

SATHYA SAI SPEAKS

Volume 41

Discourses, 2008
SATHYA SAI BABA

Contents

SATHYA SAI SPEAKS	5
Publisher's Note	6
Editor's Note For This EBook Edition	7
Sathya Sai Baba in 2008	8
1. All Are One; Be Alike To Everyone	9
2. Revere Your Mother And Father As God	15
3. Understand The Principle Of Unity	21
4. Redeem Your Life By Good Actions	26
5. Have Self-confidence And Achieve Everything	31
6. Respect And Honour Your Mother And Make Her Happy	37
7. Remembrance of the Lord's Name: Highest Spiritual Practice	42
8. Seeing Unity In Diversity Is True Spirituality	49
9. Contemplate On The Name Rama	55
10. Develop Faith And Self-confidence To Gain Self-realisation	61
11. Develop Educare And Be United	66
12. Ideal Parents Have Ideal Children	71
13. Love Is Truth; Truth Is Love. Live In Love	78
14. Educare Leads To Unity Of Thought, Word, And Deed	83
15. Develop Self-confidence To Achieve God-realisation	89
16. All Are One, Be Alike To Everyone	94
17. Love Is God, Live In Love	100
18. Lead A Happy Life With A Feeling Of Camaraderie And Fraternity	106
19. Contemplate On God, The Real Hero, For Victory	111
Glossary	118

SATHYA SAI SPEAKS

VOLUME - 41

**Discourses of
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
delivered during 2008**



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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

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Editor's Note For This EBook Edition

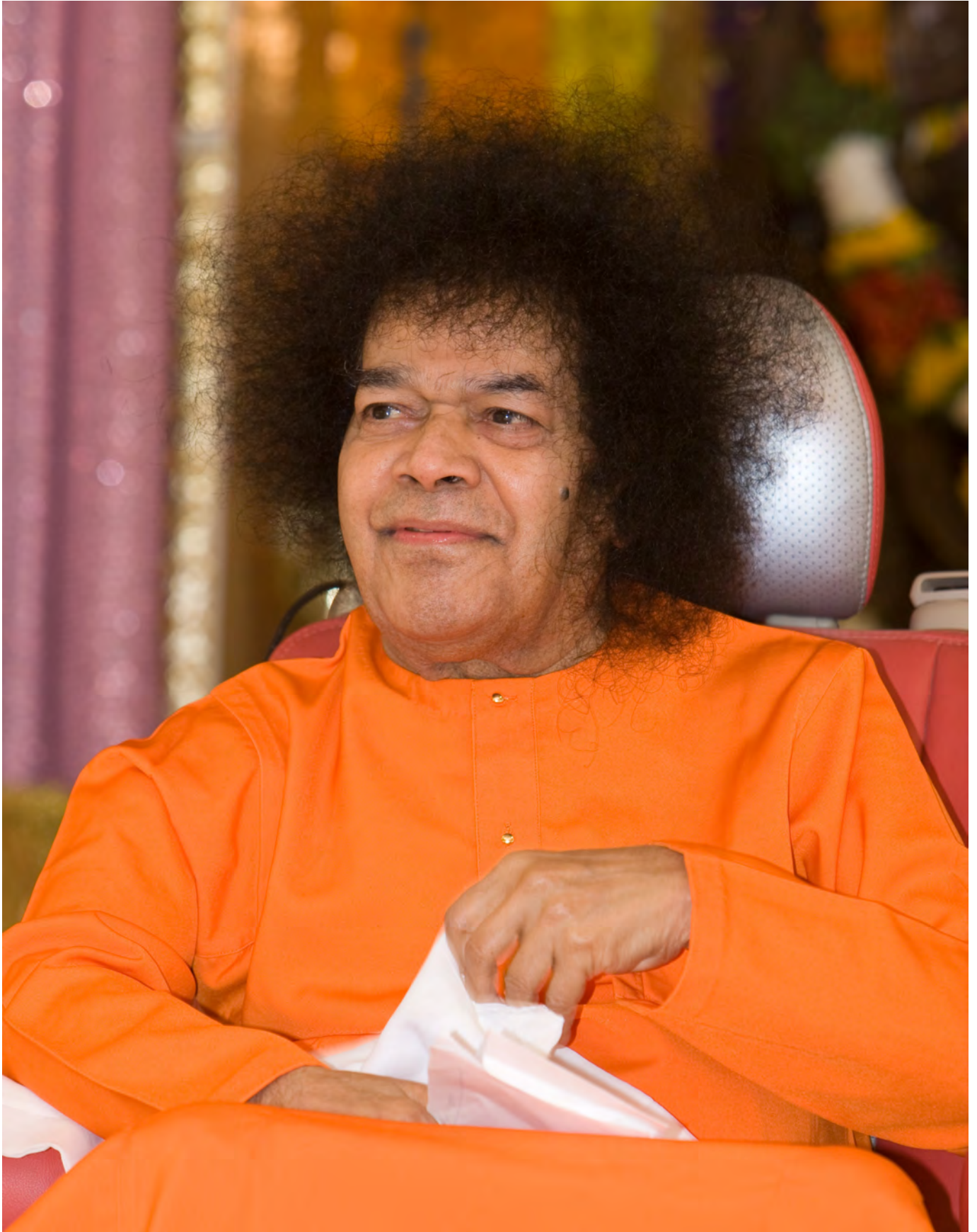
This “ebook” version of Volume 41 of “Sathya Sai Speaks” enables the reading of Sathya Sai Baba’s first recorded discourses on Ipads, Kindles, Nooks, and other electronic platforms. Now, the reader can choose the type face and the point size (based on the parameters given them by their electronic platform).

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 third 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 2008



1. All Are One; Be Alike To Everyone

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* comes in the month of *Pushya* (a month in the Indian calendar), filling our homes with the newly harvested grain.

(Telugu poem)

Humans need several objects in this world; yet, none of them is permanent. All are like passing clouds. What you think as permanent in this world is, in fact, impermanent. Hence, one has to strive to achieve that which is permanent, real, and eternal.

The *Bhagavad Gita* declares, “the eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of My Being (*Mamaivamso jivaloke jivabhuta sanathana*).” I am in you, with you, around you, above you, below you. There is no place in this Universe where God is not present. Similarly, there is no name or object that does not belong to Him. The *Upanishads* proclaim the same truth in the declarations, “God is the Indweller of all beings (*Easwara sarva bhutanam*),” and “The entire universe is permeated by God (*Isavasyam idam sarvam*).”

Unable to realise this truth, the human being laments “wherever I look, I find only human beings; I am not able to find God”. “As are the feelings, so are the results (*Yad bhavam tad bhavathi*).”

Suppose you wear a particular dress and stand before a mirror; you will find the same reflection in the mirror. Similarly, your own thoughts and feelings reflect in the outside world. Everything is reaction, reflection, and resound. Your own life style is reflected in the outside world. Whatever you speak comes back to you as a reply. But people think that it is someone else who is speaking these words. This is the truth. However, different people explain this truth in different ways in keeping with the aphorism, “Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam Sat viprah bahudha vadanti*).” Every form you see in the outside world is in fact your own reflection.

Basic human values are the vital airs of the human being

Several thousand people are gathered in this hall, but there is only one heart in all of them: the spiritual heart. I am not referring to the physical heart. Unfortunately, people are unable to repose their faith in this spiritual heart, in spite of their best education. You are all educated, well educated.

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

(Telugu poem)

This is not the type of education you have to pursue. This is the category of worldly education. This type of education we learn from an institution under the guidance of a teacher. Today, all our education, words, and speech are only artificial. There is something deeper that forms the basis for everything. That is fundamental truth.

It does not come under the realm of education. It is “educare”. Education is worldly, whereas “educare” is other-worldly. Educare is not something that can be seen with the naked eye. It lies in the depth of our heart. It has to be brought out by conscious effort.

Where is peace? Is it outside? No. Only pieces and pieces are outside. Peace is in your heart. Similarly, love. Love is in your heart. It cannot be seen. Love is God; Live in Love. This also forms part of educare. So also non-violence. It is not in the outside world. The world today is torn apart with conflicts. We don’t find peace anywhere in the world. Truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence constitute the five vital airs (*pancha pranas*) of a human being.

Love is the undercurrent that flows in all these human values. Follow truth, keeping love as the basis in your heart. Truth is eternal. Truth is God. It is not subject to changes in time. Let love be reflected on the mirror of Truth.

Whenever you come across a man not to your liking, you consider him as your enemy, keeping in mind your worldly relationship with him. You begin to hate him. This is not correct. He is, in fact, not different from you. You and he are one only. Hence, it amounts to hating yourself. There is nothing like another person or object in this world. There is only one. First and foremost, we have to realise and follow this truth.

Unfortunately today we are not able to find truth at all in this world. Whether in the field of education, politics, or worldly life, we don’t find truth at all. Even in the court of law, the seat of justice, people swear upon God and speak untruth. Thus, wherever you go untruth or falsehood is rampant. People spend a lot of money for the sake of establishing truth. It is not necessary. If only people would cultivate love for one another, it is enough. Whenever you come across someone whom you consider as your enemy, say, “Sir, my respects (*pranams*) to you”. He will, in turn offer his respects to you. As are our feelings, so are his. Our own thoughts and feelings are reflected by the other person.

Peace, truth, love are in one’s own bosom only

You don’t find peace at all in the world today. Wherever you go, you will find only ‘*galata*’ (confusion and conflict) — be it the market place, bazaar, or a shop. Even if you go to a hotel, you will find someone quarrelling with the waiter saying, “this *idli* is not good, this *vada* is not tasty, that *dosa* is not fried properly,” etc. You do not find order anywhere in this world. Everywhere it is confusion and conflict. In fact, the word “peace” is not to be found anywhere in the world.

On the other hand, the atmosphere here in Prasanthi Nilayam is totally different. There is absolute peace in this hall. You don’t find this peace anywhere else in the world. So also, the feeling of love. You do not find this love anywhere else. That is why tens of thousands of people from all over the world congregate here. Why do people go to holy places and pray? For what purpose? To acquire peace, happiness, bliss, and love. These boys studied in Brindavan and Puttaparthi. They traveled all over the country and even abroad, but they could not get peace of mind anywhere even for two minutes.

In fact, peace is in one’s own mind. There is no use searching for peace in the outside world. Similarly, truth and love are to be found only in one’s own bosom. When you cultivate love, you can achieve anything in the world. Swami is an Embodiment of Love. Love is His biggest property. My duty is to share that love with you all. If you are able to understand Swami’s love in true spirit and make use of it in a proper way, you will prosper.

Except Swami's love, nothing can protect you. You will have to understand this Love principle (*Prema thathwa*). All are brothers and sisters, but differences arise even amongst brothers and sisters. Hence, cultivate love for one another. Always maintain a cheerful disposition, with a sweet smile on your face. Never put up a "castor-oil face". Only then can your life become noble and ideal. You must always be happy and cheerful. What do you lack? You have everything, with Swami's love and grace.

Some people are not able to put up with difficulties. However, if only they kept a little patience, even that pain and suffering would turn out to be an occasion for rejoicing. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. "You are not one person, but three: the one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are." "The one you really are" is the real truth.

You must be reading several books. But if you are not able to keep your head in proper condition, all that reading will become useless. Hence, the "head" is very important. That is "educare".

You must have read volumes and volumes of books, written by great people. Each one of the authors must have highlighted a particular aspect of Divinity. But the sum total of all these descriptions that represent Divinity is one only. Sometimes, your own mind turns against you. It is the result of your own thoughts. Everything is reaction, reflection, and resound. Both good and bad are in you only, not in the outside world. When your vision is bad, you will see bad. On the other hand, when your vision is good you will see God everywhere. If you forsake truth and love and begin to see the world from that standpoint, you will find differences everywhere.

The feeling of oneness brings self-satisfaction

Embodiments of Love! Dear Students,

You are all working in far-off countries, yet you remember Swami and try to be in His divine presence at least for a few days every year. This is your good fortune (loud applause). There could be only one reason for it, your love for Swami. But for the bond of love between you and Swami, you would not have come here along with your families incurring huge expenditure, undergoing a lot of physical strain. You must realise this truth. You might have studied in Brindavan or Prasanthi Nilayam and are now working in different countries. Wherever you are, remember always that Swami is with you and in you. If someone asks where you came from, you reply that you are from Brindavan or Prasanthi Nilayam. You say so for your own satisfaction. But the truth is that Swami is in you, Brindavan is in you, and Prasanthi Nilayam is in you only. If one wishes to attain self-satisfaction, one has to realise that all are one.

Religions are many but goal is one.

Clothes are many but yarn is one.

Jewels are many but gold is one.

Cows are many but milk is one.

Beings are many but breath is one.

Castes are many but humanity is one.

(Telugu poem)

Human beings may be of different complexion, but the bliss they experience in their hearts is only one. We must aspire for that bliss, disregarding individual differences. The differences are only temporary. Divinity is only one; it assumes different forms in different ages. Lord Vishnu assumed different forms in *Kritha Yuga* (Era). The

same Lord came as Lord Rama in the *Thretha Yuga* and as Lord Krishna in the *Dwapara Yuga*. The same divine principle (God) is referred to as Brahma (The Generator), Vishnu (the Organiser) and Maheswara (the Destroyer). The different names are ascribed for the purpose of identification.

When someone asks your name, you mention a particular name. In fact, that name was given to you by your parents. You were not born with that name. At the time of your birth, you were just a baby. The names were given subsequently. Unfortunately, today we are indulging in controversies even in the case of God, on the basis of names and forms. Whomever you come across is an embodiment of Divinity, verily. For example, you come across a beggar. He is also God. God is in that form. Hence, offer your salutations to him. Nothing wrong in doing so. All are one; be alike to everyone. Love all and serve all, be they a beggar or a millionaire.

Several changes may occur in this year at the physical level, but there will be no change at all in the spiritual realm. It is possible that there may be some conflicts here and there in the secular world. There may be a few permutations and combinations in the political field. Some new parties and alliances may be formed. “Parties, parties and parties”... what are “parties”, anyway? For tea only, not parties.

We must treat all human beings alike. By doing so, all people will be happy. Good and bad, pleasure and pain — everything must be faced with a sense of equanimity. That is the foremost duty of a human being. The human mind is susceptible to several changes, on account of the food one takes and the company one moves in. The mind is like a mad monkey. It is not an ordinary monkey, but “mad monkey”. Strictly speaking, the mind is a component of mankind. Hence, it should be kind. Unfortunately, today we are converting it into a monkey. A person should always be a person. Let others do whatever they wish to us, unknowingly, but we should not consciously think in terms of doing harm to others. This is My advice.

Unity, a step toward divinity

This body is approaching the 83rd year. In all these years, I have never done any harm to anyone or caused any pain to anyone. I have never spoken untruth. I always speak truth and truth only. It causes Me great pain when I see untruthfulness. Let us, therefore, speak only truth and nothing but truth. Surely, victory will be ours. Always tread the path of truth.

Love all. It is easy to love someone, but quite difficult to hate. If you love others, there will be unity among you. All will become one. Where there is unity, there will be purity. Where there is purity, there Divinity will be. Hence, if you wish to attain Divinity, you must develop unity. And, for achieving unity, people should shed their narrow-mindedness.

This is a handkerchief. It is made up of several threads. If you remove one thread after the other, finally there will be no handkerchief at all! The cloth is made up of threads, and they in turn are made out of cotton. Similarly, there can be no humanness without human beings. The humanness must be gradually transformed into Divinity. A divine person will have divine power. In fact, you all possess divine power. There is not a single human being without divine power, but no one is aware of their innate divine power.

People very often ask Me a question: “Swami, how can we achieve unity?” In fact, unity is the very nature of humanity. Forgetting this truth, people go on arguing, “He is different from me, I am different from him,” etc. Divinity can never be attained by such arguments. Always think that you and others are only one. You say, “So and so is my father; so and so is my mother; so and so is my sister.” These are not real relationships. Father, mother,

sister, etc., are only relationships at the body level. Only with marriage did the husband-wife relationship arise. Otherwise, who is a husband and who is a wife? These are all man-made relationships.

However, as long as the relationship exists, one should respect that relationship and follow it. The husband and wife should never hurt each other. If either of them commits a mistake, it should be gently brought to the individual's notice for rectification. Harassing, abusing, and physical violence are bad practices. Never resort to them. If all of you live in unity and constantly contemplate on God, you will achieve purity. Then, Swami will surely give you *darshan* (sight of a holy person) right where you are (applause).

I belong to you all (applause). You all belong to Me. I do not differentiate between individuals. All are mine and I belong to all. There may be differences in certain aspects among people, from the worldly angle, but there should not be any difference at the spiritual level.

Always adhere to truth

Dear boys, you have come here with great love for Swami. May your hearts be filled with love up to the brim. Always speak truth. You may encounter certain difficulties in speaking truth. That does not matter; adhere to truth. Then you will surely achieve success. We should never be afraid to speak the truth. We should even be prepared to fight for truth. "Truth alone triumphs (*Sathyameva jayate*).” Hence, always speak truth. Untruth will fetch you bad reputation. Adhere to truth under all circumstances. Cultivate love. Truth is love and love is truth. If you are guided by these two like the two eyes, you will always succeed in life.

There is no use worshipping God repeating the word *devotion (bhakti)* as an empty rhetoric. You may be very intelligent. You might have also acquired vast knowledge. However, if you do not develop a sense of discrimination, all your intelligence and knowledge will be reduced to zero. Hence, discrimination is of utmost importance. Analyse whether your point of view is right or wrong. If you are convinced that your point is right, stick to it till the end.

The world today is in a state of utter confusion and chaos. Wherever you look, there is endless strife. The world today is filled with selfishness and self-interest. As long as these two take predominance, it will lead only to defeat.

You are all students of Sri Sathya Sai College. You should therefore live up to the ideals of the Sathya Sai educational institutions. If people praise that so and so is a good boy, he is a student of Sri Sathya Sai College, I will be very happy. You all must earn that good name. It gives Me great happiness (applause). There is nothing greater that I can wish for. I am not asking this for My sake. You should earn a good name for your own sake. *Ban-garu* (dear golden ones)! Conduct yourselves accordingly. Wherever you are, do not forget to contemplate on the divine name of God. You may contemplate upon any name like Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana, Madhusudana, Trivikrama, etc. Though the names are different, God is only one. He is "the Cosmic Being with thousands of heads, eyes, and feet (*Sahasra seersha Purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad*)". Adhere to truth and love always.

(Bhagawan continued his discourse after singing the *bhajan* "Hari Bhajana Bina ...")

The joy we derive by singing *bhajans* (devotional songs) cannot be attained by any other means. There is so much joy in singing *bhajans* and extolling the glory of God. I can also sing *bhajans* melodiously. But at the moment I have a very bad throat. *Bhajans* give great joy. Even if others do not share this joy, sing *bhajans* for your own joy. I am very happy.

(Addressing the old students) When do you propose to leave for your places? Wherever you go, Swami's grace is with you in abundance. I will distribute *prasadam* (consecrated food) to you all tomorrow. May you all return to your places with joyous memories of this divine congregation.

New Year Message, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-01-01

Strive for the happiness of the community and of the human race. Pray that all people everywhere may have peace and plenty. Be eager to do good and be good ... moderation in food, in talk, and in desires and pursuits; contentment with what little can be got by honest labour, eagerness to serve others and to impart joy to all – these are the most powerful of all the tonics and health-preserves known to the science of health, the *sanathana ayurveda*, the *veda* (knowledge) of the full life.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Use all chances you get to develop your skills, your health, and your character. That is your present duty. Make lasting friendships. Do not by any action of yours cause pain to another – nor suffer pain yourself, by foolishness or sheer bravado.

In your school, I find there are some girls too; treat them with great respect and do not speak slightingly of them. They are your sisters, and by honouring them, you bring honour to yourselves and your sisters. Respect for women is a sign of real culture.

So, I call upon you to read good books; revere your teachers, and to love all. Do not dishonour your elders; cultivate the spirit of service and learn how to serve the sick and the needy and seize every chance to help others. Or, at least, desist from causing sorrow to others.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. Revere Your Mother And Father As God

Emperor Nala, who reigned over a vast kingdom, could not take with him anything when he passed away.

Did King Mandhata, who adorned the *Kritha Yuga*, carry any wealth with him when he left the earth?

Even Lord Rama, who built a bridge across the ocean, is not to be seen on the earth today. Many kings have ruled over the earth, but none of them could carry even a fistful of dust with him.

Oh noble one! do you think you can carry the kingdom and its riches on your head when you leave the world?

(Telugu poem)

You brought nothing into this world at the time of your birth. Property, wealth, bank balance, etc. are all acquired in the middle, during the course of life's journey from birth to death. You cannot take these along with you while departing from this world. Then why should you worry over losing them in between?

Never forget God, who is supreme

You are not born for shedding tears. Hence you should also leave this world happily. Why worry about the ephemeral things like wealth and property, which are physical, fleeting, and impermanent? Such an attitude is unbecoming of a human being. These are all gifts from God. There are four concepts that you must always keep in mind: the individual (*vyashti*), society (*samashti*), creation (*srishti*), and God (*Parameshti*). Creation emerged out of God. From creation came society, and society itself consists of individuals. Without individuals there can be no society. Hence, ultimately these are all God's gift.

Are we making any efforts to shed tears for the sake of God? No. We are worried about passing clouds, which are ephemeral. This is not the true nature of a human being. You might have noticed that when thick clouds gather in the sky, the sun or the moon is obscured by them. It should not bother you. Just wait a few minutes. The dark clouds move away, and the sun and the moon are back shining brightly. What is required is a little patience.

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

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

The nectarous 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 power that a human being possesses is unparalleled. The human being is most powerful. That is why even God incarnates in the form of a human being (applause). It is said "God is in the form of a human being (*Daivam manusha rupena*).” A human being is the crown of God's creation. And, God is supreme. It is a sacrilege

to forget such an omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent God. You must constantly contemplate on God. You may be engaged in a variety of tasks, but never forget God, who is changeless and eternal. That should be your true nature. Your true nature should always remain the same.

The root cause for all the troubles we face is that we forget God and hanker after illusory worldly things. Happiness or sorrow is all our own making. God is always blissful. He always gives us happiness, joy, and bliss. We, out of our illusion, misinterpret God's gifts as difficulties and feel sorry for the same. Your own feelings are responsible for your suffering. Hence, change your feelings, develop a positive attitude, and you will never experience pain and suffering.

Today, you all have come here wearing white shirts and black blazers. Our Anil Kumar thought, "When our boys are wearing black coloured blazers, why not I?" He also wore a black coat and attended this function. This is imitation. In fact, the whole world is full of imitation. Such imitation is not a good sign. It may give you a momentary pleasure only.

There were kings and emperors in the past who ruled the world, but all of them left this world empty-handed. They could not take even a blade of grass along with them. No doubt we can enjoy good things as long as we live in this world. Thereafter, we cease to have any relationship with them. All the worldly relationships are only of our own making. We should not maintain such artificial relationships. As long as you live, be happy and enjoy your life. But your joy should not be like the one you derive when you eat an ice cream, which melts away in a short time. Real joy springs forth from your heart. That is bliss. You should experience that bliss continuously.

The body is made up of five elements. It is bound to fall. We as human beings feel happy when a child is born and feel sad when someone dear to us dies. Never give scope for sorrow. You may encounter any number of sorrows and difficulties, but you should face them with courage and faith in God, thinking, "I am a part of Divinity; I will not therefore feel sorry or shed tears." Lord Krishna declared in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

Better indeed is knowledge than mechanical practice.

Better still is meditation.

But better than meditation is renunciation of the desire for the fruit of *karma* (action).

For, peace follows renunciation.)

Sreyohi Jnanamabhyasath

Jnanaddhyanam Visishayathe

Dhyanath Karmaphala Tyagah

Tyagah Santiranantaram

The divine principle alone is eternal in this fleeting world

As long as one develops a desire for the fruit of one's actions, one will not have peace of mind. Take the case of a man. Before marriage, he was one and only one. With marriage he becomes two. The couple begets a child after one year. In the beginning, the man has only two legs; after marriage, they have four; after the child is born they multiply into six legs. Thus, as the family grows, the number of legs also grows, and they will end up in sorrow. It is not of God's making. It is the result of one's mental weakness.

You participated in the annual sports meet and performed various feats. You derived joy out of it. Pleasure or pain, everything is the result of your own actions. Nothing is permanent in this world. All are fleeting. One need

not be elated or depressed for anything. Whatever is born today is bound to die at some time or the other. No one knows for sure what happens to us the next moment. You are an embodiment of Divinity. The divine Principle in you is eternal. That lives today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow. Hence, treat the past, present, and future as one even though your experiences in the three phases of time are different. Do not give much credence to these experiences. Past is past; it will not come back. We are not sure of future. The present is the only reality with which we should be concerned. This is not ordinary present, but omnipresent because the past as well as future are present in it.

Dear Students!

All your experiences in this changing world are only momentary and unreal. They are like passing clouds. You need not be too much worried about them. You are marching forward. Continue your life's journey with steadfast faith in God. Why should you have to look back and brood over the past? Some people worry for everything, not only about their education but in life too. They are worried about some individuals who are no longer living. Whoever is born has to depart from this world at some time or the other. God is the only one present at all times—past, present, and future—since He is omnipresent. He may assume different forms and names at different times in keeping with the aspirations and imagination of the devotees. Keep aside your imaginations, and God can be perceived as the one and only one Divine Principle at all times.

A few days ago, people celebrated the New Year all over the world. From where did this New Year come? It did not suddenly descended from the heavens. There can be no “new” without “old”. The old transforms itself into the new and the new becomes old after some time. Thus, old and new are like the object and its reflection. Hence, do not attach much importance to these variations in time. Constantly contemplate on the timeless principle, that is, Divinity. If at all you are worried about some sorrows and difficulties troubling you, keep them aside. Some boys are worried about their examinations, which is totally unnecessary. You must face the examinations boldly and write the answers confidently to the extent of your preparation. God will take care of the rest. It is the courage and confidence that will fetch the desired result. This courage is also called “strength (*pushti*)”.

Six evil qualities form part of the human psyche: desire (*kama*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), delusion (*moha*), pride (*mada*), and jealousy (*matsarya*). The same qualities reflect in the outside world. Hence, keep your inner consciousness clean. Then, you can win over the outside world in all areas.

Embodiments of Love! Dear students!

You are acquiring degrees in several branches of knowledge, but of what use are they?

Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom.

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

Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.

(Telugu poem)

What is the use of acquiring so many degrees without realising one's own nature? The education that you pursue must ultimately bring some benefit to the society. You should pursue such type of education. Share your knowledge with others—then only will your outlook be broadened. The very purpose of your humanness will be fulfilled. The individual (*vyashti*) is only one. When another individual joins the individual, it becomes society (*samashiti*).

Develop sense control

Develop the power of senses by developing control over your senses. It is only by sense control that a human being can be called an individual. Unfortunately, today we do not at all find sense control anywhere. The senses are allowed to run amuck in the outside world. The senses are created by God for making proper use of them by a human being by exercising proper control over them. It is not for indiscriminate “enjoyment” of God’s creation. The birds, insects, and animals are doing the same. Even ants are raising families and sustaining them. You do not have to follow their example. You are a human being.

Whoever created you will also provide for your sustenance. You need not worry about your food and other needs. You may earn five thousand dollars a month abroad. No doubt it is a lot of money when converted into Indian rupees, but compare the cost of living in India and abroad. The five thousand dollars you earn in foreign countries is equivalent to five hundred rupees in India. This much amount is sufficient here.

Several people go abroad with great hopes, but what is there abroad? That broadness lies in your heart. You need not go abroad. Develop broad-mindedness. Remain here. Take good care of your parents, wife, and children. Make your children acquainted with Indian culture and spirituality. That is true education.

Does education mean reading and writing? Can you call all those who have learnt to read and write educated people? No, not at all. Knowledge without discrimination and not beneficial to the society — can it be called education? Education that does not develop discrimination is totally void. Real education is that which comes from within, that is educate. What all the teachers teach is only that which is contained in books. Real education is not available in the books.

Hence, dear students, don’t waste your time reading books and acquiring merely bookish knowledge. You read throughout the night, without sleeping. Thereby your health is spoiled. Hence, you have to read only those books that are necessary for your purpose, not all the trash you find in the bazaar. People read several books, cinema magazines, and newspapers, which are in no way useful to them. When you open a newspaper, it is full of advertisements and cinema pictures. There is nothing you can learn from them.

Follow your conscience, which guides you. If you follow your conscience, you are worthy of being called a human being. You don’t become a human being simply because you have certain limbs like hands, legs, eyes, ears, nose, etc. Even small insects have them. Can you equate yourself to them? Certainly not. You must lead the life of a real human being and set an example to others. You must be an example in true culture.

Humanity is your caste

There is a subtle difference between caste and culture. You belong to the caste of humanity, for there is only one caste, the caste of humanity. It is an inborn gift from your parents. On the other hand, culture is something that is adopted in your life. Culture teaches you what is to be done and how. It is based upon certain traditions. None can change your caste, which is humanity. Based upon your inborn caste of humanity, you can follow a culture.

Another important point to be noted in this context is that caste and culture devoid of discrimination are not only useless but harmful too. Your knowledge and sharp intellect are not that important. Discrimination is of utmost importance. You must be able to choose that which is useful and necessary for you. You have to switch on a light when you are in darkness. It is not proper to switch on a light when there is already light in the room.

Dear Students!

It is not knowledge or energy that you have to develop but the power of discrimination. Whatever object you come across, first enquire within yourself: “Is it good or bad, is it useful to me or not?” Before you take up a particular work, think carefully whether it is worth it or not. Being a human being, develop the quality of humanness.

Do not at all cause pain to your parents, who are responsible for your birth. The *Vedas* emphasise the need for showing utmost reverence to the parents by declaring, “Revere your mother and father as God (*Matru devo bhava, pitru devo bhava*).” Children today do not care for their parents. Husbands consider wife, the “artificial doll”, as the central point of their life. They follow the dictates of their wife, ignoring the parents who gave birth to them and nourished and nurtured them all through undergoing several difficulties. You may love your wife, nothing wrong in that, but you should obey your parents too. Parents deserve your utmost concern. All others come after the parents.

First and foremost, love your mother and follow her commands. It is only when you make her happy that your life will also be happy. If she sheds tears for any reason, you will have to suffer for your entire lifetime.

Very few people today have recognised the value of a mother’s love. If the mother were to say something, they try to snub her saying, “Keep quiet; I know everything.” Yet others bluntly tell her, “Shut up. You need not advise me. I am highly educated. I have a number of degrees. Do I not know?” You may have earned degrees in the academic field, but did you acquire a degree in general knowledge useful for leading a balanced life? Only parents can teach that knowledge. One has to serve their father and mother and make them happy, apart from acquiring high degrees. Then only can one lead a happy and peaceful life. These are the things one has to learn and carefully follow in life.

Dear Students!

Do not underestimate the importance of singing the glory of the divine name. *Hari Bhajana Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi ...* (Without singing to the Lord, there’s no peace or happiness ...). Participate in *bhajans*, which bring a lot of peace and confer bliss on you. *Bhajan* is a group activity where a number of people come together (*samashiti*) and sing the glory of God. One important point in *bhajans* is that everyone should join in singing the *bhajans*. There would be a lead singer and all others follow them. If you are not confident of your voice, at least repeat the divine name in your heart. Unfortunately, today, people have no time even for that. You may forget any item of work in your daily life, but never forget remembrance of the Lord’s name (*namasmarana*) and singing the name of the Lord (*nama sankirtana*). The divine name is eternal. Hence, constantly contemplate on the divine name.

Sankranthi, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-01-15

It is a good sign that more and more youngsters are coming forward to join the *Seva Dal* (selfless service organization) and take part in service activities. The participation of youth is necessary for the welfare of the world. We should rejoice when they turn over a new leaf in their life. There is a commonplace saying that you should not rejoice and distribute sweets, etc. when a child is born, but you should do so only when the child grows up and earns a good name as a good son (*satputra*). You can’t please

Me just by joining the organisation. I shall wait for the day when you turn over a new leaf and transform yourselves into better individuals. You should become persons of sterling character and good qualities.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

I do not insist that a person have faith in God. I refuse to call any person an atheist. Beings exist as a result of His will, in accordance with His plan, so no one is beyond His grace. Besides, everyone has love toward some thing or other, and that love is a spark of the Divine. Everyone ultimately has to base their life on some one truth; that truth is God. No life can be lived out in complete defiance of truth; one has to pay heed to truth and speak the truth to someone in order to make life worth living. Now, that moment is God's moment and at the moment when one utters the truth or loves, or serves or bends, one is a theist.

So, not even devotion is essential. It is love, truth, virtue, the eagerness to progress, to serve, to expand one's heart, to take in the whole of humanity in one's love, to see all as forms of the divine consciousness.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3. Understand The Principle Of Unity

People undergo a lot of difficulties and struggle day and night for the sake of money
They even stealthily resort to unfair means to earn money.

Their ego and mental aberrations add to their sufferings.

As long as the world is in such a bad condition, one cannot escape from suffering.

One can attain peace and prosperity only when one is true to one's word and mind is full
of sweetness.

One cannot have the vision of God with a disturbed or wavering mind.

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

TODAY the entire world revolves round money. Right from a student to a vegetable vendor, everyone runs after money. One cannot definitely say that this person has more craving for money or that person. Everyone considers money as the be-all and end-all of life. People undergo all sorts of difficulties for the sake of money, but nobody undergoes difficulties for the sake of God. God protects all. One may have any amount of money, but life without God is no life at all. However, people who give highest importance to God in their life are very few in number. There are fewer still who contemplate on God.

God is present in everyone in the form of Love

That is why we have started *bhajans*. There may be a few who take to wrong path even after joining *bhajans*. But, by and large, people will contemplate on God when they sing His glory. There may be many types of waves in the ocean, but water in all of them is the same. Similarly, people may have different types of thought currents, but the same God is present in all of them. Beings are many but the *Atmic* principle in all of them is the same. "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*)." Those who adhere to this truth are in fact real devotees. The essence of all the *Vedas* lies in establishing this truth.

But such people who understand this truth are not to be seen today. Never forsake truth. When truth and righteousness come together, one can experience peace and love. Truth is the basis of everything. "Truth is Brahman, which is one without a second (*Sathyameva adviteeyam Brahma*)." Truth embodies the form of love.

Embodiments of Love!

Love does not come from somewhere outside. It is immanent in the heart of everyone. Man cannot live without love. This love assumes many forms, such as love between husband and wife, between mother and child, and between friends. In spite of its different forms, love is the same. If someone asks you where God is, you can say that God is present in the heart of everyone in the form of love. This love signifies the principle of oneness. The life that is led by observing the principle of love is true life. Without the principle of love it is no life at all. All other values are contained in love.

Here is a small example. A few days ago, Shourie left his mortal coil. Many people joined his funeral proces-

sion. When his body was cremated, the five elements of his body merged with their source — earth merged with earth, fire with fire, air with air, so on and so forth. What remained in the end? Just a heap of ash! But the *Atmic* principle in him followed its divine course.

Everything is immanent in Brahman. Brahman is one without a second. Therefore, if someone asks you what your name is, you should reply, “I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*); I have no other name.” People call God by many names, such as, Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana, but Brahman is one. “Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal (*Brahma sathyam jaganmithya*).”

People give many names to God. Names are given according to the liking of individuals. Mother gives some names to her children and calls them by those names. In the same way, we call people by various names in this world. But God has only one name and that is Brahman. One who understands the principle of Brahman becomes Brahman himself. All the names of God such as Rama, Krishna, Govinda, and Narayana refer only to Brahman. Hence, we should not attach too much importance to names.

Truth, right conduct, peace, and love are divine principles. When we adhere to these divine principles, we can attain the proximity of God. Contemplate on any name of Brahman with the feeling that He is present in all. You may identify others by any name, but Brahman is present in all of them since He is omnipresent. Wherever we look, we find only Brahman. Brahman is the only reality. Therefore, always contemplate on Brahman. Everyone should chant “*Namah Sivaya, ... Namah Sivaya, ... Namah Sivaya.*” The principle of Brahman is present in this sacred *Panchakshari* mantra.

[Sai Baba chants this mantra in His discourse on 19.2.2004: <http://www.saicast.org/discourses.htm>.]

I have been seeing both Easwaramma and Pedda Venkama Raju (Sai Baba’s parents) for the last one month. They also appeared before Me when I was coming to Sai Kulwant Hall. Even Satyajit, who sleeps in My room, has seen them. Both of them were wearing yellow dress. Yellow colour represents the principle of Brahman. Today I wanted to bring out an yellow colour *linga*. But as I was coming to the Hall, all the students, devotees, and residents of the ashram prayed to Me, “Swami, You need not bring out *linga* because we cannot bear the suffering that You undergo. We want to see only Your blissful form.”

My heart is totally pure. Whatever I will must happen. The heart of the worldly people is always unsteady, but Sai’s heart is steady and changeless. How can there be any change in the principle of truth? Nobody can understand this eternal principle of truth. Once there was a yogi who mastered the *Vedas* and other scriptures after putting in a lot of hard work. When he was asked what he had learnt, he said that he had mastered all the *Vedas*, *Puranas* (mythological texts), and other scriptures. However, what is that from which all these scriptures originate? All these have originated from the Word. What is the form of the primordial Word? It is *Om (Pranava)*. God is embodied in sound. All other forms of energy emanate from it.

In the same way, the sound of Siva’s small drum (His *damaruka*) when He performs His cosmic dance contains the sound of all the musical instruments. There is a song that describes the cosmic dance of Siva. The form assumed by Siva while performing the cosmic dance is possible only for Divinity and none else. We should never forget such a divine form.

Lord Siva is lost in ecstasy
Parameswara, Sambasiva is lost in ecstasy,
dancing and dancing the Tandava dance

With Sage Narada accompanying on Tanpura and
the Lord's matted locks are shining brilliantly.

Wielding the Trident, Siva is dancing
Tadhim, Tadhim, Tadhim Tadhimtaka.

Lord Siva ...

With Goddess Saraswathi playing the Veena and
Indra the flute, Lord Vishnu on Mridanga,
Dhimi Dhimi Dhimi Dhimitaka.

Lord Siva ...

With Ganga coursing through his matted locks, and
the third eye flashing on his forehead,
as the crystal rosary sparkled and glinted,
Siva danced the Tandava.

(Telugu song)

Man Should Remember His Divine Parents

The cosmic dance of Parvathi and Easwara (Siva) is most enchanting. None other is capable of performing it. Parvathi and Easwara are the divine parents of all the people of the world. We will be free from all suffering when we constantly remember them, but, today, nobody remembers them. How can then people have protection?

Once when Siva and Parvathi were moving about in the sky, they saw a person cutting the branch of a tree on which he was sitting. As he was on the verge of falling, Parvathi prayed to Siva to save him, "Oh Lord, please save him when he falls on the ground."

But Siva said to Parvathi, "It is you who saw him first. It is you again who realised that he would die when he falls down. So, it is your responsibility to save him."

Then Parvathi submitted, "Dear Lord, when someone falls on the ground, he will either utter 'mother' or 'father'. If this man utters 'mother', I will save him, but if he utters 'father', you should save him."

Easwara agreed to this proposal. As the branch broke, both Siva and Parvathi came forward to save him. But while falling, this man did not utter either 'mother' or 'father'; he cried 'alas!'. Though both Siva and Parvathi were waiting to save him, he did not call them.

The moral of the story is that we should always remember our parents. One who does not remember his parents even in times of difficulty is really a fool. Lord Easwara and Mother Parvathi are universal parents. If one constantly remembers them, one will not encounter any difficulty or suffering. Unfortunately, today people do not remember their parents. That is why they lack protection.

When our end approaches, we should remember either our divine mother or our divine father. Those who remember their divine parents are really blessed ones. What, to talk of our divine mother and divine father, people today do not remember even their own parents!

Why should one remember one's mother? It is the mother who carries you in her womb for nine months and gives birth to you. She brings you up bearing all difficulties. He is a fool who does not remember his mother with gratitude. Similarly, your father bears all types of difficulties to provide education to you and brings you up in life.

Is it possible for you to progress in life without going to a preceptor and acquiring education? Hence, everyone should always remember their parents. You may or may not remember anybody else, but you must remember your parents.

Message Of Sivaratri

Easwaramma is the mother of this body. The meaning of the word 'Easwaramma' is 'mother of Easwara (God)'. In the history of Divinity, Mother Easwaramma exemplifies divine Motherhood. Not only this. Pedda Venkama Raju, the father of this body, signifies the lord of seven hills. Now both of them are residing in Vaikunta (heaven). Swami is the incarnation of both Parvathi and Easwara. In the triune Sai *Avatars*, the first one was Shirdi Sai, the second is Parthi Sai, and the third will be Prema Sai. Prema Sai will bring about complete unity of mankind.

Love is the unifying force in the world. Now we do not find any unity in the world. There are differences and differences all along everywhere. There will be complete unity only when love manifests in the heart of everyone. Then all will become one. There will be unity of caste, culture, and country. When somebody asks you where you came from, do not say that you came from Mysore (Karnataka) or Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu. Say that you have come from Bharat (India). You should proudly proclaim, "Bharat is my country." In fact, Bharat is the home of everyone.

When I visited East Africa, Idi Amin asked Me where I had come from. I did not say that I had come from Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh. I told him, "I came from Bharat." If everybody develops such feelings of allegiance to their country, the whole country will prosper. Very soon, the whole of India will be united, and all differences will disappear. It is necessary that there be unity of caste, culture, and country. When there is unity between these three, then all of us will become united and live like brothers and sisters. The history of Bharat exemplifies this spirit of oneness.

In the story of the *Ramayana*, both Kausalya and Kaikeyi shared their pudding of the sacrifice (*yajna*) with Sumitra when the bowl containing her share was taken away by an eagle. While Kausalya gave birth to Rama and Kaikeyi to Bharatha, Sumitra gave birth to Lakshmana and Satrugna, both of whom served their elder brothers Rama and Bharatha, respectively. Thus, all three wives of Dasaratha and his four sons set highest ideals of unity and love in the world. In keeping with the noble traditions set by the *Ramayana*, we should always maintain unity, morality and spirituality.

The name Sumitra itself signifies that she was a good friend to one and all and a paragon of all virtues. Similarly, Sita's other name, Vaidehi, signifies that she was the daughter of Videha (one who transcended body consciousness). The *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharatha*, the *Bhagavatha*, and other scriptures contain names that signify great qualities of persons bearing those names. In the same way, God is called by different names, all of which have deep inner meaning. The name of this body is Sathya Sai. But this has a deep inner meaning; it signifies one who reclines on truth (*Sathya Sayee*).

We should all become united. People may speak different languages and pursue different disciplines of education, but all should follow the principle of one country, one caste, and one culture. The present differences have arisen because people are divided on the basis of caste, language, and culture. The message of Sivaratri is that Bharat (India) should achieve the objective of unity of the entire country.

Embodiments of Love!

Wherever you may go, you should say with a sense of pride that you belong to India, that you follow Indian culture and speak its language. It would be very nice if you understand the principle of unity, develop faith in it, and lead your life accordingly. There should be unity of caste, culture, and country. Only then can our country achieve desired progress.

The name 'Bharat' contains two syllables: '*Bha*' and '*rat*'. '*Bha*' signifies God and '*rat*' stands for love. Hence, Bharat is that country where people have love for God. Understand this truth and treasure it in your heart. (Bhagawan sang the *bhajan* "*Hari Bhajan Bina ...*") Whoever wishes to have peace must participate in *bhajan*. *Bhajan* alone can confer true peace on us.

Sivaratri, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-03-06

4. Redeem Your Life By Good Actions

One is born out of *karma* (action),

One lives and dies in *karma*.

Karma is verily God,

And it is responsible for one's happiness and sorrow.

(Telugu poem)

K*arma* (action) is verily the life of a human. Whatever actions one undertakes to perform from morning to evening, one should first understand and then perform. This is your primary duty. The nature of the action that you perform determines the type of result you get. When you perform good deeds, you will have good results. On the other hand, when you performs actions with evil intention, the results are bound to be bad.

Man should behave like a human being

Bats fly in the sky like all other birds, which perch on the branches of trees to take rest. However, unlike birds, bats hang from the branches with their head down and feet up. Has anybody tied them in this manner with a thread? Or, has someone forcibly put their heads down? No. It is the result of their *karma*. In the same way, a person who harbours evil thoughts and performs evil actions is bound to get evil results. However, a person who performs good actions will get good results in accordance with the nature of the actions. When we look at them, even bats appear to be like other birds, but they have a different fate unlike other birds, which fly freely.

We cannot escape from the consequences of our actions. But we perform bad deeds and expect good results. Nobody desires bad results after performing good actions. However, every action has a result in accordance with its nature. When you write correct answers to the questions put by your teacher in the examination, you get good marks. But if you commit mistakes, your marks will be deducted. In the same way, one who is born as a human being should perform actions after enquiring what is good and what is bad. To perform good actions is the primary duty of man. To perform bad deeds is the attribute of an animal.

Always remind yourself that you are a human being and that you should perform only such actions that be-hoove a human being. You should ask yourself before performing any action, "Am I behaving like a human being or an animal?" We should perform actions after examining them in a proper way. Humans should perform actions that befit their human birth.

If you act contrary to human nature, even your neighbour will chide you, saying, "Having been born as a human being, you are behaving like an animal." In this manner, one will be punished by one's fellow human beings if one behaves like an animal. Therefore, conduct yourself like a true human being. It is a disgrace to humanness to behave like an animal. You must conduct yourself in a manner that is appropriate for a human being. The result of good actions will be good and of bad actions will be bad.

Do not forget your humanness

There is no need for God to punish you for the bad actions performed by you. Your own bad actions will give you the punishment. It is not possible to get good result out of a bad action and vice versa. We should understand

the truth that we are born as human beings only to perform good deeds. The word *manava* (man) consists of three syllables: *ma*, *na*, *va*. *Ma* means ignorance, *na* means without, and *va* means to conduct. A human being is one who conducts themselves without ignorance. One who is born as a human being must conduct oneself like a human being and speak sweetly and softly.

Among the birds also there are many categories. Some of them sing sweetly and give happiness to all. But others, like the crow, are disliked by people and are driven away when they start cawing. One feels like listening to the song of a cuckoo for any length of time. Similarly, the type of treatment that we receive from others is in accordance with our speech and behaviour.

We are born to do only good deeds. Human beings should always help their fellow human beings. Help Ever, Hurt Never. We should not hurt anybody. Sometimes, we hurt others knowingly. This is a greater mistake. God has given mind, intellect, and mind stuff (*chittha*) to humans to use them in a proper way. It is for this reason that the *Vedanta* declares, “mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (*Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo*).”

The mind that has been gifted by God to humans should be put on the right path. It is not the real nature of a human being to criticise others, to make fun of them, or to hurt them. One should be devoid of all such evils. When even animals are doing service to humans, there is nothing great if people help their fellow humans. Having been born as human beings we should love our fellow human beings like our brothers and sisters. That is the hallmark of a true human being.

First and foremost, obey the command of God. The same divine principle is present in all human beings. “God is in the form of a human being (*Daivam manusha rupena*).” One should implicitly follow the command of God, who incarnates as a human being. You should listen to the command of God and not of your friends who may be very close to you. We are born as human beings. Our appearance is also like a human being. So, we have to conduct ourselves like a human being. Never harm anybody by your thoughts, words, or deeds. Conduct yourself as a human being and uphold your humanness.

Whatever caste or culture you may belong to, you should acquire goodness in accordance with that. Since you are born among human beings and live among human beings, you should follow humanness. Only then will your life as a human being become worthwhile. If you forget your humanness, there is no use in performing any amount of recitation of God’s name, penance, spirituality, and sacrifice. Whatever spiritual practice you undertake, you can be called a human being only when you uphold humanness.

First achieve unity of thought, word, and deed

Perform only such actions that will please God. Then only will your life as a human being become meaningful. Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest. Do not waste such a precious and rare human birth. You will lose your humanness completely if you indulge in falsehood, injustice, and unrighteousness. Therefore, have good thoughts, good speech, and good vision. See good, do good, be good. This is the inner meaning of human life.

Some people may appear to be good and smiling but their mind is filled with evil intentions. This is not good.

*Manasyekam vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam;
Manasyanyat vachasyanyat, karmanyanyat duratmanam*

Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones;
Those who lack harmony of these are wicked.

One should have unity of thought, word, and deed. If you have unity, then you will attain purity, and purity will lead you to Divinity. Therefore, have purity in order to attain Divinity. Saying one thing and doing something else is not good. This is no unity at all. How can you have purity when you are devoid of unity? Therefore, if you want to have purity, you must have unity.

Suppose somebody criticises you; you should think that this also is for your good. Whatever others may do, think that it is all for your own good. Perform all actions with the aim of redeeming your life. See to it that you do not lose your humanness. You may lose any property, but do not lose the property of humanness.

Lead your life always smilingly and blissfully. But laughing unnecessarily is also not good.

Perform all actions with good intentions. When you perform good actions, your thoughts will also be good. When your mind is filled with good thoughts, all your bad thoughts will disappear. Therefore, always develop only good thoughts. This will lead to good health. We should love everyone. Love all, serve all. If you adhere to these principles, you will always have good health.

It is necessary to be healthy. Health is not limited only to the physical body, it includes mental well-being also. Never eat improper food. Eat only food items that are good and sacred and have been sanctified by offering to God. Do not offer improper food to God. Offer only sacred and pure (*sathwic*) food to God in clean utensils.

You get the result in accordance with the offering that you make. As are the actions, so will be the result. It is not possible to get good results by performing bad actions. Therefore, we should perform good actions and experience good fruits. Then only can we have good health. If we eat good food, we will have good thoughts. But people today say one thing and do something else.

Once a renunciant (*sanyasi*) came to a house and begged for food. The housewife said to him, “My dear son, go to the river and have your bath. Meanwhile, I will prepare food for you.” This renunciant was an epitome of laziness. He said to her, “Mother, for renunciants like us, reciting the name of Govinda is like having a bath.” The intelligent housewife gave him a befitting reply, saying, “Reciting the name of Govinda is like having food. Hence, you may go.” It is meaningless to say, “reciting the name of Govinda is like having a bath,” to justify laziness and not have a bath. When you say that reciting the name of Govinda is like having a bath, you should also accept that the recitation of His name amounts to having food. We should observe propriety in our life.

Understand the importance of good company

Sometimes, you may get bad thoughts. You should immediately change them into good thoughts. For this, good company is necessary. “Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are,” it is said. When you join good company, you become good. On the other hand, when you are in bad company, you become bad. Hence, always have good company. How can anybody accept you as a good person when you indulge in smoking, drinking, and meat eating? If you want to be good, perform only good deeds. Whatever the type of action you perform, you will get the result according to that.

Human life is most sacred. It is attained as a result of merits earned in many previous births.

Thousands of people have gathered here. For what? Only for God. Many people gather at places like liquor

shops also. But there you cannot have good thoughts. Therefore, always have good company.

Join good company and develop good feelings. Do not have jealousy, anger, and ego. Not only that. Have gratitude for every good thing done to you by others. Gratitude is very important. One with a sense of gratitude will reap its good fruits wherever they may be. Some people betray even those who have done good to them. This is not good. We should be grateful even for a little good done to us. Your life will be a mere waste if you lack gratitude. Develop good qualities.

Wherever you may go, conduct yourself with good feelings and serve everyone. Even if you come across your enemy, offer your greetings to them. Then they will also reciprocate in the same manner. On the other hand, if you talk to them with disrespect, they will also show disrespect to you. Our entire life is reaction, reflection, and resound.

If you want to achieve good results, lead a good life. If you work hard and study well, you will secure first rank. But if you do not study well, how can you get good marks? If you do not study well and yet get good marks, people may doubt that you have copied in the examination. Your conscience is your witness that you got good marks because you had written your examination well. Hence, do good and experience goodness. Only then will your life as a human being become meaningful. Live your life as a human being.

You need not pray to God for protection. Your goodness will protect you. Your goodness is your true support in life. “Mind is the witness of mind (*Manasuku manasu sakshi*).” We do not need any other witness. Lawyers say, “witness, witness, witness”. But what sort of witness? Not always a true witness. Our true witness is only our mind.

Whether it is for earning money or for developing virtues, we should act in a righteous manner. Do only such acts that are acceptable to our conscience. Self-satisfaction is very important. We can perform self-sacrifice only when we have self-satisfaction.

Students! Right from this age, you should develop good feelings. That is true education. There is no use reading big books without developing good feelings. Many students appear to be studying all the time, but nobody knows what they are really studying. Study something only after knowing that it is good for you. Do not read books that teach you to go on paths contrary to humanness.

Perform all actions to please God

You are all students, so your only objective should be to acquire education. But what sort of education? Education of the Self (*Atma vidya*). You should study for self-satisfaction. Some students study day and night, but nobody knows what they are studying. They have big big books, and within those big books they keep trash books and read them. Their parents feel happy thinking, “Our child is reading the *Mahabharatha*!” Do not resort to such evil practices. When you act in this manner, you will lose respect in society. Not only that, your life itself will be ruined.

First and foremost, students must control their anger. Thereafter, they should develop forbearance. Not merely that, they should always be peaceful. Only when you are peaceful can you understand the real meaning of what you are studying. At this age, students have a sacred heart. Offer your pure heart to God. You may not be able to please everybody in this world, but you can please God. If you return the money given to you by someone, they will be satisfied. But you should not only return the money but also give them your love. Treasure that gratitude

in your heart. Then only you can say that you have repaid your debt.

Everybody wants happiness. But where is happiness? “There can be no happiness and peace without chanting the name of God (*Hari bhajan bina sukh Santi nahin ...*).” That is why Guru Nanak started the practice of community singing. When many people sing the glory of God together, at least a few of them may be able to focus their mind on God and achieve self-satisfaction. Some people may be dozing during *bhajans*, while the mind of some others may be wandering here and there. But at least one person’s mind will be focused on God. Hence, community *bhajan* singing is very good; it will fill your heart with bliss.

Yesterday was *Sivarathri*. *Sivarathri* means auspicious night, the night to develop virtues. Day and night come one after the other. But all nights are not *Sivarathris*. The night on which you recite the name of God is the real Sivaratri. That is the night which brings auspiciousness to you. Hence, develop good feelings in your heart at least on Sivaratri.

Sivaratri, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-03-07

Students should realise the importance of service, to realise the Divine. It makes **One’s** life significant and purposeful.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Doctors must proceed to slums and villages and help the dwellers. There is urgent need for this type of selfless service. Lawyers must take up the cases in which wrongs are committed on the poor through their ignorance and plead on their behalf for justice. They could devote time for at least two or three such cases per week. Their pleadings on behalf of the poor should not be cursory and casual. They must be as earnest and as effective as the rest ...

This day is really a day of joy. I am happy I am amidst persons dedicated to service. **I**t is essential that members of such clubs pay attention to our spiritual advancement also, for that ensures our attainment of the goal of life.

The worldly and the spiritual are like the two wings of a bird, the two wheels of a vehicle, equally essential and equally important. By means of spiritual practices, earn spiritual wealth and share it with those whom you serve.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5. Have Self-confidence And Achieve Everything

The land whose sons are known for name and fame across the continents,
The land whose heroes fought invaders and conquerors to achieve freedom,
That famed land whose sons of wisdom and scholarship are the praise of the globe,
That land of saints, poets, singers, and divine songsters,
Oh sons of Bharat, go forth and uphold your heritage and be worthy of your glorious
past.

(Telugu poem)

It is not possible to describe the greatness and glory of the land of Bharat (India). There are many men of affluence as well as great leaders even today. But what is the use when they are not prepared to get rid of their greed and devote their life for the welfare of the needy. Born in this sacred land, the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) should try to sanctify their life by serving the poor and needy.

Embodiments of Love!

Divinity exists in all in the form of consciousness. The doctor and the judge who spoke earlier talked about Swami and His mission. But their talk was limited more to worldly matters than to spirituality. One may acquire all types of education, but without spiritual knowledge, all this is just a waste.

People today have everything, except self-confidence. In the word ‘self-confidence’, ‘self’ refers to ‘I’. What is the meaning of ‘I’? That which cannot be seen by the physical eyes, heard by physical ears, or comprehended at the physical level is ‘I’. It is divine, auspicious, and all-pervasive in the form of consciousness (*chaitanya sakthi*).

All beings in the universe are the creation of God. There is nothing in this world that is not divine. People observe differences between one another. This is a great mistake. All are one. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names. There is no second entity in this world. With hands, feet, eyes, heads, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe.

There is none in this world in whom God is not present. Everything is permeated by Divinity. Nobody has a right to say that this is divine and that is not. God is present even in difficulties, sorrow, and misery. Though we have the capacity to understand this divine power, we are, unfortunately, not able to use it. When we observe the natural scenario around us, we see vast areas of land and a number of rivers such as Yamuna, Ganga, Pinakini, Cauveri, Tungabhadra, Godavari, and Saraswathi. In spite of having such a vast land with numerous rivers, there is scarcity of food for human beings. What is the reason? The reason is that humans are not making proper use of their innate power and potentiality. Instead, they are misusing their powers and wasting their intelligence. If one makes efforts in the right direction, one can achieve everything.

What we ought to know beyond our senses

Have faith that everything that you see in this world is an aspect of Divinity. There is nothing else other than this. Only One exists in this world; there is no second. We are unable to understand this truth, and we suffer from many misconceptions. We are prepared to believe what others write in their books, but no one is prepared to

have faith in their own self. People have all types of confidence except self-confidence. What is the use of having everything except self-confidence? If only we have self-confidence, we can achieve everything; there is nothing in this world that we cannot accomplish. We should make efforts to recognise this principle of *Atma*, which is divine, auspicious, and ever new.

But people today do not make efforts to know themselves. When we ask anyone who they are, they will say their name given by their parents. If you put the same question to God, He will say, “I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*).” Because we are unable to recognise the truth, we take the wrong path and get confused. We do not make efforts to know what we are supposed to know. On the other hand, we try to know that which is not possible for us to know by our senses. Is it possible to know Divinity, which is all-pervasive? It is impossible.

Hence, whatever happens, recognise it as the will of God. All the differences are born out of our own feelings of mine and thine. In fact, there is no difference between you and Me. You and I are one (loud applause). Do not think that God exists separately in a particular place. Think that you are God. You are not the body. The body is like a water bubble. The mind is like a mad monkey. The intellect wavers. Hence, you are neither the body nor the mind nor the intellect. You are you. Make proper efforts to know this truth.

The Rama story

Tomorrow is Rama Navami. This is the day on which Sri Rama was born. There is a story about it. In the *Thretha Yuga* (era), King Dasaratha ruled over Ayodhya. He married Kausalya, who was the daughter of the king of Kosala. After some time, she gave birth to a daughter. She was named Santha. But Dasaratha was not satisfied with the birth of a female child and wanted a male child. Therefore, he gave the female child to a friend who adopted her.

Thereafter, Dasaratha had no more children, so he wanted to have another wife. As per the prevalent customs in those times, he had to seek the consent of the first wife before marrying another woman. Dasaratha went to Kausalya and said to her, “I am thinking of marrying again.” She replied, “Certainly you may do as per your wish.”

After securing Kausalya permission, he married Sumitra in the hope of getting a son. But she also did not bear him a child, and King Dasaratha became very worried.

At that time, he received information that the king of Kekaya had a beautiful daughter by name Kaikeyi. He approached the king and proposed marrying his daughter, telling him that he already had two wives. He always spoke the truth. “There is no *dharma* greater than adherence to truth (*Sathyannasti paro dharma*).” He never said anything that was untrue. He explained everything in detail to the king of Kekaya.

The king of Kekaya said, “You already have two wives, and they have not borne you any children. Now you want a third wife. I can give my daughter in marriage to you on the condition that the son born to her will be the heir to your kingdom”. Dasaratha agreed to that condition. Manthara, who was Kaikeyi’s main maid, heard all their conversation. Accordingly the marriage was performed with great rejoicings.

However, Kaikeyi also did not bear any child even after the passage of a long time. Therefore, Dasaratha decided to perform the *Putrakameshti Yajna* (a sacrifice prescribed for those who want a son), as suggested by his well-wishers. Sage Rishyasringa, along with his wife Santha, came to Ayodhya to perform the sacrifice.

On the eleventh day of the performance of the sacrifice, an effulgent being appeared from the fire in the sacrificial altar with a vessel containing a sweet pudding (*payasam*). Dasaratha gave the pudding to sage Vasishta and asked him to distribute it equally among the three queens. Accordingly, Vasishta distributed the pudding to Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi. Kausalya and Kaikeyi took their share of the pudding to their respective worship rooms. Each of them was happy, thinking that her son would be the future king of Ayodhya. Kaikeyi thought Dasaratha would crown her son as per the promise made by him at the time of marriage. Kausalya thought that, she being the first wife, her son had every right to become king.

But Sumitra had no such claims. She was a paragon of virtues. Her name, *Su-mitra*, 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 and left it on the Matanga Mountain. Anjana Devi found the bowl and partook of the sacred pudding. Consequently she became pregnant and gave birth to Hanuman.

Sumitra ran down and informed Kausalya and Kaikeyi about what had happened. They came to her rescue and shared their pudding with her. Kaikeyi gave half of her share to Sumitra. Kausalya did the same.

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. When we enquire into the reason, we can understand the mystery behind it. The sons of Kausalya and Kaikeyi were happily playing in their cradles whereas Sumitra's sons were crying all the time and were not taking milk. Sumitra was at a loss to know the reason for their crying and tried in vain various types of methods and mantras to make them comfortable. Ultimately, she went to Sage Vasishta and told him about her predicament.

Sage Vasishta closed his eyes. 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 (*amsa*) of Rama. Similarly, Satrughna is born out of the share of pudding given to you by Kaikeyi. So, he is a part of Bharatha. Put Lakshmana by the side of Rama and Satrughna by the side of Bharatha. Then they will rest peacefully."

Sumitra did as instructed by Vasishta. 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.

Since both sons of Sumitra, namely, Lakshmana and Satrughna, were always in the company of Rama and Bharatha, she had nothing much to do. Time and again she would go to Kausalya and Kaikeyi to see how her sons were playing with their elder brothers. After seeing them, she would shower her love and affection on them. 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.

Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Satrughna grew up as young men of great valour and learning under the loving care of their parents and Guru Vasishta. When Rama and Lakshmana went to protect the sacrifice of sage Viswamitra, he took them to the court of King Janaka to participate in the *swayamvara* (festival for the choice of a husband) of his daughter Sita. There, Rama broke the Siva bow and won Sita's hand. The marriage of Rama and Sita became an occasion of great rejoicing in Mithila. The people of Mithila sang joyous songs, welcoming one and all to witness Sita and Rama's marriage.

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 with jewels pure and gleaming.
Rama shall tie the knot today to beautiful Sita.
Oh, what a fine match they make!
(Telugu song)

The women of the kingdom came to participate in the wedding and joyfully sang blithesome songs:

Come let us go and see the marriage of Rama and Sita,
The sight shall confer great merit.
Blessed are those who see this scene.
Oh, come, one and all, watch the sacred marriage with joy.
(Telugu song)

After marriage, as they were returning to Ayodhya, they heard a deafening sound. As they wondered where the sound had come from, Sage Parasurama appeared and roared, "Who broke Siva's bow?"

"I did," said Rama.

"If that is so, let us see if You can break my bow," and Sage Parasurama placed his bow in Rama's hands.

Rama broke even that bow with His left hand. Seeing that, Parasurama offered his salutations to Rama and submitted his two splendours (*kalas*) to Rama, who was already endowed with twelve splendours. Rama thus shined with his own twelve splendours, two splendours from his brothers, and another two given by Parasurama, that is, with all sixteen *kalas* of the *Virat Purusha* (the first incarnation of Brahma). With Parasurama's surrender, Rama's power became full and complete.

In due course of time, Dasaratha realised that he was growing old and that it was time to crown one of his sons as heir to his kingdom. Since Rama was the eldest of the four sons and he had all the qualities of a worthy king, he thought of crowning him as the heir to his kingdom. This news was received by the subjects of the kingdom with great joy and happiness because all of them thought that Rama was most suited to assume the reigns of the kingdom.

When Manthara heard this news, she went to Kaikeyi and reminded her of the two boons granted to her by Dasaratha. She suggested to her that she must demand from Dasaratha that Bharatha be crowned as his heir to the kingdom and Rama be sent to the forest for fourteen years.

Though Kaikeyi loved Rama more than Bharatha, she was influenced by Manthara's evil advice. She removed all her ornaments and lay down in great anger in her chamber. Dasaratha went to her chamber and asked the reason for her anger. When Kaikeyi demanded the two boons granted to her by Dasaratha earlier, he was very much distressed. But as Kaikeyi persisted with her demands, he relented and agreed to make her son, Bharatha, the crown prince of Ayodhya. But when she put forth the second demand, asking him to send Rama to the forest for 14 years, Dasaratha was crestfallen.

However, Rama immediately agreed to make Bharatha the heir to the kingdom and go to forest for fourteen years to uphold the promise given by his father to Kaikeyi. When Lakshmana heard this, he became very angry. In a fit of rage, he even thought of putting Kaikeyi and Manthara to death. Rama pacified him saying that it was

their foremost duty to follow the command of their father and that he should not do anything that would bring disrepute to their father.

Kaikeyi wanted Rama to go to the forest immediately. Lakshmana and Sita also decided to follow Rama. Lakshmana went to his mother, Sumitra, and sought her permission and blessings to serve Rama in the forest. Sumitra was very happy to hear that Lakshmana was following Rama to serve Him. Lakshmana then went to his wife, Urmila. As he entered her room, she was making a painting. She was a good painter. Lakshmana asked what she was painting. She replied that she was making a painting of Rama's coronation.

On hearing this, Lakshmana told her that Rama was not going to be crowned and was going to the forest for 14 years. He also informed her that he had decided to go with Rama to the forest for 14 years. Urmila did not have any objection to it and said, "Protect Rama and Sita just as eyelids protect the eyes. They are everything for you. Consider them as your father and mother. Never be slack in serving them. Never think of me even for a moment in the forest for these fourteen years. Only Sita and Rama should be uppermost in your mind." Saying this, she offered her salutations to him.

Sita, Rama, and Lakshmana got into the chariot and proceeded to the forest. Dasaratha ran after the chariot saying, "Oh Rama, stay for a while. Let me see your beautiful form at least for some time. Anyway, I cannot stop you from going."

The shock of separation from Rama was too severe for Dasaratha to bear. He ate nothing, and he refused to drink even a drop of water. All the time he was saying, "Rama, Rama ...". In this way, remembering Rama every moment, he left his mortal coil. All this happened because there was a reason behind this, and it was like this:

Once, Dasaratha went to the forest to hunt. As he reached the bank of a stream, he heard a noise and thought that some wild animal was drinking water. On hearing this sound, he shot an arrow at the source of the sound. That arrow hit Sravana Kumar, which proved fatal. Sravana Kumar had come to the stream to take water and quench the thirst of his old mother and father, who were blind and helpless. He was the only support of his parents and carried them with him in a *kavadi* (a bamboo stick with two baskets at each end) to all places of pilgrimage. When Dasaratha realised what he had done, he was grief-stricken that he had caused the death of the only son of old parents.

Before dying, Sravana Kumar asked him to carry the water to his old parents. When Dasaratha informed his old parents about the tragic death of their son, they were drowned in inconsolable grief and cursed him that he would also die a tragic death due to separation from his son. That is what had happened to Dasaratha. After all, a curse uttered by noble souls cannot be reversed.

After the marriage of Sita and Rama, Viswamitra left for the forest.

It is not enough to worship Rama only on His birthday. When Rama returned to Ayodhya all the people of Ayodhya joyously welcomed Him, singing His glory and chanting His name. In Bharat (India), we do not find any village that does not have a temple of Rama or a person who does not know the name of Rama. Wherever we go, the name of Rama is heard. Though thousands of years have passed, Rama's name is as fresh and new as it was in the past. Rama is ever new. The name of Rama gives joy to everyone. If even an old woman is asked, she would say, "I may not be able to say any other word, but I constantly chant Rama's name." Not even one person would be found in a village who does not know Rama's name. There is no village where you do not find temples of Rama. Even if the people are not able to build a temple, they will erect a small shelter covered with a couple of

sheets and install the idol of Rama in it.

Even after the passage of thousands of years, the name of Rama is known everywhere and is held in high esteem by the people. Nowadays, even in Russia, people are chanting Rama's name. In fact, the name of Rama has spread to every nook and corner of the world. The name of Rama is the crest jewel of all names. Everybody can easily chant this. Therefore, whatever task you are engaged in, you should constantly chant the name of Rama while performing that task. When you step out of your home or when you are on your way to college, keep chanting the name of Rama all the while. The name of Rama should become your life-breath.

Tamil New Year, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-04-18

Once you try with all your might, the Lord's grace will be there to help you forward. The first step in spiritual discipline is the cleansing of the speech. Talk sweetly without anger. Do not boast of your scholarship or attainments. Be humble, eager to serve; conserve your speech. Practise silence. That will save you from squabbles, idle thoughts, and factions.

Again, practise the attitude of joy when others are joyful and of grief when others around you are grieved. Let your heart move in sympathy. But the joy and grief have to be translated into service; they should not be mere emotions.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. Respect And Honour Your Mother And Make Her Happy

Students! Boys and girls!

Venkataraman spoke to you regarding today's function in a befitting manner. He is a very learned man, who has worked in the Baba Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai. He has also worked in some specific areas of science, earlier pursued by Sir C.V. Raman. He is the winner of many awards.

Now, what can I say about the mother of this body? Man has actually three bodies: physical, mental, and spiritual. Therefore, you are not one person but three: (1) The one you think you are, i.e. body, (2) The one others think you are, i.e. mind, and (3) The one you really are, i.e. *Atma* (spirit, God). Your true form is the *Atma*, not the body or the mind.

The life principle is the mother, not the body

In the circumstances that prevail today, very few honour their mother. Your mother carried you in her womb for nine months and gave you birth after undergoing many difficulties and hardships. Forgetting such a mother is like forgetting God. This amounts to forgetting yourself. Mother is your first teacher. It is the mother who feeds and nourishes you. It is on the lap of your mother that you grow up and experience all types of happiness. None should forget the love that he receives from his mother. First and foremost, our mother deserves our highest respect.

After the death of his mother, many people told Sankaracharya to take the body out. But Sankaracharya told them, "Neither my mother is going to leave me nor am I going to leave my mother. My mother and I are one forever. Bodies are different but the principle of the *Atma* is the same in both of us. You may go away from me but none has any right to separate my mother from me. Her body will be cremated in the compound of the house." Accordingly, Sankaracharya cremated the body of his mother in the compound of his house.

None can estimate the feelings of the mother. Even today, people of Palakkad either cremate or bury the body of their mother in the compound because they feel that such a great person like Sankaracharya had done it and that they should also follow the same. In the beginning, many people criticised Sankaracharya, saying in spite of being a learned scholar, he had committed such an act of impropriety. Knowledge of the scriptures is not that important; it is cultural refinement that has great value. Culture is that which brings about refinement.

Physically, your mother may not be with you, but your love for her should remain the same. The mother of this body sent a letter to me when I was in Kodaikanal. After that I came to Brindavan (Bangalore). Once she prayed that My name be on her lips at the time of her death. When she passed away in May 1972, Summer Course was in progress at Brindavan. She was hale and hearty. All of a sudden she called out, "Swami, Swami, Swami ..." I replied, "I am coming, I am coming ..." When I came down the stairs, she breathed her last.

As long as there is life in the body, we should take care of it. Once the life goes away the body has no value. Truly speaking, who is the mother? It is the life principle that is the mother, not the body. Body is like a water bubble, mind is like a mad monkey. For what should we keep the body?

Immediately, I asked for the car to be brought and sent her body in the car to Puttaparthi. I remained in

Brindavan. For the summer course, students had not come just from one college but from various colleges all over India. They all thought that Swami would not come to the class that day. Then what? Exactly at 9 o'clock, I entered the classroom smilingly. Students were surprised to see Me there. They were all thinking, "What is this? Swami's mother has passed away and He has come to the classroom."

Mother does not go anywhere. The body that was being addressed as 'mother' has left. But the mother is with Me only. Hence, there was no need to be sad. As long as I am there, mother is always with Me. Therefore, I told the students to be happy and not to feel sorry that the mother of this body had left her mortal coil. At that time, V.K. Gokak was the Vice Chancellor. He was also surprised, thinking, "What, Swami is talking like this!"

I have not taken birth from the physical body. After all what is this body! It exists when five elements are there in it. The body is like a bag containing five elements. When the five elements leave the body, it becomes an empty bag. Hence, one should not have undue attachment to the body.

All mothers and children should develop these feelings of detachment. As long as the mother is alive, we should respect her, honour her, and make her happy in every possible way. There is no need to be sad when she leaves the body.

Even here in Puttaparthi, people said, "What is this? Swami sent the body of Easwaramma, but He Himself has not come?" Why should I go with the body? The body is only a vesture. It is like a leather bag. When the five elements leave the body, the five senses also go with it. Then why should we grieve over the lifeless body? I arranged for whatever was supposed to be done at the worldly level. I remained in Brindavan and conducted the summer classes happily.

In this world, all the physical relationships are of our own making. Otherwise, who is related to whom? This relationship of mother and son is only at the physical level. The mother came, performed the acts that she was destined to perform, and then left. I have to perform My duty. Therefore, I engaged Myself in the performance of the task for which I have come. When we see from the worldly point of view, the body is physical and ephemeral.

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.

(Telugu poem)

We should keep the indweller (*Dehi*) in our view and not the physical body (*deha*). Everyone forgets the body when they go to sleep. When you can forget it in your sleep, why can't you forget it forever? However, as long as your parents are there, you should make them happy. Do not ignore their well being. We should look after our parents and treat them with love and respect. However, we should not have undue attachment to the body. The relationship between husband and wife is there only after marriage. Wife comes in the middle of your life, but mother is there with you right from the birth. It is sheer foolishness to forget your mother, who is with you since your birth and get entirely immersed in the love of your wife, who comes in the middle of your life.

Other relations like sons, daughters, grandsons, and sons-in-law are also formed in the middle of life. In fact, all worldly relations are temporary; they come and go like passing clouds. You have connections with these relations as long as you exist. Where is the connection when you yourself are not there? Hence, do not form any relationships on the basis of the body. However, perform all duties that you are required to perform at the physical and worldly level with earnestness. Your conduct should be good, and your deeds should also be good.

Never forget your mother; treasure her form in your heart. We come from the heart of our mother, and mother should always be in our heart. Therefore, your mother never leaves you; nor should you leave her. Mother and children are united with each other for ever.

*Twameva matacha pita Twameva,
Twameva bandhuscha sakha Twameva,
Twameva vidya dravinam Twameva.*

You alone are the father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth.
(Sanskrit verse)

Wherever you may be, keep your heart suffused with feelings of love for your mother.

Once Narasimha Murthy came to Me and said, “My mother has passed away.”

I asked him, “Who has passed away — your mother or her body?” I told him, “Your mother is here. I am your mother (loud applause). It is the body that dies. The body is like a water bubble. Bodies come and go. Therefore, have no worry about the death of the body of your mother. I am here with you. Ask Me whatever you wanted from your mother, I will give (loud applause). Hence, do not feel sad at all.”

From then onward, Narasimha Murthy is with Me. I give him whatever he wants. Mother, father, and other relations are temporary — coming and going, coming and going. But God is not coming and going. He is always present. Therefore, it is only God who is present at all times. The entire world is ephemeral and transitory. How many people have taken birth in this world? Are they all here now? Death can occur in any manner; it has no sign or symptom. Death is death. Even if some symptoms of death are visible, we should not worry at all.

Never ever show disrespect to your mother. Never make her shed a tear by your conduct. Keep her always happy. Her happiness will bring you all good things in life. But we should not worry at the death of our parents.

Recently, I also said in My discourse in Bangalore that both My mother and father appeared before Me. They smiled on seeing Me; I also smiled on seeing them. We should be happy when our parents smile. Small children smile at everyone. We also start smiling when they smile. Parents are also like small children. Mother always loves her children. Therefore, whatever high position we may attain in our life, we should never disrespect or look down upon our parents. Always consider them as God. Mother is God, father is God. That is why it is said, “Revere your mother, father, preceptor, and guest as God (*Matru devo bhava, pitru devo bhava, acharya devo bhava, atithi devo bhava*).

Parents are to be made happy at all cost

Mother gives you your body. Father provides the means of nourishment and growth of the body. Teacher gives you education. And God gives you everything. Therefore, never forget these four, and treasure them in your heart.

Mother and father have their place in the heart of a person. One should not forget them even if one is in great difficulty or upset over something. One who forgets their parents cannot be a human being. How can you exist without your parents? They are the seeds of your life; the very source of your life on earth. Therefore, parents should have prime importance in your life.

Even if you are old or in great difficulty, make efforts to make your parents happy as far as it is possible for

you. Feed them even if you have to resort to begging. Bear all hardships to look after them. Fulfil all their desires. This will result in the fulfilment of your own desires.

Everything in this world is reaction, reflection, and resound. None can escape from these. If you cause difficulties to your parents today, your children will cause difficulties for you tomorrow. You will get back the result of your actions without much delay. You may love anyone you like, but do not forget your parents. When your parents have not forgotten you, do not forget your parents.

*Mata nasti, pita nasti, nasti bandu
sahodaraha, artham nasti, griham nasti,
tasmat jagrata jagratah.*

Relationships like mother, father, brother, sister, and friend are not real.

House and wealth are also illusory.

Beware of this truth.

(Sanskrit verse)

Remember your parents at all times. Never forget them. It is for this reason that I have come here straight from Brindavan. Earlier, people thought that Easwaramma Day might be celebrated at Kodaikanal. But I decided that I should be here at Puttapparthi on 6 May and that a grand function should be held here and poor people should be made happy by distributing clothes and serving them sumptuous food. Wherever I am, I perform this function in the same grand manner. Never ignore poor people. Always remember them and help them.

But some people out of their distress and anger abuse and ridicule them. This is a great mistake. If you ridicule them now, it will come back to you in future. You may be thinking that you are ridiculing them, but, truly speaking, you are ridiculing yourself. Never ridicule or insult them. Always love them. If you insult them before others, you will also be insulted by others. You cannot escape from the reaction, reflection and resound.

Shun gambling, lust, and anger

Difficulties come and go. Even the mighty Rama had to cry like an ordinary man on account of his separation from His wife, Sita. Even the valorous Pandavas had to live in the forest, eating leaves and tubers. How much power and valour they had! Yet they had to live in the forest and bear all difficulties. Why? They were defeated in gambling. Similar will be the fate of all those who take to this bad path. Gambling is not good at all.

Similarly, drinking of liquor is also not good. Addiction to drinking leads to loss of control over oneself. Under the influence of liquor, a drunken man may say anything. Later on, he will repent after coming back to his normal senses.

Lust and anger are the two demonic qualities. Never allow them to come near you. In a fit of anger, we may say anything without considering its consequences. But after a few minutes, when we come to our normal mood, we will feel sorry, "Alas! Why did I abuse like this?" Therefore, first and foremost, kill the anger. Rama killed many demons and demonesses in the forest because of their evil qualities of lust and anger. Whoever one may be, whether male or female, if they have the evil qualities of lust and anger, they should be punished. Anger and lust are very bad for humans.

Love God. Adore Him and worship Him. He is your father, mother, and everything. Have relationship only

with God. God will never leave you. He is omnipresent. All the worldly people whom you love are like passing clouds. They come and go. But God comes and grows. Therefore, love God and have faith in Him. One who has love for God only is a true human being.

(Swami called a boy from Iran, who is a student of the Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, and asked him to chant *vedic* mantras.) See how beautifully this boy from Iran has chanted the *vedic* mantras! He is a Mohammedan boy. In their country, people are not allowed even to utter the name of Rama in public. When you ask him his name, he will tell, “My name is Sathya.”

(Swami asked this boy – “What is your name?” What is your parents name? Chant the *vedic* mantras nicely and learn all *vedic* mantras. Do you know *Rig Veda*?” The boy then recited *Rudram* and *Sri Suktam* with perfect intonation and pronunciation to the applause of the entire gathering.)

Everything is there in the *Vedas*. The essence of all the religions like Hindu, Islam, and Christianity is there in the *Vedas*. Even Christians sing the glory of God in the same manner. Even the Mohammedans extol the five elements and worship the god for wealth. Hence, God is one for all religions. God is one. There is difference only in names. Mohammedans offer prayers to God five times a day. Hindus also pray to God in the morning and evening. We should never say that the *Veda* is only for Hindus. *Veda* is for all.

That which is one and universal is the *Veda*. *Veda* can alleviate all types of suffering of man. Hence, it is good for everyone to learn the *Veda*. Many people from America also come here and learn the *Vedas*. Many people in Russia and Germany also recite *vedic* mantras both in the morning and evening. Since Hindus do not recite *vedic* mantras, they are forgetting them. Nobody should forget the *Vedas*. *Veda* and *Vedanta* are like your parents. We should always remember them and never forget them.

Students, whatever you may study, never forget God. Only then can you attain peace. People say, “I want peace.” There can be no peace without *bhajan*. (Here Bhagawan sang the *bhajan*, “*Hari Bhajana Bina ...*” and continued His discourse.)

Many people perform rituals and sacrifices for the sake of peace. Where can you get peace from? It is within you only. It does not come from outside. What comes from outside are only pieces, pieces, pieces! Peace comes from our heart only. Do devotional singing (*bhajans*) to attain peace. Only *bhajans* can give you peace.

Easwaramma Day, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-05-06

7. Remembrance of the Lord's Name: Highest Spiritual Practice

Embodiments of divine Atma!

From time immemorial, the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) have been performing various spiritual practices like rituals and sacrifices, repetition of God's name, penance, meditation, etc. to attain God. It has been their faith that one could attain God by undertaking such spiritual practices. But nobody knows about the will (*sankalpa*) of God, who is omnipresent.

God is the Indweller in the heart of humans

“With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, God permeates the entire universe (*Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, Sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati*).”

God has innumerable mouths, ears, eyes, hands, and feet. Wherever you look, God is present there. Such a Cosmic Being cannot be attained merely by undertaking spiritual practices. Nobody can say that God is this or that. Then what is the nature of God? He is most subtle and universally present. Whomsoever you salute or ridicule, it reaches God.

Ordinary mortals cannot understand such a subtle divine principle because of their own weakness. They seek satisfaction in earthly and worldly pleasures and have no yearning for ethical and spiritual attainments. All of them, from the most ordinary to the highly evolved individuals, undertake all types of rituals and sacrifices merely for their satisfaction. But God can be attained only by ethical and spiritual endeavours.

Desire to amass more and more money is increasing in all fields, more particularly in politics today. But this is sheer ignorance. As long as one is in the grip of this ignorance, one cannot understand the principle of Divinity. As long as your heart is filled with the feelings of 'I' (pride) and 'mine' (attachment), you cannot realise God. Therefore, what is the first and foremost requirement to know God? Elimination of the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'.

Many people offer worship and perform rituals to have direct vision of God, but this is not possible for anyone by such means. Then how can it be possible? All objects in creation are bound to perish one day or the other. The mountains can sink in water and rivers can dry up. The human body is also perishable. Nothing in this creation is permanent. Only God is eternal, immortal, infinite, and imperceptible. How is it possible for anyone to understand such a Cosmic Being? Some people imagine that they had a vision of God in meditation or in the yajna fire. But this is merely their illusion; such a vision is not everlasting. But where does God dwell? He dwells in the heart of all in the form of the *Atmic* principle. He has to be attained only by the principle of the Self. It is not proper to attribute various names and forms to Him.

Divine name has infinite power

When Rama reached the seashore to go to Lanka and bring Sita back after killing Ravana, many people felt that it was an impossible task because they thought Ravana was very wicked, fierce, and powerful. Moreover, there was a vast sea to be crossed, which was not possible. Rama suggested that a bridge across the sea be built.

Hanuman, Jambavan, and other monkeys asserted that the bridge could be constructed in no time. Agreeing to their suggestion, Rama commanded them to start constructing the bridge.

The monkeys then brought big boulders and parts of mountains from various quarters and started throwing them into the sea, but they all sank in sea water. How could the bridge be made in this way? It could not be made unless the rocks and boulders settled at one place. What could be done for that? Perceiving the difficult situation, Lakshmana said to Rama, “Dear elder brother, everything in this world is perishable and bound to sink. But there is one thing that does not perish or sink. And that is Your name. Your name is everlasting, ever true, and ever abiding. It is indestructible. The bridge should be constructed on the foundation of Your name.”

Rama commended Lakshmana by patting his back and said, “Lakshmana, you have suggested the correct method.” Hearing this, Hanuman said to Rama, “Swami, I can do this work.”

Now the monkeys started bringing the rocks, and Hanuman told them to write the word ‘Rama’ on each boulder. The boulders with the name ‘Rama’ written on them did not sink in water but started drifting away. Then Hanuman told them that they should write the letter ‘*Ra*’ on one boulder and ‘*ma*’ on the other. The monkeys did as commanded and threw the two boulders together in to the sea with devotion and steadfast faith. The waves of the ocean brought the two boulders together to make the word ‘Rama’. In this way, the bridge was constructed. No rock did ever sink and such a long bridge was constructed in a short time.

What was the foundation of the rocks and boulders? It was Rama’s name. Since all of them bore the two letters ‘*Ra*’ and ‘*ma*’, which constituted the name Rama, they floated on water.

As soon as the bridge was constructed, Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman, and the entire army crossed over and reached Lanka in no time. Vibhishana also said, “Oh Rama! Everything can be achieved by the power of Your name. Your name of just two letters has enabled the monkeys to build such a long bridge.”

The war with Ravana resulted in his death and the release of Sita from his prison. Thus, the name of Rama is most powerful and eternal. The form will sink at any time, at any place, and under any condition. But the Name will not sink and will save you wherever you are. In this way, Rama taught that the Name is ever true and eternal. None can ever damage or destroy it, nor can anyone take it away from you.

The war with Ravana could be won on the strength and power of the Name. It is, therefore, enough if you chant Rama’s name. Then you will be victorious in all your endeavours. Like the name of Rama, the names Krishna, Siva, Hari, and Hara also consist of two letters.

Make any name of God the basis of your life, and you can achieve everything. Name is eternal but form is ephemeral; the form has old age and death. Therefore, it is the Name that is most important. This is what Rama taught mankind. Therefore, chant the name of God constantly. Other spiritual practices like charity, rituals, worship, etc. are of little use if you do not chant the divine Name. The *Bharatiyas* (Indians) have been practising nine modes of worship of God, namely: listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His lotus feet, salutation, worship, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender.

The last and highest step in these modes of worship is self-surrender. Surrender does not mean offering your body to God. Real surrender is the chanting of the divine Name and making it the basis of your life. It is for the same reason that Guru Nanak, the first guru of the Sikhs, started community singing. He told his followers that they should seek fulfilment in life by chanting the divine Name. Therefore, all Sikhs give highest priority to

chanting of the divine Name in their life. In the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the holy place of the Sikhs, the divine Name is chanted constantly. Therefore, consider the chanting of the Name of God as the most important spiritual practice.

You may spend any amount of money in charity and in doing acts of service, but these practices will give you only temporary mental satisfaction if not associated with chanting the divine Name.

You see how people give useless advertisements in newspapers with the desire to earn money. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. Therefore, develop morality. This gives you purity of mind.

You recite the name of God one hundred thousand times and wait for the fruit of this spiritual practice. But this turns out to be a futile wait; you never get the expected result because you perform that as a mere ritual. What you get is temporary satisfaction.

Many rich people spend any amount of money in the performance of rituals and sacrifices, but when a beggar comes to their door for alms, they withdraw their hand. This is not correct. God cannot be attained by money. It is God who has given you all your money. Then why do you give it back to Him? Utilise your money on your worldly and spiritual pursuits. Also, use it to help poor people. However, you can attain Me only through remembrance of the name of God (*namasmarana*). Therefore, chant the divine Name and attain the Divine. It is only by chanting the divine Name that you can easily attain God.

When Droupadi was being humiliated in the Kaurava court, she prayed to Krishna to protect her and called out His many names, like *Dwarakavasi*, *Brindavana Sanchari* (dweller of Dwaraka, rambler of Brindavan), etc. Krishna did not come. Then she called out describing His attributes like *dayamaya*, *kripamaya* (embodiment of kindness, embodiment of compassion), etc. Still Krishna did not come to her rescue. But when she addressed Him as *Hridayavasi* (in dweller in her heart), He manifested before her that very moment. Where does God live? He lives in your heart. Therefore, there is no use calling Him with the feeling that He dwells somewhere outside.

The form is perishable but the name is eternal

It is possible for you to acquire any number of worldly and material things, but you are not able to attain God, who is right within you. See God, who is immanent in you. Look inside, don't look outside. Close your eyes and pray to God, who dwells in you. Then only will God manifest before you and grant you everything. It is only by chanting the divine Name that you can receive God's grace and His direct vision.

Nagar sankirtan (walking the streets in a group, singing devotional songs) has been devised to spread chanting of the divine Name (*namasmarana*) among people more and more. While chanting the name of God in *nagar sankirtan*, do not extol the attributes of God. There is no use extolling the attributes of God any number of times. God is the embodiment of the *Atma*. The *Atma* is attributeless.

Names such as Krishna, Rama, Sai Baba, etc. are names of the bodies of *Avatars*. The *Avatars* were not born with these names. Names were given to them by others. It is the body that has birth, not the *Atma*. Death can come to the body at any time. When you ask God His name, He will reply, "I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*).” He will not say, "I am this or that form.” "I (*Aham*)” has no particular form; it connotes the *Atma*. We give many names to the *Atma* and seek satisfaction by calling out these names. Not only that, we clamour so much for this temporary satisfaction. This satisfaction is not permanent; it is ephemeral and lasts only for a short time. Only the *Atma* is ever true, everlasting, and eternal.

Rama incarnated thousands of years ago, but His Name lives even today. Even now, when we are faced with any difficulty, we say, “Oh Rama!” It is the Name that is eternal and not the form. Therefore, contemplate on the name of God, have His direct realisation, install Him in your heart, and merge with Him.

When there is an earthquake, thousands of houses are destroyed. Many rivers like Cauveri, Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswathi flow in India, and when the rivers are in flood, several villages are washed away and many lives are lost. Hence, forms are not permanent; forms are ephemeral and perishable. But the formless Ganga and Yamuna are flowing within you in the form of *Soham* (I am God). ‘*So*’ in the right nerve channel and ‘*Hum*’ in the left, both joining the central nerve channel (*sushumna*). By activating this subtle channel *sushumna*, you should reach your spiritual heart.

Many of you know that when people go to a temple, they close their eyes and offer their salutations to the idol of the deity installed there. Don’t you go there to have the *darshan* (sight of a holy person) of the deity? Then why do you close your eyes on reaching there? You do not look at the idol of the deity in the temple while you chant ‘Rama, Rama, Rama’ within you. Similarly, when you go to Tirupati, you stand before the idol and chant ‘Venkateswara, Venkateswara, Venkateswara’. You pay a fee to enter the temple and have *darshan* of the deity. In spite of that, you close your eyes when you are in front of the idol. Develop this inner vision if you want to have the grace of God.

Perform all actions to please God

Do you know why has God given you eyes? Not to see anything and everything but to see the Lord of Kailasa (Siva’s mountain abode). Why has God given you hands? Has God given you hands only to take food into your mouth? No, no. God has given you hands to serve mankind. Similarly, God has given you tongue to chant the name of God. Do you know why has God given you feet? Not to roam about in all the countries of the world, but to go round the temple of God. That is how you should sanctify the organs of the body given to you by God.

You say, you do selfless service (*seva*). But do you know the meaning of the term? Is it to massage the feet of somebody with your hands? No, no. When you serve anyone, develop the feeling “I am serving Rama,” “I am serving Krishna,” “I am serving my deity.” Develop such feelings in your heart more and more. Whatever you eat, whatever you do, everything should be done with the feeling of offering it to God. Perform all tasks to please God. Whatever work you do, consider it the work of God. When you develop this feeling with total dedication, then God will manifest before you.

Fill your mind with the name of God. If you fill your mind with the name of God, you will experience immense bliss. Devotional songs have been devised to fill your mind with divine Name. “*Hari bhajan bina sukha santi nahin ...*” (There can be no happiness and peace without chanting the name of God). It is enough if you adhere to the divine Name. Then you do not need to offer any other material like flowers, food, etc. to God. God does not need your flowers, which if you offer in the morning will dry up in the evening. You offer food to God.

You place it before the deity and then eat it yourself! Why do you do this drama of offering food to God? Instead, offer your love to God. That is the food of God. It is love that is most important. Love has no form. Truth, right conduct, peace, love, and nonviolence are the gifts of God to man. Truth has no form. The name *Sathy*a (Truth) has been given to this body, but Truth is formless. Truth is eternal. It does not undergo any change in the three periods of time — past, present, and future. “There is no right conduct (*dharma*) greater than adherence to

truth (*Sathyannasti paro dharma*).” Right conduct originates from truth only. Where there is truth, there is right conduct.

Where there is no truth, right conduct (*dharma*) also does not abide there. When there is truth in your heart, you would be endowed with right conduct. When you have truth and right conduct, peace will descend on you and you will experience supreme peace. You say, you try to attain peace and pray for it. Where is peace available? Is it available in a shop or in a marketplace? No, no. It has to come to you from you only. It is, in fact, present in you. When you have peace, love will shine in you. The evil qualities of anger, hatred, jealousy, hypocrisy, and ostentation cannot even come near a person who is endowed with love.

Speak truth under all circumstances

Love has no form of its own. Whatever you desire, you start loving it. Have love and give love to all. Do not hate anyone. Where jealousy and hatred are not there, conflicts cannot exist.

The students sing the song: “Perform the journey of your life with truth, righteousness, peace, and love as your companions (*Sathya dharmamu, santhi, premalato nee nitya jivana yatra saginchu*).” Therefore, first and foremost, develop truth. Speak truth under all circumstances. Do not tell a lie to escape from blame. You can escape from blame temporarily by telling a lie, but your heart will be devoid of peace forever. When you do not have truth, how can you get righteousness? Therefore, first of all protect truth. Truth is God. There are no two truths; truth is only one. God is truth. Therefore, always protect truth. Whatever you do, tell it truthfully.

If you give room to evil qualities like anger, hypocrisy, jealousy, etc., you are bound to ruin yourself. When your heart is bereft of truth, you cannot do anything good. When you truthfully tell someone, “I bought this article for three rupees and will give you for five rupees,” you earn a profit of two rupees. But if you demand ten rupees for the same article by telling a lie just to earn more profit, you will be inviting many more untruths. This is the main reason that people today have become victims of so many miseries. Do not tell lies. Do not burden yourself with the load of sins by telling lies. Do not tell lies to earn more profit. You will have to undergo so much suffering due to this. Lead your life with love. Whomsoever you address, speak to them with love. When you thus lead your life with love, you will attain everything.

Embodiments of Love!

There is love in everyone of you, but you do not make proper use of it. Rather, you put your love to misuse. How far can a people go if they walk on their head instead of their feet? God has given you feet for walking. Similarly, God has given you tongue to speak truth. Speaking untruth is like walking on your head. How long can you go like that? God has given you head to make proper use of it and think: “What is good and what is bad? What is truth and what is untruth?” While saying or doing anything, first think whether what you are saying is true or untrue and what you are doing is right or wrong. After due consideration, take only to the path of truth. Conduct yourself in accordance with God’s command. Speak only that which is truthful.

Truth is another name of God. Constantly chant the name of God.

There is no use spending money aimlessly on rituals and worship. Instead, give food to the hungry and clothes to the needy. Do as much as you can, but never do anything by forsaking the name of God. If you give alms to a beggar, chant the name of Rama while giving alms. Chant silently in your mind; there is no need to

chant loudly. Mind is the foundation of your life. “Mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (*Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo*).” Whatever your mind may forget, it should not forget the name of God.

Give up all demonic qualities

It is by the power of His name that Rama crossed the ocean and reached Lanka. Hence, we should cross the ocean of our difficulties and troubles by using the power of the divine name. Only the Name is enough to root out all our anxieties, troubles, sorrows, miseries, worries, and maladies.

Lust, anger, jealousy, envy, and hypocrisy were the qualities of the demons who lived in Lanka. Do not give room to these demonic qualities in your heart. If you allow the demon of anger to abide in you, that itself is enough to turn everything bad in your life. No work of an angry person becomes fruitful. Anger distances even your relatives and friends from you. Therefore, do not allow anger to come near you. Lead your life constantly chanting within you the name of God, who is the embodiment of peace and love.

When all individuals develop peace in them, the entire country will become good and peaceful. Those who aspire for the welfare of the country should live always in love. Lead your life without causing any harm to anybody. We sing this prayer after the conclusion of *bhajans*: “*Loka samasta sukhino bhavantu* (may all the people of the world be happy)!” Remember God with love. The entire world will be good by the power of love. Devotees should never do away with love. Even if others criticise, abuse, or beat you, lead your life with love. Live in love. Love lives by giving and forgiving, self lives by getting and forgetting (loud applause). Fill your life with love. Even if someone beats you, do not abuse him. Think that it is God only who has punished you like this.

Everything happens according to what God wills. It is God who gives you troubles and joys; it is He who protects you and punishes you in many ways. Everything is God. Therefore, offer everything to Him. Whatever you get in your life, consider it the gift of God. Do all actions to please God. When you think like this, you will attain great blessedness. If He could make boulders float on water, can He not make your mind float in the ocean that is this world (*samsara*)? Cross this ocean by converting the mind into a bridge. Use it to cross this vast ocean and kill the demons of lust and anger.

To cross this ocean, you must do *bhajan* and sing the glories of God. *Bhajan* is very necessary to realise the glory of the divine name. When so many people do *bhajan* together, the prayer from the heart of at least one or two will reach God. Won't even one person among so many have a sacred heart? Hence, there is a great possibility of your melting the heart of God by community singing. *Bhajan* is very necessary to melt the heart of God. When you do *nagar sankirtan* (walking the streets in a group, singing *bhajans*) early in the morning, everybody will get up and listen to the divine Name. Hearing the name of God as soon as they wake up will fill them with great bliss and enthusiasm. Therefore, constantly remember the name of God; never forget it. This is the most noble path. This is true spiritual practice. When you do this, you will be immensely blessed.

Brindavan, 2008-05-24

People talk about Swami's *vibhuthi* (sacred ash) and Swami's miracles, but the real miracle is Swami's boundless love. It is this love that is inspiring countless devotees to engage themselves in selfless service.

Sathya Sai Baba

Students must have a challenging attitude toward things; they must honour physical labour. They should be eager to be of service to those who need it on account of their disabilities. Honour also your elders and do not miss any chance of serving, honouring, or pleasing them.

Whatever gives you health and joy, welcome it, but do not lower yourself by indulging in vulgar pastimes. Do not wander aimlessly in the streets or frequent cinema halls, mix with undesirable company, or cultivate bad habits just for sake of fun.

This country has to be raised to great heights through you, not through its present leaders, remember ... You boys must say to yourselves, "... We shall not belie our words in our actions. We will act together in harmony and love." If you develop such virtues, the nation will prosper; if not, it will be ruined. Have this warning always ringing in your ears.

Sathya Sai Baba

8. Seeing Unity In Diversity Is True Spirituality

All names and forms are manifestations of the Supreme Being,
Who is the embodiment of peace and auspiciousness.
He is existence, knowledge, bliss Absolute, and non-dual.
He is truth, goodness, beauty (*sathyam, sivam, sundaram*).
(Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

PEOPLE today acquire many types of education in this world, but they lack the knowledge of humanness. They see diversity in unity but cannot see unity in diversity. Embodiments of love! It is very easy to see diversity in unity; anyone can do that. But it requires a lot of effort to recognise unity underlying the entire diversity that exists in this world.

Recognise the divine principle present in all

People today should try to acquire the knowledge of the *Atmic* principle that is uniformly present in all. One who knows the principle of the *Atma* knows everything. Consider all human beings in this world as one, and recognise the oneness of the entire mankind.

Religions are many but goal is one.
Clothes are many but yarn is one.
Jewels are many but gold is one.
Cows are many but milk is one.

There is unity in the entire creation of God, but mankind causes many divisions in it. Unity of the entire mankind is the need of the hour. When you develop unity, there will be purity in your heart. Where there is purity, there is divinity. Unity, purity, and divinity are closely interlinked and interdependent. But people today are drifting away from unity. I have been saying, “Religions are many, but goal is one.”

So many people have gathered in this hall. Though they took different routes to come here, the destination for all of them was the same. In the same way, all have to reach one God. Divinity is immanent in every human being. Human life is not possible without Divinity. “God is in the form of a human being (*Daivam manusha rupena*).” Who is a human being? Without understanding the meaning of this term, people consider someone as a human being who is endowed with human form, with hands, feet, ears, eyes, etc. like a human being. But it is not so.

In fact, a human is not different from God. A human is not a separate entity. One who realises one’s oneness with God is a true human being. There may be differences in physical forms of human beings, but the same divine principle is present in all. However, some people cause differences between person and person by various ways. This is the cause of all types of conflicts, sorrows, and miseries in the world today. When one understands the truth that the same divine principle is present in all, there will be no room for differences and troubles. Therefore, always focus on the Divinity of humanity. All our difficulties arise when we multiply our differences, forgetting our Divinity. Therefore, we should firmly install the divine principle in our heart, which is the same in everyone.

You can accomplish everything by chanting the divine name

I told you a few days ago, how Hanuman crossed the ocean and reached Lanka by the power of the divine name of Rama. Before this, all the monkeys (*vanaras*) gathered on the seashore were asked the question, “Who can cross the ocean in one leap?” Some of them said they could cover a distance of 40 leagues; others said they could go up to 50 or 60 leagues. But when the same question was put to Hanuman, he said, “By the grace of Rama, I can cover any distance.” While others had a limited understanding of Rama’s Divinity, Hanuman alone had total perception of the reality.

It is not spiritual practices like repetition of God’s name, penance, yoga, and rituals that give us direct perception of God. Many people have been undertaking these practices, but what have they experienced and achieved? These are merely physical and external practices.

It is the name of God that is most important. When you know this truth, you will know everything. That is why I keep on telling you from time to time “Hari *bhajan bina sukhas santi nahin ...* (There can be no happiness and peace without chanting the name of God).” You can accomplish everything by chanting the name of God alone. Hanuman crossed the vast ocean by constantly chanting the name of Rama. But other monkeys misunderstood this truth.

At the time of construction of the bridge over the ocean also, Hanuman told the monkeys to write ‘*Ra*’ on one stone and ‘*ma*’ on the other and throw them in the ocean. The stones would then join together to form the bridge. Rama, Lakshmana, and the monkeys crossed the ocean and reached Lanka by walking on this bridge constructed on the principle of unity of the divine name of Rama. We should treasure this truth in our heart.

Instead of observing differences on the basis of names like Rama, Lakshmana, Bhima, etc., we should recognise the *Atmic* principle in them and consider all as embodiments of Divinity. Spiritual practices like repetition of the name, meditation, sacrifices, and yoga have little significance if the divine name is absent in your heart.

You have a name, which was given to you by your parents after your birth; you were not born with this name. What you are born with is the principle of Rama. That is the *Atma*. Call it *Atma*, call it *Omkaara*, call it Rama, all refer to the same divine principle. Even if you come across your enemy, offer your salutations to them. Your salutations do not go to your enemy, they reach God. When you greet your enemy lovingly, saying “hello”, they will also give up hatred and become friendly with you. But people today out of their ego identify themselves with their names. They consider themselves as Ramaiah, Krishnaiah, etc., instead of saying “I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*). This is the root cause of all our differences.

The name that is universally present in all is the name of Rama. When you offer your salutations to others while contemplating on Rama, your salutations will reach Rama. Therefore, do all actions to please God. All our daily chores like cooking, eating, etc. are suffused with the principle of Rama. People undertake worldly, external, and physical practices because they do not understand this subtle truth.

Ego and attachment are the cause of bondage

All the developments in science are only at the worldly and physical level. Scientists have developed planes that can fly at high speed and cover hundreds of miles in a minute. But they expose people to all sorts of dangers. All worldly things are bound to perish one day or the other. A potter makes many pots, but if they slip from our hand, they break into pieces.

There is no greatness in all that we do for our individual benefit; whatever we do should be beneficial to society and the community. Our welfare lies in the welfare of society, but, today, nobody thinks about society. Wherever we go, we find selfishness and self-interest rampant. That is why there are so many conflicts and differences in the world.

There are divisions even in one family. Due to the increase of differences among people, unity has been shattered. Therefore, strive for unity. You and your neighbour are one. There is difference only in your names, but Divinity immanent in both of you is the same. There is no mistake in calling people by different names when the divine principle of unity is firmly embedded in your heart.

Perform your duty as a householder. But this is your worldly duty, and you must recognise your duty as a divine being (*daiva dharma*), which is universal. That is why I address you as “embodiments of divine *Atma* (*Divyatma Swarupulara*)”. When a man wants to say that what he is saying is absolutely true, he would use the term ‘*Atma sakshi*’ meaning *Atma* is his witness. Therefore, we should conduct ourselves recognising the principle of *Atma*.

Unity of the world today has been destroyed due to the abnormal increase in the differences of people. Therefore, do not observe differences on the basis of names and forms. Develop faith in the *Atmic* principle. *Atma* is only one. It is indivisible and cannot be broken into pieces. Only the body dies, but the *Atma* lives forever. It is said that every human being undergoes the cycle of birth and death. But it is only the human body that takes birth, grows, and dies, not the *Atma*. Therefore, know the oneness of the *Atmic* principle.

Let people say anything, you should recognise that your *Atma* is your witness. Do not give up this divine principle under any circumstances. Whatever you do, do it for the sake of *Atma*. Whatever delicious items of food you eat, consider them as an offering to God. Whatever you do in life, do it with the feeling of offering it to God. “Do all actions to please God (*Sarva karma bhagavad preetyartham*).” When you have such sacred feelings, you can attain liberation easily.

One can attain *moksha* (liberation) only when one gives up *moha* (worldly attachment). The feeling of ‘I’ is the cause of ego and the feeling of ‘mine’ is the basis of attachment. Ego and attachment are the cause of your bondage. Therefore, first and foremost, try to get rid of ego and attachment. As much as you reduce these two, that much closer you will get to liberation. Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure. Reduce the burden of your desires.

But people, on the other hand, keep on adding to the burden of desires as they grow. As their desires increase, humanness in them decreases, and they lose awareness of their Divinity. Therefore, we should develop Divinity in us. Everything else is bound to perish one day or the other. Howsoever safe and secure we may keep our possessions, ultimately we have to lose them. We may deposit all our money in a big bank, put it under lock and key, and arrange proper security for it. In spite of all that, we are bound to lose it some time or other. Do not have temptation for things that are perishable. What remains with us forever at all places is the principle of the *Atma*.

Develop the spirit of unity

Though thousands of years have passed since Rama incarnated as the son of Dasaratha, all people, from a child to an old man, even today chant His name. People say, ‘Rama, Rama’ when they encounter any difficulty. This sacred name is whispered into the ears of a dying man. It is Rama’s name that you should love and nothing

else. Since He attracted everyone, He was given the name 'Rama'.

You may chant any name of God, but you should have firm faith that the *Atma* within you is the divine principle. Then you will not have any difficulties.

We accumulate so much money, but for whom? Can we carry even a paisa with us when we depart from this world? No, no. We leave even our body here. The mind may waver and the intellect may be clouded, but the *Atma* remains as the eternal witness. That is the principle of Rama.

The name Rama does not denote any particular form. It denotes the divine principle. Therefore, always chant the divine name, be it Rama, Krishna, or any other name. Siva means auspiciousness. It is only the name of God that imparts auspiciousness to us. We may say Srinivasa, Venkatesa, Rama, etc. All these denote the same divine principle. Install this divine principle in your heart.

People chant 'Ram, Ram, Ram,' performing repetition of the name. When the repetition comes to an end, Rama is also forgotten. But we should never forget Rama. Whatever work we may be doing, we should constantly chant the divine name. In the *Kali Yuga* (the present era), remembrance of the name (*namasmarana*) is prescribed as the means to attain liberation. Realising this truth, Guru Nanak started the practice of community singing. All should come together and sing *bhajans*. The mind of some may go in other directions. But at least a few of them will focus it on God's name. Therefore, when you do *bhajans* in a group, the prayers of at least one or two may reach God, which will benefit all.

Do we eat all the fruits that ripen on a tree? No. We eat only a few and distribute the rest to others. We prepare a desert in our house. All the family members partake of it; one who prepares it does not consume the whole lot.

When Dasaratha performed sacrifice for the birth of a son (*putrakameshti yajna*), an effulgent being emerged from the sacrificial fire and gave him a vessel of sweet pudding (*payasam*) to distribute to his three wives, Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi. (Here Swami narrated the story of the birth of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Satrughna and revealed the mystery why Lakshmana always followed Rama and Satrughna followed Bharatha.)

There was such a strong bond of love between Rama and Lakshmana as well as between Bharatha and Satrughna that they never left each other's company. See how much power this unity holds! Union is strength. When you don't talk to each other and don't develop unity, you achieve nothing. Even if some feelings of enmity arise in you, try to adjust with each other. Devotees should conduct themselves gracefully with proper understanding and adjustment. Even if someone criticises the deity you worship, do not react to that criticism. Rather, think only that your deity has assumed the form of the critic. Praise and censure make no difference to God.

Always love all. When you love everyone in this manner, all evil qualities like hatred, anger, and greed will leave you. When you become free from these evil qualities, you will attain liberation easily. You claim that you are a devotee, but what is the use when you have hatred, anger, jealousy, hypocrisy, malice, etc. in you? These evil qualities will ruin your life. Talk smilingly to others and develop the spirit of unity.

So many people have come here. All of them have participated in *bhajans*, but how many have true devotion in their heart? Even if there are ten people with true devotion, it is enough.

All of you should imbibe the spirit of unity. Whomsoever you come across, say, "He is my brother, she is my sister." In this way, consider all as your brothers and sisters and conduct yourself with unity. All are children of God. Therefore, if at any time feelings of hatred develop between you and others, remind yourself that you are

not separate from them. Consider that all are one, attain unity, and experience its bliss. Seeing unity in diversity is divinity and true spirituality. Study of scriptures, performing rituals, doing worship, etc. do not signify true spirituality. Recognising the unity of the *Atmic* principle is true spirituality. When you realise this unity, you will earn divine grace.

You are always chanting, “Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram,” but this alone will not develop devotion in you. You should imbibe the spirit of unity and chant the divine name to develop true devotion. If you have even a trace of true devotion in you, do good to others and live in harmony with them. Do not hate anyone. Love all. If you have love and faith, you will develop nonviolence. Only then can you experience bliss.

Unity of the human race is imminent

What is the real purpose of telling you to develop truth, righteousness, peace, and love? Righteousness emerges from truth. “There is no *dharm*a greater than adherence to truth (*Sathyannasti paro dharm*a).” Without truth, there can be no righteousness. Similarly, love cannot exist without righteousness. If you have love, you will not hate or disrespect anybody. Truth, righteousness, peace, and love (*sathya*, *dharm*a, *santhi*, and *prema*) are the primary human qualities. Anger, jealousy, malice, hypocrisy, lust, hatred, and greed are not human qualities. If you have love and peace, all other virtues will develop in you automatically.

People keep on repeating, “I want peace, I want peace.” Can anybody get peace by this type of constant repetition? No, not at all. You can have peace only when you develop love. Peace is not a commodity that you can buy in the market. It comes from a heart that is filled with love.

Where does love come from? Love comes from righteousness, and righteousness comes from truth. Hence, truth is the source of righteousness, righteousness is the source of love, and love is the source of peace. Where there are both peace and love, nonviolence comes there on its own. Therefore, truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence are the qualities of a true human being. Consider them as your five life-breaths (*pancha pranas*).

Today, people have forgotten these five life-breaths of human qualities. Instead they harbour evil qualities like lust, anger, etc., considering them as their life-breaths. That is why people are enmeshed in so many difficulties. When you develop human qualities, you will surely attain peace. Therefore, preserve your innate human qualities like the five life-breaths. Keep away from evil qualities like lust, anger, etc.

Believe it or not, in the next 25 to 30 years, the entire human race will become one. People of all religions like Hindu, Muslim, Christian, etc. will be united. There will be complete unity in the world. It is from Bharat (India) that the spirit of devotion for God will spread to all other parts of the world. Treasure this truth in your heart.

People consider culture as a way of life. No, no, it is not so. Unity of all is culture; purity is culture. You will realise Divinity when you burn all your impurities. When you develop love, all your evil qualities like hatred, etc., will wither away.

People develop hatred and jealousy against those who excel them, saying, “Look how much money he accumulated! What a high position he attained!” They hate those who have greater achievements. This is not good. If someone has achieved more than you, consider your own incapability as the cause of your lesser achievement. Expand your love and broaden your heart. Then you will succeed in achieving more.

Victory and defeat depend on the feelings of your heart. It is with reference to this that the *Vedas* declare,

“The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation of man (*Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo*).” Our mind is the root cause of our feelings of love or hatred. Whatever work we do, we should do it with the spirit of unity. Perform all your actions to please God. That will surely lead to universal good.

After *bhajan*, we all chant, “May all the beings of all the worlds be happy (*Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu*)! What is the great achievement if you alone are happy? All should be happy. Your happiness lies in the happiness of all, your well-being lies in the well-being of all. You cannot be happy when others are not happy. Therefore, pray for the welfare of all, including small creatures and insects. This is the real meaning of unity. Only the heart that desires the well-being of all is dear to God.

All that I have said today is profound truth. This is the essence of devotion. What does devotion mean? It is not a big ocean. It is an ocean of bliss. That is what is described as:

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 aphorism “That Thou Art,”
One without a second,
Eternal, pure, unchanging,
Witness of all functions of the intellect,
Beyond all mental conditions and the three attributes of purity (*sathwa*), passion (*rajas*),
and inertia (*thamas*).

Nityanandam,
Parama Sukhadam,
Kevalam Jnanamurtim,
Dwandwateetam,
Gagana Sadrisham,
Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam,
Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam,
Achalam,
Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam.

We should attain this eternal bliss.

Brindavan, 2008-05-31

Do not postpone the cultivation of devotion to God. Start serving God through service to fellow beings. Every act of service, however small, is service to the Divine. Demonstrate, by reverential behaviour, selfless service, truthfulness, and integrity. Demonstrate that you are pursuing the ideals for which the Sathya Sai Educational institutions stand.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. Contemplate On The Name Rama

Embodiments of Love!

The seven day chanting of the divine name *Rama (Ramayana Saptaha)* has been conducted with great joy and devotion during the last seven days. You have all participated in this great event. The priests who conducted the event with great devotion and sincerity and the speakers from different parts who participated in it made the event a grand success. Setty Garu, who arranged this function, had made several conveniences for the priests and devotees and made every one happy.

Group singing of Rama's name is more effective

Constant contemplation on Rama's name and singing of the glory of that divine name confers bliss, peace, and prosperity on one and all. There are two ways of contemplating on the divine name and singing its glory: individual practice and collective practice. Of the two, collective practice is better. It was Guru Nanak who initiated the practice of group singing of the glory of the divine name. In fact, individual chanting of the divine name is not enough. If thousands of people join together and sing the glory of the divine name in one voice, the prayers of at least one or two individuals will certainly move Divinity. Hence, it is better to follow the collective method. Wherever you are, sing the glory of the divine name of Rama in a group. Contemplation on Rama's name confers peace and happiness. It is a universal spiritual practice.

The name 'Rama' is not limited to a particular form. It dwells in every individual as '*Atma Rama*'. The *Atma* that dwells in every individual is given the name 'Rama'. Hence, right from a child to a grown up individual, everyone has to undertake the spiritual practice of constant contemplation of Rama's name (*Ramanama*). We often see even blind people contemplating on *Ramanama*, saying 'Rama Rama'. Only the divine name can confer peace and happiness. Nothing else, not even wealth and property, can bring happiness and peace. Constant contemplation on the divine name can remove all worries.

To be born is a worry.

To live on this earth is a worry.

The world is a source of worry.

Death also is a worry.

All actions and difficulties cause worry.

Devotion to Sri Rama is the panacea for all worries.

(Telugu poem)

Hence, undertake contemplation on the divine name of Rama (*Ramachintana*) whenever you find yourself surrounded by worries. The name 'Ram' has been in the hearts of people for aeons.

The story of Rama's birth

In the *Thretha Yuga* (era), King Dasaratha of Ayodhya longed for sons to continue the Ikshvaku dynasty. He performed a sacrifice called '*Putrakameshti-yaga*', praying that he be blessed with a son. King Dasaratha had three wives: Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi. He had one daughter named Santha through Kausalya earlier, whom

he gave in adoption to his friend. She married Sage Rishyasringa. The sacrifice was conducted under the guidance of that couple.

At the conclusion of the sacrifice, Agni Deva, the fire god, emerged from the sacred fire (*homakunda*) with a vessel containing sacred pudding (*payasam*). He gave it to Dasaratha to be distributed equally among his three wives. Kausalya and Kaikeyi received their share of the sacred pudding happily and took it to their worship rooms. Both were very happy that their son to be born would be the heir apparent to the throne of Ayodhya. The claims of both appeared to be genuine — Kausalya’s by virtue of her being the eldest queen and Kaikeyi’s because of a promise her father had extracted at the time of her marriage to King Dasaratha that the son to be born to her would be made the King of Ayodhya. Dasaratha cannot go back on his word, as per the tradition of Ikshvaku family.

However, Sumitra had no such desire. She carried her bowl of pudding to the terrace and placed it on the parapet wall, while drying her hair in the sun. She was in a pensive mood, thinking that it was of no use to partake of the pudding because her son to be born would have no claim to the throne, like Kausalya’s or Kaikeyi’s. While she was contemplating on the future, an eagle swooped down and carried away the bowl containing the sacred pudding. She was shocked and disturbed, fearing the reprimand she would have to face from her husband for being careless. She at once rushed downstairs and informed Kausalya and Kaikeyi about what had happened. They hugged Sumitra and consoled her, saying, “Sister why are you so much disturbed? We three are one, and we will share our portion of the pudding with you”. So saying, they brought their bowls and poured some quantity of pudding from each of their bowls into another bowl and offered it to Sumitra. Unlike present times, there used to be perfect rapport between the co-wives in those days.

Thus, all three queens got their bowls containing the sacred pudding ready and took them to Sage Vasishtha and obtained his blessings. Thereafter, they offered their respects (*pranams*) to King Dasaratha and happily partook of the sacred pudding. All three queens became pregnant.

In due course, Kausalya, the eldest queen, delivered a beautiful baby boy, who was named Rama. The Universal *Atma* embodied itself in the womb of Kausalya. He was named ‘Rama’, meaning he who makes one and all happy. Kaikeyi also gave birth to a son, who was named Bharatha. However, Sumitra gave birth to two sons, who were named Lakshmana and Satrughna. Lakshmana was born out of the share of pudding given by Kausalya and Satrughna from that given by Kaikeyi. Hence, Lakshmana always followed Rama while Satrughna followed Bharatha. This is how the story unfolded:

Sumitra’s two sons, Lakshmana and Satrughna, were crying all the time, day and night, without even taking food. Sumitra could not bear the suffering of the infants. She went to sage Vasishtha and explained her predicament. Sage Vasishtha closed his eyes and meditated for some time. His yogic vision enabled him to realise the truth. He explained 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. Put Lakshmana by Rama’s side and Satrughna by Bharatha’s side. Then they will rest peacefully.” As soon as Sumitra acted accordingly, the babies became peaceful. As years passed, the four brothers grew up happily together.

Back to the story of the eagle taking away the bowl containing the sacred pudding kept by Sumitra on the parapet wall while drying her hair in the sun. The eagle dropped the bowl on the ground in a mountainous region where Anjanadevi was meditating. She picked up the bowl and happily ate the sacred pudding. As a result, she

gave birth to the great hero of the *Ramayana*, namely, Hanuman. While Rama and Lakshmana were moving in the Rishyamuka mountain range during their search for Sita, Hanuman approached them on the orders of Sugriva, the *Vanara* (Monkey) king. After asking about the purpose of their search, Hanuman took them to Sugriva and introduced them to him. He persuaded Rama to seek Sugriva's friendship and help in their search for Sita. The vow of everlasting friendship was solemnised in the presence of a ritual fire.

Sugriva then brought a bundle of jewels wrapped in a cloth that had been thrown by Sita from Ravana's aerial chariot (*pushpaka vimana*), which had carried her to Lanka. Sugriva placed the bundle before Rama in order to identify and confirm that they belonged to Sita. Rama called Lakshmana to his side and directed him to identify the jewels. Lakshmana, on seeing the jewels, expressed his inability saying "Oh Rama, I seek your pardon; I do not know of any jewels that were worn by mother Sita. However, I can identify her anklets, since I prostrated at her feet daily to pay my obeisance to her".

Undue desires bring untold miseries

During the stay of Rama and Sita in a hermitage built by Lakshmana in the Panchavati region, one day, at the behest of Ravana, Maricha the demon assumed the form of a golden deer and began moving about in the vicinity of the hermitage. Sita was fascinated by the charming golden deer and persuaded Rama to catch it and bring it to her, so that she could play with it. Rama decided to oblige her as per the divine plan. However, he instructed Lakshmana to stay behind and guard the hermitage and Sita from the wily demons during his absence.

As Rama went in pursuit of the golden deer, it went deep into the forest. Finally, Rama lifted his bow and released a fatal arrow on the deer. Maricha, in the guise of the golden deer, at last fell dead in his real form. However, before he breathed his last, he cried in agony, in a feigned voice of Rama, "Ha! Sita, Ha! Lakshmana." The cry fell on the ears of Sita and Lakshmana.

Sita, on hearing the cry implored Lakshmana to go in search of Rama immediately. Lakshmana counseled Sita that no danger could ever befall Rama and that this was all the plan of the wily demons. Sita was not convinced. She even used harsh words that hurt Lakshmana, while compelling him to go to Rama's rescue. Of course, this too was as per the divine plan that would unfold itself in the future. Left with no other option, Lakshmana agreed to go in search of Rama. However, before he left the hermitage, he drew a line around it and asked Sita not to step out of that line under any circumstances till he and Rama returned.

As soon as Lakshmana left the hermitage in search of Rama, Ravana approached in the guise of a sage. He stood before the hermitage and asked for food saying "Oh Mother, give me food." Sita heard him and decided to provide him food. She brought the food from inside the hermitage and tried to give it to Ravana standing behind the line drawn by Lakshmana. But Ravana insisted that Sita should come closer, across the line drawn by Lakshmana, and offer him the food. He pretended as though he could not bear the pangs of hunger any more. Finally, Sita obliged and crossed the line drawn by Lakshmana to give alms to Ravana. Just at that moment, Ravana assumed his real form and abducted her in his chariot. Ravana took Sita to Lanka and kept her in confinement under a tree in the *Asokavana* (a grove of asoka trees).

Sita lamented her indiscreet act of becoming crazy about a golden deer and the consequences that followed. She lamented, "Oh! Why did that sinful golden deer come near our hermitage? Why did I develop a fascination for that golden deer? Why did I ask Rama to catch it and bring it to me?" Of what use is all this repentance at this

stage? She found herself in captivity in Lanka.

Ravana kept three ladies to guard Sita during her incarceration in the *Asokavana*. One was Sarama, the wife of Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana. The other two ladies, Ajata and Trijata, who were daughters of Sarama. They were very considerate toward Sita, keeping up her sagging morale all the while by their comforting words. Sita wondered that such good people also existed in Lanka. In fact, it was due to their consoling words and protection that Sita could bear her ordeal courageously.

Though Sita was imprisoned in Lanka, Ravana did not dare to touch her. He knew that he would be reduced to ashes if he touched her without her consent. He was all the while pleading with her to accept him. When Ravana stooped to the level of denigrating Rama and threatened her, she, without even looking at his face, plucked a blade of grass and threw it before him saying, “You are a mean fellow. You are not worth even this blade of grass. How dare you denigrate Rama in front of me, you vile and vicious wretch.”

Sita had another name, Vaidehi, meaning one who has no body attachment. King Janaka was her foster father. He lovingly brought her up and gave her in marriage to Rama. There are several inner and subtle meanings in the story of *Ramayana*. In fact, Sita was not the sister of Rama, as has been portrayed in some texts. If she were to be the sister of Rama, how could King Janaka offer her as bride to Rama? Unfortunately, people do not realise these inner meanings.

The nobility of Hanuman

Hanuman was a great hero in the story of *Ramayana*. He led an army of monkeys (*vanaras*) in his holy mission of searching for Sita, who was kept in captivity in Lanka by Ravana. He was a very intelligent and faithful servant of Rama. He was a person of noble qualities and great physical strength. In his noble qualities and might, he was unparalleled. In fact, one whole chapter of the *Ramayana*, namely, *Sundara Kaanda*, was devoted to describing his qualities of head and heart.

While he was embarking on his holy mission of finding Sita in the city of Lanka, he was given certain identification clues about Sita. He was told that Sita was a woman of noble qualities and divine beauty and that she would not mix with the demon (*rakshasa*) ladies. He searched for Sita in every nook and corner of Lanka, including the inner chambers of the palace where Ravana’s queens and the ladies attending on them stayed. During his search, he came across ladies scantily dressed and fallen on their beds, intoxicated by drink and dance. But he was totally unmoved by these obscene forms, keeping always in his mind the characteristics and excellence of Sita that Rama had described to him earlier. His supreme stability of mind in such an environment befitted his true celibate (*brahmachari*) status. One cannot find parallels to Lord Rama and His noble servant Hanuman in this world. They are both unique.

The boys just sang a beautiful *bhajan*, “*Rama Lakshmana Janaki, Jai bolo Hanuman ki*”. During their singing, Hanuman’s name was mentioned after a little pause, indicating the importance of Hanuman. Only when people like Hanuman are worshipped and their qualities emulated can one cultivate good thoughts, good habits, good qualities, and good behaviour. It is said, “The end of education is character.” It is only in Rama and Hanuman that such noble character is to be found. Hence, constantly contemplate on Rama and Hanuman and their noble qualities. The different names like Rama, Krishna, Hanuman, Siva, Vishnu, etc. represent the one Divinity that is all-pervading. God is one; the names and forms differ.

Gold is one; ornaments differ.
Religions are many, Divinity is one,
The cows are many in colour; but milk is the same.
(Telugu poem)

You are Brahman

Similarly, God is one, though He is referred to by different names and forms. Different people, when asked to give their names, reply 'I am Ramaiah', 'I am Lakshmaiah', 'I am Govindappa', etc. But the real answer should be 'I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasami*).’ There can be no other names. All are embodiments of the divine Self. The *Atma* has no qualities (*gunas*). It is formless and attributeless.

The *Atma* is the embodiment of eternal bliss,
Wisdom absolute,
Beyond the pair of opposites,
Expansive and pervasive like the sky,
The goal indicated by the aphorism “You are That (*Thath twam asi*)”,
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
(*sathwa, rajas, and thamas*).

*Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham,
Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam,
Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam ...*

(Sanskrit verse)

Strictly speaking, God has no name or form, in spite of the fact it is said “God is in human form (*Daivam manusharupena*).” He has no birth and no qualities. He is formless and attributeless. When someone asks “who are you?”, reply “I am God.” Names like Ramaiah, Lakshmaiah, etc. are only those given by your parents after your birth. In fact, you have no specific name. All are embodiments of the divine Self. Whether you act the role of Ramaiah or Krishnaiah, you are essentially the same divine Self. Only the roles differ.

God is immanent in every human being, nay, every living being. He is the embodiment of *Atma* (*Atma-swarupa*). The one God is immanent in all human beings and all living beings, although names and forms may appear to be different. You must develop firm faith in the oneness of Divinity. Whomever you come across, offer your respects (*pranams*) to them. Pay your obeisance even to a beggar. He may be a ‘beggar’ as a physical entity, but he is ‘bigger’ as the embodiment of the divine Self. Do not develop hatred toward any individual. Do not consider anyone as your enemy.

In fact, they are all reflections of your own divine self. Everyone repeats “I, I”. Everyone claims, “This is my body, my mind, my intellect, and my subconscious mind.” Then “who am I?” That “I” is Divinity, in essence. The same “I” is referred to by several names.

The symbol of Christianity, the cross (†), signifies cutting off of the individual ego (*ahamkara*).

We say “I came here.” “I am going,” “I am coming,” etc. What is this “I”? It represents the one divine Self. You have to develop that feeling of one divine *Atma* permeating the entire universe (*Ekatmabhava*). That is real devotion. Do not differentiate between “I” and “you”. Those who desire to attain self realisation must shed this difference. They must get rid of the feeling of “I” and “mine”. We are all one. “All are one, be alike to everyone.” This is the essence of all philosophy. Be happy.

Srimad Ramayana Sudha Pravachano Saptaham, Prasanthi Nilayam. 2008-06-08

We owe a debt of gratitude to the Divine, which has not only endowed us with this precious human body but also sustains it. We shall be able to enjoy these gifts of the Divine only if we discharge this debt to the Divine. Do this by rendering service to other bodies saturated with the same Divine, by doing righteous deeds, and by consecrating all actions in the service of society.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Now, there are many social workers ... who visit hospitals and do service to the patients there. Most of the work they do is mechanical, like fanning the patients, writing letters for them, and singing *bhajans*, without paying heed to the actual requirements of the patients. Many do this work because it is the current mode of social service. But it must be work done with the full cooperation of the mind, gladly, intelligently, reverentially. The patient should not feel disgusted at the fussiness of the social worker but should look forward to the arrival of the person, of someone who is very near and dear. If you do not like that type of work, you need not engage in it. Do not burden your mind by the unpleasantness of the task. Work done mechanically is like the flame of an oil-less wick; the oil is mental enthusiasm; pour it, and the lamp will burn clear and long.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. Develop Faith And Self-confidence To Gain Self-realisation

By the power of love does the earth rotates without an axle,
By the power of love do the stars remain in the sky without falling on the ground,
By the power of love do the oceans confine to their limits without submerging the earth,
By the power of love does the wind god blow cool breezes in all the worlds,
That mighty power of love is verily the *Atmic* power.
That power of love is most wonderful, infinite, unique, and all pervasive.
The entire creation is saturated with love.
(Telugu Poem)

Call it love (*prema*) or truth (*sathyam*) or I (*Aham*), all are God's different names only! The *Vedas* declare "I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*)!" If God were to reveal His name, He would say "I am Brahman." That is His true name.

The entire creation is from Truth,
Into Truth the entire creation merges.
Is there a place in the universe
Where truth is not present?
The whole universe is a manifestation of pure consciousness.
Know this reality.
(Telugu poem)

God is the source and sustenance of all activities in this world. The entire universe moves according to His divine will and command. Shivraj Patil made an in-depth study of the *Bhagavad Gita* for some months and grasped the essence of the *Gita*. Finally, he wrote a commentary on the *Gita* in English. Several people write several books, but the *Gita* commentary written by Shivraj Patil is a unique work. Whenever he had an occasion to meet Swami, he used to show his work to Him, to check whether the interpretations given in the book were correct or not. In fact, the essence of *Bhagavad Gita* is contained in this small book. The *Gita* made a deep imprint on his mind and he beautifully recorded those impressions in his book.

God alone is the real guru

Today is Guru Purnima. What does it signify? People think that it is a day on which they offer some money to a guru, a mendicant, or a yogi, or a great person and obtain a mantra from him. It is not correct.

Gurur-Brahma Gurur-Vishnu
Gurur Devo Maheswara,
Guru Sakshat Param Brahma
Tasmai Sri Gurave Namaha.

Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu,
Guru is Maheswara.

Guru is verily the supreme Brahman.

So, salutations to the Guru.

Who is a guru? The verse (*shloka*) mentioned above states that a guru is verily Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer), and Maheswara (the destroyer). These are the different facets of God, and hence guru means God, verily. Purnima is the day on which the spotlessly clean and unblemished moon sheds his cool and steady light on the world. Whatever is said or taught with a pure heart is God's own word. People celebrate Guru Purnima as a guru-worship day, the day on which they worship their guru and offer some money or presents in return for some mantra or other sacred words taught to them by him. In fact, one's own heart is one's guru. Whatever comes from the depth of one's own heart is the real teaching of guru.

The unique guru devotion of Ekalavya

You all know the story of Ekalavya. He approached Dronacharya and prayed to teach him archery. Dronacharya turned down his request, saying that the sacred skills of archery must be taught to a valiant hero and not to a wandering tribal youth engaged in hunting animals. Ekalavya, however, considered Dronacharya as his guru and installed him in his heart. Even though Dronacharya did not give any instructions to him, he went and made a clay image of his guru and started worshipping it daily. He learnt all the skills of archery, constantly contemplating on Dronacharya as his guru. He became an expert archer in no time.

One day, the Kaurava and Pandava boys were playing near a well. Dronacharya happened to pass that way along with his wife and son, Aswathama. Observing that the young boys were going round and round the well making a big noise, Dronacharya went near them and asked, "My dear boys, what are you searching for?" The boys said that they were playing with a ball and it had fallen into the well. Dronacharya took an arrow from his quiver and shot it into the well. It went straight and stuck to the ball. Next, he released some more arrows one after the other, and with the help of the chain of arrows he pulled the ball out. The boys were wonderstruck at the skill of Dronacharya and reported the matter to their parents. Then Dronacharya was called to the royal court by Bhishmacharya and was made the guru of the Pandava and Kaurava boys to teach them archery.

One day, the Pandavas along with their guru Dronacharya were going on a hunting expedition in a forest. They had taken some hunting dogs with them. One of the dogs started barking. Immediately, an arrow released by someone from somewhere came like a bullet and stuck to the mouth of the dog. When they started searching for the person who shot that arrow, they came across Ekalavya who confessed to shooting the arrow. Arjuna realised that Ekalavya employed the technique of *sabdabhedhi* (shooting an arrow at a target, sensing the direction from which the sound was coming). Arjuna became jealous at the extraordinary skill in archery of Ekalavya, particularly his ability to use the *sabdabhedhi* technique.

Ekalavya prostrated before Dronacharya, whom he had considered his guru. Arjuna, seething with anger and jealousy, looked at Dronacharya and said, "You had promised me that you would not teach the *sabdabhedhi* technique to anyone except me. I implicitly believed your words."

Dronacharya replied, "I am not the guru of Ekalavya, nor did I teach this technique to him. You can ascertain the fact if you wish, from him."

Ekalavya was questioned. He replied, "It is true that Dronacharya refused to teach me archery. But, constantly contemplating on him as my guru, I learnt archery including the *sabdabhedhi* technique".

Ekalavya's reply fanned the flames of jealousy in Arjuna. He wished that none in the world could excel him in the skills of archery. He wanted to subdue Ekalavya somehow and make him powerless. He therefore prompted Guru Dronacharya to ask for *guru dakshina* (an offering to the guru made by a disciple as a token of gratitude for teaching skills) from Ekalavya.

Bowing to the wishes of Arjuna, Dronacharya asked Ekalavya, "What would you offer to me?"

Arjuna then made a subtle suggestion to Dronacharya saying, "Ekalavya informed just now that he had learnt the skills from you, treating you as his guru. Hence, it must be you again who should frustrate his efforts to excel in archery." Dronacharya then asked for an unusual '*guru dakshina*' from his 'disciple' Ekalavya: Ekalavya's right thumb should be offered to him.

Immediately, Ekalavya cut off his right thumb and offered it to Dronacharya as his offering.

Since he has offered his right thumb to his guru,
he could no longer wield a bow in his hand.
Thus, Ekalavya's skill of archery was contained and
Arjuna's ego was satisfied.
(Telugu poem)

Arjuna felt very happy, for he knew now that none could excel him in archery, particularly in the technique of "*sabdabhedhi*". Right from that moment, Ekalavya never touched his bow and arrow. He did not at all feel sad to lose his skills in archery. On the other hand, he felt extremely happy that he could fulfil the wishes of his guru. Thus, a great archer was permanently incapacitated due to the jealousy of another great archer. Arjuna moved about freely with puffed-up ego that he was invincible.

It is possible that sometimes the subtle meanings of some verses of great texts like the *Bhagavad Gita* may be revealed to one by one's own inner voice coming from the heart. In fact, that is the real teaching. Shivraj Patil, by his deep devotion, could tap that inner source and translate the *Gita* into other languages. That is why his *Bhagavad Gita* translation has turned out to be a great work.

The *Atmic Principle* (*Atma Thathwa*) can be realised if only one could shed the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. Today, many people make efforts to realise the *Atmic Principle*, but their efforts do not succeed because they are unable to get rid of the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. In fact, they are the obstacles to self-realisation. First and foremost, one has to remove the feeling of 'I' (ego). Then realisation will dawn on you. The religious symbol of Christianity (†) also denotes this cutting off of ego. The egocentric assertion of 'I' is the root cause for all sorrows, unrest, and difficulties. One has to realise this truth. The feeling of 'mine' has also to be shed. When a teacher develops a feeling "these are all my disciples," ego will raise its head there also. Hence, the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' has to be removed. Then only can the *Atmic Principle* be realised.

Faith and self-confidence will lead one to self-realisation

Shivraj Patil has been coming to Swami for the last thirty years. He first had Swami's *darshan* (sight of a holy person) in the house of S.B.Chavan. Thereafter, they used to visit Swami together. Thereby, he developed intense devotion to Swami. In the meanwhile, Shivraj Patil became a minister in the Government of Maharashtra. Thereafter, he moved to Delhi and became a minister in the Central Government. He also held the position of Speaker of the *Lok Sabha* in Delhi. Thus, he came up in life with the grace of Swami and his own hard work and

sincerity. He never aspired for any positions in life. Even when Swami asked him what he wanted, he used to evade a reply. He earned a very good name as a minister in the government. They used to repose lot of confidence in him.

One has to develop faith and self-confidence. Self-confidence leads to self-satisfaction and self-sacrifice and ultimately to self-realisation. The *Bhagavad Gita* is a very sacred text. It is verily the breath of God.

One has to develop faith first. Even a demon worships God, but his actions are demonic. One can have peace only when one develops faith in God and dedicates all one's actions to God. You may study any number of books and sacred texts. You may even lecture on them. But that is of no use. Whatever you put into practice, only that will become part of you.

There are three steps to self-realisation, namely, self-confidence, self-satisfaction, and self-sacrifice. When these three go together, there will be fullness (*purmathwa*). That is *Purnima* (full-moon day), when the moon will be spotless, shedding cool light on the world.

Only when there is perfect accord between thought, word, and deed does it become truth. Simply giving expression to one's thoughts and lecturing on principles without putting them into practice amounts to empty rhetoric. It amounts to falsehood. Such a person will not become a full individual. Shivraj Patil is not such a person. He experienced truth and gave expression to his thoughts in the form of a book. That is why his book earned him a reputation, giving him great satisfaction.

I expect all students to relate to their teachers what they have learnt from them. Mere book reading is of no use. There must be close interaction between teachers and students. Such an interaction would be like the positive and negative coming together. Students have to develop intimate relationship with their parents. They must love their parents and obey their command. Then only they will succeed in life.

The last verse (*sloka*) in the *Bhagavad Gita* reads:

*Yathra Yogeshwara Krishno Yatra
Partho Dhanurdharah
Tathra Srirvijayo Bhutir Dhruva
Neetirmathir Mama.*

Where there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and
Where there is Arjuna, armed with his mighty bow, come together,
There lie wealth, victory, glory, and everlasting morality.

The essence of the *Bhagavad Gita* is contained in this one verse.

Today, Shivraj Patil brought out this beautiful and nectarous message for the benefit of one and all through his *Bhagavad Gita* translation. It is our good fortune to come across such noble works. People write several books on several subjects, but books like this are rare.

We see students going to the library and reading books stacked there. Some of them develop interest for spiritual books, while some others read novels. Some boys keep novels in between their text books or spiritual books and read them with absorbing interest. This is nothing but cheating others as well as themselves. It is not good. That is why we thoughtfully avoided stacking such books in our library. I am sure our boys are not interested in such trash. Their hearts are pure and sacred. Our boys are generally good and well-behaved. But, due to the age,

there will be some distractions now and then. They are like passing clouds. Students should develop enough mental strength to keep away from such distractions.

I wish that our students should also write some good books on academic topics and spiritual subjects (Swami then called an ex-student by name Gowri Shankar, who is presently working as a faculty member in the Dept. of Physics in Sri Sathya Sai University, and introduced him to the audience). This boy has been invited to Hungary to present a paper in an international conference being held there by the Institute of Nuclear Science. All his expenses for travel and stay in Hungary will be borne by the institute. This boy is well behaved and highly educated. I wish that all our students get such opportunities of being invited by other institutions and universities in India and abroad. I will be very happy to see you participating in such activities. I am sure your parents will also be happy. Whatever you have read and learnt must be shared with all.

Today you witnessed the release of a book written by Shivraj Patil containing his impressions and commentary on *Bhagavad Gita*. No doubt, his book will be of interest to one and all.

Two of our students from the Anantapur campus secured very good marks in English and Physics, respectively. They have been invited to America, all expenses paid. Such academic excellence brings credit to our Institute. I am happy.

Guru Purnima, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-07-18

Many a time, the game ends even before one recognises the Master. So, while life is on, one should devote it for some sacred activity the most sacred being selfless service. It ensures fellowship and kinship among all men. It discloses the unity inherent in all Divinity.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

All religions have accepted the timelessness and omnipresence of God. So, it is strange that even those who accept this truth display such narrowness of mind. Hatred between people professing different religions leads ultimately to the destruction of faith in religion itself. Those who are bent upon destroying religion must be utterly thoughtless. What has to be destroyed is religious bigotry, not religion itself.

To despise other people's religion out of love for one's own religion is like demonstrating love for one's mother by denigrating the mothers of others. One should realise that other people have the same regard and devotion for their faiths as one has for one's own religion. Young people of today should, while cultivating attachment to their own religion, respect the beliefs and practices of all others.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. Develop Educare And Be United

Embodiments of Love!

I have nothing more to add to what has been told to you by Michael Goldstein and the All India President of Sri Sathya Seva Organisations, Srinivasan.

Education is not a subject on which anybody and everybody should talk. Today, education has become more outward and worldly. Millions and millions of people have pursued such worldly education in India. In what way is society benefited by such people? Everyone is concerned with their own selfish interest. No one cares for public interest and welfare. No one is bothered about how society is and in what condition it is, or what difficulties people are undergoing. When they speak in public, they are highly rhetorical about helping the poor, but when it comes to action, they are nowhere near.

Shun the feeling of I and mine and develop a broader outlook

You all know the state of the world today. Wherever you turn, you see sorrow and suffering. Peace and happiness are not to be found anywhere. Every country claims progress and achievement in different areas. These claims are hollow in nature, since peace and happiness cannot be found anywhere. If we enquire into the truth, every country is steeped in difficulties and is in some crisis or other. No government makes a sincere effort to understand the difficulties faced by poor people. It is very difficult to determine who is poor and who is rich.

All are 'poor' in one sense. Then who are the rich people? Those who put into practice what they say. It is said, "*Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam*". It means: Those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect accord are great souls. Such people are very rare. In fact, countries that are considered to be super powers are causing great harm to the poorer countries. They do not even regret their mistakes. They are unable to realise how the people of the underdeveloped and developing countries are suffering. For example, the people in Iraq underwent untold suffering, but none cared to bother about their suffering.

No doubt, in every country there are rich and poor people. Strangely, it is the rich people who are taken care of and provided with help. No one comes to the rescue of the poor people or provide succour to them. Hence, first and foremost, the poor and the downtrodden should be protected.

Every devotee must cultivate love and compassion. It is said, "It is only by sacrifice that one can attain immortality (*Tyagenaike amrutathwamanasuh*).” Only a person with the quality of sacrifice can experience bliss. Those with the egocentric feelings of 'I' and 'mine' can never be happy in life. Where there is the feeling of 'I', there comes ego. Those who cultivate the feeling of 'mine' and 'my people' develop attachment. Never develop the feeling that only one's country should prosper. Develop a broader outlook and pray, "May the whole world be happy (*Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu*)!

Those who develop the narrow-minded feelings of 'I' and 'mine' undergo a lot of suffering. This is due to the secular education that they have acquired. Worldly education does not go beyond one's own selfish interest. We should love all and serve all. Today, the rich have lost the qualities of fear of sin and love for God. If you cultivate only these two qualities, you can achieve anything in life.

We must bring down our selfish interest to a greater extent. One has to gradually give up selfishness. We have to make full use of our education and energies for the benefit of society. If there are no poor people, you cannot even be sure of your food, for it is they who toil in the fields and factories to produce the grains and goods for the consumption of people in society. While the rich enjoy the comforts of life, the poor sweat to keep their body and soul together.

Every individual in society has their own rights, the right to live, etc. Hence, we must take care of the poor people and provide them with certain basic necessities. For utilising their services, we must also serve them in return. Today, those who are highly educated and those who are holding positions of power are steeped in utter selfishness. It is only they who exhibit mean mentality.

Human beings are those who practise human values

Today, everyone wishes to fulfil one's selfish interests at the cost of others. No one acts with a pure heart and good intention to help others. A human being is expected to have the qualities of truth (*sathya*), righteousness (*dharma*), peace (*santhi*), love (*prema*), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*). Devoid of these qualities, one is not a human being at all. How can a person with demonic qualities be called a human being? Hence, first and foremost one has to cultivate human qualities.

No one has a right to enjoy when his fellow human being is suffering. All are God's children. To whomsoever you cause suffering, it will affect you. Hence, you have to conduct your life with devotion to God and love for all human beings. All should remain united. Where there is unity, there shall be purity. Where there is purity, there is Divinity. You all have to lead your lives keeping in view these three aspects of unity, purity, and Divinity. Do not remain unconcerned with others' difficulties and suffering. Treat their suffering as your own.

The one God dwells in the hearts of all people. God is immanent even in ants and mosquitoes. There should be compassion in your heart, but this has become a rare quality these days. Instead, we find 'come-fashion' everywhere. How can then equality prevail in society? Show at least an iota of humanity. He who has such a human quality will become a person with compassionate heart in the real sense. Lust, anger, hatred, jealousy, pride, etc. are animal qualities. The real wealth of a human being is noble qualities like love, compassion, righteousness, sacrifice, and truth. Only a person with these human qualities can be considered a human being. Unfortunately, today people are human only in form, but their qualities are those of animals. What is important is not the form but qualities.

You cannot be sure when difficulties will confront you. Every action (*karma*) has its reaction, resound, and reflection. If you hurt others, surely it will have its reaction. Only when you recognise this truth and conduct yourself accordingly can you be called a true human being. Talk to any student of our institutions, even primary school children will explain to you the human qualities very clearly. Human values have to be cultivated right from childhood. Boys and girls should grow in human values. Even elders can learn from such students.

Truth originates from one's own heart

Now, about truth. From where did truth come? It did not sprout from the earth, nor has it descended from the sky. Its origin is not north, south, east, or west. Truth is firmly installed in your own heart. If you develop your inner vision, you can surely recognise truth there. Where there is truth, there is righteousness. When truth and

righteousness go together, love emerges from the heart. From love comes peace. When peace and love go hand in hand, nonviolence reigns. We have to understand the inter-relationship between the five human values, namely, truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence. All these human values are embedded in our own inner being.

A human being is God, verily. That is why God is portrayed in human form. If God were to reveal His true identity, He would declare, "I am Brahman." He would not say "I am so and so." All the names of individuals are only those given to the human body by their parents. They are not God-given. God has given only one gift, that is *Atma*. That is, "The one divine Self permeates all beings (*Mamatma sarvabhutantaratma*)."

Observe the ants. They move in a line up and down. While doing so, they greet each other happily. If a cow has given birth to a calf, it does not join the flock leaving the young calf alone. The cow recognises the cry of the calf even from a distance. The calf cries "*Amba! Amba!*" And the mother cow responds. Such is the relationship among animals and even in birds.

In the *Ramayana* story, a hunter saw two birds happily spending their time in each other's company, perched on a tree. The hunter shot an arrow and killed the male bird. Unable to bear the separation from her beloved, the female bird also died soon thereafter. Sage Valmiki, who witnessed this pathetic scene, uttered a verse (*sloka*) even without knowing it. It came spontaneously from his mouth. That *soka* (grief) became the inspiration for the great epic *Ramayana*. Thus, the birds and animals also love each other.

How then can a human being lose such a noble quality of love? Today there are many things that a human being can learn from birds, animals, and even beasts, but the human being is least bothered to learn these lessons. I have been teaching many good things for decades, but you don't listen. Even if you listen, you don't put them into practice. If somebody abuses you, you feel sad. Don't you know that that person also feels the same way when you abuse them? Praise or criticism, treat them all as part of the divine play (*leela*). When you develop such a sense of equanimity, you will come up in life.

Today, even rich people are crazy for money, but they do not show the same enthusiasm for God. People have lost self-confidence, totally. "Where is *Atma*? What is *Atma*?" People ask a hundred and one questions. They do not at all understand that the *Atma* they were questioning about is very much immanent in them.

People say, "This is my handkerchief." This means that 'I' is separate and 'handkerchief' is separate. Similarly, when you say 'my body,' you are different from your body. What is this 'my'? You say 'this is mine,' but who are you? You do not know the truth about yourself. When you know yourself, it amounts to knowing everything. If you do not know yourself, you cannot know others. Hence, sit calmly and peacefully in some corner and try to enquire into the nature of your own self. That is real meditation. Meditation does not imply contemplating on God.

Know about yourself, in the first instance. God is in you, with you, around you, above you, and below you. YOU ARE GOD. Whenever someone asks, "Who are you?" say "I am God." Don't say, "I am so and so." How happy you will feel when you consider yourself as God! Even those who listen to your reply will feel happy.

Develop inner vision

Education does not mean simply imparting knowledge. We learn many things from textbooks, but we may not be able to understand their real meaning. First and foremost, enquire into yourself, "Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?" Then you will get the real answer. Are you the mind? Intellect? Subconscious mind? Ego? Body? You are none of these. No doubt the body, mind, intellect, etc. are all gifts of God. You have, of course, to respect

them and value them, but it is not enough to read various texts and feel happy and contented that you have gained vast knowledge.

Yesterday, one boy came to me and informed, “Swami, I finished reading *Sri Shirdi Sai Satcharitra*.” When I asked whether he had read the book fully, he replied that he had completely read the book without missing a single letter. Then I asked, “How many teachings of Baba contained in that book are you practising?” He replied, “None, Swami,” Then, what for is this reading? For turning pages? Not at all. There should be a transformation in your heart. Then only will your reading of sacred texts be sanctified.

Devotees undertake several kinds of spiritual disciplines, but they are not spiritual disciplines in the real sense. If you wish to see ‘reality’, you have to develop an inner vision. If you open your eyes and see the outside world, you will see a number of heads. On the other hand, close your eyes and look into yourself. Then you will see none but yourself. Hence, develop an inner vision. Enquire into yourself, “Who am I?” Immediately the reply comes from within: “I am I.” That is the correct answer. People say “I am so and so; I am an American,” etc. These are not the real answers to the question “Who am I?” These are all outward names for identification in the external world. They are not important. What is important is self-enquiry. Then you will realise the Truth.

Goldstein and Srinivasan who spoke earlier eulogised education. What they said related to worldly education. I do not agree. It should relate to you. Then only can the concept of ‘I am I’ be realised. Tomorrow, I will provide answers to some of your questions that bother you in your daily life. I am sure very soon you will realise Divinity.

I do not wish to speak about modern education. That everybody will do. Reading books and gaining worldly knowledge is not great. This is only bookish knowledge. You must gain knowledge of your own self (inner being). That is real knowledge. That is changeless and eternal.

Truth is only one, not two. Truth is God. Righteousness is God. Peace is God. Love is God. Know this. “Love is God; live in love”. If you cultivate such selfless and divine love, you can achieve everything in life. “God is one; goal is one.” Develop firm faith in this maxim, and you can understand everything.

Your experiences and enjoyment in this material world are not important. They are not true. Behind these momentary experiences, there are some eternal values to be cultivated, some human qualities to be developed. These values and qualities have to manifest from within, not from the outside world. That is Educare. Educare means bringing out the latent qualities and values from the core of our inner being. The books you read in the outside world relate to education, but this is ‘Educare’. What is needed today is ‘Educare’. If people develop ‘Educare’, all will be united.

Take it from Me: in about 25 to 30 years’ time, the entire world will become one. There will be only one caste, one religion, and one God. What is needed is such unity. Today, there are several differences between individuals on the basis of caste, creed, religion, language, nation, etc. Such differences should disappear and unity should prevail. The *Veda* has emphasised this unity in the declaration “Truth is one, the wise say it in different ways (*Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti*).” That is the real world we are visualising.

Today, I spoke at length, taking a lot of time. Tomorrow I will clarify all your doubts leisurely.

Sri Sathya Sai World Education Conference, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-07-20

Henceforth, develop universal love and dedicate yourself to the service of society. Life is constantly ebbing away. To utilise all your resources for the good of others is the way to experience real bliss. Whatever may have been your lapses in the past, begin a new life of dedication and devotion from today. Make the best use of the sacred atmosphere prevailing in the ashram and engage yourself in spiritual practices and service to the people around you.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Even if you cannot love others, do not hate them or feel envy toward them. Do not misunderstand their motives and scandalise them; if you only knew, their motives might be as noble as yours or their action might be due to ignorance rather than wickedness or mischief. Pardon the other man's faults, but deal harshly with your own.

The holy culture of this ancient land has been spoilt by just one impurity: intolerance of another's success, prosperity, or progress. If you cannot help another, at least avoid doing them harm or causing them pain. That itself is a great service. What right have you to find fault with another or to talk evil of them? When you say that nothing can ever happen on earth without His will, why get annoyed or angry? Your duty is to cleanse yourself and engage in your own inner purification. That endeavour will bring you the cooperation of all good men, and you will find strength and joy welling up within you.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

12. Ideal Parents Have Ideal Children

Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom.

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

Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.

(Telugu Poem)

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

(Telugu poem)

You may acquire as high an education as you can, but if you do not put it into practice, it is of no use. You may earn any number of degrees or titles, but they do not make you a truly learned person. All your learning is flawed if what you practise is different from what you have learnt. Therefore, put into practice what you learn.

A teacher should be a role model in human values

A mean-minded person does not give up evil qualities in spite of a high education. These so-called highly educated persons are, in fact, much more ignorant than those who are illiterate. Unfortunately, children today imitate and follow such 'highly educated' persons.

(Bhagawan answered the questions of the delegates to Sri Sathya Sai World Education Conference 2008.)

The first question: What type of relationship should students have with God?

God is not separate from you. He is not outside. He is very much within you. Therefore, develop a relationship of love and oneness with God. If God were separate from you, you could form a mundane relationship with Him. But He is not separate from you. He is with you, in you, around you, and behind you (loud applause). You cannot have worldly relationship with God, who is all-pervasive. You should strengthen the feeling, "God is in me," and develop oneness with Him. This is the answer to the first question.

The second question: What are the signs of spiritual transformation?

You should examine yourself whether you are leading your life with worldly feelings or with wholehearted faith in God. Have the firm conviction that you are equal-minded in both pleasure and pain. There are no special signs of spiritual transformation. But, at times, you may have certain spiritual dreams and visions. Ask yourself whether you are progressing or declining in your devotion. Everything depends upon your faith. Other than this, there are no special signs.

The third question: What should be the qualities of a teacher in the Sai System of Education?

Teachers should not give too much freedom to the students. They should exercise control over the students with loving and convincing words. They should not allow them to act in an arbitrary way just because they are their students. They should give them freedom in a measured manner, but in between they should apply brakes. The teacher should also punish the students whenever it is necessary. They should not punish just for the sake of punishment. They should use punishment only as a deterrent.

The fourth question: How should a teacher conduct himself in this system of education, and what sort of discipline should the teacher observe? What efforts should a teacher make to become a role model in human values?

This is another question that has been asked. This is a very important subject. A teacher should conduct himself like a teacher. Similarly, a student should behave like a student. The teacher should take care that proper learning environment is provided in the classroom and the students are happy and satisfied.

When the teacher behaves with the students in an ideal manner, the students will also follow the teacher. What you want your students to do, you should show them by your own example. Not only that, the teacher should eat the same food that they advise the students to eat. If the teacher asks the students not to eat fish and meat and the teacher eats all these things, it is very bad. Whatever you tell your students, first practise yourself. Whatever you want your students to become, first become that yourself. Do not act in an arbitrary way with pride that you are a teacher. Be humble, caring, and full of love when you are dealing with your students.

The next question is: How should teachers behave with girl students?

If there are only boys in the classroom, it is okay. But if there are girl students also, the teacher should behave in a much more refined and disciplined manner. Consider all the girl students as your sisters. Make them happy and treat them with respect as you do your own sister. Only then can you inculcate virtues in them. In this way, you should lead an ideal life and become a role model for others.

How should the parents impart human values to their children, and how can we involve parents in the education of their children?

Children should make their parents happy

Parents should never discuss family matters in the presence of their children. They may be having financial and other problems, but they should not let their children know about them. They should deal with their problems themselves and try to keep the children as happy as they can and work for their progress.

First and foremost, the parents should put human values into practice in their own life and then encourage their children to develop these values. The parents should guide their children on the right path by their own example. At the same time, the children should not cause any trouble to their parents. Their parents bring them up with great expectations. The children should develop the understanding that they have made progress in life only due to the sacrifice of their parents and hence should show gratitude to them. However great may be the difficulties that parents have to undergo, they hide them from their children in order to make them happy. In such a situation, if the children cause even a little trouble to their parents, they will be totally dejected.

Set your life on a course that gives happiness to your parents. Even if you have your own family, see to it that your parents do not suffer in any way. Do not ignore your parents, thinking, “My family should be happy, why bother about my parents?” This is not good. Only an illiterate fool will behave like that; no educated person will act in this manner. From time to time, go to your parents, serve them, make them happy, and try to fulfil their needs. Giving happiness to parents is the main duty of the children.

But some children associate themselves with bad company and acquire evil qualities. People are known by the company they keep. That is why it is said, “Tell me your company I shall tell you what you are.” Therefore,

never associate with bad company.

Look after the needs of your parents carefully. Those who do not look after their parents should be condemned. Differences between parents and children are on the rise in today's world. The tastes of the children are different from the expectations of the parents. If you merely pursue your own tastes, then what about your parents? You have every right to satisfy your tastes provided you fulfil the needs of your parents. It is sheer selfishness to work merely for your own satisfaction and cause grief to your parents. Children should not resort to this type of behaviour.

You have your mother-in-law and father-in-law after your marriage. But from your very birth, you have lived with your parents. Therefore, it is your duty to make your parents happy. The children should always pray for the welfare of their parents and discharge their duty toward them. Moreover, do not interfere in the affairs of others unnecessarily. Before asking about others, ask about your parents and try to know their wishes. Parents should also educate their children in this regard. If you pay all your attention to your in-laws and forget your parents, with whom you had a long association, that amounts to selfishness and deception. It is due to the rise of selfishness that there is a lack of happy and cordial relationship between parents and children today. However, such selfish children are in minority. Hence, there is no need to worry too much about it.

Parents should inculcate human values in children

Whatever parents tell their children to follow, they should themselves adhere to it. Then only will their children become good. Due to the effect of modern times, some children try to keep distance from their parents, thereby causing them to develop tension and bad temper. But control your temper. It is a great mistake if you show your temper to your parents, who always wish for your welfare. Show gratitude to your parents, to God, and to all those who have helped you. Never do anything due to which your parents may shed tears. When you make your parents happy, you will also be happy.

Sathya Sai education (*bal vikas*) is very necessary for children because the children learn human values in the this class. But, first of all, parents should themselves develop human values. Then only will they have the right to teach human values to their children. When you do not practise yourself and merely tell the children to follow, how would they listen?

Whatever you tell the children, you should demonstrate by your own example. But, you say, you don't have time and you are busy with your office work. When you pay all your attention to your office work, who will look after the children? I have written a poem in this regard.

When husband and wife go out to office, who will do the household work?

If women go out to teach others' children in schools, who will teach their own children?

If women also go to work just like men, who will cook food in the kitchen?

Earning money may solve some financial problems, but how will it resolve domestic problems?

Women can work and earn money, but they cannot lead a happy life if they neglect their home.

(Telugu poem)

Educated women want to take up jobs. But if women go for jobs, who will do the household work? When

both husband and wife go to office for work, who will look after the children? Some people employ a female servant (*ayah*) to look after their children, but can an *ayah* look after the children with love like a mother? No, it cannot be so. Therefore, mothers should themselves look after their children even at the cost of their jobs. If women also go to office like men, who will cook food in the house?

Here is a small example. Both husband and wife phone from their office to their cook that they will come home at 5 o'clock and therefore he should have tea ready. But have they provided the required articles for the preparation of tea? No. For the preparation of tea, milk, sugar, and tea leaves are required. Without them, how can anybody prepare tea? Besides that, cups and saucers are also required. In the absence of all these, if you ask the cook to prepare tea, how can he do so? In this way, you will lose respect before the invited guests. First of all, set your house right; then only should you pay attention to the outside work.

There is nothing wrong if both husband and wife go to work, but they should make sure that the children are not put to any inconvenience in the house. If you leave your children to the care of the *ayah* and the cook and go to work just to earn more money, what is the use? It is of no use because you will have to pay a salary to both the *ayah* and the cook. Not only that, you will lose so many articles in the house. Then, what is left with you out of your earning?

When you yourself look after the children, you save that much money. But parents do not give importance to this. Sometimes, even cups are not available in the house for drinking coffee. In such a situation, what is the use of women taking up jobs outside? Nowadays people are crazy for jobs, but they do not care whether necessary comforts and conveniences are there in the house or not.

As soon as the husband and wife return from office, they engage themselves in reading newspapers, listening to radio, and watching TV programmes. Some do not come home but straightaway go from office to clubs, where they play some cheap games. How can such people bring up their children in an ideal manner? If the children are not doing well in studies, it is not their fault; it is the fault of their parents.

Therefore, women should remain at home and look after their children in a proper way. That is your real income. If you lose that real income and strive to earn some money by working outside, spoiling your children in the process, you will be called selfish parents. When your children take to bad ways, you will have to undergo a lot of suffering. The main responsibility of parents is to look after their children properly.

Practise human values in your profession and at your workplace. Human values are not separate from day-to-day life. You may be a police officer or a nurse or a doctor or in any other profession. Perform your duty sincerely. Then everything will become good. But, unfortunately, people do not perform their duty honestly. Consequently, children have to suffer entirely due to the fault of elders. Engage yourself in good and honest work —only then can your children attain progress and happiness.

Parents should keep a watch on their children

Sai schools can have a corpus fund for their maintenance. They can take the help of parents in running the school. Such mutual cooperation between the school and parents should be developed. Discipline, devotion, and duty should be given utmost importance in these schools. Teaching of human values should find a prominent place in the school curriculum. Put the children on the spiritual path, so that they develop love for God. If they want to put on an improper dress, do not allow it. Observe moderation in everything. Only then can the children be kept

in check. It is the responsibility of parents to keep a check on their children. Parents should be made aware of the Sai System of Education. Some of the parents may not be aware of this system. The children can also explain the various aspects of this system to their parents. Only then will the parents understand it clearly. Otherwise, they may have some doubts regarding what their children are being taught in the school.

Sometimes, out of fear, children may not tell their parents everything correctly. Therefore, the parents should go to the school at least once a week and check whether what the child is telling is correct or not. Parents should go to school without the knowledge of their children and try to know the facts personally. They should also try to ask about the studies and behaviour of their children. Some children may tell their parents that they have secured 50 marks, when actually they got only 20 marks. Some parents blindly believe what their child tells them, and they do not go to the school to check the correctness of the child's statement. I am not saying anything about schools in other countries, but this is a common practice in India.

Only in villages do we find the parents taking proper care of their children to inculcate necessary discipline in them. Whenever it is necessary, they punish their children and put them on the right path. But in towns and cities, the parents, particularly those in the higher strata of society, do not pay much attention to their children. In fact, it is only they who are supposed to be more vigilant.

When children have time, they should sit quietly and study, but many of them roam in the bazaars. This is not good. Students should not loiter in the streets at all. Only stupid roam the streets. They behave like street dogs. Students who want to maintain their honour and dignity should sit calmly in the house and engage themselves in studies. The parents should check their children to see that they do not spend money in an arbitrary manner. They should tell them what is right and what is wrong and make them understand that spending money lavishly is not good. In this manner, the parents should teach them what is good and put them on the right path.

There should be harmony between the parents and children at home. What is the use if there is no harmony at home? The parents do not pay heed to their children and the children do not listen to their parents. This should not happen. They should discuss among themselves what is right and what is wrong and maintain harmony in the house.

More importantly, the parents should be vigilant with regard to the studies of their children. They should know about the types of books they are reading. Some children keep cheap novels in their textbooks and read them. When we see from a distance, we think they are reading their textbooks. But it is not a textbook but a novel of bad taste! Only when we keep a watch on children will they come up in life. We should throw such books away as soon as we see them. There is not even one such book in our library (loud applause). If somebody brings such books, they are immediately destroyed. If you follow this practice in your home also, then your children will become good. We should look after the children carefully and strive for their progress in this manner.

Observe ceiling on your desires

Don't waste money, Don't waste energy, Don't waste food. And don't waste time. This is what is meant by ceiling on desires. Only when we ourselves practise ceiling on desires can we keep our children in check. But today, neither the elders nor the children observe ceiling on desires. Many of the elders do not even know what is meant by ceiling on desires.

Only in India do we find some people practising ceiling on desires, but in other countries, like America,

people do not practise this. In fact, they waste a lot of food and money. They spend so many dollars even on one dinner party. They should observe certain limits. They should feed those who are in need. Ceiling on desires is very important because it can help man to progress in life.

Misuse of money is evil. Waste of food is bad. If you waste money, you may have to face many difficulties. Do not throw away the food that is left after you have eaten. Better you give it to someone who is hungry. Unfortunately, people throw away the food instead of giving it to those who are hungry.

Ceiling on desires is necessary in every aspect of life. Even in talking, we should observe a ceiling and not talk too much. Then, we will experience immense happiness. If you make someone happy by giving them food, your happiness will also become double.

Nobody should waste anything. Time waste is life waste. By wasting time, we waste our life. We should also not waste money. What is the use of wasting money? Misuse of money is evil. Therefore, never misuse money. Spend only when it is necessary. Is it proper for you to spend money unnecessarily only because your pocket is full? Is it not a mistake? In this manner, many people waste money.

Those who get fat salaries spend money in an arbitrary way. When you lead your life in such a lavish manner, low income people like sweeper and milkman will also try to imitate you and ask for more salary. Do not set a bad ideal to others. We should follow the path that is beneficial to all. When you have too much money, you don't mind wasting it, but do not spend money like that. Think before spending whether you are making proper or improper use of money.

With this, all your questions are answered. Lead your life very carefully. Even a small mistake can be blown up by others in society. Therefore, do not make even a small mistake. Conduct yourself in this careful manner.

Sri Sathya Sai World Education Conference, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-07-21

If you are good for the world, then the Lord of worlds will shower love on you. Become a blossom, exude the fragrance of selfless service and love; then I shall gladly wear the garland composed of all of you.

Take the name of the Lord and repeat it always. I was listening to the *bhajan* you did here yesterday and today. Your voices were low; they could scarcely be heard outside this hall ...

Do *bhajan* with faith and enthusiasm. Let the whole city shake with the devotion you put into every Name that you sing. The Name promotes comradeship and establishes concord; it stills all storms and grants peace.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Wear the glasses of love, and all will appear lovable and good. Reference was made here to service of the poor; the eye of love will see all as Narayana; not only the poor, but the rich also. The rich too have to be sympathised with. You must

pity the rich, for they have so few chances of developing the attitude of renunciation!
See all as Embodiments of Lord Narayana and worship all with the flower of love.

Even My nature can be understood by you only when you wear the glasses of holiness; holy things can be cognised only by the holy seeker. You get what you search for; you see what your eyes crave. The doctor is found where patients gather; the surgeon stays in the operation ward. So too, the Lord is ever with the suffering and the struggling. Whenever people cry out in agony: "Oh God," there, God will be.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

13. Love Is Truth; Truth Is Love. Live In Love

All the names and forms are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being, who is existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute and non-dual.

He is the embodiment of truth, goodness, beauty (*sathyam, sivam, sundaram*).

(Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Love!

During the last two days, you attended the conference and listened to the speakers sitting here in this hall, undergoing all inconveniences. It is really your good fortune that you could come here from far off countries and participate in this conference. You have come here spending a lot of money and undergoing great strain. This in itself is a testimony to the purity of your heart. There are millions of people in this world. There are lakhs of schools and colleges. But only a few of you are blessed with the opportunity of coming here. You can imagine how fortunate you are!

The educated must manifest human values

Having come here and participated in this conference, what is it that you are supposed to learn? First of all, you must understand the nature of your own heart and manifest human values, namely, truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence. Only then can you be called educated in the true sense of the term.

Many lawyers in this world study voluminous books, but in spite of their learning, we find many ‘liars’ among them. There are many doctors. But what is the use? They are getting bogged down with professional rivalry. We cannot find unity anywhere. First and foremost, we have to develop unity.

All of us are the children of God. We are all brothers and sisters. We should preserve this truth in our heart. At times, there may be some differences among brothers and sisters. Therefore, we must learn to adjust with each other. Not only that, we must understand each other in the first instance. Adjustment becomes easy when we have proper understanding. There cannot be any adjustment without proper understanding. Firstly, you must understand that whatever Swami teaches is only out of His love for you.

There is great progress in the field of science today. All the inventions of the scientists are within the purview of senses. In fact, many scientists are acting in a senseless manner and committing mistakes. Scientists themselves are not sure of what they are saying and doing. They say they are helping society, but in fact they are doing just the opposite. Help never, hurt ever — this seems to be their motto. As a result, people today are leading their lives with fear and anxiety. When you board a plane, you are not sure whether you will reach the destination safely. People are in the grip of fear. They are afraid of even rats!

Never be afraid of anything. Don’t fear. Fear is the root cause of anxiety and delusion. People today are afraid to eat even fruits and vegetables because they are grown with the help of chemicals that are harmful to health. The food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe are all polluted. How can we lead a healthy life in such a polluted environment?

We should make our lives pollution free. We have to do it ourselves. Don’t eat junk food and spoil your

health merely for the sake of satisfying your taste buds. When you take proper care of your health, the children born to you will also be healthy.

Always speak the truth. Apart from speaking truth, remain calm and composed in the face of criticism. Only then can there be peace.

Our ancient sages used to observe silence as part of their spiritual discipline. Observance of silence helps you to progress on the spiritual path. When you practise silence, you can easily experience peace of mind. Love manifests from peace. When you are filled with love, you will have no enemies. Therefore, lead your life with love. Only through love can we establish peace in the world.

Today, people talk of peace but we find only pieces everywhere. Even the country is being divided into pieces! What I mean to say is that people are keeping the interests of their regions above the national interest. We should stand united as a country. When someone asks you, ‘Where do you come from?’ you should proudly say that you belong to India. Do not say you belong to Puttaparthi, Anantapur district, etc. Only those with a narrow mind will give such an answer. ‘I come from India,’ should be your answer. Similarly, one should not say that one comes from California, which is only a small part of America. One should say that one comes from America. Always be broad-minded in your thinking. It is your good fortune to be endowed with such a broad mind. When you develop broad-mindedness, your children also will be broad-minded.

Parents should lead an exemplary life

Parents should enroll their children in Sai spiritual education (*bal vikas*) classes and impart sacred teachings to them. As the parents, so are the children. Therefore, parents should tread the right path and set an ideal so that their children can emulate them. The fault lies in the parents if the children do not behave properly. Hence, parents should take utmost care in bringing up their children.

After a certain age, children do not obey their parents, because parents themselves do not follow the right path. Parents should lead exemplary lives if they want their children to be good and come up in life. There should be no difference of opinion between the father and mother. They should be united in whatever they tell their children. In some families, mother says one thing and father says something else. Such lack of unity and understanding between the parents is not a good sign. Both of them must stand on one word and teach their children the right path. First of all, they should teach their children to adhere to truth. It is enough if we follow the path of truth, because truth is the basis of everything.

“There is no right conduct (*dharma*) greater than adherence to truth (*Sathyannasti paro dharma*).” Peace originates from righteousness and love manifests from peace. Where there is love, there is nonviolence, and everyone can lead a peaceful life.

If the nation has to attain peace and prosperity, we should follow the path of truth. What is truth? “He is a noble soul whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in harmony (*Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam*).” If your thought, word, and deed are at variance, it amounts to falsehood. Before we teach our children to adhere to truth, we should practise truth in our daily life. Only then can children emulate us and become ideal.

We should lead a ‘heartful life’, not an artificial life. Today, right from the system of education, everything has become artificial. People read a number of sacred texts, chant mantras, and undertake meditation. But all this is done in an artificial manner. Whatever the spiritual practice we undertake, we should do it whole-heartedly.

In the name of meditation, people close their eyes and sit cross-legged, but they have no control over their mind. Their mind goes everywhere as per its whims and fancies. We should control our mind in the first instance. “The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (*Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo*).” As the thought, so is the action. Hence, we should entertain only good thoughts, which lead to good actions and ultimately yield good results. Do not follow the vagaries of the mind. Do not be under the control of the mind. The mind should be under your control. The mind is like a mad monkey. It goes everywhere without any restraint. But it becomes quiet and subdued when it is turned toward God.

When the sun rises, our shadow is very long. If we start walking toward the sun, our shadow will fall behind us. On the other hand if we walk in the opposite direction with our back toward the sun, we have to follow our shadow, which falls ahead of us. When the sun is right on our head, the shadow will fall under our feet. Delusion (*maya*) is like our shadow. In order to conquer delusion, you have to turn your mind toward God. When your mind is directly focused on God, delusion will be totally subdued like the shadow under your feet.

Keep your mind focused on God

The three hands on the clock indicate seconds, minutes, and hours. The second hand is the longest and moves quicker than the other two. When the second hand completes sixty digits, the minute hand moves forward by one digit. Similarly, when the minute hand crosses sixty digits, the hour hand crosses one digit. However, it is the hour hand that is most important. Thinking of God once in a while and spending the rest of the time in worldly pursuits is like the second hand, which has little significance. But constant contemplation of God at all times is like the hour hand, which is most important.

Do not act as per the vagaries of your mind. As I have mentioned earlier, the mind can cause liberation or bondage. Therefore, you have to exercise control over your mind and turn it in the right direction, i.e. toward truth and love. Then it becomes steady and attains the power of concentration. Love is truth and truth is love. Live in love. This is not physical and worldly love. We should preserve spiritual love in our heart. Only then can we develop steadiness of mind. Worldly love will only make our mind fickle and unsteady. Therefore, keep your mind always focused on God. Only then can you experience peace. People think it is very difficult, but let Me tell you that no spiritual discipline is easier than this.

When we develop love for God, the mind can be controlled very easily. On the other hand, if the mind is not turned toward God, it can never be controlled. Whatever you do, consider it as God’s work.

Everything happens as per the will of God. Do not be under the delusion that your will alone can make things move. If that be the case, why are you not able to exercise any control over certain events that take place in your life? Understand that everything moves as per the divine will. If something good happens to you, consider it as the will of God. If something bad were to happen, accept that also as the will of God.

There is certainly some purpose behind whatever He does, which you cannot comprehend. Whatever He does is for your own good. Hence, leave everything to His will. “One should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat (*Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau*).” Whatever may happen, consider it as an act of divine love and welcome it wholeheartedly.

When you get immersed in divine love, you will be successful in all your endeavours. But today, people are getting immersed in worldly love only. One who develops worldly love is a liar! Only divine love can be called

true love. Divine love will never betray you. Let people think what they like, let them criticise you in any manner, but always remain firmly established in divine love. Under any circumstances, do not deviate from the path of divine love. When you preserve divine love in your heart, your future as well as the future of your children will be safe and secure.

When someone asks you, “Who are you?”, you are unable to give correct reply. You identify yourself with the physical body. But in fact, the physical body is like a leather bag that contains various entities such as the mind, intellect, subconscious mind, etc. Once the life principle ebbs away from the body, it becomes an ‘empty bag’, which is of no use to us. Hence, we put it in the fire and reduce it to ashes. Before the body becomes an ‘empty bag’ and is burnt to ashes, offer to God all that is contained in it and redeem your life.

Eliminate the bad in you and establish direct contact with God

First of all, give up the bad qualities such as lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, and jealousy (*kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya*). They can cause you only misery, not happiness. You can see for yourself how blissful you become when you get rid of these evil qualities. In order to experience such eternal bliss, offer to God all that is in you. You have a number of desires, but is it possible to get all your desires fulfilled? No.

Never cause harm to others in the process of fulfilment of your desires. If you desire something, pray to God and ask Him directly. Establish direct contact with Him. If you follow ‘indirect’ methods, you will be put to untold misery.

But today, people try to harm others in order to satisfy their own greed. Such people are bound to reap the consequences of their evil deeds. Long ago during the independence movement, I composed a song picturing a scene where an infant was crying and his mother was consoling him with an assurance that everything will be alright and there is nothing to worry about the fate of the country. I sang it on the stage, placing a rubber doll in a cradle and rocking it gently.

Do not cry, my child, do not cry.

If you cry, you will not be called a valiant son of Bharat (India).

Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.

Did you get scared because the terrible Hitler has invaded the invincible Russia?

Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.

Do not cry, my child, do not cry.

For the Red Army is marching under Stalin.

They will put an end to Hitler.

Then what else is the reason for your crying?

Is it because the countrymen lack unity?

All the countrymen will unite and fight to win freedom;

Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.

(Telugu song)

Maintain a noble character suffused with love

Today, you have gathered here in such large numbers. Have we sent an invitation letter to any of you? No, no. It is only love that has brought you here (applause). It is only love that can unite everybody, not hatred. When

your love and My love come together, any task can be achieved. Hence, develop love. With the power of love, you can win over anybody, even a mighty demon can be subdued.

When Ravana abducted Sita, Hanuman went to Lanka in search of her. He found her in the Asoka grove (a grove of Asoka trees), sitting under a tree and chanting the name of Rama. She had firm faith that only Rama could protect her from the clutches of the demons (*rakshasas*). In spite of all his learning, valour and wealth, Ravana was as insignificant as a blade of grass when compared to Rama because he lacked character. Rama was one of noble character. If one is endowed with noble character, one can achieve any mighty task. That is why I often tell our students that the end of education is character. What is the use of all your education if you lack character?

Some lawyers keep reading a number of books day and night, but when they go to the court, they speak only untruth. Greatness does not lie in reading books. The truth that the books teach should be preserved in our heart. We must develop good character. Then we will certainly achieve success in all that we do.

Once you go back home, remember all that Swami has taught you and develop good character among your children. Develop a spirit of sacrifice and sanctify your life with noble deeds. What is the use of merely amassing wealth? Alexander, the great emperor, conquered different parts of the world and came to India with a desire to conquer this country too. On his return journey, he suffered a grave illness. Sensing that his end had approached, he called all his ministers and generals and told them that he was not going to live anymore. He instructed them to take his body to his country after his death. He further told them to expose his hands out of the bier with his palms turned upward and take the funeral procession to all the streets of the city. This was to tell the people of the world that in spite of his great conquests in the world and a great name and fame, Alexander left the world empty-handed.

This is true for all of us. Whatever we may accumulate, we have to go empty-handed only. In the ultimate analysis, all worldly possessions are useless. Our bank balance will not follow us when we leave this world. Therefore, utilise your wealth for the benefit of the poor and needy with a spirit of sacrifice. When you spend your life in such a sacred manner, you will certainly be redeemed.

Valedictory Address,
Sri Sathya Sai World Education Conference,
Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-07-22

14. Educare Leads To Unity Of Thought, Word, And Deed

This land of Bharat (India) is the motherland for great people who acquired name and fame in different continents;

This land of Bharat is the battlefield where the warriors of foreign countries were driven out and freedom from foreign rule obtained;

The sweetest feeling of this land of Bharat is the feeling of motherhood.

Consigning to flames the moral fabric of our country that ordains self-respect as more valuable than one's own life,

The dagger of unrestrained freedom has been given to the people today imitating the western countries;

Just as an elephant that is unable to realise its own strength,

So are the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) today.

(Telugu poem)

The elephant, not knowing its own inherent strength, meekly submits itself to the mahout and obeys his commands. Similarly, a human, unable to realise their own divine nature, submits themselves to the world and its attractions and in the process encounters several difficulties. One is unable to bear even a little inconvenience. Someone transferred to a new place feels diffident to take up the new assignment. If their son or daughter falls sick, they are filled with anxiety. One lives in the grip of fear. One is unable to realise one's own strength.

Education is for life, not for a living

The reason for this fear complex is modern education. It does not develop self-confidence and self-reliance. Modern education teaches you how to make a living in the outside world. You may earn money and make a comfortable living by providing all sorts of conveniences to the ephemeral physical body, with the help of modern education. But you cannot have peace of mind. You may enjoy worldly pleasures with money, but spiritual bliss cannot be attained with wealth.

Hence, never forget spirituality under any circumstances. Only spiritual life can confer peace and happiness. It is said "*Bhajana bina sukha santi nahi ...*" — peace and happiness can be attained only by singing the glory of the Divine and not by wealth or worldly possessions. Worldly education aims at providing physical comforts only.

In spite of education and intelligence,

A foolish person will not know their true Self and

A mean-minded person will not give up their evil qualities.

(Telugu poem)

Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom.

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

Acquire that knowledge which will make you immortal.

(Telugu poem)

What is the use of pursuing such type of education? A human being needs to cultivate the five human values, namely, truth (*sathya*), righteousness (*dharma*), peace (*santhi*), love (*prema*), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*). Lust,

anger, greed, delusion, etc. are qualities of animals. Unfortunately, today, people are developing animal qualities. They make no effort to cultivate human qualities. That is why they have no peace of mind or happiness in spite of accumulating a lot of wealth.

It is in this context that much emphasis is laid on 'educare' instead of education. What is educare? Educare is manifesting one's own innate divine nature. One can experience bliss by doing so. There are several colleges and universities in different parts of the world today. There are innumerable professors, and Ph.D.s too. But could their high academic degrees confer peace and happiness on them? Why didn't the world experience peace and happiness in spite of producing so many educated people? The reason: all their education is meant to make a comfortable living.

Education is for life, not for a mere living. One has to pursue educare along with education. Education is related to the outside world, whereas educare concerns itself with one's inner being. It relates to the *Atma* (soul). Where is *Atma*? It is everywhere. It is omnipresent. The *Vedas* declare "I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*). This dictum denotes the universal existence of God. A human being is the embodiment of the divine Self, verily; a human is not merely a human being. Since you identify yourself with the physical body, you consider yourself a mere mortal.

There are five human values. The first one is truth (*sathya*). What is its form? It has no form. It is beyond description. Similarly, peace (*santhi*) cannot be perceived by the naked eye. So also the other human values like righteousness (*dharma*), love (*prema*), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*) have no form. Love is one quality that is present in all human beings, but it is invisible. It can be recognised only when it is showered on another human being. Where there is love, there cannot be hatred. Where there is no hatred, there cannot be violence. That is nonviolence.

Strangely, the term human value has acquired a new meaning these days. It is mistaken for accumulating wealth and maintaining a bank balance. People think this is the purpose of education. This is not true. The real human values are truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence. Anything contrary to these values is animalistic in nature. Hence, whenever you are confronted with such animal thoughts, remind yourself, "I am not an animal, I am not an animal, I am a human being, I am a human being." You are a human being, not an animal.

However, you can be considered a human being only when you manifest human qualities, not otherwise. You may be highly educated and well read, but if you do not have human qualities, you cannot be called a human being. Only that person who manifests the five human values can be called a real human being.

You may be an emperor with lot of wealth and man-power to support you, but you may not be happy. Real peace and happiness come from an inner feeling of peace and tranquility. Worldly positions and power cannot confer peace and happiness.

You all know the story of Alexander. He went round the world on a conquest. He crossed the river Sindhu and came to India. Meanwhile he had a heart attack. A good number of doctors around him examined him and declared that he might not live long and might die very soon. Alexander called his ministers and generals and told them "After I leave this body, wrap my dead body with a white cloth, keeping my both hands in a raised position so that all people can see my empty hands. Then take my body in procession through all the streets of our village. Whoever sees my body will ask why my hands are kept in such raised position. Tell them that Emperor Alexander conquered all the countries and accumulated a lot of wealth. However, at the time of his death, none,

even the mighty army or the doctors presentm could save him. He left the world empty-handed, leaving behind all his empire and great wealth.”.

Similarly, one may be a billionaire or a millionaire; yet one has to leave this world with empty hands. You may store your wealth in bank lockers, but you cannot take even a handful of earth along with you at the time of leaving this world. Not even a dust particle.

That which manifests one’s innate Divinity is real education

All education that we pursue today is secular. No doubt that is also necessary, but the real education is that which helps you to manifest your innate divinity. You may read a number of texts, and teach them to others, too, but they cannot make your life exemplary.

What sort of education should a man pursue? Educare. What is educare? Educare is manifesting one’s innate human qualities in the outside world. No textbooks need be read for this purpose. However, since you came into this world with a physical body, you have to acquire education and earn money to sustain that body. Secular education is for sustaining the physical body.

The chanting of the *Gayatri Mantra* starts with *AUM*. Then the mantra proper reads

Bhur Bhuva Suvah

Tat Savitur Varenyam

Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi

Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat

We contemplate the glory of Light illuminating the three worlds: gross, subtle, and causal.
I am that vivifying power, love, radiant illumination, and divine grace of universal intelligence.

We pray for the divine light to illumine our minds.

The chanting of *AUM* itself will confer all the benefits that accrue by chanting of the mantra. There is a great necessity today to explain the significance and inner meanings of such mantras to students. That is why we have recruited teachers who can explain these spiritual aspects along with secular education.

The first Vice Chancellor of our University, V. K. Gokak, was one such great teacher who could impart secular education with spiritual background. I knew him even before we started our colleges. He learnt several aspects from Me. He always used to chant the divine name of Swami. He and his wife had single minded devotion. Whenever I visited their house, first of all, they would take Me to their worship room. Gokak’s heart was very pure.

Such a noble person became the first Vice Chancellor of our university. Students today are enjoying the fruits of all the hard work done by him. He used to obey My command in letter and spirit. He used to approach Me to clarify even a small doubt. Today, his eldest son, Anil Gokak, is laying down the office of the Vice Chancellor of our university after completing his tenure of three years. Anil is a worthy son of a worthy father. Having completed his tenure, he is leaving the university, but I know that his mind is always with Swami.

Both Anil Gokak and his wife are ardent devotees of Swami. Do not think that they are going away from us, nor are we sending them away. Sri Sathya Sai University is imprinted in their hearts. Their thoughts are always focused on Swami. Their hearts are always tuned to Swami. Swami is always with them. Do not think that we

are giving them a send-off today. No, no. We do not give send-off to anyone — we always welcome, welcome, welcome. I also told them that wherever they were, they should come here and have Swami's *darshan* (sight of a holy person).

The Gokak family has always remained a homogeneous unit. Wherever they are, Swami is firmly installed in their heart. Anil Gokak is Mine and I am his. I told him, "I and you are one."

Not only Anil, all of you are part of Me, though outwardly you appear to be different from Me. "God is immanent in every living being (*Easwara sarva bhutanam*).” "The entire universe is permeated by God (*Easavasyamidam jagat*). Even ants and insects are different forms of God. There is nothing in the universe that is not divine. That is the 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.

(Telugu poem)

Develop the feeling that God is always with us

Everything is God. It is God that protects or punishes. Do not be under the impression that someone is punishing you. It is God's will that works through him. Whoever hurts you or causes suffering to you, always think that they belong to you. Never entertain an ill feeling against that person. All are one, be alike to everyone. The bodies may be different and the thoughts may be different. But, the *Atmic* principle (*Atma thathwa*) in all is only one. No one can separate the *Atma* as belonging to this person or that person.

Wherever you go, whether it is America or Japan or Germany or Pakistan or India, only one sun illuminates the entire world. It is daytime for us now, whereas it is night in America. Does it mean that there is no sun in America? No. The sun is here, there, and everywhere, illumining the entire world. Since the earth rotates round the sun, it is night in America at this point of time.

Similarly, God is everywhere. He is omnipresent. We need not search for Him in some corner. He is immanent in us. One should develop a feeling that God is always with us, in us, above us, and below us. One should develop such firm faith. Then one can see Him at any place of one's choice. You may contemplate upon Rama or Krishna. While doing so, keep the form of your chosen deity before your mind's eye and contemplate on Him. Surely you will visualise that form. Therefore, do not entertain the feeling that God has forsaken you. If God were to forsake you, how could you exist in the world? God and you are one. Lord Easwara is also referred to as *Arthanareeswara* (Lord who is half male, half female), signifying the unity between the male and female aspects of Divinity.

In fact, all our troubles are due to our attachment to the material world (*prakriti*). Do not entertain the feeling that you are separate from God, that you are only a devotee, etc. Do not think that He is God and you are only a servant of God. You are not merely a devotee. You are God, verily. Constantly remind yourself "I am God, I am God, I am God."

All the names that are given to individuals are for the purpose of identification. They are not eternal. In fact, all names and forms are meant to be shed at one time or other. But the *Atma* is eternal and changeless. If 'I' and 'mine' are removed, what remains is God only. You say this is my body, my mind, my intellect, etc. You are not the

body, you are not the mind, you are not the intellect. You are separate from all these things. You are God, verily.

Fill water in thousand vessels and keep them in the sun. The sun reflects in all thousand vessels, but there is only one sun. Just as the one sun reflects in thousand vessels, so also the one God illumines the entire universe. God is one, and the goal is one. You have to develop the feeling that everything, good or bad, profit or loss, is God. Of course, secular education and ideas are necessary to a certain extent.

Today, Viswanath Pandit is taking charge as the new Vice Chancellor. He has also toured several countries of the world as an academician. He is '*Viswanatha*'. He is a very good person.

In the past also, several Vice Chancellors worked in this university and left after completing their tenure. They may not be present here in their physical bodies, but their *Atmas* are always with Me. In fact, I am their *Atma*. Hence, no one should feel that someone has left and some other person has come in his place.

Perform your duty. This duty strengthens your relationship with God. Duty is God. Anil Gokak performed his duties very well. He used to bring even a small matter to the notice of Swami for clarification. I need such people. Right from the first Vice Chancellor, the senior Gokak, to the junior Gokak, all Vice Chancellors are My people only. Even the future Vice Chancellors belong to Me only. I utilise the services of all these persons for the development of students.

Students must develop equal-mindedness

The students are also good. College students in the outside world these days are problematic, but our students cannot be compared to those boys. Our students are unique. They do not join unsuitable company in the outside world. They maintain good behaviour at all times. Everywhere they are distinct and distinguishable, but that does not mean that they are separate or misfits in any society. Wherever they are, they act in harmony with their local community and always conduct themselves with dignity, obeying Swami's command.

Spirituality is like the head of a physical body. Only when the head functions well do all the limbs in the body function smoothly. Our students should therefore treat spirituality as their head. Each lecturer teaches a particular subject in the class room, and the students should imprint their teachings in their hearts. They should not differentiate between the lecturers, saying so and so is a great lecturer and others are not. If you conduct yourself as good boys with sterling character and leadership qualities, you can even rule this country in the years to come. Hence, develop a sense of equal-mindedness, treat all lecturers as good, and take their lessons to your heart. This is what I wish to emphasise today as My advice to all the students of our Institute.

Let there be unity between your thoughts, words, and deeds. That is triple purity (*trikarana suddhi*). What you think, you should speak; what you speak, you must put into practice. That is real humanness. Unity does not mean gathering of all people at one place. What is needed is perfect harmony between thoughts, words, and deeds. That is real educare. Educare is very much immanent in you. You need not refer to any textbooks to find educare. Our heart itself is a textbook. Follow its teachings. Then you will become good students and good people. The good people are God's own people. Don't consider yourself as merely students. You are not merely students. Only your body is a student, but in your heart, you are verily divine.

Anil Gokak is leaving today. He will come back. Wherever he and his family reside, they belong to Me. I belong to them too. This is our relationship. I wish that all of you should conduct yourself as good students and welcome the incoming Vice Chancellor, Viswanath Pandit, with love and respect. Be happy.

The ego is most easily destroyed by devotion, by dwelling on the magnificence of the Lord, and by rendering service to others as children of the Lord. You can call on the Lord by any name, for all names are His; select the Name and Form that appeals to you most. That is why a thousand names (*sahasranamas*) are composed for the various forms of God; you have the freedom and the right to select any one of the thousand.

The guru will give you the Name and Form suited to your temperament and meritorious acts. ... You have to do the spiritual discipline in an atmosphere of joy and contentment.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Physical health is a prerequisite for mental health, and mental health ensures physical health! An attitude of generosity, of fortitude in the presence of sorrow and loss, a spirit of enthusiasm to do good, to be of service to the best of one's capacity – these build up the mind as well as the body. The very joy derived from service reacts on the body and makes you free from disease. The body and the mind are closely interrelated ...

The village is the backbone of the whole country. The child becomes an adult, the village grows into a town; only, we should see that the innocent, simple, sincere child does not grow into a cruel, hard-hearted person. Similarly, we have to see that the quiet, God-fearing simple village does not grow into a noisy negative town. Tomorrow's leaders are being bred in this and other villages all over the land. If you have virtue, tomorrow the towns will have virtue. If you have strength, the towns will be strong. If you are quarrelsome, the towns will be affected by it. Learn to live and work in amity. Make the joyful experience of today a permanent feature of your life.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

15. Develop Self-confidence To Achieve God-realisation

This land of Bharat (India) gave birth to great people who earned name and fame in different continents.

This land of Bharat is the battlefield from where the foreign rulers were driven out and freedom won.

This land of Bharat had earned a great reputation for erudite scholarship.

This land of Bharat is a divine land, which produced great intellectuals in the fields of art, music, literature, and sciences.

Having been born in such a great land, oh boys and girls, the responsibility to uphold the glory of this country is yours.

(Telugu poem)

BHARAT (India) is no ordinary country. It is so pleasing to God that He incarnated several times in this great land. The people of this country developed great love and devotion to God. This land gave birth to great warriors, scholars, and intellectuals. But such a great country is in a sad plight. However, we need not be disheartened. No doubt, in the modern world, science has progressed by leaps and bounds, but it has failed to realise Divinity.

Only spirituality can ensure self-confidence and morality

Devoid of self-confidence, any amount of education, scientific knowledge, and experiments are absolutely of no use. Not only are they useless, they are also a waste of time. This is not the way to God-realisation. God-realisation is possible only through control of senses and mind and by developing faith in God. Self-confidence is the key to God-realisation. Hence, dear students, develop self-confidence. Then you can achieve anything in life.

People now are crazy about science, but it is only illusory. Science teaches about transitory, impermanent, and unreal things only. It fails to teach the true *Atma* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*). Scientists are still engaged in unravelling the mysteries of the universe without concentrating on the realisation of the *Atma* Principle. These experiments are an exercise in futility. Science may explore a few mysteries in the physical world and contribute to a better living. It may make some inventions that may help amass great wealth but will miserably fail in developing noble qualities. What is the use of acquiring wealth while ignoring morality? Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows. Morality is possible only through spirituality.

A galaxy of scientists have made great inventions, but they failed to control their body and mind. Why should people pursue such scientific knowledge that would spoil their brains? Instead, one should develop one's brain, cultivate a positive outlook, and engage oneself in service to the country and society. The education you pursue must contribute to the welfare of society. Only then can you earn name and fame and develop morality and integrity.

Develop morality. Only then you can realise truth. Strive to uphold truth. Truth is the father and mother to the world. When truth and righteousness join together, peace is born. From peace, comes love. Where there is love, there is no scope for hatred. There will be no place at all for evil qualities like anger and jealousy. It is only because people have lost the noble quality of love that even brothers and sisters hate one another these days. Hence, first and foremost develop love. There is nothing in this world that you cannot achieve by love. Love is God, live

in love. Love is your life.

Even an ant cannot live without love. It makes friendship with other ants while moving about. The insects too love one another. Only human beings have lost this noble quality of love today. No doubt, people have love inherently but are showing it for wealth and to certain individuals only. There is no use developing such individualised love. One has to develop love for society as a whole. It is only when there is society that an individual can exist. One can live as a member of society. By living in society, one can contribute to its welfare. No other method would work.

The Onam story

Emperor Bali was a great renunciant. He earned great name and fame for his noble quality of charity. He used to readily give away whatever was asked by others. The people of Kerala are most fortunate to have had Bali as their emperor.

Once he was performing a sacrificial rite (*yajna*). Several scholars attended it. The *Vamana Avatar* also came. While He was approaching the stage where the rite was being performed, people started wondering, “This boy is too young! What has He to do with the rite? This is an occasion on which great *vedic* scholars are expected to participate. How dare this young lad venture into this!”

But the daughter of Emperor Bali did not take Him so lightly. She was attracted and charmed by His captivating beauty and scholarly look. Emperor Bali received the great Vamana and asked, “Swami, what brought you here? What can I do for you?” Vamana replied that he did not need anything like money or grains and that he would be content to have just three footstep length of land. Bali was surprised at Vamana’s request, since even to bury a dead body only six feet length of land was required. He therefore requested Vamana to ask for something more.

But Vamana replied, “If you give Me three steps length of land, that would be enough.”

Emperor Bali immediately promised to give Him three steps of land as requested. In fact, Vamana’s request has to be understood from the spiritual angle. It may appear to be a trivial request from the worldly point of view. Vamana then covered the entire earth with one foot. Similarly, He occupied the entire sky with the second step. Now, there was no space available to set the third footstep. He asked Emperor Bali where He could set His third step, so that He might leave the place immediately.

Emperor Bali was nonplussed at the developments and offered his head saying, “Swami, I have now only my head. Kindly keep your foot on my head.” So saying, he removed the crown and offered his head. Lord Vamana then kept His foot on Emperor Bali’s head and pushed him down to the nether world.

Vamana did so only with a view to crush the ego of Emperor Bali. In fact, Emperor Bali was a man of righteousness and great charitable disposition. He was proud of these qualities and had developed ego. Vamana therefore decided to crush his ego. Emperor Bali’s subjects were greatly distressed that they had lost a great emperor. However, Emperor Bali promised to visit their land once in a year. This festival of Onam is held every year to commemorate that great day.

On this day, the people of Kerala take a good head bath, cook a variety of tasty dishes, and feast on them. Notable among the dishes is the banana pudding. Before partaking of this pudding, they light a sacred lamp in

their shrines and offer it to God with prayers. The people of Kerala firmly believe that Emperor Bali would visit them on Onam day and give his *darshan* (sight of a holy person). Therefore, they offer their prayers with a pure and sacred heart.

This tradition is being continued in Kerala till this day. In fact, they eagerly await this great festival. When the king loves his subjects so intensely, so will his subjects love him. It is said, “As is the king, so are the subjects (*Yatha raja thatha praja*). The people of Kerala loved Emperor Bali, and he loved them intensely. The festival of Onam reflects the bond of intimate love between Emperor Bali and his subjects.

What does the name Bali signify? It signifies the great quality of total sacrifice. When Vamana asked for three feet land, he kept his promise and offered himself in the end, in total surrender to the Lord. That is why he has become immortal. It is said, “Immortality is not attained through action, progeny, or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice (*Na karmana na prajaya dhanena tyagenaike amrutatthwamanasuh*).”

What do the three foot steps indicate? Surrender at the lotus feet of the Lord physically, mentally, and spiritually. Emperor Bali, in total surrender to the Lord, offered his head to Vamana so that He might keep His foot on it. Once Vamana kept His foot over Bali’s head, he was sanctified and liberated.

In order that people may remember this great sacrifice and surrender, Emperor Bali would visit their land once in a year on this day. The people too have not forgotten their emperor till this day.

Kerala is a land of plenty. There is no dearth of food grains. There is no dearth of water. In fact, the monsoon rains begin in Kerala. Kerala is a sacred land. It is a land of righteousness and sacrifice. The noble quality of charity had its origin in Kerala. People outside are also full of praise for Kerala. Prayers to God began in Kerala. Kerala gave birth to several great scholars. It is only because the land is so sacred that Lord Vamana incarnated in that place.

Vamana was three feet tall, and He asked for three foot steps of land from Emperor Bali. He covered the entire earth and sky with His two feet. Such was the magnificence of His power. God is described as “Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest (*Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan*).” The Vamana *Avatar* had come only for granting liberation to Emperor Bali. Among the *Avatars* of Vishnu, the Vamana *Avatar* is the first in human form.

As the Vamana *Avatar*, dressed in the traditional attire of a *dhoti* (cloth worn around the waist; skirt), was entering the sacrifice hall, the gaze of all the people there was fixed on Him. Everyone was captivated by the beauty and grace of the resplendent young boy. He took Emperor Bali along with Him to His divine abode. That was the great merit earned by Emperor Bali. The Onam festival is the day on which the Vamana *Avatar* granted liberation to Emperor Bali.

The people of Kerala celebrate Onam on a grand scale, with single-minded devotion. All of them unite to celebrate this festival regardless of caste, creed, and religion. It is their good fortune to come over here in large numbers and celebrate Onam festival in the divine presence of Swami.

Whenever the devotees of Kerala come here, they pray, “Swami, please visit Kerala.” I tell them, “I will come, I will come.” I never said no to them. Not only to them, I say yes to all those who invite Me. Surely, I will visit them one day and show them the glory and power of Divinity. There are great scholars in Kerala. Kerala is no ordinary State. It is a land where God had incarnated as Vamana *Avatar*.

The people of Kerala are most fortunate, for their hearts are filled with love and devotion to God. There is none among them who does not contemplate on God. They may not express their devotion outwardly, but in their heart of hearts they are greatly devoted. People from outside refer to Kerala as a communist state. No, no; it is not communist but ‘come you next’. There are very young children participating in the spiritual education (*bal vikas*) programmes. How beautiful are their faces, radiating bliss and devotion! Their love toward Swami is overflowing. They are full of love! Their hearts are pure and will become mature in due course.

The power of chastity

Today, the *bal vikas* children of Kerala are going to stage a playlet on Savithri. Who is Savithri? People generally remember her as the wife of Sathyavantha.

She was a chaste woman who took a firm resolve to bring her dead husband back to life. She relentlessly pursued her resolve with Lord Yama (The Lord of Death). Lord Yama offered to grant any request put forward by her, but she refused. Her firm reply was, “I do not want anything. Give me my husband back with life.” Unable to withstand her pressure, Lord Yama acceded to her request and brought her husband back to life. For six days, Sathyavantha’s dead body was lying. At last, he came back to life as a result of the boon granted by Lord Yama to Savithri.

Thus, Savithri proved herself to be a great woman of chastity, who brought her dead husband back to life with her noble qualities. Thus, women possess great power of persuasion. Their power can work wonders — even bring the dead back to life. Can you find parallels to Savithri in any other country? Only in Bharat (India) do such wonders take place, since it is a land of 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
(Telugu poem)

In the *Ramayana*, when Sri Rama put Sita to the test of fire after vanquishing Ravana, the God of Fire returned Sita to Rama testifying to her character thus: “Sita is a noble woman of chastity. Do not trouble her like this.” Thus, the land of Bharat is the birthplace of several women of chastity.

People of other countries referred to this country by several names. When Indians go abroad, they introduce themselves saying, “I am from Delhi; I am from Kolkata; I am from Bengaluru”, etc., instead of saying “I am from Bharat.” Those are actually cities and regions that form part of India. Hence, it would be appropriate to say that you are from India.

Wherever you go, you must be proud to refer to yourself as *Bharatiyas* (Indians). The name ‘Bharatha’ has great significance. ‘*Bha*’ refers to Divinity and ‘*ratha*’ refers to one who loves God. Thus, *Bharatiyas* are people who love God. The country of Bharath has acquired its name on account of such people inhabiting it.

The present generation does not realise the significance of Bharat. They very casually mention that they belong to Puttaparthi in the Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh State in India. Where is Puttaparthi? Where is Anantapur? All these are parts in the country of Bharat only. The *Bharatiyas* are most fortunate people. It is the

people of Kerala who imbibed the true spirit of Bharat. They are blessed. Today, they are putting on the play of Savithri. We have to learn a lot from this play.

You have seen how the devotees of Kerala staged beautiful dramas during the last two days. Yesterday, they enacted the '*Sita Rama Kalyana*' (the celestial wedding of Sri Rama and Sita) in all its glory and splendour. The day before they put up a beautiful show of Krishna plays (*leelas*). The music, action, and dialogues are wonderful. Their dresses are also good. The lady devotees of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in Kerala did great service in putting on this show. It is only because of their hard work and enthusiasm that these playlets appeared so natural and captivating. Whatever they do, the men and women of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Kerala conduct on a grand scale.

I wish and bless that the devotees of Kerala must keep up this spirit in all their service activities in the future also. I am happy that you all realised the importance and significance of the festival of Onam. Now go ahead with your programme of staging the playlet of Savithri.

Onam, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-09-12

The path of love and service is not smooth: it abounds in struggle and disappointments. Life itself is a pendulum between sighs and smiles. But every obstacle is an invitation to your intelligence. "Life is a challenge; meet it! Life is a dream; realise it."

Mankind is terrified by a crowd of problems at the present time – scientific, technological, economic, and moral. These cannot be solved by material means alone. Mental transformation must also happen.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sacrifice is the highest virtue. Some people are building hospitals and educational institutions with business motives, spending crores of rupees. If they invest 50 crores on a hospital, they expect a profit of 100 crores. Similarly, with the investment of 50 crores on an educational institution, they want to make 200 crores. This sort of business is an unhealthy practice. Whatever you do, do it for the benefit of others.

When you stepped into this world, you did not bring anything with you, nor can you take anything with you when you leave. No benefit accrues to you from having palatial buildings and huge bank balances if you cannot use them for the service of society. Spend your money for the welfare of society. Only then you can win divine grace. Serve the needy by providing comforts and conveniences.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16. All Are One, Be Alike To Everyone

Karma is responsible for the birth, existence, and death of people.
It holds sway over all stages of their lives as the very deity of human existence.
It is responsible for joy and sorrow.
(Telugu poem)

People experience pleasure and pain, sorrow and difficulties in this world. When they experience pleasure, they would say it is due to their deservedness. On the other hand, when they undergo difficulties, they attribute it to their destiny. Really speaking, both pleasure and pain are the result of one's own actions (*karma*). "As are the feelings, so is the result (*Yad bhavam tad bhavathi*)." As are the actions, so will be the result. As is the food, so will be the belch. Similarly, the entire world is based on *karma*. Hence, the *karmas* performed by people should be sacred.

The three facets of the divine female principle

It is now Dasara festival time. What is Dasara? The celebration of Dasara festival is meant to purify the actions performed by the *dasendriyas* (5 senses of action and 5 senses of perception). Every human being in this world has to perform some kind of *karma* (action). The presiding deity or the driving force behind these actions is Devi (also known as Durga), who is the personification of energy. She is the bestower of all kinds of energy to perform various kinds of *karma* by the human beings.

Goddess Lakshmi bestows various kinds of wealth like money, food grains, gold, different kinds of objects, vehicles for movement, etc., to human beings so that they can lead a happy life in this world.

The third facet of the divine female principle is Saraswathi, the goddess of learning and intellect.

Thus, the Trinity of Durga (goddess of energy), Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) and Saraswathi (goddess of learning and intellect) are worshipped during this festival of Dasara. This is the underlying principle of worshipping this Trinity of Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswathi during this 9-day (*Navaratri*) festival. It is essential that people worship all these three facets of the divine Principle.

One Bilva leaf with three petals is offered to the three-eyed Lord Siva,
Who is the embodiment of the three attributes (*gunas*),
Who holds the trident in his hand, and
Who destroys the sins accumulated over three births.)

Tridalam Trigunakaram
Trinetram Cha Triyayudham;
Trijanma Papa Samharam
Eka Bilvam Sivarpanam.

Human intellect is to be used for righteous actions

Everyone performs *Devi Puja* (worshipping goddess Devi) during the *Navaratri* festival, which confers energy on the individual. The worship of Lakshmi brings all kinds of wealth, and that of Saraswathi, learning and good intellect. Hence, the worship of all three aspects of goddess is very important during the *Navaratri* festival.

In all this worship, righteousness (*dharma*) is of utmost importance. One should enquire into oneself what result would accrue on account of a particular action and then get into it. This reasoning faculty is in the domain of the intellect (*buddhi*), which is all-pervading in the human body. Just as the electric current passes through the wire, intellect enters and influences all senses of a human being. Hence, every human being should make proper use of their intellect and undertake only righteous actions at all times.

No doubt, one is bound by the result of one's own actions — good or bad. And, no result is possible without performing an action. The Pandavas experienced the result of their *karmas*. So did Sita in the *Ramayana*. Hence, we should undertake good and sacred *karmas* beneficial to society, thereby sanctifying our lives.

The left side of the chest of Lord Mahavishnu is the abode of Goddess Lakshmi. Seated in that sacred abode, she showers her grace on one and all. Lord Vishnu is also known as Narayana. Lord Narayana in this context does not refer to Lakshminarayana, but to Sathyanarayana (meaning Sai Baba).

This unique Avatar is the embodiment of truth and righteousness

This Sathyanarayana moves among people, cuts jokes, talks to them, and makes them happy. The Lakshminarayana reclines on Adishesha, the serpent. This Sathyanarayana too was rocked under the bed by a serpent when he was just a newborn baby. Sathyanarayana looks like any other ordinary human being, but He possesses extraordinary and superhuman powers. They are indescribable. He looks very innocent. Yet, *sathya* (truth) is the most important quality He looks for in the people. Wherever He goes, He teaches truth only, for, from truth emerges righteousness (*dharma*). “There is no *dharma* greater than adherence to truth (*Sathyannasti paro dharma*).” In fact, Sathyanarayana is the embodiment of Truth and Righteousness (*Sathya* and *Dharma*)! It is for propagating these two human values that Lord Sathyanarayana has incarnated in human form as Sathyanarayana Raju.

Sathyanarayana is a unique *Avatar*, though He appears to be an ordinary human being. People often commit the mistake of taking Him to be an ordinary human, since He very closely interacts with them at the human level. Whatever He speaks is truth, truth, and nothing but truth! Truth is often times construed as giving expression to one's own thoughts. It is not as simple as that, it is much more: putting them into action. Truth is one with perfect accord between one's thought, word, and deed.

People do not follow My words properly. They take My words lightly, thinking them to be just a joke or fun. Whatever I speak, even if it is a joke or for fun, it is Truth, Truth and Truth only! Unfortunately, people do not recognise this truth, even those who move very closely with Swami. They therefore take it lightly. They just listen and forget about it. But, surely the result of their apathy would be apparent sooner than later.

Only those who are unable to visualise the future will be taking my words lightly. Though Swami is moving in front of them, giving them *darshan*, talking to them now and then, and performing several gigantic tasks right in front of their eyes, people are unable to recognise His true nature and get convinced by His words. How strange it is! It is nearing 83 years since this body was born. I have not forgotten a single incident in this earthly sojourn. But people say, “Swami forgets things”. No, there is no truth at all in this statement. Forgetfulness is not in My dictionary.

The principle of Sathya Sai is the principle of *Soham Mantra*, which never comes under the veil of forgetfulness in the waking, dream, and deep sleep states.

(Telugu song)

It is human nature to misunderstand Truth, which is beyond the three periods of time (past, present, and future) and the three states of human life (awake, dream, and deep sleep). I am now revealing that truth. I have never tried to reveal this so far. Since the time has come to reveal it, I am doing so. People have to realise this. Truth does not make any kind of distinction. It has neither friends nor foes. It has no hatred or dislike against anyone. All are the children of Truth (*Sathyam*)! Hence, all are equal to Me.

I do not make any distinction between people. You may think that I am giving more attention to some people or favouring some. You may also think that I am ignoring some people. No, this is not true. You all know and you must have also seen Me. I do not at all get angry against anybody, even though some talk ill of Me. I will always be smiling. Even the apparent anger that I display sometimes is just to correct an individual. The students vouchsafe for this attitude of Mine. They wonder how Swami is able to put up such a smiling countenance in the midst of great criticism and how could Swami muster such great patience!

One Atmanarayana immanent in all

For Me, all are one even though individuals appear to be different in form and qualities; there is only one divine force working through them. That is the power of *Atma* (*Atma sakthi*). There is only one *Atmanarayana* immanent in all human beings, nay, all living beings. Every human being must try to realise this *Atmic* Principle (*Atma Thathwa*).

So many bulbs illuminate this hall. However, the electric current flowing in all these bulbs is the same. The bulbs may appear to be different, but the current is the same. Similarly, even though the names and forms of the living beings in God's creation appear to be different, the *Atmic* consciousness permeating them is only one. If the main switch is switched off, all these lights go off and darkness envelops. Thus, God illumines the entire universe as the *Atmic* Principle immanent in all the living beings and objects.

Even though God may appear to be involved in so many activities in this world, it is only for the pleasure of His devotees. He has no desires of His own. He has only one desire: "May all the beings in all the worlds be happy (*Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu*)!"

However, human beings will be experiencing the results of their own actions. It is not possible for all to be always happy in this ephemeral world. One may experience happiness, while another may suffer at the same time. This is the nature of the world. The sorrows and difficulties or pleasure and pain bring different experiences to different people, but the *Atmic* Principle present in all the human beings is only one.

Electric bulbs may be of different colours and sizes, but the electric current passing through them is the same. Only the wattage of the bulbs is different. Depending upon the wattage, some bulbs may be bright while others are dim. The brightness or dimness is due only to the wattage of the bulbs and has nothing to do with the current. Similarly, the sorrows and difficulties, pleasure and pain experienced by different individuals are only their own making, and God has nothing to do with it.

Lord Sathyanarayana is also called Vishnu. Lord Vishnu has incarnated as Sathyanarayana in this world. Hence, Sathyanarayana is verily Lord Vishnu. This has been explained in the *Vishnu Purana*. You must understand His true nature (*thathwa*) well.

I have not given a discourse during the last ten days. What is the reason? People attributed different reasons for this, according to their imagination. But one thing is true. I am sitting before the microphone today to reveal the truth. My love is supreme and pure. I love those who love Me. I love even those who develop hatred toward Me. I am also extending My love to those who are demonic and who try to put Me to great inconvenience. There is no one in this world whom I do not love.

Unfortunately, people do not realise this truth. People think, “Swami is not talking to us; perhaps Swami is angry with us.” Let Me assure you that I have no anger at all. I have only one thing: ‘hunger’, ‘hunger’ for devotees! It is only due to this hunger that I draw devotees in large numbers to Me.

Be assured that God is the embodiment of Love. He has no hatred toward anybody. It is to teach this principle of love that the *Navaratri* celebrations have been started. Different people worship God and sing His glory in different ways. I have no difference at all! I wish that all should live as embodiments of love and like brothers and sisters. Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world.

All are God’s children. God is the only father of all. Hence, we must love all. Others may or may not love us, but we must love all and serve all. People keep a distance from us as long as they do not understand the power of love. Once they understand and experience love, they become one with us. I am waiting for such a transformation in the hearts of people.

Thousands of people have heard My discourses over a period of time. Thousands and thousands of people witnessed My divine powers on various occasions. In spite of all that, people are unable to understand the true nature of My Divinity. People talk of so many things according to their perceptions and understanding. It is not their fault. There are very few people who could realise Truth and conduct themselves accordingly. Only those who realise the path of Truth will be able to follow it. When people develop anger or hatred against Truth, they keep themselves away from it. Irrespective of their love or hatred, we should always love them. People keep a distance from one another due to differences of opinion. In fact, you are not different from others. Today, they may appear to be different, but tomorrow they may come close to you. All are brothers and sisters! Hence, all should live like brothers and sisters with love and unity.

“All are one; be alike to everyone.” This is My special message on this holy occasion of *Navaratri*.

You will be able to realise truth sooner or later. When a tree bears fruit, not all the fruits in a bunch will ripen at the same time. Similarly, when a plant bears flowers, not all the flowers blossom at the same time. Some will be in the process of blossoming, some are fully blossomed, yet others will be only in the bud stage. Only the fully blossomed flower spreads its fragrance.

Similarly, people will be in different stages of evolution — some are like the bud, some at the blossoming stage, and some others like the fully blossomed flower, spreading their fragrance. We have to wait patiently till the fragrance stage comes. This is My important message.

Today is the *Purnahuthi* day of the sacrificial rite *Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajnam*. What is meant by *Purnahuthi*? It means total sacrifice. My life has always been one of sacrifice!

That is full, this is full.

When the full is taken out of the full,

What remains again is the full.

Purnamada purnamidam
Purnat purnamudachyate
Purnasya purnamadaya
Purnamevavashishyate.
(Sanskrit verse)

Those who understand the truth will be able to know. Students are still in the budding stage. It will take some time for them to understand the true spirit of Swami's words. Hence, keep patience till then.

Students must avoid the use of cell phone

One more thing I wish to mention in this context. I see several boys keeping cell phones in their pockets. They think that they are keeping cell phones for their convenience and easy communication. They do not realise the ill-effects of these instruments. Cell phones are often misused for undesirable purposes, like establishing contacts between boys and girls. They develop bad thoughts and bad connections between them.

In order that bad thoughts should not enter our minds, avoid such connections altogether. It is said, "The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (*Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo*)." It is common practice that we give our telephone numbers to all and sundry. What happens thereafter? Bad contacts develop. All unnecessary calls are made to verify whether we respond to them or not. Thus, boys and girls develop unnecessary contacts and establish undesirable relationships between them. Hence, I strongly advise you not to make use of cell phones. It may be convenient in the beginning, but gradually it will lead to bad ways.

I will be approaching 83 years of age shortly. I have not made use of a telephone till now. Several people want to make calls to Me expressing their sorrow and seeking solace. Come what may, I do not use the phone. Hence, I have a right to guide you and warn you.

You must be very careful. You are still in the budding stage. Conduct yourself carefully, keeping your age in mind. If you don't take proper care of yourself, even the world will look down upon you. You will be branded as a careless youngster. Respect and disrespect in the world depends on the way you conduct yourself. You may think that your conduct is alright, but it is for others to judge. Always conduct yourself in such a way that you do not give scope for any misunderstanding by others.

The elders may exercise discretion and try to understand you in proper spirit, but children of your age cannot do so. Once misunderstanding sets in, you will miss the finer things in life and become doomed. Hence, I wish that you all be very careful in your contacts and relations with others. If possible, dump your cell phones in a well. You will be happy and peaceful. Better you don't acquire them at all! Even if you acquire one, establish contact and connection with only those with whom it is desirable.

Do not develop unnecessary and undesirable contacts with others. By developing such contacts, you gather news from all and sundry and pass it on to others. Ultimately, you will end up as Narada, poking your nose into all sorts of things. You will not only spoil your mind with unwanted things but will also spoil the minds of others. Why all this unpleasantness? Is it not because of your unwanted and undesirable telephonic contacts? Hence, be careful and earn a good name for yourself, your parents, and the institution in which you are studying.

Develop the spirit of mutual help. Villagers have been ruined because one person cannot tolerate the prosperity of another

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Jealousy is the cause of ruin. It is born of the undue importance attached to the body, the senses, and the accumulation of objects that cater to the senses. See things in their proper perspective – give them their worth but no more. There are greater things that grant joy and peace. Try to get hold of them; every one of you has a right to possess them. None can keep them away from your grasp.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

In India, people have clubbed together in the name of service, as Lions Club, Rotary Club, Cosmopolitan Club, etc. Their ideals are really sacred and the projects are also commendable. They revere all people as a single family. Many worthy persons perform devoted service as members of these clubs. It is indeed a fortunate chance for them, for there can be no good work higher than this.

They say, “Money makes many things,” but it is more correct to say, “Money makes many wrongs.” Not all, of course, are ruined by affluence. They can help such organisations to do more and better service. They can supply medicines to those who render health service to the poor. They can visit slums and offer help in various ways to the dwellers. These are all laudable. But collecting money and paying others to do the service is not enough; we must assess what services we ourselves are offering directly. And we must not be content as doctors, lawyers, the rich, the educated with spurts of service, on and off. It must be a continuous process, according to a settled timetable undertaken every week.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

17. Love Is God, Live In Love

This land of Bharat (India) is the motherland for great people, who acquired name and fame in different continents.

The land of Bharat is the battlefield wherefrom the warriors of foreign countries were driven out and freedom from foreign rule was acquired.

This land of Bharat has acquired great name and fame for erudite scholarship.

This land of Bharat is a divine land, which has produced great intellectuals in the fields of music, art, literature and various sciences.

Having been born in such a great land, oh boys and girls, the responsibility to protect and uphold the righteousness of this country is yours.

(Telugu poem)

The fame and fortune of Bharat (India) is truly great. While several countries of the world had faced calamities of various kinds, Bharat has remained stable. It is a country richly endowed with a variety of wealth.

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

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

The nectarous 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)

Throughout history, Bharat (India) has been preeminent in material and intellectual plenty. It was ruled by great kings and righteous rulers. Several women famed for their chastity were born in this country. Savithri could bring back her dead husband Sathyavantha to life by the power of her chastity. Can you find parallels to such noble and chaste women elsewhere in the world?

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 the 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)

Bharatiyas have forgotten their greatness and values

Sadly, however, today, many persons born in this great land of Bharat are succumbing to and are tempted by trivial things. Their perception is bad, they listen to bad things, and even their behaviour is bad. What a great fall!

The *Bharatiyas* (Indians) today are like the elephant, which is unaware of its own strength. With a swish of its tail an elephant can knock a man off his feet and throw him yards away. Such a powerful elephant will meekly obey the commands of the mahout. It just acts according to the wishes of the mahout. Similarly, *Bharatiyas* today are surrendering to the dictates of outsiders and are becoming their slaves.

The way of life of *Bharatiyas* is conditioned by truth and righteousness, in accordance with the *vedic* injunctions, “Speak truth (*sathyam vada*) and follow righteousness (*dharmam chara*).” In fact, truth and righteousness are the very treasure of *Bharatiyas*. Unfortunately, today, *Bharatiyas* have forgotten these great values and, therefore, have become slaves in their own country. Their lifestyle itself has undergone a change where truth and righteousness have no place. Truly speaking, there is none in this world who can conquer Bharat. *Bharatiyas* are born with the great human values, namely, truth, righteousness, peace, and love.

Every individual has to enquire into their true nature, “Who am I?” The reply that comes from within is, “I am a human being.” Along with this reply, one has to assure oneself, “I am not an animal.” That is your true nature, but when you consider yourself to be a human being, you must display human qualities. What are they? First and foremost, truth (*sathyam*). From truth comes righteousness (*dharma*). It is said “There is no greater right conduct than adhering to truth (*Sathyaannasti paro dharmah*).” Truth and right conduct together bring peace (*santhi*) and love (*prema*).

Where there is love, there cannot be hatred and jealousy. Unfortunately, today people have lost the great quality of love. Even a dog loves its puppy. Even the birds love their offspring. But a human being does not love a fellow human being. Lack of unity among people is the root cause for the present state of affairs in Bharat. There is no unity in the family, in society, and in the country. Where there is unity, there will be purity, where there is purity, there Divinity shall be. What is required today is unity, purity, and Divinity.

Scientists today are inventing several things. A double-decker plane is being flown in the sky. However, along with the great advances made in science and technology, loss of the quality of human life is also on a large scale. This was not the case in earlier times. Several people used to live together under one roof, with peace and happiness. There was no fear complex at all. But, today, the fear complex is all pervading. Wherefrom did this fear come? It is due to lack of self-confidence. One has no faith in one’s inner self. It is said “The *Atmic* consciousness is not for the weak minded (*Naayamatma balaheenena labhyah*).”

People have developed faith in everything in this world, but not in their own self. Where there is self-confidence, there will be self-satisfaction; where there is self-satisfaction, there will be self-sacrifice; where there is self-sacrifice, there will be self-realisation.

It is common knowledge that where the foundation is strong, the walls will be safe; where the walls are safe, the roof will be secure. Only in such a house can one live safely. Today, the foundation itself is not strong. How then can the walls remain safe? Self-confidence is the foundation for a human being, self-satisfaction represents the walls, self-sacrifice is the roof, and self-realisation is life. Hence, there should be perfect coordination between these four.

Due to indiscriminate use of technology, the air, water, food — everything is polluted and poisoned all over the world. Fortunately, the country of Bharat is spared from this widespread pollution. We should not run after science and technology. Science without humanness is fraught with great danger to the very existence of humanity.

There is no greater power than human power. Some people question, “Where is God?” The answer is very

simple. Every human God, you are God, verily. The *Vedas* declare, “The moon was born out of the mind and the sun out of the eyes of the Supreme Being (*Chandrama manaso jaathah; chaksho surya ajaayata*).” The real strength comes from our own inner self. This strength is unparalleled.

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

(Telugu poem)

Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom.

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

Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.

(Telugu poem)

The spiritual health of Bharat is unique

Today’s education does not provide real knowledge that matures into wisdom. It just helps one to earn a livelihood. It promotes acquisition and misuse of wealth. With the money people acquire through various means, people send young boys to foreign countries for higher education. They spend lakhs of rupees for that purpose. By the time they return to their homeland, the children are spoiled totally.

Here is a small incident that had happened sometime ago. The Indian parents took their son to a temple before his departure to a foreign country for his studies and advised him, “Dear son, this deity is the mother to one and all. She is the Mother of the universe. Never forget the Mother. Constantly contemplate on Her, wherever you are”. They, in fact, extracted a promise from him to that effect.

The boy left for U.S.A. Once he set his foot in America, he totally forgot about the Mother, fully immersed in that new environment. After a lapse of three years, he returned to his native country, Bharat, fully accustomed to the American way of life. The parents took that boy to the same temple straight from the airport for a *darshan* of the divine Mother. As soon as he entered the temple, the boy, instead of offering his *namaskar* (a salutation to another with hands pressed together and pointing upward, meaning “I bow to your form”) to the deity, greeted Her in English, “How are you Madam?”

The parents scolded the boy for his impertinence and for not paying his obeisance to the divine Mother. They regretted very much that their son, brought up in a traditional family, did not even care to offer his *pranams* (similar to *namaskar*) to the divine Mother and all the lakhs of rupees spent on his foreign education had gone waste. They finally decided to advise all those parents who wished to send their children abroad for higher education against it.

It is indisputably true that higher studies abroad are resulting in people acquiring bad thoughts, habits, and behaviour. One need not be crazy about foreign education. The wealth of education and culture available in this country is not to be found in other countries. We must be proud of our birth in this great land of Bharat. It is a great privilege to be referred to as *Bharatiyas*. We must, therefore, develop self-confidence. We must develop interest in leading a moral, virtuous, and spiritual life.

Unfortunately, today there is no morality in people. How then can you lead a happy and peaceful life? The great spiritual wealth available in this country of Bharat is not to be found in any other country. People from several countries are inviting Me to visit their places, offering Me even special aircraft. But I am consistently turning

down their requests. I am always happy here in India. I don't need these planes and such other comforts. I want only devotion.

Visualise the same Atma Principle in all

I did not come across anyone who hates Me, and till now I have no enemies at all. All people love Me, since I love one and all. However, people do not understand My love properly. Because of My universal love, even people from far-off lands come to Me. Why then should I go abroad? Some people misunderstand and misinterpret My love. Some even develop aversion toward Me on the ground that I did not oblige them by granting their requests on some occasions. In fact, will they progress in the spiritual path if I grant all their requests? No, not at all. On the other hand, they will get spoiled. That is why I wish to keep the boys and girls in proper limits right from their childhood.

You can observe that no one in our educational institutions ever hates Me in the least. All students gather round Me lovingly calling, "Swami! Swami!" When I come out after paying a visit to their campuses, they take leave of Me with tears in their eyes. Do you find the same situation prevalent in educational institutions elsewhere? Do the colleges and universities outside function as temples of learning? Even parents visiting their wards in those educational institutions are not treated with due respect.

Parents are sacred. The *Bharatiya* (Indian) culture exhorts, "Father is God; mother is God (*Matrudevobhava; Pitrudevobhava!*)" Every human being is an embodiment of God. In fact, the entire creation is God. Unable to realise this great truth, we say, "This person is my enemy, he ill-treated me," and develop hatred against him. As you think, so it will be (*Yad bhavam tad bhavati*). Love begets love and hatred begets hatred.

It is common to help those who help you, but it is only Sai who is gracious enough to help those that try to cause harm to Him, ignoring their own faults. You must love even those who harm you. That is real humanness. You must develop such a human quality. Whomever you come across, treat him as an embodiment of Divinity.

It is said, "God is in human form (*Daivam manusha rupena*)." You may observe the picture of any form of God, there God is portrayed in the human form. Rama, Krishna, or any other deity – all are in human forms only. You may relate to God in different forms and names; but all are embodiments of the divine Self.

The *Atma* Principle (*Thathwa*) is the same in all human beings, irrespective of names and forms. It is said, "One *Atma* resides as the indweller in all living beings (*Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma*)."

One has to cultivate such noble feelings right from childhood. You may think it is a difficult task. No, there is nothing easier than this feeling of equality. Suppose a person whom you consider as an enemy is approaching you; you offer your respects to him and ask, "Hello, How are you brother?" Immediately the other man will respond saying "How are you brother?" He will not get angry. Why? Since you called him brother, he will also treat you in the same way. It is in your language that either love and faith or enmity and distrust in the other person is displayed.

You must rise to a level where you will be able to visualise the same *Atma* Principle in all. Then you will truly become "embodiment of the divine Self (*Divyatma Swarupa*)." You must consider "I am an embodiment of the divine Self. All these different forms of human beings are only my reflections. I am able to see myself in these bodies, which are like mirrors." Only when you are able to reach that stage will you enjoy real peace. You will not experience peace by merely doing repetition of the Lord's name, penance, yoga, or sacrificial rites and rituals.

People crave peace and undertake several spiritual practices for that purpose, but they don't find peace anywhere. Wherever you look, there are only pieces in the outside world. But once they direct their vision inward, they will be able to find peace there. The peace within is manifesting outside. Only such a person with inner vision can be called a human being in the real sense. Animals have no such inner vision and discriminatory intellect. They therefore display cruelty. You are not an animal. You are a human being. Hence, lead a life befitting that of a human being. You say that you are a human being, but you live the life of a cruel animal. How then can you be called a human being?

Cultivate love, give up hatred

Live like a real human being. Get rid of animal qualities like desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, hatred, and envy. Do not hate anybody. I have no anger against anyone till date. That is why all people love Me. I have only one quality: love toward all. Hence, even if I go to a forest, people will follow Me there. It is only My love that draws all people to Me. Yet, some people develop antipathy toward Me. It is not My fault, but their own imagination. People wonder how Swami is so divinely peaceful and is able to interact with so many people day in and day out. In fact, peace is natural to Me. I always smile and put up a serene countenance. I can never put on a castor oil face. I am always happy and smiling. I exhort you also to be so. When you all are happy, I am happy. Your happiness is My happiness.

What could be the reason for millions of people loving Me? What brought you here in such large numbers? Did I send any invitation to you all? It is only your love that brought you here. Can invitations draw crowds? Even when there is no invitation, people rush toward Me if they come to know that I am passing through a particular place. What could be the reason for this? Only love. Love is God; live in love. That is what you have to learn and cultivate. Love is the foremost quality that you should cultivate. Take a pledge accordingly on this sacred day.

Become embodiments of divine love

Very soon, the entire world will be united. In fact, after 28 years the world itself will become "Bharat". Everyone will call themselves a *Bharatiya* (one imbued with godliness – *Bhagavat ratas*). No one will refer to themselves as belonging to this state or that state, this region or that region. You may go to any country, but you refer to yourself as belonging to the country of Bharat. For example, there may be Karnataka State, Tamil Nadu State, etc., but they are all parts of a larger country called Bharat. Without the country, the states cannot exist. You are all *Bharatiyas* first and last. Hence, you say that you came from Bharat. The different states might have been created certain linguistic or geographical considerations, but they are all parts of one country: Bharat.

We all belong to only one party: the party of love. Love, love, and only love. Keeping love as your guiding force and go to any country, and people will respect you, consider you as their own brothers and sisters, and extend all necessary help to you.

Love is selflessness. A human being should never have selfishness. However, people of their own accord develop evil qualities like selfishness, hatred, anger, etc. These traits are cultivated by human beings themselves; they are not God-given. God has bestowed only one noble quality on all human beings, that is love. Love is eternal. Physical strength, courage or valour can never be a match to the power of love.

When Sita was kept in confinement in Lanka under the guard of demons, it was her love for Rama that gave

her courage and confidence to boldly face all difficult situations. She constantly contemplated on the divine name of Rama during the period. Finally, Rama's love saved her. During that ten-month period, none could touch her. If only you cultivate such divine love, it will confer everything on you. You all should become the embodiments of love. Pray constantly, "May all the beings of all the worlds be happy (*Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu*)." That is the only prayer you have to do. Then, all people in all countries will be happy and peaceful.

I am loving you all. I have no enemies. No one hates Me. Sometimes I do speak harshly in a raised voice, but that is only outwardly. I do not bear ill will toward anyone. Hence, if you follow the ideal set by Swami and love all, your life will be sanctified. Your parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, and friends will feel happy.

27th Convocation, Sri Sathya Sai University, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-11-22

Whoever loves and serves all, that person the Lord loves and honours ... You must start with the first step, the cleansing of the mind and cultivation of virtue. Even if you do not start with that step, at least do not laugh at those who do, and discourage them. Do at least this much!

Then, do not depend upon others for doing your work, like attending to your personal wants. Do them yourself; that is real freedom. Again, never accept anything 'free' from others; pay it back, in service or work. That will make you self-respecting individuals.

Receiving a favour means getting bound to the giver. Grow with self-respect and dignity. That is the best service you can do to yourself.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18. Lead A Happy Life With A Feeling Of Camaraderie And Fraternity

All names and forms are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being,
who is existence-knowledge-bliss, absolute, and nondual.
He is the embodiment of truth, goodness, beauty (*sathyam, sivam, sundaram*).
(Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Love!

The country of Bharat (India) is most sacred. In this sacred land of Bharat, tolerance is the noble quality that we should cultivate. Just as an elephant is unable to realise its innate strength, so are the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) today. The elephant meekly submits itself to the commands of a mahout, who is ignorant and illiterate. In spite of its great strength, it cannot demonstrate its strength. Similarly, *Bharatiyas* today are unable to demonstrate their strength in spite of possessing a rich culture, righteousness, and justice on their side. The *Vedas* declare, “Immortality is not attained through action, progeny, or wealth, it is attained only by sacrifice (*Na karmana na prajaya dhanena tyagenaike amrutatthwamanasuh*).”

The greatest drawback in this country is lack of unity among people. We have everything in this country. We have noble qualities. We are righteous. But there is no unity among people, with the result that all other positive factors become ineffectual. Hence, we have to cultivate unity among people. We all belong to one species: human beings. Being humans, we are, unfortunately, exhibiting inhuman and animal qualities.

Hence, first and foremost we have to recognise our innate human nature today. We have to treat others’ suffering as our own. We have to treat others’ difficulties as our own. We have to be amicable with one and all. We must develop faith in the maxim, “embodiments of one divine Self (*Ekatmaswarupas*).” We must develop a sense of discrimination between good and bad and take the good only, leaving the bad in all human beings. The same principle has to be followed in society also. We have to do good even to those who harm us:

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)

We must always entertain good thoughts about people. “See good, do good, and be good — that is the way to God.” “As is the feeling, so is the result (*Yad bhavam tad bhavati*).” If our thoughts are good, we will always engage ourselves in good deeds. If you eat a mango, can you get the belch of a cucumber? No. Similarly, if you entertain good thoughts always, you will see good only everywhere. When you indulge in bad thoughts, you will see bad only everywhere.

Secular education is useless without a spiritual base

There is a Sathya Sai College in Muddenahalli, near Bangalore. Several boys coming from poor families in the villages around are studying in this college. A number of philanthropists extended help to the college in different ways — some built classrooms, others a *bhajan* hall, etc. However, this institution is not affiliated with

any university. Once the boys finish their education, they have to go to places like Bangalore to pursue a degree course.

When I thought of their plight, I got a good idea. Here in Puttaparthi, our college and university are housed in spacious and beautiful buildings. Suppose we establish a campus in Muddenahalli; the boys there will also be happy. Is it not? Hence, I decided to establish a college campus of Sri Sathya Sai University in Muddenahalli. Mine is divine will, which is irrevocable and immutable. Now that I have decided, I will initiate the process from tomorrow.

Since the boys studying in Muddenahalli college come from a rural background and are very poor, they are unable to go for higher education in cities and towns. They therefore discontinue their studies and take to farming activity. Of course, that is also necessary. Secular education helps to make a comfortable living. Hence, education is of top priority. Once they finish their education, they can get into any occupation, including agriculture.

I have therefore decided to provide university education to the boys in Muddenahalli. I am of the view that, side by side with academic subjects, there must be provision for teaching epics and sacred texts like the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavatha*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* as well. The boys must be given good training and be allowed to spread the message of these epics in the villages around. All secular education is useless without a spiritual base.

There are millions of educated people in the world, but what is their contribution to society? Nothing. They don't even care for society. They are crazy about the luxurious life in towns and cities. They indulge in bad practices like gambling and club life. The children too are taking to bad ways, observing their parents. Hence, it is My view that children should be taught to tread the right path. The elders will follow them later on observing them. Keeping this in My mind, I have decided to establish a university campus in Muddenahalli. Perhaps it will cost about two to three crores of rupees. I do not mind this expenditure. It is My resolve that this is needed.

The boys in Prasanthi Nilayam are excellent. They are pure gold. It is possible that one or two may stray from the right path, but very soon they adjust themselves to the academic environment and follow the mainstream.

Yesterday, the boys staged a play. It conveys a great message. The theme of the play was two brothers quarrelling for their share of property in a small village. They are counseled saying, "Dear brothers, if you quarrel with each other like this, how can our village prosper? You must be united and must lead an amicable life", and, finally, they are corrected. The boys should therefore be encouraged to take up such village development programmes.

Students, no doubt, are good today, but the elders spoil them by their bad behaviour. It is the elders who divert them to bad ways. However, the students quickly realise their mistakes and retrace their steps. I know of boys who advise their parents addicted to alcohol to desist from such bad ways saying, "Dear father, don't indulge in these bad habits. By doing so, you will only be encouraging us also to take to drinking. This is not good." If elders take to drinking, smoking, and gambling, the children follow suit. They get spoiled. Hence, if the children must lead a virtuous life, the elders must lead an ideal life first.

I have therefore decided to establish a university campus in Muddenahalli to teach boys to lead an ideal life with clean habits. The boys there cannot afford to go to a city for a university education. Nor can their parents afford the expenditure. Hence, I have decided to establish a university campus with all the equipment and facilities like classrooms for all the courses and a good hostel. It will be ready for opening within a year. It is My divine will.

All that I have for you is a thousand mothers' love

A number of people like Anil Kumar, Ajit Popat, etc., have spoken a lot extolling Me. I am not happy about such praises. I have no desire for people to extol Me. I am neither elated nor depressed by such acts. I am beyond praise or ridicule, respect or disrespect, anger or happiness. I have only one attribute throughout: My love. I love even those who hate Me. I love even those who indulge in bad propaganda against Me. I do not consider anyone as enemy. All are Mine.

I am looking after you all, like a mother. Mine is not one mother's love. It is the love of a thousand mothers. Sai's love is a thousand mothers' love. It is only due to that love that I ignore all your faults and move forward. Whenever someone commits a mistake, I call them and correct them in a raised voice, but I don't show anger against them. I have no anger against anybody. In fact, I have no anger at all. People who are unable to understand My true nature think otherwise.

Whatever people may think and say, I have only one attribute: love. Mine is a right royal road, not shortcuts. People do not understand Me properly. Once they recognise My true nature, they themselves will repent. That repentance is expiation for their misunderstanding. However, there is no change in my attitude toward them.

What I wish is, "May all the beings of all the worlds be happy (*Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu!*)" All should be hale and healthy and lead happy and prosperous lives with mutual love and understanding. You must acquire wealth, but do not misuse wealth. Then only will I be happy. I will extend any help to such people.

I have not stretched My hand before anyone till date for any kind of help. If there is anyone in this vast con-course of devotees in this hall whom I had approached for money, they may rise and point out to Me. There is none, surely. Whatever I need in My *avataric* mission comes from within only. "Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows." It is My endeavour that morality should be developed. All villages must be developed. For this purpose, education in rural areas is an important tool. Simultaneously, faith in God must also be developed. People with self-confidence can achieve anything.

Those who denigrate will repent

Bhakta Ramadas wanted to build a magnificent temple for Rama in Bhadrachalam. He therefore utilised all the tax money collected from people for the purpose. As a result, he was imprisoned by Emperor Tanisha on charges of misuse of state money and was put to great torture. Unable to bear the physical torture, he prayed to his dear Lord Rama and even used harsh words thus:

That crest jewel which adorns You cost me ten thousand gold coins.

Unmindful of my travails, You are flaunting the jewelry as if it is Your ancestral property!

(Telugu song)

The very next moment he realised his folly and repented and begged Rama for pardon. Similarly, several people may think and talk in several ways about Swami. But, very soon, they will realise and repent their indiscreet acts. Different people have different opinions. People indulge in loose talk out of their delusion. But I have no illusions. Whatever people may say, I talk to them and greet them with love. I don't punish them for their indiscreet talk or behaviour. They themselves must realise their fault and repent. If they denigrate Me now, they will themselves face trouble later. Hence, people must think twice before indulging in any loose talk.

Unfortunately, none has been able to realise My true nature. They pretend to have understood My mind, but none could comprehend it in the least. They look to the outward manifestations only. They talk of My programmes and activities in the outside world only. They are unable to realise My divine love at all, which flows from the depths of My heart. However, I am confident that people will realise it one day. I always wish and work for the welfare of the entire world.

All should live in peace. Even if we don't have any other property, we can lead a happy life if only the property of love is with us. And, that love should be supported by self-confidence.

Discard the feeling of 'I' and 'mine'

God is the only source and sustenance for the entire universe. Everything else is an illusion. Sorrows and difficulties, loss and gain, diseases and sickness — treat them all as the divine will. Then everything will turn out to be good for you.

You say, "This is my body," but who are you? You say, "My body," but you are not the "body". Similarly, you say, "My mind," but you are not saying, "I am the mind". Thus, "you" are different from your body, mind, etc.

When someone asks your name, do not say, "I am Rama" or "I am Krishna;" say, "I am I." Whatever name you say, it is only the name given to you by your parents. It is not your real name. In fact, nothing belongs to you in this world. "I" is your only property. That is why we say "I", "I", "I" for everything.

You are God, verily, if only you get rid of "I", the ego, and "mine", the attachment. Then, you are really yourself (your real SELF)! When you say, "My house, my people," etc., attachment grows. This body attachment breeds ego. Hence, once you rise above "I" and 'mine' and lead a contented life, you will derive great happiness. May you all lead a happy, loving and long life! May you 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)

Strive for unity

We cannot do any work with one finger. When all five fingers of the hand join together, we can do any work. Similarly, if people are divided, no work can be executed.

A small story. Once the five fingers of a hand argued among themselves as to which finger was great. The middle finger argued with ego, "I am taller than all of you. There are two 'body guards' on either side of me. Hence, I am great."

The index finger said, "You can do any work only if I show you to do that work. Otherwise, you cannot. Hence, I only am great." The small finger intervened and said, "Though I am small in size, I stand in the front as the commander-in-chief to punish any individual or teach him a lesson. Therefore, I am great." Thereupon, the ring finger laughed and said, "People wear diamond and gem-studded rings only on the ring finger. Hence, I am the monarch of all." Finally, after hearing all these arguments, the thumb laughed aloud and wound up the discussion with the suggestion, "None of you can undertake any work without me. Therefore, let us all get together to

work.”

Let all the theists, atheists, theistic atheists, and atheistic theists come together. That is what we need today. What Bharat (India) needs today is unity. We have everything — love, truth, righteousness, and justice — but not unity. It is only due to lack of unity that we are leading a life of diversity and divergent ideas. All should be united and should lead a happy life with a feeling of camaraderie and fraternity.

Unfortunately, today there is a feeling of difference even between a father and a son in the house. The wife and husband, the brothers and sisters, all quarrel among themselves. How can there be peace and happiness in the family? There may be differences of opinion, but they should not last for long. They just come and go like the passing clouds. Why should people fight among themselves? You should not mind these differences.

Always keep the welfare of others before your eyes

I have not approached anyone for anything, though I am undertaking huge social service projects. I had undertaken a project for supplying drinking water to ten million people living in Chennai. Every house has been provided with drinking water. Not only that, water has also been arranged for irrigation purposes. The people living in the upland areas of East and West Godavari districts in Andhra Pradesh were suffering for want of safe drinking water. I arranged for execution of a drinking water supply project for the benefit of all those people. Along with the supply of drinking water, arrangements were made to provide water purifying systems en route. Thus, I always wish to do some good to every individual.

Now, I propose to establish a university campus in Muddenahalli for the benefit of students studying in Sri Sathya Sai College there. I had watched with My own eyes the difficulties the students were undergoing there due to lack of facilities for higher education, and I was moved. I assured them that I would provide the necessary facilities. Is anyone here from Muddenahalli? (Swami invited Sri Narayana Rao to the stage and introduced him to the audience). This person is the Principal of the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Muddenahalli. He is highly educated and is running the school well. Whenever I visit Muddenahalli he would pray, “Swami, when will You shower Your grace on us?” (with the kind permission of Swami, Sri Narayana Rao spoke for a few minutes, offering his grateful thanks to Swami.) Thereafter, Swami concluded His divine discourse saying, “Share the joy that I gave you today with all! Be happy!”

83rd Birthday, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-11-23

Love is God, God is Love. Where there is love, there God is certainly evident. Love more and more people, love them more and more intensely; transform the love into service, transform the service into worship; that is the highest spiritual discipline.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. Contemplate On God, The Real Hero, For Victory

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)

Embodiments of Love!

What can one say about Jesus Christ that has not been said already! Today is Christmas, the holy day on which Jesus Christ was born some two thousand years ago. You all know about it.

All that we see, hear, and do are like dream scenes, which will disappear soon. They are, of course, true as long as you sleep. The moment you wake up or slide into deep sleep, they just disappear. Similarly, all that you see, hear, and do in the objective world are also like dream scenes. They are unreal and subject to constant change. The *Atma* Principle (*Thathwa*) is the only entity that is permanent in all three periods of time, namely, past, present, and future, as also the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. This *Atma* Principle is love. In fact, love is born out of *Atma* only. If only you cultivate love, the entire world will come under your control.

Make your mind steady by curbing your desires

Do not hurt anyone. "Hurt never, love ever." Constantly remember love, which is the eternal truth.

You are not one person, you are three: (1) the one you think you are, (2) the one others think you are, and (3) the one you really are. That is your real nature. You say, "this is my body, this is my mind, this is my intellect, this is my subconscious mind," etc., but who is this 'my'? Unfortunately, no one today puts this question to themselves. When you say, 'my body,' you are separate from your body. You say, "this is my house." But who are you? You have to find answer to this question. How long will this house, which you say is yours, last? It is sure to dilapidate sooner than later. All these worldly objects are subject to change and destruction.

Only one entity is changeless: the Brahma Principle (*Thathwa*). That is love. If only you get hold of it, everything else will come under your control. Wherever you look today, there are only desires, desires, and more desires. Put a ceiling on these desires! Then only will your mind become steady. You say "I want this, I want that," etc. Thus, you develop many wants. They are like passing clouds. Why should you multiply your wants, these passing clouds? Ultimately, nothing accompanies you at the time of your leaving this mortal body.

Great kings and emperors ruled over this world. They conquered several countries and accumulated boundless wealth. Even Alexander the Great, who conquered several parts of the world, could not take with him even a miniscule part of the wealth he accumulated. He had to leave this world with empty hands. To demonstrate this truth, 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 toward the sky. The ministers were curious to know the reason for this

strange request. He said, “I have conquered several countries and accumulated so much wealth. There is a vast army under my control. Yet, nothing is accompanying me at the time of my leaving this body. I am going with empty hands. This has to be demonstrated to all people.”

Embodiments of Love!

People should, of course, have some comforts for this physical body and fulfil some desires that are necessary for their daily life. But, unfortunately, these desires are reaching a point of insatiability. You may live for a few years or full hundred years in this physical world. One day or other the body has to be cast off. Hence, do not cultivate unlimited desires.

Some people have intense desire to have the vision of God. Where is God? You are all embodiments of Divinity. God is not separate. Men are more valuable than all the wealth in the world. God also is in human form.

Good and bad arise from our thoughts

We see three kinds of beings in the world: tame animals, wild beasts, and humans. One has to analyse for oneself whether one belongs to the category of animals, beasts, or humans. If you think you are a human being, then cultivate human values, lead a human life, and develop human thoughts.

First and foremost, truth is a human value. Truth does not undergo any change in all three periods of time — past, present, and future. Truth is always truth. Develop faith in that truth. All others undergo change. You say, “I am peaceful today.” What about tomorrow? No peace. All pieces, pieces! Hence, this state of peace also undergoes change.

“Love is God; live in love.” In fact, your entire life is nourished and nurtured by love. When truth and love go together, nonviolence is the result. Where there is love, people will not quarrel among themselves. You don’t get angry against someone. When you develop love, you consider all people as your brothers. Suppose you meet someone and say “hello, brother,” even your enemy will respond by saying, “hello, brother.” “As is the feeling, so is the result (*Yad bhavam tad bhavati*).” Hence, you have to develop noble feelings.

Good and bad arise only from your thoughts. If something bad happens, it is not something that others have done for you. Nor has God a role to play in this. You are bad to yourself! Your thoughts have done you harm! Suppose you are happy, even that is not caused by God. That too is on account of your own thoughts. Hence, one has to purify one’s thoughts, first and foremost. When you develop pure thoughts, your life will be happy and peaceful. Where there is purity, there Divinity is.

Unfortunately, today, Divinity is being divided and differentiated in the name of religion. Where unity, purity, and Divinity go together, life is happy.

God is not responsible for either good or bad thoughts. You only are responsible for both. If you have bad thoughts, that is your own making. All are one’s own making. The same is the case with good thoughts. See! How beautiful are these lights in this hall! Who made them? The human being only. Hence, there can be no Divinity without humanness. Humanness must be sanctified. Human beings must cultivate human values. Then only can one attain Divinity. The senses create a lot of unsteadiness in us. They lead us to bad ways in many ways. However, when our mind is pure they lead us on the noble path. Hence, keep your mind fresh and pure always. It should not be allowed to waver, which can lead us to ups and downs.

It is said, “The entire world is permeated by the mind (*Manomoolam idam jagat*).” Do not think that God is separate from you. You are confused because you think you are separate from God. Not only are you confused, but your ‘fuse’ is also blown, meaning you are engulfed in darkness. Your faith in God must always be steady and unwavering.

Do constant repetition of the name

Today, the world is facing a lot of unrest. People are indulging in criminal activities. What then is your role in the present situation? You need not do anything else. Just contemplate on and chant the name of God incessantly (do *namasmarana*). Contemplate upon your inner Self. You need not make use of any kind of bombs and weapons. Remain calm and unperturbed at all times. Maintain the attitude that whatever happens is for our own good only.

On the other hand, if you constantly brood that so and so did this and so and so did that, you will only develop hatred against others. Hence, constantly contemplate on God with a calm and steady mind. Never lose your courage and fortitude. If you do that, the worldly worries cannot trouble you in the least and cause fear and anxiety in you. The physical body is susceptible to birth and death. It is its nature.

The *Atma* is eternal without birth or death.

It has no beginning, middle or end.

It is omnipresent and eternal witness.

(Telugu poem)

Today we indulge in negative thoughts relating to the body. Never entertain negative thoughts. The physical body is like a water bubble. The mind is like a mad monkey. The body is bound to perish sooner or later. Hence, do not trust the physical body. Do not believe your mind. Of course, you should take proper care of your body as long as you live, for the body enables you to lead the life. Later, it drops down of its own accord. No one lives in this world permanently. Only one entity in this world is permanent: the *Atma*. People say, “my self, my self,” and “I, I.” This single letter “I” is the real *Atma* (Self).

A person with two minds is said to be confused and ignorant. “A person with dual mind is half blind.” Hence, develop single-minded faith and devotion. Once you develop faith in anything, it should last till your death. Unfortunately, people change their faith every now and then. When in difficulties, they respond in one way. When passing through better times, their behaviour is altogether different. This should not happen.

Love, love, love — only this quality changeless. Cultivate such changeless love. Whatever happens, it is as per God’s will. You think you are the doer, out of your ego. You are not the doer. Where are you? You are not there, really. It is your inner Self, your inner voice that really responds to situations. Hence, “you” means your “*Atma* (Self)”. Faith in the inner Self is the basis for everything in this world.

Accept everything as God’s gift

Jesus was crucified on the cross. Mother Mary could not bear that scene and wept inconsolably. Jesus then remarked, “Why do you cry? This is natural. Whatever has to happen will happen. Hence, do not shed tears.”

Jesus helped the fishermen in many ways. He gave them bread. Once, the fishermen could not catch even one fish. Jesus then called Peter and said, “Peter, bring the fishing net and follow me.” He directed the fishermen

to cast the net at a particular place. There was such a huge catch that even all the fishermen could not pull the net to the shore.

Thus, God can do anything at His divine will. Everything is God's gift only. One has to realise this fact and develop faith accordingly. If you are enjoying good times, it is God's gift. On the other hand, if you are passing through difficult times, it is also God's gift. Develop such steady faith. If you are suffering from malarial fever, you will be given bitter pills. That is also for your good.

Good and bad coexist; none can separate them.

You cannot find good or bad to the exclusion of the other.

(Telugu poem)

Bad is not there separately in a distant corner. Good and bad exist together. It is only a difference of time. Hence, we have to accept everything as God's gift. If we encounter bad we express disgust and say, "I don't want this!" Don't do that. There is good even in bad. There is good in bad and bad in good. Good and bad are like the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Only the time at which they occur differs.

Suppose you ate nice, tasty food consisting of sweets, bread, etc., tonight. Tomorrow morning it turns into excreta. The good food has turned into bad matter. Thus, good and bad occur at different times, not at the same time. What we have to do in the present-day world is constant prayer to God. If only you develop faith in your own self, everything will accrue to you. If you do not have that faith, all your wealth and property is a mere waste. We hanker after worldly possessions with ego and arrogance, but they lead us to nowhere. They are sure to land us in peril one day or the other. Hence, one should always conduct oneself with humility and faith in God thinking, "Everything is God's gift; God is the doer of everything."

Your Atma is none other than God

Where is God? This is the question sceptics often raise. God is in you, with you, above you, below you, and around you. He is the "Indweller of your heart (your *Hridayavasi*)." Your *Atma* is none other than God, verily. Hence, one need not have to search for God elsewhere.

You repeat the names of Rama and Krishna, thus identifying Divinity with a particular name and form. That which is beyond the body, that which is beyond the name, is real Divinity. Divinity has nothing to do with the physical body. The physical body may subsist for a limited period only. It constantly undergoes change. At the time of birth, you call it a 'child'. As it grows, you call it a 'boy'. After some time, you call it a 'man'. Thereafter, when it becomes old, you call it a 'grandfather'. The child, boy, man, and grandfather are all one only.

Though God has come in human form and is acting as a human being now, never forget to realise Him as God. Since we are in human frames, let us know God in human form. Devoid of your physical body, you can never realise God. Hence, one has to experience God only in human form.

People develop ego on the basis of their physical and intellectual capabilities, wealth, and property. It is also common to see ego showing its head in positions of power. All these will vanish in no time. Even your body will perish. Unfortunately, these days people consider the ephemeral worldly possessions as permanent, while ignoring the really permanent things. Hence, realise the true nature of the *Atma* Principle.

People flock to this place in thousands and lakhs to have the *darshan* (sight) of this physical body. The more

important thing to realise is that the physical body points to the eternal Divinity. Divinity is beyond the body. Hence, do not treat the physical body as permanent. However, one has to keep up the health of the physical body as long as one lives. Do not neglect it, thinking that it is bound to perish one day or the other. You have to look after the welfare of the body till your last breath. It is not your concern what happens to it later.

Embodiments of Love!

You need not go in search of the *Atma*. It is omnipresent — behind you, with you, around you, and above you. People do not repose their faith in such an omnipresent *Atmic* consciousness; they hanker after ephemeral things. Hence, first and foremost, you have to enquire which is permanent and which is not. Enquire into yourself, “Who am I?” The answer comes, “I am a human being.” If you consider yourself a human being, you must have human qualities.

An animal like an ox or a he-buffalo ploughs the land, eats grass, and does some hard work in the fields. Similarly, the nature of a beast is to pounce upon all creatures and cause harm to them, including killing. We are not animals or beasts. We are human beings. Hence, we have to cultivate human qualities. What are they? Truth, peace, love, and nonviolence.

If you have to develop the quality of nonviolence, you have to cultivate love first. Where there is love, there will be nonviolence. Similarly, love, peace, and truth are all interdependent. When love and truth go together, peace is the result. Truth is an innate divine quality. This is not bookish knowledge; this is the manifestation of the inner Self. There is no human in this world in whom truth is not present. However, one conceals that truth and makes it appear as untruth. Sadly, today, we are more interested in falsehood than truth.

Repose first faith in the omnipresent God

You might have witnessed a number of dramas and playlets on the theme of love. Rama, Krishna, Sita, and Radha are all mythological characters. Rama and Sita, Krishna and Radha are shining examples of the Love Principle (*Prema Thathwa*). Hence, they are referred to as ‘*Sitaramulu*’ and ‘*Radhakrishnulu*’.

The demon king Ravana confined Sita in Lanka for ten months. He used to coax her frequently to become his queen. However, she flatly refused to submit herself to his overtures, saying, “You are in no way comparable to Rama, the embodiment of truth and righteousness.” She never even looked at his face. She pulled out a blade of grass and threw it on the ground saying, “You are like this blade of grass. Your might and power cannot be compared to Rama’s.” Such was her intense faith in Rama. One has to develop such strong faith in Divinity.

A number of terrorists are operating in various parts of the world, but none of them can cause any damage to you if you develop faith and love in God. God is everywhere. You should repose firm faith in that omnipresent God. Any number of bombs cannot cause the least damage to your body. God is in you, with you, around you, above you, and below you. Unfortunately, people repose more confidence in temporary and palliative measures, which are like peppermints, than developing firm faith in the omnipotent and omnipresent Divinity.

Do not take Divinity lightly. He is the only Chief for the entire universe. Develop faith in that Chief. Call Him by any name, Rama, Krishna, Jesus, or Allah; God is only one. “Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam Sat viprah bahudha vadanti*).” You put the single digit 1 and any number of zeroes thereafter, and the value of that number increases by leaps and bounds. But if you remove the 1, the value of the number

comes to zero even if you put one hundred zeroes one after the other. God is the only Hero, while all others are zeroes. Hence, keep God in the front always.

If you contemplate on God, the real Hero, you can achieve victory in all fields. The so-called bombs and other powers cannot do any damage to you. The human power is not comparable to any other power. After all, who made the bomb? It is only the human being. Then, who is great? Is it the one who made the bomb or the object itself? Undoubtedly, the human being is great.

The Self in you is the Supreme Self

Human beings should realise their innate strength and greatness. The *Vedanta* (philosophy) exhorts the human being to realise their true nature by a process of enquiry into oneself. If you enquire into yourself by putting the question, “Who am I?” that comes the reply, “I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*).” You have to constantly remind yourself, “I am not a human being, I am God verily.” As far as the physical body is concerned, you are a human being. When God is with you, in you, around you, why should you have to fear man-made bombs? Develop self-confidence. Develop faith in the *Atma* Principle.

The Self in you is the Supreme Self. When that Supreme Self is present in your body, why should you fear anyone? Even if the body becomes weak, the power of that Supreme Self drives you to march forward. It will help you. Hence, may all people contemplate on God incessantly!

Do not get confused with names. You can contemplate on any name. Many varieties of sweets are prepared with sugar, which is the basic ingredient. You may eat any sweet of your choice, but all sweets taste sweet only.

Everything is God. Do not entertain any doubts in this regard. Doubts create confusion in you. If a human being is to live the life of a real human being, all doubts have to be removed. The sooner the better, for, as long as doubts persist, they work like slow poison. Develop faith in yourself. That is called self-faith. If only you possess self-faith, none can cause any harm to you. Even bombs cannot do any damage. Many people develop a fear complex these days that that area is attacked with bombs, this area is attacked with bombs, etc. We need not entertain any such fear.

Embodiments of Love!

You gathered here with great devotion, love, and faith. Keep up that feeling of love. Constantly remind yourself, “I am God,” “I am God,” with a feeling of love for God. If anyone asks your name, do not reply “I am so and so.” Instead, reply, “I am God.” Not only Me, you are also God. Everybody is God. Develop such confidence.

(Bhagawan sang two *bhajans*, “*Prema mudita manase kaho ...*” and *Hari bhajana bina ...*” and continued His discourse.)

You all say, “I want peace, I want peace, I want happiness.” Where is this peace and happiness? They are available only in singing the glory of God. You will get peace and happiness only by singing the glory of the divine Name. They cannot be obtained from any shop. “*Hari bhajana bina sukh shanti nahin ...*” Peace and happiness have to well up from the inner spring of your own heart. If you wish to have peace, happiness, and bliss, contemplate on the divine Name in your heart. Be happy.

It is high time every person who wishes to lead a purposeful and righteous life decides to engage themselves in service to society and devotes all their wealth and energies to spreading happiness in the community. People must realise that there can be no greater source of real bliss than renunciation (*thyaga*).

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*).

Anjaneya. A name for Hanuman, because he was Anjana Devi’s son.

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.

Atmic. Of or relating to the *Atma*.

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.

ayurveda. Classical Indian medical knowledge; science of health and long life.

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.

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. 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*.

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,

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*.

chaitanya. Consciousness, intelligence, spirit.

chit. Consciousness, knowledge, awareness.

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

darshan. Sight of a holy person.

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

Devi. Personification of the feminine principle; Goddess of the universe.

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

Droupadi. Wife of Pandavas. See *Mahabharatha*.

Durga. Goddess of the universe; mother earth; daughter of Himaval and wife of Siva.

Easwara. 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. She passed away on May 6, 1998.

Ekalavya. Son of the king of foresters; refused as a student by Drona because he was a labourer.

Ganga. The 1560-mile-long Ganges river; starts in the Himalayas and flows generally east into the Bay of Bengal; the most sacred river of India.

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.

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

Indra. Lord of the *devas* (celestials). Indra is one of the chief deities in the *Rig veda*.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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."

Madhusudana. "Killer of the Madhu demon". Name for Krishna.

Mahabharatha. Ancient epic in poetic form, by sage Vyasa; describes conflict between the Pandava brothers and their cousins, the 100 Kaurava brothers. It contains the *Bhagavad Gita*, the metaphysical teaching of Krishna to Arjuna.

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.

Manthara. Hunchbacked maid of Queen Kaika.

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 (*mantraa*) 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 (*dharmā*), wealth and power (*artha*), and sense-pleasure (*kama*).

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.

Nanak. 15th century founder of Sikh religion.

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 *dharmā*.

Narayana. The Primal Person, the Lord, Vishnu.

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

Omkara. The form of AUM, or Om.

Onam. A 10-day festival celebrated by the people of Kerala in August–September to commemorate the Vamana and the subsequent homecoming of the Emperor Bali.

pancha. Five.

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

Parabrahman. Universal Absolute Brahman.

Paramatma. Supreme Self, Supreme *Atma*.

Parameswara. Supreme Lord, highest Godhead, Siva.

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

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

Parvathi. Siva's consort.

Pedda Venkama Raju. Sathya Sai Baba's father.

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.

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.

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

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 Hindu epic, composed by Sage Valmiki, deals with the incarnation of Vishnu as Sri Rama, who strove all his life to reestablish the reign of *dharma* 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).

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. Ancient and also eternal.

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.

Saraswathi. Goddess of learning and eloquence, a daughter of Brahma.

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.

sathwic. Adjective form of *sathwa*; serene, pure, good, balanced.

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.

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).

Sivarathri. The fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight, when the moon is waning. *Mahasivarathri* is the *Sivarathri* when the sun is in the sign of Aquarius, generally February or March. *Siva-rathri* means "Auspicious darkness". In His discourse of 7 March 1978, Sai Baba explained, "The waned moon may be taken to stand for the mind with all its wild fancies and waywardness reduced after it has been conquered by spiritual discipline. On this night, there is just a minute part more to be conquered, and that can be done by keeping vigil and dwelling on the glory of God." That is the reason for night-long devotional singing on *Mahasivarathri*.

soham. I am God.

Sugriva. Monkey-king, brother of Vali; with his army of monkeys headed by Hanuman, assisted Rama in defeating Ravana.

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

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

Tandava. A dance performed by Siva; the source of the cycle of creation, preservation, and dissolution.

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.

Thathwa. Principle, truth, essence. That-this entity. *Thathwa* is regarded as made up of That (*Thath*) and you (*thwam*).

Trivikrama. Three steps. A name for Vamana, who asked for three feet of land from Emperor Bali and humbled Bali's pride.

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*.

vairagya. Detachment, renunciation.

Vali. A great monkey-king; brother and enemy of Sugriva.

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.

Veda. Knowledge, wisdom. This knowledge is generally viewed as being given in the *Vedas*.

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; Rakshasa chief who represented pure mindedness and sided with Rama.

vidya. Spiritual education, spiritual knowledge, learning, that which illumines, that which gives light, supreme teaching.

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.

yuga. Era or age. There is a cycle of four *yugas*: the *Kritha yuga*, *Thretha yuga*, *Dwapara yuga*, and *Kali yuga*. Present age is the *Kali yuga*

