

MOTHER'S ROLE IN HUMAN VALUES

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

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

Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace, the utility of holding positions of authority is zero,

Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace, the sanctity of all your acts of charity is zero,

These four qualities are the four pillars that support the mansion of Sanathana Dharma.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

The mansion of human life rests on the four pillars of truth, righteousness, love and peace. The safety and security of life depend on these four values. Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has been able to sustain itself as it is built on the bedrock of these values. Our ancestors led their lives strictly adhering to these eternal values. Bereft of these values, the mansion of life will collapse in a moment. Humanity continues to exist till this day only due to the fact that he/she is practising these four values at least to a certain extent.

The individual child's life is greatly influenced by the qualities of the parents. The loving care of Jijabai made Shivaji a great warrior. Rama's divinity blossomed because of the noble qualities of His mother Kausalya. The twins Lava and Kusha could become powerful and famous due to their noble and virtuous mother Sita. The same can be said of our ancient sages and seers. They could sanctify their lives because of the noble influence of their parents. Today, people neglect their parents as they fail to recognise the impact and influence they bear on their lives. They forget the fact that they could attain exalted position in life only because of their parents. Gandhi became a Mahatma because of his pious mother Putlibai. She used to observe a strict vow wherein she would wait for the cooing of the cuckoo before partaking of her food. However, on one day, she had to wait for a long time for the call of the cuckoo without taking food. The young Gandhi could not bear to see his mother fasting for such a long time. Hence, he went out of the house and imitated the cooing of the cuckoo. Then he came inside and told, "Mother, now that the cuckoo has made its call, please take your food." She at once recognised that her son was telling a lie. Unable to contain her grief, she slapped Gandhi on his cheeks and said, "What sin have I committed that such a liar should be born to me!" She was shedding tears as she spoke. Gandhi repented and prayed for her forgiveness. He took a pledge that he would never utter a lie thenceforth. In this manner, our ancients developed virtues and attained exalted position only because of their mothers. Today, the country is facing hardship as people have no regard for truth and are indulging in falsehood in their thoughts, words and deeds. The welfare of a nation depends on the teaching that the mother imparts to her children. When parents tread the path of truth, the children would naturally emulate them.

In olden days, it was a common practice among the women of Bharat to perform the sacred ritual of Sathyanarayana Vratam, on every full moon day. Likewise, mother Easwaramma used to perform Sathyanarayana Vratam every full moon day in the company of Karanam Subbamma, who was her neighbour. Karanam Subbamma would often tell Easwaramma, "You are performing Sathyanarayana Vratam. With His blessings, you will bear a son. I want you to name him Sathyanarayana." On a particular full moon day, Easwaramma did not have food till very late in the afternoon as she was participating in the Sathyanarayana Vratam being performed in Subbamma's house. The family members including her husband Pedda Venkama Raju were very much upset to see her remain without food for such a long time. Pedda Venkama Raju argued that there was no need to observe such severe austerities. But Easwaramma was determined. She told them not to wait for her saying, "I am not at all hungry. Sathyanarayana Vratam is more important

for me than food.” After the ritual was completed, Subbamma brought Prasadam (blessed food) for Easwamma. Only after partaking of the Prasadam did Easwamma have her food that day. Women in those days used to perform such rituals with all sincerity and devotion. It was only after partaking of Prasadam could Easwamma conceive. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). Some people have faith in scriptural injunctions and adhere to them with earnestness, whereas some others ignore them. Easwamma was the one who followed the injunctions strictly. Only after performing the Vratam and partaking of the Prasadam, would she commence her household chores. She was unlettered. But she had unflinching faith in God. During the seventh month of her pregnancy, one day Subbamma told her, “Easwamma, the child in your womb is safe only due to the grace of Lord Sathyanarayana.” She extracted a promise from her that the child would be named Sathyanarayana. The mother of Pedda Venkama Raju was also a great devotee of the Lord. She too was of the opinion that the child should be named after Lord Sathyanarayana. Prior to the birth of the child, a very significant incident took place. Puttaparthi, was then a tiny hamlet. In the centre there was a well from which people would draw water. One day Easwamma was fetching water from the well. All of a sudden she saw a white luminous light, emerging like lightning from the sky, entering her womb. There was a sudden gust of wind. Subbamma who came out of her house at that time saw the light entering the womb of Easwamma. Till this day, I have not revealed this to anyone. I am disclosing this today so that you may understand the significance associated with the advent of the Avatar. A day prior to this, as Pedda Venkama Raju was passing in front of Subbamma’s house, she called him inside and told him, “Venkama Raju, tomorrow when the child is born, name him as Sathyanarayana.” But he brushed her advice aside saying, it was her foolish imagination.

At 3 o’clock in the morning, at an auspicious moment, the child was born. It is natural for any child to cry when it is born. But this child did not cry at all. The midwife and the people in the household were anxious that the child might be stillborn. Easwamma too was very much worried. Without anybody noticing her, she pinched the child to make it cry. On the contrary, to her utter surprise, the baby started smiling. Everyone was mystified to see the newborn babe smiling. Just then Subbamma entered the house and said, “Easwamma, I heard that you have given birth to a male child at an auspicious moment. Can I have a glimpse of the child?” Easwamma wrapped the child in a cloth and placed him in front of Subbamma. Subbamma was an orthodox Brahmin lady. In those days, orthodox Brahmins would maintain distance from others. If they happened to touch them inadvertently, they would at once have a bath. That was the reason, why Easwamma kept the baby at a distance from Subbamma. Watching this, the mother-in-law said, “Easwamma, she has come here with a lot of love and concern to see the child. Why don’t you let Subbamma hold the child in her arms? Why do you keep him at a distance?” Easwamma said, “Oh mother! Subbamma is a very pious and orthodox brahmin lady. She may not like to touch the newborn baby. Hence, we should maintain distance from her.” In fact, Subbamma herself had no such discriminatory feelings.

Mother Easwamma looked after her child with love and care. Days rolled by and the child grew into a boy. He was *mithabhashi* and *mithaahari* (one who spoke less and ate less). Easwamma was mystified by the strange behaviour of her son. Usually children are fond of eating. Especially some people would prefer non-vegetarian items like fish or meat. But her son was totally averse to non-vegetarian food. He would not even visit the houses where non-vegetarian food was cooked. Seeing his noble qualities, Easwamma realised that the child was not an ordinary one, but one of divine nature. Her eldest daughter Venkamma also recognised the divine nature of the child. Together, they brought up the child with love and care. They would sing devotional songs as lullabies. The child was brought up in such a noble environment.

As there was no proper school in Puttaparthi, Seshama Raju, the elder brother of this body, took Me to Uravakonda and

admitted Me in a school. The then Municipal Chairman of Bellary, Rama Raju was a friend of Seshama Raju. He took us to the Virupaksha temple in Hampi during holidays. I was reluctant to enter the temple. Hence, Seshama Raju instructed Me to keep a watch over their belongings as they went inside to have Darshan of the deity. I readily agreed and remained outside. The priest was giving arati to the deity. To their utter astonishment, they found Me standing inside the sanctum sanctorum in place of Lord Virupaksha. Seshama Raju could not believe his eyes. In fact, he was very angry thinking that I was transgressing My limits. He thought it was improper on My part to have entered the sanctum sanctorum. He at once came out of the temple only to find Me there! He again went inside and found Me there also! Still he was having doubts. He told his wife, "You go outside and keep a watch over Sathya. Do not allow Him to go anywhere. Meanwhile, I will go inside and see whether He is still there." She did accordingly. He again saw a smiling Sathya standing in the sanctum sanctorum. He wondered whether it was a dream, hallucination or reality. At that time, his friend Rama Raju noticed a brilliant aura around My face. He revealed this only to his wife and not to anybody else including Seshama Raju. In fact, Seshama Raju was full of doubts.

The vacation was over and we were returning to Uravakonda. Rama Raju brought a pair of knickers and a shirt for Me as parting gift. But I refused to accept them. In those days, wearing a collar pin was considered a fashion. Hence, Rama Raju presented a gold collar pin to Me with the prayer that I should remember him always. Wearing a collar pin was very common among the children hailing from rich families. The collar pin dropped on the way while I was proceeding to the school in Uravakonda. It could not be traced. I at once discarded the books and returned home. I declared:

*Know that I am Sai in reality,
Cast off your worldly relationships,
Give up your efforts to restrain Me,
The worldly attachments can no longer bind Me,
None, however great he may be, can deter Me*

. (Telugu Poem)

Seshama Raju was not at home when I sang this poem. Later on when his wife told him about it, he laughed and brushed it aside saying, I would have got it composed by somebody. Being a poet himself, he thought it was impossible for a young boy like Me to compose such excellent poetry.

Excise Inspector Hanumantha Rao had great love for Me. Even his children were highly devoted to Me. When Hanumantha Rao came to know about the happenings, he at once came in his car and took Me to his house. He went on questioning, "My dear, did Your brother or sister-in-law scold You or did they beat You? Why have You decided to leave the house?" I sang a song:

The link with the world had gone in the form of the pin; the pilgrimage to Hampi also served its purpose. Baba left home saying that Maya could not bind Him any longer.

(Telugu Song)

I said, "The worldly attachment is like a small pin which I gave up. Hence, I have left the house. I will no longer stay there." I did not even enter the house of Hanumantha Rao. There was a big rock in front of the house. I sat there and did not speak to anybody. Everyone was stupefied beyond words to see the change that had taken place in Me. In the evening, Seshama Raju who was on his way back home from school, tried to take Me with him. But I was firm in My decision not to go home. Then Hanumantha Rao persuaded him saying, "Do not compel Sathya to go with you. Let

him remain here for some time. I will bring him to you myself afterwards.”

I remained there for some time. Many people came to Me and put all sorts of questions like “Are You a ghost or a demon? Who are You?” I told them, I am neither a ghost nor a demon. “Know that I am Sai Baba in reality.” They asked Me, “How are we to believe that you are Sai Baba? Can you prove Your claim?” In fact, in those days nobody in Anantapur District had even heard the name of Sai Baba. I took some flowers in My hand and threw them on the floor. As people were watching wonderstruck, the flowers arranged themselves as the letters *Sai Baba* in Telugu. Somebody brought a camera and took a photograph of Me sitting on the rock. There was a small stone in front of Me which appeared like Shirdi Sai Baba in the photograph. Many copies were made of the photograph and distributed to all.

The same rock on which I sat that day remains there even today. At the same place, the Andhra State President of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, Anjanaiah has built a beautiful Mandir with a spacious hall.

Gradually My fame spread far and wide. People from various villages and cities started to flock around Me. People possessed by evil spirits were brought to Me in bullock-carts. They believed that I could drive away the evil spirits. People who were mentally retarded were also brought to Me. True to their faith, the evil spirits were driven away and the patients were cured of their mental ailments. Then they started believing in My Divinity.

As people were coming in large numbers, it was not possible for Seshama Raju to keep Me with him. Hence, he wrote a letter to Pedda Venkama Raju to come and take Me away to Puttaparthi. In those days, Puttaparthi was such a remote village that it would take several days for letters to reach. However, Pedda Venkama Raju received the letter in Bukkapatnam where he had gone to make purchases in the market. The letter said, “Father, it is not possible for us to keep Sathya with us any longer. Please come and take him home at once.” Pedda Venkama Raju came to Uravakonda from Bukkapatnam straightaway. He did not have sufficient money in his pocket. He took the bus fare from Seshama Raju and brought Me to Bukkapatnam by bus. From there, we had to walk all the way to Puttaparthi, as there was no transport facility. In fact, the name of Puttaparthi was hardly known beyond the closest localities.

When we reached Puttaparthi, Kondama Raju (grandfather of this body) was at home. He was very austere and God-minded. He told Venkama Raju, “Venkappa, let Him do whatever He wants, do not raise any objection. He is immersed in divine consciousness. Let him stay with me for some time.” He kept Me with him and looked after Me with great love and care.

The four brothers - Pedda Venkama Raju, Chinna Venkama Raju, Venkatarama Raju and Venkata Subba Raju decided to live separately. Kondama Raju divided the property equally among them. Pedda Venkama Raju then asked, “Father, whom are you going to stay with?” Kondama Raju replied, “I will not stay with anyone. I do not want any property for myself. Give me Sathya. That is enough. He will look after me.” In those days, nobody used to call Me by the full name Sathyanarayana. Everyone used to address Me as ‘Sathya’. From then onwards, I stayed with Kondama Raju and served him. Everyday morning and evening, Venkamma used to come to Me. Sometimes she would ask, “Sathya, do You get dreams? Does anyone appear before You and talk to You?” However, I would not say anything to her. She had immense faith in Sai Baba. One day, she prayed, “Sathya, please give me a photograph of Sai Baba.” I at once materialised a photograph of Sai Baba and gave her. She kept the photograph with her till her last breath.

One day Kondama Raju called Venkamma and told her, “Our people are living in ignorance, they are unable to recognise the Divine nature of Sathya. He is verily God Himself. He is never hungry, never thirsty. He has transcended hunger and sleep.”

Namagiriamma was the actual name of Easwamma, given by her parents. As Kondama Raju recognised My Divinity, he told his son, Pedda Venkama Raju, to change her name to Easwamma as he was very well aware that she was the mother of Easwara Himself.

In the middle of the night, Kondama Raju would quietly place his hand near My nostrils, just to see whether I was breathing or not. Sometimes, he would not notice any breathing process taking place. He would only hear the sound Soham coming from Me. People started pouring into Kondama Raju's house to see Me. If anyone questioned them, they would reply, "The grandson of Kondama Raju is one of divine powers. He appears in our dreams and solves our problems."

Once, Seshama Raju came to Puttaparthi during holidays. He did not like so many people visiting the house of Kondama Raju. At that time, he was thoroughly sceptical. He argued with Kondama Raju and told him not to allow anybody to come to his house. In those days, the educated were highly respected in the villages. Seshama Raju had just completed teachers' training. Hence, people in the village considered him to be highly educated. He told Kondama Raju, "Grandfather, do not allow anybody to come near this boy. He does not have any divine power. He is suffering from hysteria." In this manner, he spoke derisively about Me.

There used to be an exorcist in Kadiri who was considered to be an expert in driving away from people the evil spirits that had taken possession of them. I was put in a cart for transporting Me to Kadiri and Venkamma accompanied Me. At no time would she be parted from Me. This so-called exorcist of Kadiri was a thorough drunkard. He asserted that I was possessed by some powerful spirit and boasted that he would rid Me of the evil and belaboured Me with canes, sticks, whips and the like. He even went to the extent of pouring some highly corrosive liquids into My eyes expecting to drive away the spirit in this manner. I submitted Myself to all this torture without demur. In the evening when I got free, I approached Venkamma and asked her to put a little fluid of cow dung dissolved in water. With this treatment overnight, My eyes became clear again. So, for every maltreatment of this kind, I used to go to Venkamma and got the situation remedied. Finally, he had My head shaved and scratched deeply with a sharp knife. The scalp became bloody with severe wounds. Seating Me, water was poured from a height of 10 feet above; it was a terribly painful operation. After this treatment failed, he started rubbing lemon juice into the wounds. Venkamma could not bear the sight of this torture. Quietly, she called the cartman and in the darkness of night, she took Me back home to Puttaparthi.

Steadily the fame of Sai's greatness was spreading far and wide. There was such a rush of people that there was hardly any space for people to stay in the house. Then Pedda Venkama Raju told the people to come to the house only on Thursdays every week. But people protested saying that they could not bear their sufferings till Thursday. Then Subbamma called Venkappa and told him that as it was not practical to accommodate the surging crowds in his house, she would take Me to her house and meet all My needs and also of the visitors. As Subbamma was a Brahmin and Swami belonged to the Raju caste, the Brahmins of Puttaparthi took objection to Subbamma's proposal and decided to boycott Subbamma. She however said that as she was childless and had no inclination to go about visiting anybody, she was not worried by the proposed boycott. "I shall never forsake Sathya", she said. In the village, there were a few Harijan residences. These Harijans were highly devoted to Swami. I used to visit their houses. Even Subbamma accompanied Me to those places. She would not bear to be separated from Me even for a moment. She was looking after Me as her own son. All the Brahmins of the village were completely inimical to Subbamma and even her own mother and brother turned against her. In the path of Divinity incarnate such impediments do arise and she was quite aware of the situation. She declared that she was unconcerned about the enmity of anybody. She was quite firm in her resolve to hold on to Me. Soon, even her house started overflowing with the throng of visitors. So, once Venkappa approached Subbamma and said, "Why should you undergo this kind of ordeals on account of my son? Let us put Him in a separate house." Then Subbamma gave some land

between the Sathyabhama and Venugopala Swami temples. A small room was constructed there. They used to lock Me up in the room, but, in spite of the locked closed room, I used to get out and sit on the top of the hill. These kinds of wonders were of daily occurrence.

Meanwhile, those who were opposed to Subbamma on caste grounds decided to get rid of Swami by poison. I was very fond of *vadas* (Indian delicacy) in those days. So, these people made some *vadas* and mixed some virulent poison in some of them. Subbamma was warning Me all the time against visiting those houses. But, I used to go to all places despite her objection. On this occasion, I visited this house and picked up the specific *vadas* that had been poisoned and ate them. The sequel to this attempt is already known.

Another attempt of this kind was when some of them set fire to My improvised house. The house had a thatched roof. Some miscreants set fire to the house. As the fire was raging, people were worried as to what would have happened to Me inside. Suddenly, there was a cloudburst which poured down just above the house and put out the fire. There was however, not a drop of rain anywhere else. Venkamma, Subbamma and Easwamma came there weeping. The roof was fully burnt and only the walls were standing. They peeped over the wall and found Me sleeping peacefully. I was totally unharmed. Then Subbamma had the lock broken open and took Me away to her house. After several such trials and tests, people developed greater faith in Sai Baba.

In Penukonda, another person started claiming miraculous powers, saying that he was a devotee of Sai Baba. Several others started imitating My dress and manners, started going about trying to collect a following at different places. Merely assuming My name and manners, one cannot have a following indefinitely. People realised the truth very soon. After this, My sojourn to Bangalore began. Easwamma and Venkamma entreated that I should not forsake Puttaparthi. I promised them that I would never abandon Puttaparthi. Various royalties including the Maharani of Mysore used to visit Puttaparthi. Those days Chitravathi was flowing most of the time. They used to cross the river by putting planks and driving the cars over such improvised causeways. As, such following by the high and low of the land increased, all opportunities for creating obstacles by the local opponents vanished.

All great men have been moulded by their mothers. It is the high moral character and behaviour of the mothers that would result in the greatness of their progeny. It is the virtues of Kausalya that resulted in the greatness of Rama. Similarly, Sita brought up Lava and Kusa to be great. In this manner, virtuous mothers were responsible for ideal children. After I had promised Easwamma, I never abandoned Puttaparthi. The whole world may flock here but I shall not leave Puttaparthi. Generally, the Avatars adhere to their place of birth. If you uproot a plant from here and plant it elsewhere, how long will it survive? A tree should grow where the seed sprouted. In this manner only, Sathya Sai Baba has retained his roots in Puttaparthi and has made Puttaparthi a place of pilgrimage. When the High School at Bukkapatnam was established, they requested Me for a prayer song and I composed a suitable verse emphasising the unity in diversity of the people of Bharat.

The power of motherhood is indescribable. It is the righteous observances and strict adherence to moral values of the mothers that manifest in their children. They (mothers) may be unlettered. Their greatness does not depend on literacy or book learning. It is the unlettered Easwamma's virtues that have brought about this greatness of the name and fame of Puttaparthi. It is a matter of regret that Easwamma is forgotten, while her son is extolled. Without Easwamma, how could there be such a phenomenal Power? Never neglect your parents.

What is the origin of the name of this village Puttaparthi? There is a strange story associated with it. Near the temple of Venugopala Swami, there used to be an anthill in which there was a snake. Everyday the cowherds would take their cows for grazing to the outskirts of the village. One of the cows would go to the anthill and the snake would drink milk

from its udder. Everyday the cow would return home with its udder empty. The cowherds found out the reason behind this and planned to kill the snake. One day as the snake was drinking milk from the cow, they hit it with a boulder. The snake got enraged and pronounced a curse on them, saying, the cowherds and their cows would no longer be able to live in the village. That is why, the cowherds left Puttaparthi village and built their houses near Gokulam. Even today you can see it for yourselves. The boulder with which the cowherds tried to kill the snake is now being worshipped as Venugopala Swami idol.

Today I narrated at length all this in order to make you aware of the significance of the names Sai Baba and Puttaparthi. Puttaparthi has a great history behind it. Many eminent people visited this place. Many people of affluence lived here and brought great name and fame to this village. In those days, the Mysore Maharaja and his mother used to come here quite frequently. Many such eminent personalities recognised the greatness of Puttaparthi and revered it.

*The Lord of Puttaparthi will protect you always,
He is the embodiment of compassion,
He will hold your hand and take you across the ocean of life,
He will never forsake you under any circumstances.*

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiment of Love!

You are really fortunate, having done great merit, for you are able to enjoy the Divine proximity of Sai. It is your great good fortune that you are able to sing with Swami and play with Him. You are with Sai and Sai is with you. That is why I often say, "I and you are one." The power and glory of God is beyond the ken of human understanding. Develop unwavering faith in him.

Students!

Having come to Puttaparthi and studied here, you should make every effort to uphold the prestige of Puttaparthi. I want to bring to your notice one important thing. Usually students like to spend their vacations at their respective homes. But here the students do not like to go home even after the vacation starts. Only very few of them go home. Most of them like to stay back even after completing their post graduation. What is the reason for this? Here is the greatest Divine magnet. God attracts one and all. His power is beyond all estimation. In the years to come, you will experience the power of this magnet more and more.

(Bhagavan sang the Bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina ...*" and continued the Discourse.)

(Pointing to Dr. Anjanaiah, Swami said) He has constructed a Mandir in Uravakonda. The Mandir enshrines the rock on which I sat when I gave the first teaching to mankind. He completed his M.Sc. Ph.D. and was doing a job. Later on, he resigned and dedicated himself to the service of Swami. At present, he is the State President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Andhra Pradesh. (Pointing to an elderly devotee) He is the father-in-law of Dr. Anjanaiah. He also stays in Uravakonda. He has kept aside 100 acres of land for Swami. He is growing various types of fruits there and sending them to Puttaparthi. At present he has completed 100 years of his life. I want to tell you another important thing. Here, in Prasanthi Nilayam, all the devotees who dedicate their lives to Swami live for full 100 years. Kasturi came here and lived a full life. Similar was the case with Pujari Kistappa. All of you might have heard of Kamavadhani. He was a great Vedic scholar. He came and stayed here for 30 years. Never did he leave Puttaparthi. One day after performing Rama Kalyanam, here in the Mandir, he told Me, "Swami, I am going to My room. I will have a sacred bath and come back." I told him, "You don't need to come back. After bath, have your food and sleep peacefully." He went home and had a bath. As instructed by Swami, he had his food and rested. He died peacefully in his sleep. The name of Sai was always in his

mind. He never had any illness. There was another devotee by name Soorayya. He was a bachelor. He had no desires. Prior to coming here, he was working for Venkatagiri Raja. One day he expressed his desire to the Raja that he wanted to go to Puttaparthi. The Raja was very happy and made all the arrangements for his coming here. He stayed here for more than 30 years and served Swami. He too lived for 100 years and died peacefully in his sleep.

(Swami called Sri Gopal Rao to the dais) Many of you might have heard of Gopal Rao. He is also completing 100 years. Even at an advanced age, he used to go to canteen regularly and serve water to the devotees. When he was the Chairman of Andhra Bank, there was a major strike. Many big people were arrested. Indira Gandhi sent him a telegram. That day I happened to go to his house for lunch. I told him, "Gopal Rao, do not yield to political pressure. What you have chosen is the path of truth. Do not budge from it." He obeyed My command. Nobody could touch him. At present he is living in Prasanthi Nilayam happily doing Namasmarana. Dr. Padmanabhan's father, Seshagiri Rao came here at the age of 63 after his retirement. He also lived for 100 years and had a peaceful death. All these devotees led a happy and healthy life. At no point of time did they seek the service of others. I told Gopal Rao that he would die peacefully without depending on others for service. I told him to be courageous. In this manner, many devotees led a long and peaceful life in Divine proximity. Physical body is bound to perish one day or the other. But one should leave the body peacefully without being wholly dependent on others. (At the end, Swami permitted Sri Gopal Rao to speak a few words.)