened and informed Pedda Venkama Raju, “Sir! It is not an isolated incident. Your elder son beats the boy every day. We are very much pained to witness His suffering.”

Young Sai attends school after finishing daily chores at home

Seshama Raju used to be very angry with Me since his wife used to make complaints against Me daily, saying that I did not attend to this work, that work, etc. My daily chores in their house included making hot water for bath, preparing coffee early in the morning for Seshama Raju and his wife, doing odd jobs in the house, and, most important, fetching drinking water two times, both in the morning and evening, from a canal, which was at some

distance from the house. To finish all these jobs and attend to school as per schedule, I had to get up very early in the morning, that is, at about 3 o'clock.

In spite of all this hectic schedule, I was very happy that the people in the village were of good nature and used to love Me very much. They used to make affectionate enquiries about My welfare daily. They were very fond of My singing.

When I went to Pushpagiri to participate in the scout camp, all this busy schedule came to a standstill. Though the neighbours were very considerate toward Me for My hard work and good nature, people in Seshama Raju's family could not put up with My absence and the disruption in the daily routine. They used to shout at Me if on any day I was a little late in bringing water from the canal. Of course, I used to ignore that shouting and carry on My work as usual, patiently.

The return of Sathya to Puttaparthi

The father informed Me that night that he had to go out for answering his nature call. There was no light. There was darkness all around. I held a small kerosene lamp in one hand and a jug of water in the other and accompanied him to an isolated place. I put those things on the ground and tried to return. But he held My hand and with great agony told Me, "Sathya! Did I ever beat You on any day in all these years? You are undergoing so much of suffering at the hands of these people here. Come away from this house. Come! Let us leave for our village early in the morning." I tried to pacify him saying, "It is not proper for Me to leave the house now, especially when they are immersed in grief at the death of their son. Please go first. I will come later." Thereupon, father left for Puttaparthi, very reluctantly.

On reaching home, he informed the mother about the situation prevailing here. She could not contain her agony and shed tears at My plight. She told the father, "Sathya is a very good boy. I never beat Him on any day. I now understand that Seshama Raju is beating Him regularly, listening to others' words. I cannot bear this any more. We can bring up Sathya somehow, even by selling salt if need be. He need not depend on others for His upbringing. Please go and bring back Sathya to our house." The father tried to explain his inability, but she was insistent. He, therefore, gave a telegram, "Mother serious, come down to Puttaparthi." Then, I had no option but to return to Puttaparthi.

There used to be a merchant by name Kotte Subbanna in Kamalapuram those days, who used to sell the famous children's tonic, '*Bala Bhaskara*'. He gave us some amount for our journey to Puttaparthi, since neither I nor the father had any money with us. We reached Anantapuram with great difficulty. There used to be a lawyer's family in Anantapur, who were all good people. The entire family was devoted to Swami. They invited us to partake lunch in their house.

Sathya sings prayer songs in melodious voice

We had our lunch in their house and finally returned to Puttaparthi. As soon as we entered our house, mother held My hand and asked, "There is swelling still. Do You have pain also?" Thereafter, she applied several home-made medicines including a paste of rice bran on the affected part and also gave hot water fomentation. Poor lady! She tried her best to make Me cheerful. Everyone around Me cried on seeing My swollen hand. I told them, "Nothing to worry; everything is healed up."

Since then I decided to stay in Puttaparthi, permanently. Seshama Raju came on a visit during holidays. Father and mother both chided him profusely saying, “You took this boy along with you to get Him educated; but you put Him to great torture. What kind of an education is this? Go away! We don’t give you food even!” Thereafter, Seshama Raju was transferred to Uravakonda. He took Me again with him in order to admit Me in the high school there. There were good teachers there, especially Sri Tammiraju and another by name H.S. Ramana who used to teach us English language. He was so fond of Me that he used to take Me to his house. Not only these two, all our teachers used to be very affectionate toward Me since I was a good singer with a melodious voice.

One day they put Me on the stage during a function and asked Me to sing a song. I sang the following song:

Take any vegetable of your choice.
Only one anna a measure.
Take brinjals; they are very tasty.
The well was deep and
It was difficult to draw water; so too,
the life in Uravakonda was difficult to forget.
(Telugu song)

All the teachers praised the song and congratulated Me for singing that song. Later, they asked Me to sing the daily prayer song in the school assembly. I sang thus:

Moment to moment, Thy clarion call resounds
Hearing Thy magnanimous words,
The Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Muslims, and Christians come to Thy throne
From east and west, making a garland of love.
Hail to Thee, Who unites all humanity!
Hail to Thee, Who controls the destiny of Bharat!
Hail to Thee! Hail to Thee!

That was our prayer song, which I used to sing daily in the school assembly. The teachers of our school used to stand on either side of Me during the assembly and shed tears of joy at My melodious singing. I used to have a very good voice.

The declaration of Sai mission

One day, I announced to the people around Me that it was time for Me to leave school as well as the house and embark on My mission to alleviate the suffering of humanity. I revealed My true nature earlier thus:

Know that I am Sai, verily.
Cast off your worldly relationships.
Give up your efforts to restrain Me.
The worldly attachment can no longer bind Me.
None, however great, can hold Me.
(Telugu poem)

Everyone cried aloud, unable to bear separation from Me. The headmaster of our school, Lakshmipathi, declared a holiday for the day. Everyone including the teachers, students, and public felt very sad at My decision

to leave them.

The next day, one Muslim boy was asked to go up the stage to sing the prayer song. He too was a good singer with a melodious voice. But the moment he went up the stage, he became highly emotional and wept uncontrollably, unable to bear separation from Me. He sat down expressing his inability to sing the prayer. The singing of the daily prayer was discontinued from then on. Instead, the headmaster of the school used to say a few words and conclude.

I gave up studies since then. At the time I discontinued studies, I was only in the third form (eighth class), but people around Me used to wonder at My scholarship, thinking that I might have obtained a degree or so. I used to write poetry and keep Myself aloof from people. I used to maintain silence. Even when I was in the house, I maintained the same profile. I just used to have food and come out and sit on the Chitravati sands. There is a hill by the side of the river where I used to go up and sit silently. Several people including children from the neighbouring villages and also from Uravakonda used to visit this “Sai Baba”. Subbamma used to cook and serve food for them. She used to feel very happy at her service, thinking that she was serving Swami’s classmates. Since then, the number of people visiting Swami has increased by leaps and bounds.

Once the Maharaja of Mysore, Jayachamaraja Wodayar, came in his car. The motorable road was only up to Penukonda. He, therefore, traveled in a bullock cart from Penukonda to Karnatanagepalli and from there to Puttaparthi by walk. He pleaded with Me, “Swami! Why are You putting Yourself to trouble, residing in Puttaparthi? Please come to Mysore. I will arrange to build a big mansion for You.”

I told him, “A tree must grow in the same place where it was born. If it is plucked out and transplanted elsewhere, it will not grow. This ‘tree’ must also grow in the same place where it was born.” The Maharaja was a great devotee. He used to visit the Chamundeswari temple daily in the morning and evening and sing a song specially composed in praise of Goddess Chamundeswari.

Development of the road to Puttaparthi

The Maharaja of Mysore visited Puttaparthi again on another occasion. By that time, a motorable road was laid from Penukonda to Bukkapatanam. He telephoned the governor of Andhra Pradesh saying, “Why don’t you lay a good road to reach Puttaparthi? How much money is being wasted on all and sundry schemes! Please arrange to lay a good road to Puttaparthi immediately.” The governor instructed the government accordingly and after a protracted correspondence, a chief engineer by name Tiruvannai Iyengar was finally sent to undertake a survey of the project. It was planned to lay a bypass road direct to the temple (*mandir*), without touching the Chitravati Road. The Maharaja of Mysore offered to bear the entire expenditure for the project.

Before starting the work, the Chief Engineer surveyed the area travelling in a bullock cart. He found that the river encircled the village on three sides and only the fourth side was available for laying a road. He stayed for three to four days here and reached the temple (*mandir*) in that route by a bullock cart. He confirmed that route and passed orders finally to lay a ‘black top’ road in that route, drilling a big hole in a hill blocking the way. At last, a direct road to reach the temple in Puttaparthi was ready, without touching the Chitravati River.

Once, the road was made ready, a number of people including Rajas and Maharajas with their families started visiting Puttaparthi. Notable among them were the Rajas of Bobbili and Venkatagiri. They used to bring tents and stay in those tents. Gradually, the number of people visiting Puttaparthi increased by leaps and bounds. The

people in the villages around Puttaparthi used to argue with them saying, “Shouldn’t we have an opportunity to have Swami’s sight, touch, and conversation (*darshan*, *sparshan*, and *sambhashan*)? Is He meant only for the Rajas, Maharajas?” I used to pacify them saying that all are My devotees and I don’t make any distinction between rich and poor. Later, the Rajas of Bobbili, Trivandrum, and the younger brother of Trivandrum Raja, who was a film director, made a lot of conveniences here like building houses for the visiting devotees.

The former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, the late Dr. Bezawada Gopala Reddy, built a hospital in Puttaparthi. In spite of his busy schedule as the Chief Minister, he used to make regular visits to Puttaparthi. He continued the same till his last breath. He used to attend every function held in Prasanthi Nilayam. In due course, millions of devotees from all over India and all parts of the world started coming to Prasanthi Nilayam.

Respect your mother; she is very important

In fact, I have not come down to deliver discourses on any particular form of God. Divinity is only one by whatever name and form people refer to Him. The goal is one and love is one. The names and forms may be different. Some may refer to Divinity as *Atma*; others as *Aum*. Yet, both are same. The names Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana, etc. may be different, but God is only one. You contemplate on any name, but God is only one. The *Upanishads* exhort, “Revere your mother, father, preceptor, and guest as God.” First and foremost, respect your mother. She is very important!

In this sacred land of Bharat (India)
Forbearance is the real beauty
In this country the nectarine feeling is
The feeling of Love toward one’s mother
(Telugu poem)

Even if the mother and son go to a court in a property dispute, the mother would tell the lawyer, “He is my son,” and the son would say, “She is my mother.” Hence the relationship between a person and their parents is lasting. Even after the physical body ceases to exist the motherly relationship exists. A mother is always a mother. Hence, there can be no greater, respectable, and sweet feeling than motherhood. Many people write letters to Me addressing Me as “Mother Sai”. They refer to Me as their revered mother. I also address all of you as “children”.

Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-09-27

All ills are traceable to faulty living. And what is that traceable faulty living? It is the ignorance of one’s real Nature, ignorance so deep-rooted that it affects thoughts, words, and deeds. The drug that can cure it is patented under different names: Wisdom (*jnana*), *karma*, contemplation (*upasana*), and devotion (*bhakthi*). They are all the same in potency and curative power. The difference lies only in the method of administration either as a mixture or as a tablet or as an injection.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16. Love Is The Royal Road To Reach God

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat (India).

The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling of love towards one's mother.

(Telugu poem)

Whatever you may have already learnt, there is still so much to be learnt in the sacred land of Bharat (India). The land of Bharat is pious, divine, glorious, and ever new. Anyone born in this holy land is a blessed one.

People are responsible for all their sufferings

What is the purpose of human birth? It is to experience the love of God. Only those who are recipients of God's love can bring about transformation in the world. Society today is full of unrest and suffering. Wherever you look, there is nothing except sorrow. Many natural calamities like floods are causing great devastation. This is not something caused by God. Humanity itself is the cause of all this suffering. God always teaches the path of righteousness and not that of unrighteousness, injustice, and impropriety. The *Vedas* declare: "Speak truth, practise righteousness (*Sathyam vada, dharmam chara*)."

God is one, but, people call Him by different names like Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana. It is only due to delusion that people observe differences in these names. You may call God by the name of Allah or Jesus, it is all the same. In fact, there is only oneness in this world. "One *Atma* dwells in all beings (*Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma*)." "Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti*)." You yourself are the cause of all your delusion. You think that you are in the grip of sorrow, but this sorrow is of your own making; it is not given by God. Everything is the creation of your own thoughts; God is not responsible for it. Do not think that God is responsible for any of your sufferings. God gives only happiness.

God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the great aphorism "You are That", one without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions, and the three attributes of purity, passion, and inertia (God is *nityanandam, parama sukhadam, kevalam jnanamurtim, dwandwateetam, gagana sadrisham, thathwamasyadi lakshyam, ekam, nityam, vimalam, achalam, sarvadhee sakshibhutam, bhavateetam, and trigunarahitam*).

If you enquire into the teachings of *Vedanta*, you will realise that God has nothing to do with your sufferings and difficulties. God always helps. Your thoughts are responsible for your happiness and sorrow. It is a great mistake to think that someone else is the cause of your difficulties and sufferings.

You should love all and serve all. Love is present not only in human beings, but also in birds and animals. All can experience love including birds, animals, and insects. Whomsoever you see, there is God in them in the form of *Atma*. If you hate someone, it amounts to hating God. Therefore, do not hate anyone. Do not be angry with anyone. If you hate someone, you are, in fact, hating yourself. Similarly, if you abuse someone, you are abusing yourself.

Every human being is a mirror. You see yourself in the mirror. There may be many mirrors, but, you see your own reflection in all of them. Everything is reaction, reflection, and resound. Do not think that someone else has

abused you. It is only you who abuse yourself, but, today, people do not realise this truth. Develop the faith that God is present in the form of *Atma* in whomsoever you see. Therefore, it is not good to hate or ridicule anyone.

Love all. Love is the royal road to reach God. No other path except the path of love can take you to God. All spiritual aspirants who attained God could reach Him only through love.

Follow the path of love

Sakkubai always chanted ‘Ranga, Ranga, Ranga,’ but others made fun of her. Her mother-in-law and her husband subjected her to great ordeals. Ultimately, Lord Panduranga came to her help, and she was able to reach Pandharpur. Thus, she became a shining example of devotion and dedication for the entire world. That is why so many people came to see her. She never thought that Panduranga was separate from her. She contemplated on Panduranga in all the three states, viz. waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

But modern people do not know who God is and where He is. In fact, God is present everywhere, wherever you see. Many people who earlier did not believe in God and even showed disrespect to the idols of gods have become devotees of Swami. Unknowingly people may commit mistakes, but once they realise their mistake, they will repent. Repentance is true atonement. It is God who pervades the entire world. Out of their ignorance, people may say many things about God. But once they realise the truth, they will know that God is one.

We see many poisonous creatures like snakes and scorpions. God has given them power only for their protection. When a scorpion bites, it has no intention to harm you. It bites you only out of its fear that you might harm it. Even a tiger in the forest will not harm you if you do not provoke it. It will pounce upon you only when you provoke it. In this manner, for everything there is reaction, reflection, and resound. Whatever you do, you are bound to reap its consequences. If you do something bad, you will receive only bad results. Do not think that God has given this bad result to you. On the other hand, if you do something good, you will have only good results. Man’s thoughts are responsible for his happiness and suffering. Therefore, have only good thoughts.

A human being should have human qualities. But, unfortunately, human values are not to be seen in people today. People behave like animals. Therefore, fault lies in people and not in anybody else. One should accept one’s own mistakes instead of finding fault in others. Today, there are few who do good. On the other hand, we find everywhere people indulging in bad deeds. Recently, there were severe floods in some parts of the country. Many people went to help the flood victims. But there were others who gave no help and at the same time criticised those who helped the people affected by floods. Many people criticised even devotees like Radha and Sakkubai, who always chanted the name of God. Ultimately, Krishna taught them a lesson. Therefore, never criticise anyone. If some people develop good thoughts, follow them and feel happy about it.

God is the ocean of bliss, but sometimes you unjustly criticise Him because of your own evil qualities. Whatever good or bad you get, it comes from you only and not from God. Therefore, try to correct yourself. First of all, you have to annihilate your ego. That means cutting of your little ‘I’, which makes the sacred symbol cross (†) worshipped by the Christians. You can realise your Self (*Aham*) only when you root out your ego. When you know yourself, you will know everything. People today try to know everything except the principle of *Atma*. One is able to fly in the sky and keep an account of the number of stars, but one is unable to do the ‘homework’ given by God to know oneself. One is following the evil path because one does not try to know one’s true Self.

Know thyself

God's love is immanent in every being. You prepare a number of sweets like Mysore Pak, gulab jamoon, burfi, palkova, jilebi, etc. In all these, sugar is the same. Similarly, God permeates all beings. "Whomsoever you salute, it reaches God (*Sarva jiva namaskaram Kesavam pratigachhati*)." "Whomsoever you criticise, it reaches God (*Sarva jiva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigachhati*)." Everything happens by the will of God. One who understands this truth is a real human being.

What must you know today? You should know your mistakes and rectify them. That is enough. Help Ever, Hurt Never. You become a true human being when you know this truth. What does the term 'human being' mean? A human being is one with morality and character. When people adhere to the path of morality, they will have no suffering. It is only to teach such lessons to humans that God incarnates on earth.

One should know the unity in diversity. You may describe the glory of any name of God, but God is one. He is present in everyone as the *Atma*, which has no name and no form. The same *Atma* is present in all living beings. You see so many lights here. They appear to be different from each other but the electric current in all of them is the same. When you turn off the main switch, everything will become dark. Various names and forms such as Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana are like the bulbs. The same divinity is present in all these names and forms.

First of all, understand the nature of your mind. You have to keep your mind under your control. Then everything will become good for you. What do the *vedic* mantras signify? They signify the oneness of the *Atma*. There is no greater spiritual practice than to realise the oneness of the *Atma*. This is the goal of all the spiritual practices like chanting, penance, and sacrifice. Therefore, develop faith in unity and not diversity. When you develop faith in unity, you will experience peace and happiness.

Know your real name

When you ask God, "Who are You?", He will reply, "I am *Atma*." He will not say, "I am Rama, I am Krishna, I am Venkateswara, I am Sai Baba." God is only one. This is the eternal truth. He is the same in all the three periods of time — past, present, and future. The same divinity is present in the individual, society, creation, and Creator. Therefore, do not put your faith in diversity.

When you are in difficulty, you chant the name of Venkateswara, Rama, or Krishna, but you do not remember them when you have no difficulties. However, right from your birth, you chant the mantra, "*Soham* (I am God)" with each inhalation and exhalation. Ultimately, you should realise, "I am God."

Your parents may have given you a certain name. If I ask, "Who are you?", someone will say, "I am Ramaiah", and someone else will say, "I am Krishnaiah." These names are given to you by your parents and not by God. *Soham, Soham, Soham* (I am God, I am God, I am God.) This is the name given to you by God. This is the name given to everyone, whichever country or religion or community one may belong to. Those who realise this divine principle and act accordingly are truly blessed. You may attend any number of meetings and listen to a number of discourses, but what you have to ultimately know is only one thing and that is Self (*Aham*).

Many people try to describe the glory of Swami in many ways. But, it is all their delusion; they do not know My Reality. What is My name? It is not Sathya Sai Baba, though the world knows Me by this name. People should get rid of this delusion to know My Reality. Today, everybody is trying to realise the truth except the politicians. If only they would realise the truth, the entire nation would prosper. Politics is the cause of all the conflicts that

we see today, everywhere. Politics has affected not only the general public but also the police, the army, and the entire administration. How many people are getting killed because of politics! Therefore, do not put your faith in politics and do not follow politics. Whosoever tells you something good, accept and follow. May all the beings of all the worlds be happy (*Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu*)! This is My message.

All living beings should be happy. Wherefrom can you derive happiness? You can derive it only from the *Atma*. People want peace. But where is peace? Outside, you find only pieces. Peace is present only in love. If you develop love, you will have everything.

Very happy!

Sri Sathya Sai Panduranga Kshetra, Hadshi, Pune, 2009-10-29

The Lord does not test a person just for fun; He does not pile calamity on calamity because He enjoys it. Examinations are held, to measure achievement and to award marks and honours. You must ask to be examined, so that your progress may be recorded.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Spiritual practice requires regular habits and moderation in food, sleep, and exercise. Fasting weakens the intellect and reduces the strength of discrimination. The body, the mind, and the spirit – all three must be equally looked after. Unless you have “muscles of iron and nerves of steel,” you cannot contain in your head the tremendously transforming idea of nondualism (*adwaita*), of your being the Universal itself, the Eternal Reality itself!

Lesser strength can only think in terms of servitude or subsidiary roles. To see the Truth as Truth, and the untruth as untruth, clarity of vision and courage of vision are both needed.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

17. Be Good, Do Good, And See Good

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace, and love, the value of all your education is zero;

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace, and love, the benefit of all your acts of charity and kindness is zero;

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace, and love, the utility of all your positions of power is zero; and

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace, and love the result of all your good deeds is zero.

Truth, righteousness, peace, and love are verily the pillars of the mansion of *Sanathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion).

What else is to be conveyed to this assembly of noble souls?

(Telugu poem)

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and a mean-minded person will not give up his evil qualities.

What is the use of acquiring education that cannot lead you to immortality?

Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.

(Telugu poem)

PEOPLE pursue education and obtain high degrees in different disciplines. But in their day-to-day life, their behaviour is totally at variance with the principles they learnt. In spite of their high academic qualifications, they woefully lack the knowledge about the essence of education. What they acquire is only worldly, evanescent, and unreal education.

There are millions of students and highly educated people in the world. They obtain all sorts of degrees starting from A to Z. But of what use are their degrees? What is their contribution for the welfare of the world? Do they help the poor and the forlorn at least to a small extent? They earn crores of rupees, but they don't give even a penny in charity. They are too selfish. They do not at all control their desires. One who controls their desires can work wonders in the world.

People are not at all satisfied with their earnings. They accumulate huge amount of wealth and still crave to earn more. The *Vedas* declare, "Immortality is attained not through action, progeny, or wealth but only by sacrifice (*Na karmana na prajaya dhanena tyagenaike namruThathwa manashu*).” People do not at all strive to attain immortality. Wherever you see and whomever you come across, you find selfishness, selfishness, and selfishness alone. Of what use is the education of such selfish people?

Education, educate, and their benefits

No doubt, education has to be pursued and some activities have to be undertaken in the world for leading a comfortable life. One has to take care of the worldly needs for oneself and one's family, like food, clothing, and shelter. But, to what extent? These are all activities that one undertakes for the sake of oneself and one's family, not for others. Modern education is breeding selfishness. It is for acquiring goods and services for one's own comfort. These are worldly pleasures. The qualities of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and envy (*kama, krodha,*

lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya) drive man's efforts in pursuit of worldly pleasures. No doubt, worldly education helps to provide comfort and joy in the objective world, but it does not at all contribute to inner bliss. It is only the five human values of truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence that confer inner bliss.

A person who cultivates these five human values will always be happy. The five senses of action provide external pleasure; but the five human values confer inner bliss.

Education helps to obtain various conveniences for external pleasure, whereas inner bliss can be experienced only by educare. There is a lot of difference between education and educare. Education involves reading of books written by someone and listening to the lectures delivered by someone. Educare, however, has nothing to do with books. It has no form at all! It is Truth that has no form.

The *Upanishads* ordain, "Speak truth, practise righteousness (*Sathyam vada, dharmam chara*)." Truth has to be spoken and righteousness has to be practised, but, nowadays, people lecture about these values but do not follow. This is not correct.

Love is one quality that is common to all human beings, nay, animals, birds, beasts, and even insects. Every living being loves its progeny, and love is divine. Whoever cultivates love, God manifests in them. It is only the divine quality of love that saves us from sorrows, difficulties, and calamities. Unfortunately, people do not cultivate love and instead go after transient things. "Love is God, live in love." Worldly possessions give momentary pleasure, but love confers eternal bliss. Real love manifests from the depth of one's own heart. One has to attain such divine love. Wherever you go, whatever activity you may undertake, let your heart be filled with love. Such people, wherever they are, whether in the town or in the forest or in the sky or in a deep sea, will surely be protected. Divine love neither grows nor diminishes. It always remains the same.

God does not make any distinction between people

"God is one without a second (*Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma*)." To attribute various names to God such as Rama, Krishna, Govinda, etc. is only your imagination. That which has neither birth nor death is one and only one. It has no beginning and no end. That is Brahma. Hence, whenever someone asks "Who are you? What is your name?", you have to reply "I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*)." There is nothing real and eternal except Brahman. Hence, do not waste his time in pursuit of transient things. What is the use of acquiring such objects? No doubt worldly education is necessary. However, always remind yourself that it is all temporary.

Brahman is One without a second. Zero gains value only when it is placed after the number. Likewise, the zero of worldly life will have value only if it is associated with the One that is Brahma. We are going after the impermanent and transitory things, forgetting the One. We think that the qualities of anger, envy, jealousy, pride, etc., are God-given, but it is not true. God does not make any distinction between people by granting positive attributes to some and negative qualities to others. All these differences are man-made. God has nothing to do with them. When our wish is fulfilled, we praise God. On the other hand, if something goes wrong, we attribute our failure to God and blame Him. God is only a witness to everything that goes on in the world, good or bad. He neither gives nor receives anything. All our sorrows and difficulties are of our own making.

Mind alone is responsible for joy and sorrow

The thoughts that flow from our mind are expressed through speech. Hence, mind is the source for our

speech. And, this mind has its origin in our breath (inhaling and exhaling). Therefore, the inhaling and exhaling (*Soham*) is Brahman verily and the mind represents Vishnu. It is said, “The world is a projection of the mind (*Manomoolam idam jagat*).” Our speech represents Siva. Hence, we need not go in search of the Trinity Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara somewhere in a distant place. God is in us, with us, above, below, and around us. In fact, you are God.

Your mind alone is responsible for your joy or sorrow. You think these are thrust on you by someone from outside. No, all these experiences flow from you only. You are responsible for everything. If you realise that these experiences emanate from your own mind and think that you are God, you will become God. On the other hand, if you identify yourself with the world and think “I am so and so,” you will remain separate from God.

One should not cultivate excessive desires “Less luggage, more comfort makes travel a pleasure.” Hence, reduce the luggage of your desires. It is natural that people have some desires, but one has to enquire which desires are good for one and which cause harm. Unfortunately, this sense of discrimination is lost in present times. All these desires, which are the result of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and envy, have their origin in the mind.

When you marry a girl, you develop love for her in the beginning. After some time, if for any reason she goes against your wishes, you develop hatred for her. Your anger and hatred will ultimately land you in difficulties. If you can reduce your desires and expectations, you will be able to lead a happy married life. Students too behave in the same way. As one goes on acquiring degrees, one loses his peace because of limitless desires.

Whatever may be one’s expectations in pursuing higher education, one has to put into practice what one has learnt in the college or university. Merely acquiring a number of degrees without putting into practice what one has learnt through education is a waste. It does not help him in any way. Education without practising the principles of education leads to loss and worry. Hence, practice is of utmost importance. For example, you are enacting a drama. Is it not true that you do a number of rehearsals before finally performing on the stage? It is the practice that makes you perfect. Hence, practice is needed in all your endeavours — reading, writing, medicine, surgery, etc.

The *Gita* says:

Better indeed is knowledge than practice.
Better than knowledge is meditation on God.
But better than meditation is renunciation of the desire for the fruits of actions.
For, there follows peace immediately.

*Sreyohi Jnanamabhyasat,
Jnanaddhyanam vishishyate,
Dhyanat karmaphala tyaga,
Tyagat Santiranantaram.*
(Sanskrit verse)

Where is peace? Peace is very much in us only. It is futile to search for peace somewhere in the outer world. If one wants to attain peace, one has to search for it in oneself.

Mother is the foundation for the mansion of your life

You have acquired all this knowledge from text books and your teachers. This is bookish knowledge. If you put it into practice, it becomes practical knowledge, which will remain with you permanently.

The rain water is pure. When you place a vessel while it is raining, you can collect pure water. It is like distilled water. By drinking that water, you will not be troubled by any ailment. When the same water is mixed up with other substances, it gets polluted. In the same manner, the mind, which is always pure, is polluted by desires. Hence, do not pollute your mind by cultivating desires. Keep the mind always pure. Whenever a desire arises in your mind brush it aside to keep your mind free from pollution. Apart from reading your text books and acquiring knowledge, keep your mind always pure and free from pollution. This is what you have to learn today.

You may or may not worship God, but you must respect your mother and father, who are responsible for your birth. Respect your mother. Keep her always happy. No one can estimate or describe a mother's love. No one can pollute it. If only you are able to win the love of your mother, it amounts to acquiring all degrees. Our scriptures enjoin on us to respect mother, father, teacher, and God in that order.

First and foremost is the mother who gave you birth. The father brings you up and puts you on the road to development. The mother is the foundation for the mansion of your life; father represents the wall and the guru (teacher) is the roof. And, finally, God is your life itself. Hence, those who yearn for God must love their mother first. If only you keep her happy, all other things of happiness will be added unto you.

Nowadays, people keep their aged parents in the old age homes. This is not correct. The *Upanishads* exhort one: "Revere your mother, father, and teacher as God (*Matrudevo bhava, pitrudevo bhava, acharyadevo bhava*)."
One who forsakes his mother is not a human being at all! It is your mother who brought you up to this stage. Hence, love your mother and serve her when she falls sick. You must develop the feeling that whatever your mother says is for your good only. Do not get angry when she chides you. Even her anger is for your good only.

Krishna's compassion for Kuchela

Once Kuchela, a poor *Brahmin*, went to meet his childhood friend Krishna. He was afraid that the guards standing at the gate of Krishna's palace might not let him in. But God is so compassionate that He will not forsake any individual. Lord Krishna Himself came to him and asked, "Dear friend Kuchela, what do you want?" Kuchela replied, "Swami, I do not want anything. I will be happy if I have Your love and grace. Oh Lord! That is enough".

When Kuchela returned to his place after taking leave of Krishna, he could not recognise his house. In place of his hut, now stood a palatial building. His wife and children were moving about in gorgeous clothes, wearing glittering ornaments. This is the gift of love from God. Hence, if only we are able to win God's love, everything else will be added unto us. Therefore develop firm faith in God.

You will not come up in life unless you get rid of your bad qualities. Even if you have accumulated wealth and attained positions of power, they will not last long. It is not wealth but noble qualities that are important for a human being. Hence, develop human qualities. You call yourself a human being. Unless there are values in you, how can you be called a human being? It is only when you develop noble qualities that you are entitled to be called a human. God will protect a person with human values by constantly guarding and guiding him. Hence, develop human values; do not crave for money. We often come across people changing jobs with a hope to get high salaries. Do not develop this craze for money. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows.

Develop morality and love for God. When you develop love for God, the demonic qualities in you will be

removed. When people get rid of the demonic qualities, society itself will change into a better society. You will earn a good name. People will praise you, “So and so is a good person. We must have people like that person.”

If you wish to earn such a good name, be fully involved in prayer to God. The prayer must constantly ring in your heart. Love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society, these are the qualities that you have to develop. Then only you will be entitled to be called a good person. Be good, do good, and see good. Never entertain bad thoughts. It is quite common to get bad thoughts in your age, but do not give them a place in your heart. Just brush them aside.

Our boys are always good boys

You may be a boy now, but you will grow into an old man after some years. Child, boy, man, grandfather — these are all the different stages in one’s life. They all belong to the same person. The names and the body change, but the individual is one. Similarly, God is one in whichever name and form He is worshipped. The names and forms ascribed to God may differ but God is one, as per the saying, “*Ekam Sat viprah bahudha vadanti.*” Develop total faith in this maxim. Wherever you are and whatever activity you are engaged in, constantly contemplate on God. Then only will your life be fruitful. May you all develop good qualities, good behaviour, good thoughts and good feelings. Be happy. Our boys are always good boys.

Do not give scope for unnecessary contacts

Today, wherever you look, you find people spending time watching cinemas and TV shows and hearing cinema music from tape recorders. In addition, almost everyone irrespective of sex and status in society is using cell phones. People are wasting a lot of time talking to someone on cell phones. They even talk to strangers. Because of the proliferation of the entertainment media and the indiscriminate use of cell phones, human beings have lost their value. Very often, due to the misuse of cell phones, people, especially the younger generation, land themselves in serious trouble. Most often, cell phones are put to misuse than proper use.

I would advise you, particularly the boys and girls, not to give your cell phone number to anyone. You will face great danger by doing so. Try to avoid using cell phones. Even if you buy one, don’t give your number to others indiscriminately. There are some people who continuously talk on cell phones for hours together. This is totally wrong. By doing so, you will be committing sin. Once you give your cell number to others, they will call you back. You will feel happy in the beginning. Later, they will be talking to you frequently. Unnecessary contacts will develop by doing so. Finally, they mislead you and spoil your life. In the beginning, they introduce themselves to you saying, “I am your friend.” The friendship gradually leads to establishing relationship. You will be deceived and you will land in deep trouble in the end. Hence, do not give scope for such unnecessary contacts.

Earn good name for yourselves, your parents, and the institution

Always spend your time in the contemplation of the divine name or reading good books.

Today is convocation day. Some of you might be entering into the outside world, having acquired degrees. Let your contact with the outside world be good. It is possible that there may be significant changes in the lives of most of the students from today. I wish you all should earn good name for yourselves, your parents, and the institution in which you studied. Samuel Sandweiss also told you the same thing in his convocation address. He talked about his divine experiences. The advice of these elders must be imprinted in your hearts. They always speak

good words. I am very happy. It is not possible for Me to talk to you all, individually. Hence, I gave a discourse that is applicable to all. Our students are all good when compared to those in the other institutions. Let that good name be upheld. I am very happy.

(Bhagawan wanted all the students to sing a song. The students sang in chorus the song: “*Hum ko tum se pyar kitna*”.)

Your song has given Me immense happiness.

Convocation Day, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-11-22

Death stalks your footsteps like a tiger in the bush. So without further waste of time, endeavour to give up sloth and anger; be tranquil amidst the storms; mix in tranquil company.

Let the flagrant smoke of divine thoughts, full of love to all, rise around you; why try to scatter fragrance from scent-sticks available in the market?

The flame of experiential knowledge of Supreme Reality (*jnana*) can reduce to cinders the impulses inherited through many births and many experiences. In the heat of that crucible, dross is burnt and precious metal is isolated.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18. Install God In The Altar of Your Sacred Heart

The sun appears serene and peaceful.
The days have become shorter,
And the cool wind is blowing.
(Telugu poem)

THIS festive season brings all prosperity to the people filling the granaries of the farmers with the newly harvested grains in plenty. Not only farmers, all people in general feel happy and enjoy this season. People attribute their happiness and prosperity to God. Where is God? God is everywhere. He is omnipresent — in you, above you, below you, and around you. He has no particular name or form. Neither has He birth or death. Only when there is birth will be death too! Hence, God has no birth, no death! He is present in every living being as the Embodiment of Divine *Atma* (*Atmaswarupa*). Man today is unable to realise that *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*).

Bharat (India) is a sacred land. It has given birth to many noble souls and chaste women.

This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women, like
Savithri, who brought her dead husband back to life;
Chandramati, who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth;
Sita, who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed; and
Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity.
This land of piety and nobility attained plenty and prosperity and
Became the teacher of all the nations of the world because of such women of chastity.
(Telugu poem)

God expects only a pure and sacred heart from devotees

Sri Rama released Sita from the captivity of the demon Ravana, who confined her in Lanka for ten months. Rama took her into His fold after putting her to the test of fire. The fire god presented her before Rama, saying, “Oh! Rama! Sita is a great woman of chastity. She is so much devoted to her husband that she did not look at the face of even one male in all these ten months.” Sita came out of the fire unscathed, and the fire god himself attested to her chastity. One can imagine how great and noble she was!

Can there be a parallel to such women in any country in the world? The country of Bharat is situated in the middle of the seven seas. Every man and woman in this country has to conduct themselves as a noble male (*purushottama*) and chaste woman (*pativrata*) respectively. No wonder several *Avatars* (incarnations) took birth in this sacred land. Great men and women and noble souls may be born in any country. But *Avatars* took birth only in the country of Bharat.

Today, people aspire for everything in the world except for God. People leave even their motherland in quest of wealth and money. This is not a positive development, especially for the *Bharatiyas* (Indians), for they are expected to rise above the desire for money. God always gives; He never takes. God desires only love from us, nothing else. The country of Bharat is so noble and sacred, but the people of this country are leaving, seeking greener pastures elsewhere. However, those with a pure and unblemished heart are sticking on to their native

country. What God expects from His devotee is only a pure and sacred heart.

The importance of human values

People ascribe different names and forms to God. In fact, God is only one. He is beyond all names and forms. He takes on a name and form according to the wishes and aspirations of a particular devotee. When you contemplate on the form of Jesus and wish to see Him in that form, He manifests before you as Jesus. “With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (*Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvatokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Srutimalloke Sarvamavrutya Tishtati*).” God is present in every human being, nay in every living being.

God is in the form of a human being (*Daivam manusha rupena*). That is why the human values are considered to be so sacred and important. It is not enough to simply have a human body. In keeping with the human form, one should also cultivate the human values of truth (*sathya*), righteousness (*dharma*), peace (*santhi*), love (*prema*), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*). Do not tell a lie under any circumstances. If you adhere to truth, righteousness will follow. Where truth and righteousness go together, there peace will be. Where there is peace, there will be love too. There can be no place for violence when there is love. Unfortunately, today there is violence everywhere due to the absence of love among people. Whomsoever you come across these days, there is unrest and unrest.

The words you speak must always be sweet and soft

People chant God’s Name and do penance (*tapa*) to obtain peace, but there is no peace anywhere. Wherever you see, only pieces, pieces, and pieces! One has to develop love in order to get peace. First and foremost, one has to develop love. “Love is God, God is Love.” “Truth is God, God is Truth.” Truth and love are the embodiments of Divinity, verily. Though God is one, people ascribe different names like Rama, Krishna, Govinda, and Narayana to God. The different names and forms ascribed to God are the outcome of the imagination of poets and painters. For example, Ravi Varma portrayed God in different forms based upon his imagination. But God cannot be limited to a particular name and form. All names and forms are His, and He transcends them too! God is immanent in all living species including the human beings. The entire creation is the manifestation of Divinity.

God has no desires and aspirations. He is selfless. Everything in the outside world is the reaction, reflection, and resound of your inner being. This is a cloth (showing a handkerchief). Strictly speaking, this is not a cloth; it is a bundle of threads. The threads woven together assumed the form of a cloth. Similarly, the thoughts and desires of a human being make their mind. They, in turn express themselves in the form of speech. The words lead to actions through the sense organs. In the process, one entertains certain bad thoughts and feelings.

Why did God give eyes to a human being? Only to see good. Similarly, the ears are meant to hear good things and the tongue to speak good words. The words you speak must always be sweet and soft and never harsh. Thus, one has to consider every limb and organ in the body given by God as sacred and make proper use of it. Such a sacred body has to be dedicated to God and none else. God gives you all that is necessary for your life’s journey. Therefore, install God in the altar of your pure and sacred heart.

The significance of the cross

God is omnipresent. The sky is God and the earth is God. All the human beings are embodiments of Divin-

ity. God is immanent in every human being in the form of breath (*Soham*). People have to realise this truth. Only when you realise the true nature of God can you be considered to have acquired spiritual wisdom (*jnana*). *Jnana* is not mere bookish knowledge. Several educated people have acquired vast knowledge from textbooks. But who is a realised soul in the real sense? Only the person who has realised, “I am not the body, I am not the mind; I am God verily”, is a realised soul.

When you say, “this is my body,” who are you? To whom are you referring? The expression ‘my body’ connotes that you are separate from the body. When you say, “This is my mind,” the mind is separate from you. Similarly, when you say, “This is my intellect (*buddhi*), it means the intellect is separate from you. In all these expressions, what is that ‘my’? That ‘my’ is ‘I’. This ‘I’ is what was referred to by Jesus Christ as the ego, which has to be cut. That is the real significance of the cross. You cut the ego.

The true nature of a human being

Man is bound by two things: ‘I’ and ‘mine’. That is the human bondage. If you can get released from these two bonds, what remains is ‘you’ only. Now you are with the body. Supposing you have to leave the body tomorrow. At that time, who are you and where are you? You do not know! The body is like a dress; a robe. Once you get rid of attachment to this dress, your true nature will be apparent.

The same truth has been explained in the saying “The one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are.” That is the true nature of a human being. When someone asks who you are, you will answer, “I am so and so.” You will give your name. In fact, that name is given to you by your parents and not by God at the time of your birth. Suppose you ask God, “Who are you?” He will reply, I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*). Every individual should remind themselves “I am Brahman, I have no other name.”

If someone asks, “What is your name?”, you should reply, “My name is Brahman.” If you are constantly aware of your true nature thus, that is the *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*). You need not contemplate on anything else. Whenever you come across a friend or any acquaintance, you greet him with a *namaskar*. This implies that you are in fact paying obeisance to the Divinity immanent in the individual. Hence, do not entertain the feeling of ‘I’, ‘I’, ‘I’.

All these physical bodies are like the roles played in a drama. They change. The world itself is a cosmic drama. You must constantly remind yourself that you are playing your role in the cosmic drama and your real nature is that you are an Embodiment of Divine Self (*Atmaswarupa*). Have you any doubts in this regard? If you are entertaining any doubts, you will be confused.

Live in the present, that is the reality

Unfortunately, today people do not know about their own true nature. How then can they know about God? Hence, first and foremost know thyself! Enquire into yourself, “Who am I? Who am I?” You will realise, “I am I, I am *Atma*”, “I am I, I am *Atma*”, “I am I, I am *Atma*.” If you forget this divine Self, what remains is ‘deep wine’! Hence, you should become divine.

Rama, Krishna, Govinda, etc. are only references to Divinity in the common parlance. An individual is referred to by several names, based upon the relationships at the physical level. One person refers to another saying, “He is my son-in-law.” Someone else says, “He is my son.” A third person says, “He is my brother.” Thus, one

gets into bondage as the relationships increase. From where did this bondage emerge? It is all of your own making. You marry a girl and refer to her, “She is my wife.” But, before marriage who was she? You do not know. After some years when she departs finally, you do not know anything about her. Thus, you do not know who she was before marriage or where she had gone after her departure. The wife-husband relationship is only in between.

Hence, do not worry about the past. Past is past, and future is uncertain. You do not know, you have no knowledge of either the past or the future; you are aware of only the present. Hence, live in the present. That is the only reality.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the *bhajan*, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukh Santi Nahin ...*.)

Christmas, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2009-12-25

In this sacred land, people have forgotten the real source of sacredness, of holy life, of living in peace with oneself and others. Now, the time has come to remind them of it. With jewel in the neck, the wearer has been searching for it everywhere else. A person has to hold the mirror to the face. The *vedic* clarion call will soon ring in ears of humanity. The *Avatar* has come to remind man and to redirect him along the True path.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Glossary

Meanings of Sanskrit words used in discussing religious and philosophical topics, more particularly used in the discourses by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, reproduced in this volume, are given in this glossary. While the English equivalents for the Sanskrit words have been given in the text with reference to the context, this glossary attempts to provide comprehensive meanings and detailed explanations of the more important Sanskrit words, for the benefit of lay readers who are interested in Hindu religion and philosophy.

aham. The knower, the “I”.

ahamkara. Ego, self-love, selfish individuality.

ahimsa. Nonviolence.

ananda. Divine bliss. The Self is unalloyed, eternal bliss. Pleasures are but its faint and impermanent shadows.

anithya. Impermanent, transient. *Aham Brahmasmi.* “I am Brahman”. This is one of the great *Vedic* aphorisms (*mahavakyas*).

Arjuna. Krishna’s disciple, in the *Bhagavad Gita*; third of five Pandava brothers. See *Mahabharatha*.

asanthi. Lack of peace; agitated mind; restlessness. Opposite of *santhi*.

Aswathama. Son of Drona.

Atma. Self; Soul. Self, with limitations, is the individual soul. Self, with no limitations, is Brahman, the Supreme Reality.

Atmarama. Eternal bliss; Rama in the heart.

Atmaswarupa. Embodiment of the all-pervading divine Self.

Aum. *Om*; Designation of the Universal Brahman; sacred, primordial sound of the universe.

Avatar. Incarnation of God. Whenever there is a decline of *dharma*, God comes down to the world assuming bodily form to protect the good, punish the wicked and re-establish *dharma*. An *Avatar* is born and lives free and is ever conscious of His mission. By His precept and example, He opens up new paths in spirituality, shedding His grace on all.

Bali. Emperor of demons; grandson of Prahlada and son of the demon Virochana. Humiliated by dwarf Vamana, who was an incarnation of Vishnu.

Bhagavad Gita. Literally, Song of God. Portion of the *Mahabharatha* that is a dialogue between Arjuna, one of the Pandava brothers, and Krishna.

Bhagavan. Divinity; term of reverential address; Sathya Sai Baba is called Bhagavan by his devotees.

Bhagavatha. A sacred book composed by Sage Vyasa dealing with Vishnu and His incarnations, especially Sri Krishna.

Bhagiratha. King of Solar Dynasty, son of Amsuman. Gave up his kingdom for enlightenment, but eventually returned as king.

Bhagirati. Name for the Ganga river, because Bhagiratha brought the river to earth.

bhajans. Congregational chant group worship by devotees with devotional music in which repetition of holy names predominates.

Bharatha. Son of Dasaratha and Kaika; brother of Rama. “Bharatha” means “he who rules”.

Bhima. Second of five Pandava brothers; named for his size and strength. See *Mahabharatha*.

Bhishma. The guardian and patriarch of the Kauravas and Pandavas. Son of King Shantanu. Remarkable for his wisdom and unflinching devotion to God. Trapped by his fate to fight on side of evil Kauravas; bled to death on a bed of arrows while thinking of God. See *Mahabharatha*. He also vowed life-long celibacy to ensure that his offspring would not claim the throne

Brahma. The Creator, the First of the Hindu Trinity of Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Preserver), and Siva (the Destroyer).

Brahman. The Supreme Being, the Absolute Reality, Impersonal God with no form or attributes. The uncaused cause of the Universe, Existence, Consciousness-Bliss Absolute (*Sath-Chith-Ananda*); The Eternal Changeless Reality — not conditioned by time, space, and causation.

brahmin. First of four castes of social order, the priestly or teacher caste; a person belonging to this caste.

buddhi. Intellect, intelligence, faculty of discrimination.

caste. The four castes of social order are: *brahmin* (priestly or teacher), *kshatriya* (warrior, protector), *vaisya* (trader, merchant, agriculturist), and *sudra* (worker, helper). See *varna dharma*.

chit. Consciousness, knowledge, awareness.

dharmā. Righteousness, religion, code of conduct, duty, essential nature of a being or thing. It holds together the entire Universe. Man is exhorted to practise *dharmā* to achieve material and spiritual welfare. The *Vedas* contain the roots of *dharmā*. God is naturally interested in the reign of *dharmā*.

darshan. Sight of a holy person.

Dasaratha. Son of Aja and father of Rama; King of Ayodhya; the name means “ten chariot hero”.

Dharmaraja. Name for Yudhistira, eldest of the five Pandava brothers; also, a name for Yama, God of death.

Dhritharashtra. Father of Kauravas; holder of ruling power.

Dronacharya. Drona, the teacher of archery and war tactics for the Pandavas and Kauravas.

Droupadi. Wife of Pandavas. See *Mahabharatha*.

Drupada. King of Panchala (Punjab) and father of Droupadi.

Duryodhana. Chief (and eldest) of the evil-minded sons of Dhritharashtra.

Easwara (Iswara) The Supreme Lord. Easwara is the Lord of every creature in the universe. Hence, the entire cosmos is reflected as an image in the Lord. Siva is often called Easwara.

Easwaramma. Sathya Sai Baba’s mother; means *the mother of Easwara (God)*. She passed away on 6 May 6 1998

Gauri. Siva’s consort Parvathi.

Gayatri mantra. A very sacred *Vedic* prayer for self-enlightenment; it is repeated piously at dawn, noon, and twilight devotions.

Govinda. Govinda and Gopala are names of Krishna, referring to his occupation as a young boy as a cowherd.

guna. Quality, property, trait; one of the three constituents of nature (*sathwa, rajas, and thamas*). They bind the soul to the body. Man’s supreme goal in life is to transcend the *gunas* and attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

guru. Spiritual guide; a knower of Brahman, who is calm, desireless, merciful, and ever ready to help and guide spiritual aspirants who approach him.

Hanuman. Son of the Wind God and a great “devotee servant” of Rama. He was part man, part monkey.

Hara. God; name for Siva.

Hari. God; destroyer of sins; name for Vishnu.

Hiranyakasipu. A demonic person who forbade mention of Vishnu’s name, wicked father of Prahlada, who was a great devotee of the Lord; killed by the man-lion Narashimha, an *Avatar* of Vishnu.

Iswara. The Supreme Ruler, the Personal God. He is Brahman associated with illusion (*maya*) but has it under His control, unlike the individual soul, who is illusion’s slave. He has a lovely form, auspicious attributes, and infinite power to create, sustain, and destroy. He dwells in the heart of every being, controlling it from within. He responds positively to true devotion and sincere prayer.

Janaka. A self-realized king; Sita’s father and Rama’s father-in-law. His ancestor was Nimi, a great emperor.

japa. Soft prayer or repetition of the name of God.

jathi. Race, birth, humanity.

jnana. Sacred knowledge; knowledge of the spirit, pursued as a means to Self-realisation. It is direct experience of God, as the Soul of the souls. *Jnana* makes a man omniscient, free, fearless, and immortal.

Kaikeyi. Also **Kaika.** A princess of Kekaya (Kashmir), third wife of Dasaratha, and mother of Bharatha.

Kailas. Siva’s mountain abode; Bhagiratha performed penance here to bring down the river Ganga.

karma. Action, deed, work, religious rite, the totality of innate tendencies formed as a consequence of acts done in previous lives. Every *karma* produces a lasting impression on the mind of the doer, apart from affecting others. Repetition of a particular *karma* produces a tendency (*vasana*) in the mind. *Karma* is of three kinds: (i) *praarabdha*, which is being exhausted in the present life: (ii) *aagami*, which is being accumulated in the present life, and (iii) *samchitha*, which is being accumulated or stored to be experienced in future lives. *Akarma* is action that is done without any intention to gain the consequences; *vikarma* is action that is intentionally done.

Kauravas. Family that fought Pandavas. See *Mahabharatha*.

Kausalya. Daughter of the King of Kosala, first wife of Dasaratha, and mother of Rama.

Kausika. Name for Viswamitra, since he was Kusa’s son.

Kesava. “Slayer of the demon Kesi”; a name for Krishna.

Krishna. The *Avatar* of Vishnu in the *Dwapara yuga*, prior to the present *Kali yuga*.

Kuchela. A poor *brahmin* classmate of Krishna.

Kumbhakarna. Younger brother of Ravana, who slept for six months at a time.

Lakshmana. Brother of Rama and son of Sumitra; represents intellect.

Lakshmi. Consort of Vishnu, goddess of wealth.

leela. Divine sport or play.

lingam. Egg-shaped stone; symbol of Siva; the form of the formless; symbolizes merger of the form with the formless.

Madhava. God (name for Krishna); Master of illusion (*maya*), Lord of Lakshmi.

Mahabharatha. The Hindu epic composed by Sage Vyasa, which deals with the deeds and fortunes of the cousins (the Kauravas and Pandavas) of the Lunar race, with Lord Krishna playing a significant and decisive role in shaping the events. The *Bhagavad Gita* and *Vishnu Sahasranama* occur in this great epic. It is considered

to be the Fifth *Veda* by devout Hindus. Of this great epic, it is claimed that “what is not in it is nowhere.

Mahasivarathri. *Sivarathri* means “night of Siva”. It is the night when the moon is at its smallest. *Mahasivarathri* is the great *Sivarathri*, taking place generally in February or March.

Maheswara. Name for Siva; the great Lord.

manas. Mind, the inner organ, which has four aspects: (i) mind (*manas*), which deliberates, desires, and feels; (ii) intellect (*buddhi*), which understands, reasons, and decides; (iii) the ‘I’ sense, and (iv) memory (*chitha*). The mind, with all its desires and their broods, conceals the Divinity within man. Purification of the mind is essential for realisation of the Self.

Mandodari. Ravana’s wife, queen of Lanka.

mantra. A sacred formula, mystic syllable or word symbol uttered during the performance of the rituals or meditation. They represent the spiritual truths directly revealed to the *rishis* (seers). The section of the *Veda* that contains these hymns (*mantras*) is called the *Samhitha*.

maya. Delusion. The mysterious, creative, and delusive power of Brahman through which God projects the appearance of the Universe. *Maya* is the material cause and Brahman is the efficient cause of the Universe. Brahman and *maya* are inextricably associated with each other like fire and its power to heat. *Maya* deludes the individual souls in egoism, making them forget their true spiritual nature.

maya-sakthi. Power of illusion, the veiling and projecting power of God.

mithya. Mixture of truth and falsehood; neither true nor untrue, but something in between. The world is not untrue (*asat*) but *mithya*.

moksha/mukthi. Liberation from all kinds of bondage, especially the one to the cycle of birth and death. It is a state of absolute freedom, peace, and bliss, attained through Self-realisation. This is the supreme goal of human endeavour, the other three being, righteousness (*dharma*), wealth and power (*artha*), and sense-pleasure (*kama*).

Nakula. One of the Pandava brothers. See *Mahabharatha*.

namasmarana. Remembering God through His Name — one of the important steps of spiritual discipline to obtain God’s grace and to make progress in the spiritual journey.

nara. Man; divine man; primeval man, human being.

Narada. Sage-bard; traveled the world chanting Narayana. Famous for creating disputes, resulting in solutions for the spiritual advancement or victory of the virtuous. Expert in law and author of texts on *dharma*.

Narasimha. Man-lion. One of the ten *Avatars* of Vishnu.

Narayana. The Primal Person, the Lord, Vishnu.

Om. Designation of the Universal Brahman; sacred, primordial sound of the Universe.

Pandavas. Sons of Pandu; family of 5 brothers that fought the Kauravas: Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. See *Mahabharatha*.

Panduranga. A name for Krishna, which means: the pure Lord and leader of the Pandavas.

Parabrahman. Universal Absolute Brahman.

Paramatma. Supreme Self, Supreme *Atma*.

Param-jyothi. Highest revelation, supreme light, divine intelligence.

Parasurama. An incarnation of Vishnu as man, born to destroy the arrogance of the wicked *Kshatriya* kings

Parvathi. Siva's consort. Also known as Gauri (fair complexioned) and by other names.

Prahlada. Son of the demon king Hiranyakasipu. As a boy, he was beaten, trampled, and cast into fire and water. But he saw only God everywhere, and repetition of the Name of God saved him. Once, Prahlada asserted that God was everywhere, and Narayana appeared in his man-lion form from within a pillar to destroy the king.

prakriti. Nature, the Divine Power of Becoming. Also known as *maya*, *avidya*, and *sakthi*; the world of matter and mind as opposed to the spirit. *Prakriti* has three dispositions or *gunas* (*sathwa*, *rajas*, and *thamas*), which go into the make-up of all living and non-living beings in the Universe, in varying proportions leading to the appearance of infinite multiplicity in form, nature, and behaviour.

prana. Life-breath, life force, vital energy, the five vital airs.

Pranava. *Om*; the sacred seed-sound and symbol of Brahman. "The most exalted syllable in *Vedas*". It is used in meditation on God. It is uttered first before a *Vedic mantra* is chanted.

prasanthi. Supreme peace, equanimity.

prema. Ecstatic love of God; divine love of the most intense kind.

Puranas. The Hindu scriptures in which *Vedic* truths are illustrated through tales of divine incarnations and heroes. Sage Vyasa is believed to have written them. Of the 18 *Puranas*, *Srimad Bhagavatha* is the best known.

Radha. Cowherd maid, a chief devotee of Krishna; one of Lakshmi's forms.

rajas/rajo guna. One of the three *gunas* (qualities or dispositions) of *maya* or *prakriti*. *Rajas* is the quality of passion, energy, restlessness, attachment, and extroversion. It results in pain.

Rama. Avatar of the *Thretha yuga*. Hero of the *Ramayana*; killed the wicked Ravana to rescue his wife Sita, who had been kidnapped. "Rama" means "he who pleases".

Ramayana. This sacred epic, composed by Sage Valmiki, deals with the incarnation of Vishnu as Sri Rama, who strove all his life to reestablish the reign of *dharm*a in the world. The *Ramayana* has played an important role in influencing and shaping the Hindu ethos over the centuries.

Ravana. Lord of demons and king of Lanka, who abducted Sita (Rama's wife).

Sahadeva. One of the Pandava brothers. See *Mahabharatha*.

Sakkubai. A famous Krishna devotee.

sakshatkara. Divine spiritual experience or vision; direct experience of the Lord.

sakthi. Great universal power, divine energy, strength. *Maha* means *Great*, so *Mahasakthi* is great *sakthi*.

samadhi. The super-conscious state transcending the body, mind, and intellect, attained through rigorous and protracted spiritual practices. In that state of consciousness, the objective world and the ego vanish and Reality is perceived or communed with, in utter peace and bliss. When, in this state, the aspirant realises his oneness with God, it is called *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

samsara. Worldly life; life of the individual soul through repeated births and deaths. Liberation means getting freed from this cycle.

Sanathana Dharma. Eternal religion. A descriptive term for what has come to be called Hinduism. It has no single founder or text of its own. It is more a commonwealth of religious faiths and a way of life.

Sankara. Another name for Siva (means beneficent, conferring happiness).

Sankara. Also **Sankaracharya**. Celebrated philosopher, preceptor of non-dualistic *Vedanta*. Defeated all religious opponents in debates throughout India.

Sankranthi. *Sankranthi*, meaning “sacred change”, occurs every month as the sun moves from one house of the Zodiac to another. But special sacredness is attached to the movement of the sun to Capricorn (*Makara*), so this day is known as *Makara Sankranthi*. This day is related to the beginning of the apparent northward movement of the sun. This auspicious day heralds the conferment of many worldly and spiritual blessings on man. It is a witness to the prospective successes of humanity in many fields. (From Sai Baba’s discourses of 14 Jan 1997 and 14 Jan 1998).

santhi. Peace, equanimity, serenity, tranquility.

saranagathi. Absolute self-surrender.

Sastras. The Hindu scriptures containing the teachings of the sages. The *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Ithihasas* (epics), the *Puranas*, the *Smrithis* (codes of conduct), etc. form the *Sastras* of the Hindus. They teach us how to live wisely and well with all the tenderness and concern of the Mother.

sat. Existence, being, good, real.

sat-chit-ananda. Existence-knowledge-bliss, or being-awareness-bliss.

sathwa. One of the three *gunas* (qualities and dispositions) of *maya* or *prakriti*. It is the quality of purity, brightness, peace, and harmony. It leads to knowledge. Man is exhorted to overcome *thamas* by *rajas* and *rajas* by *sathwa* and finally to go beyond *sathwa* itself to attain liberation.

sathya. Truth.

Sathyanarayana. Sathya Sai Baba, as an incarnation of Narayana, the Primal Person, the Lord, Vishnu.

Satrughna. Sumitra’s son, twin of Lakshmana and brother of Rama. The name means “slayer of enemies”.

Savithri. Brought husband back to life by outwitting Yama, the Lord of Death, by her power of purity and chastity.

seva. Selfless service; service to others while trying to serve the God within them.

Shantanu. A Kuru king, descendant of the Bharata race, of the lunar dynasty and the ancestor of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Bhishma was his son.

Sita. Wife of Rama; brought up by King Janaka who found her in a box in the earth. Also, a tributary of the Ganga, flowing westward.

Siva. The Destroyer, the Third of the Hindu Trinity of Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Preserver), and Siva (the Destroyer).

soham. I am God.

Sumitra. Second wife of Dasaratha and mother of Lakshmana and Satrugna.

swarupa. Form, essential nature, true nature of Being, embodiment.

thamas. One of the *gunas* (qualities and dispositions) of *maya* or *prakriti*. It is the quality of dullness, inertia, darkness and tendency to evil. It results in ignorance.

Taithiriya Upanishad. One of the ten most important *Upanishads*; it is the philosophical portion of the *Black Yajur-veda*; the other part is called the *White Yajur-veda*.

Thathwa. Principle, truth, essence. That-this entity. *Thathwa* is regarded as made up of That (*Thath*) and you (*thwam*).

upadhi. Container, disguise, encasement, limitation.

Upanishads. The very sacred portions of the *Vedas* that deal with God, man, and universe, their nature and interrelationships. Spiritual knowledge (*jnana*) is their content, so they form the *Jnana-kaanda* of the *Vedas*.

Vaikunta. Vishnu's heaven.

vairagya. Detachment, renunciation.

Valmiki. The saint-poet who wrote the *Ramayana*.

Vamana. Dwarf incarnation of Vishnu, who asked for three feet of land from Emperor Bali and humbled Bali's pride.

varna dharma. The Hindu community is divided into four social groups, or castes (*varnas*), based on *gunas* and vocations: (1) *Brahmana* (the *Brahmins*), the custodian of spiritual and moral role), (2) *kshatriya*, the warrior group, which rules and defends the land), (3) *vaishya*, the group dealing with commerce, business, and trade, and (4) *sudra*, the group devoted to labour and service to the community. Each *varna* has its own *dharmic* restrictions and regulations that strive to canalise impulses and instinct into fields that are special to their place in society, controls pertaining to the duties of the caste.

vasana. Inclination, impression of anything remaining in the subconscious mind from past action.

Vasishta. One of the greatest *rishis* (sages) of ancient times; priest of the solar race of kings; revealer of several *Vedic* hymns. Had sacred, wishfulfilling cow called Nandini.

Vedas. The oldest and the holiest of the Hindu scriptures, the primary source of authority in Hindu religion and philosophy. They are four in number: the *Rig Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, and *Atharva Veda*.

Vedic. Of your relating to the *Vedas*.

Vedanta. Means "the end of the *Vedas*". It is the essence of the *Vedas* enshrined in the *Upanishads*. The philosophy of non-dualism, or qualified non-dualism, or dualism based on the *Upanishadic* teachings, is denoted by this term.

Vibhishana. Brother of Ravana; Demon chief who represented pure mindedness and sided with Rama.

Vinayaka. Vinayaka is another name for Ganesha, the elephant-headed Deity who is known as the remover of obstacles. Ganesh is often honoured at the beginning of rituals and ceremonies; for example, the first *bhajan* in a devotional song session may be a Ganesh *bhajan*.

Vishnu. The Preserver, the Second of the Hindu Trinity of Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Preserver), and Siva (the Destroyer).

Viswamitra. Sage; known for his efforts to equal Vasishta. Born as warrior Kausika who, by the power of the *Gayatri* transformed himself spiritually. Early counselor of the young Rama.

Yama. God of Death; death personified.

yoga. Union with God. Also the path by which this union of the soul with God is achieved. The four important paths of *yoga* are knowledge, action, meditation, and devotion.

Yudhistira. Eldest Pandava brother; also called Dharmaraja.

yuga. Era or age. There is a cycle of four *yugas*: the *Kritha-yuga*, *Thretha-yuga*, *Dwapara-yuga*, and *Kali-yuga*. Present age is *Kali-yuga*

