

SUMMER SHOWERS 1990

INDIAN CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY

Discourses by

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BABA

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1.

The Glory of Indian Culture

The entire Cosmos has emerged from Truth
And it will merge back in Truth
Where is the place beyond the sway of Truth?
Behold, brothers, That which is the Pure Sathwa!

Embodiments of Divine Love, dear students, teachers and patrons of education!

To every man born on earth, Truth is verily the visible God. The entire universe consisting of movable and immovable objects has emerged from Truth. *Sathyam-Jnanam-Anantam-Brahma*. Truth is indeed Brahman. Truth is endless. According to *Vedantins*, Truth is synonymous with the eternal Brahman. Hence, truth alone has to be revered by everyone. *Bharathiyas* (Indians) are wedded to truth and righteousness. Justice is their mainstay. Every man is the inheritor of truth and righteousness. Young boys and girls who want to promote peace and harmony should strive to seek and pursue truth. *Bharathiyas* cherish the welfare of the world. Our youth should therefore dedicate themselves to universal well-being. This is our creed or religion, so to speak. It is because we have forgotten such sacred truth as well as our culture and the sanctity thereof, that we are unable to achieve communal unity and national integrity.

Truth and righteousness will never submit to anything. All kinds of power, whether physical, intellectual, monetary, military, or political, have to bend before truth and righteousness; but the latter will yield to none. Truth and righteousness will always triumph.

The chief requisite of man's life is to be human. Whatever our scholarship or position of authority, we should not ignore the human values. Indian culture is unparalleled and most wonderful. Having forgotten the grandeur and glory of their heritage, the students of today enticed by so-called modernity, have become oblivious to their own innate divinity. The whirlwind of the rapidly progressing science and technology, coupled with industrialization, is bringing about undesirable changes in our society by way of uprooting the moral or ethical values so essential for human well-being. Science and technology have, no doubt, contributed substantially to material progress; but they have altogether undermined spiritual values such as selflessness, divinity, and dignity inherent in man. In a way, they have devalued humanity itself so much so that the present generation of young men and women are unable to recognise their divine nature. They are considering self-centredness as the goal of life. Demonic qualities like ostentation, egoism, and excessive and empty talk are playing their devil dance in society. This very country, which has been the spiritual teacher of entire mankind, is becoming the playing field of evil forces like injustice, indiscipline, licentiousness, and defiance of truth. Having become slaves to modernity, people are utterly disregarding truth and righteousness and ignoring the hoary Indian culture and traditions, with the false notion that material self advancement is the *summum bonum* of life. What the students have to protect today is not the nation. They have to safeguard truth and righteousness only. These two, in turn, will protect the nation. Giving up truth and righteousness, educated persons nowadays are causing damage to the nation, ostensibly in the name of protecting it.

People do not become wise by mere education. They are considering education as a means of livelihood rather than the art of living. The supreme goal of life should ever be

kept in view. A small piece of fertile land is more valuable than a large tract of barren land; so also character is much more valuable and essential than scholarship. Today everybody is striving to acquire wealth, power, and pelf, which are like passing clouds, while nobody bothers himself to acquire virtues that lead to the Truth Eternal. You must try to become exemplars of virtues, but not of wealth and power. It is a pity that even the elders who profess themselves to be well-wishers of society are giving up their own ancient culture, lured by modernity. When the mother cow is grazing off the crop in the field, will its calf stand quiet on the field bund? It is impossible. It is no wonder the younger generation is following the bad example of their elders, leaders, parents, and teachers who are not setting the right example for the youth to emulate. What is the reason for our ancients earning name and fame as upholders of morality in society? Because of their exemplary practice of virtues in daily life. They pursued the four *purusharthas* (goals of life) scrupulously and shared with others benefits and joys derived therefrom. But the present day youngsters are groping in the dark, aimlessly indulging in all sorts of indiscriminate activities.

Dharma (right conduct), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire), and *moksha* (liberation) are the four *purusharthas* (goals of human life.) Dispensing with *dharma*, which is like the feet, and *moksha*, which may be compared to the head, people are hankering only after *artha* and *kama*, resulting in disorder and insecurity in the society and nation in general. The root cause for loss of peace and security is the neglect of truth and righteousness, which are highly indispensable for man.

Students! Do not forget our ancient culture, which is the very life-breath of *Bharathiyas*. Bharath (India) had offered the gems of its great culture to the world at large in the past. The nation has suffered a serious setback due to the ever-growing malady of aping other countries. Imitation is human. Creation is divine. The right education for the students is the manifestation of their innate divinity.

About fifty years back, the youth of our country, imbued with patriotism and love for our culture, used to follow the footsteps of the elders. The national leaders, teachers, and scholars of those days were setting up exemplary ideals. There was harmony in their thoughts, words, and deeds. That is why the younger generation was following their example. They used to decorate their rooms with pictures of divine incarnations and national leaders whom they used to adore and emulate. However it is a matter for regret that nowadays, ideal teachers and ideal leaders are conspicuous by their absence. Leaders and teachers say something and actually do something else, with the result that they have forfeited the confidence of the young. Today the pictures of their favourite film stars adorn the walls of the students' rooms. What is the reason for this degeneration of their minds? The only reason is the dearth of ideal leaders who believe, practise, and propagate the Indian culture. Nevertheless, *Bharathiya* culture might be seen by the discerning eye to be pervading not only the manner of dressing and speaking, working, and playing but also every activity undertaken from dawn to dusk.

In present day India there are many persons who do not understand what *samskrithi* (culture) is. There can be no human life without *samskrithi*. It is a way of life. Ignoring this way and taking to wrong paths, men are losing peace and security. Everyone wants comfort. But no attempt is being made to recognise what real comfort is. Eating four times a day, sleeping, viewing television and films three or four times, forgetful of the outside world—these are considered to contribute to comfort or happiness. Among all living creatures, to be born as a human being is declared by the scriptures as a rare privi-

lege. But if man too is content merely with eating, drinking, mating and sleeping like birds and beasts, without trying to understand what *samskrithi* is, his life is a sheer waste.

The word *samskrithi*, originating from *samskritham*, refers to the process of refinement of every object before it is made fit for human use. For example, consider how many transformations are undergone by paddy before it becomes fit for human consumption—threshing the paddy grains from the sheaves, winnowing and separating grains from chaff, pounding or milling to remove the husk from the grain, cleaning the rice by removing extraneous matter like small stones and weed seeds, etc., soaking the raw rice in water, and finally cooking over fire to get cooked rice. Such *samskrithi* (refinement) also enhances the value of things. For instance, the value of paddy is, say, one hundred rupees per bag. But, when it is dehusked and cleaned in the milling process, the value of one bag of rice will be six hundred rupees—a sixfold increase due to refinement. Let us consider a second example. If a wrist watch made of stainless steel is crushed and thrown into fire, the resulting mass of stainless steel will not be worth even a quarter of a rupee. But the worth of the same mass of steel when fabricated into a wrist watch by the manufacturing process is enhanced to one thousand rupees. To give another illustration, cotton harvested from the cotton plant has to be dried, the unwanted calyx removed, and then put in a ginning machine to separate the seeds from the lint; the lint has to be spun into yarn in a spinning machine, and the yarn has to be woven into cloth in a weaving mill. Thus, when cotton is transformed into cloth, its value and utility are enhanced. Likewise, man should not remain in the state in which he was born. He should manifest his inherent divinity. Students should therefore try to acquire, in addition to academic knowledge, qualities like humility and discrimination, which will help them to become full-fledged human personalities. As a seed finds fulfillment in a fruit-bearing tree, man should find fulfillment in a purposeful life leading to perfection through *samskarana* (transformation), and yielding the fruits of peace, security and love.

Love is a divine quality in man. But it should be shown not only toward other human beings, but also towards birds, beasts, and other living creatures. True *samskrithi* lies in such an expansion of love, giving up narrowness and developing broad-mindedness, which results in real joy for oneself and for the society as well. Thus will human nature be sublimated into divinity.

The *Vedas*, which are the repositories of Indian culture, have declared that one should not entertain hatred or ill will toward any living being. Therefore, along with their normal studies, the students should acquaint themselves with the Indian culture and put it into practice.

You are all aware how in the present day world man is losing foresight in every thought, sacrificing truth in every word, and forsaking righteousness in every action. Love is on the decline on all fronts and progressive ideas are given the go-by. Spirituality is being ridiculed. Hatred based on caste and religion is ever on the increase. Parochialism and selfishness are running riot and playing havoc. If today revolutions are rampant, what is the reason for it? It is because people have forsaken fear of sin, love for God, and morality in society. There is no benefit to the world from people who have the human form *sans* discrimination and discipline, which are the characteristics of a true man. Students! Along with your usual education you must imbibe the qualities of faith in the nation to which you belong and cherish the welfare of the world in which you live. Since ancient times, it has been the Hindu tradition to pray for the happiness of all. Bharath has

been contributing to the stability, peace, and security of all nations through its unique spiritual genius.

The *Vedas* which are the basis for Indian culture, have taught: speak truth—practice righteousness. Unfortunately, today, people do not speak truth. They talk about righteousness but do not practise it. If we protect *dharma*, practising it, *dharma* in turn will protect us. *Dharma* does not mean the mere observance of certain traditions and formalities. It is the harmony of thought, word, and deed, which results in the purification of these faculties. Today, *dharma* has declined because of the lack of such harmony and purity of the *trikaranas* (three instruments of action). The *Upanishads* exhort man not to abandon *sathya* (truth) and *dharma* (righteousness) under any circumstances even at the risk of his life; King Harishchandra stands out as the supreme exemplar in this respect.

Truth alone triumphs. One who wants to achieve victory should follow *dharma*. Dhritarashtra asked Sanjaya, “in your opinion, who will win the Kurukshetra war—Pandavas or Kauravas?” Sanjaya, who was the master of his senses, replied, “O King! Where there is the Almighty Lord together with the virtuous Arjuna devoted to truth and righteousness, there certainly will victory be.” There is no *dharma* or religion higher than *sathya* (truth). *Dharma* depends on *sathya*. Bhagavatha declares that there is no greater sin than going back on one’s own plighted word. Hence *sathya* is supreme. *Sathya* and *dharma* are interdependent and inseparable.

Boys and girls—children of Bharath! The path of truth is supremely important. We should firmly believe that it is the divine Principle and pay obeisance to it accordingly. People study and learn about various things, but, with all their education, they do not know their own Reality. The more one has book learning, the more argumentative one becomes. Howsoever educated a wicked fellow might be, his evil nature will not change. What is the use of straining oneself to acquire such worthless education? That alone is true education which confers immortality on man. That is indeed the education in truth and righteousness. *Sathya* and *dharma* are inseparable from the virtuous and noble persons. That is why truth, which is eternal, is also called *Atma*, which is the core of all beings. While all other objects and beings are subject to change, like the passing clouds; *Atma* alone remains changeless. That does not mean that you should give up secular learning. Along with it, you should try to acquire the knowledge of that which is real and everlasting. How many have not acquired high educational qualifications, name and fame? But how transient and fleeting are such things! The body itself is impermanent. However, even when the body perishes, our *samskaras* (accumulated mental impressions) will remain with us permanently. We should remember that we should live not for the sake of *annam* (food), but for the sake of *adarsham* (ideal). Ideals are always supreme and everlasting. If one person becomes an ideal, he can influence the lives of many others for the better. It is better to live like the swan for one year than to live like the crow for hundred years. It is enough if you live even for ten years as ideal students. To lead an ideal life, it is essential to have love of the nation and love of the Spirit (*Atma*), as well as love and respect for parents.

Students! Try to recognise how sacred, how pure, how exemplary, how loving, how sublime, and how vast your motherland is. Many young men of India are nowadays going abroad, belittling their own motherland as worthless. In fact, no other country in the world has really all the worthwhile things that Bharath has. Born in this land of *karma*, *yoga*, and *thyaga* (sacrifice), students should understand and cherish its cultural heritage. Their present ignorance of this sacred culture is due to the absence of teachers and par-

ents who could convey the elements of this culture to the students. During the fifteen days of this Summer Course, you, students, should learn how to harmonise our ancient culture and tradition with the needs of the modern world and to lead lives governed by truth and righteousness. Position or power is not important. They are transient like the passing clouds. One should not be proud of one's wealth, progeny, or youthful vigour. They may all disappear in a moment. Adolescence is a very precious period in one's life. It should be rightly used. Once you waste this precious period, you cannot get it back later on, strive as you may, with all your effort. Try to develop faith in the sacred *Bharathiya* culture, which transcends the limitations of time, space, and circumstances. During these fifteen days, endeavour to understand fully the glory and unique greatness of our culture.

In his welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor, Sri Saraf, prayed that I should explain to you the functions and significance of the body, senses, mind, intellect, and *Atma*. It is essential for students to know about these matters. Of what avail is it for one to know all about the external world without knowing about one's own reality! It is important for you to understand the nature of Brahman (the supreme Oversoul), and *Atma* (the individual soul). This is the royal path to the fulfillment of human life. Students—both boys and girls— should sanctify this precious period of time by imbibing sacred ideas and ideals and then strive to spread the same throughout the length and breadth of this vast country of ours. Do not forget that in all these matters, devotion is the most important requisite. Without divine grace, we cannot achieve anything. For anyone to think that he can achieve things by himself is only to betray his egoistic arrogance. Therefore, try to develop faith in *Atma* (Self); then you can achieve anything.

SANCTIFY THE BODY

You are not the body, a bundle of flesh, blood and bones!
 Neither are you the unmanifested desires, nor the manifested mind;
 You are also not the infatuating delusion that thwarts your liberation;
 But you are the Eternal *Paramatma*,
 If only you recognise your innate power.

Students! Embodiments of Divine Love!

The body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect are only vestures put on by man. Only when we understand the nature and significance of these adjuncts can we make proper use of them. You wear trousers, banian, shirt, and coat. Only when you know how to use each of these things correctly can you use them in the proper way and get the benefit therefrom. Otherwise you may make bizarre use of them, like putting on the banian over the shirt or wearing the pant in the reverse direction. Hence you generally ensure that you wear your daily attire correctly so as to give a decent and attractive appearance. Likewise the body is our garment. It is only when we know how to wear it and use it appropriately that we can make good use of it and get the best out of it.

Dahyati iti dehah—That which is burnt is called the body. This is the derivative meaning of the word *deha* (body). It is a matter of common knowledge that the body is burnt after death. But even when it is alive, the body experiences burning due to worries. The body is inert. It is a storehouse of filth and subject to all kinds of diseases. It is a bundle of bones and flesh and cannot help you to cross the ocean of births and deaths. So, Oh Mind! Instead of relying on such a flimsy body, better cling to the Lotus Feet of Lord Hari. This was the prayer of the sages. The body, which is made up of the five elements, is impermanent. But you who have put on this body are verily the supreme God who is eternal and unchanging. It is therefore, up to you to use your power of discrimination in using the body wisely and thereby to derive joy from it.

Sarira is another name for the body. *Siryathe iti sariraha*. That which is liable to decay is called *sarira*. At the time of birth, the body is a lump of flesh and blood. As it grows, it attains beauty and enters the stage of adolescence and adulthood, when it becomes puffed up with the pride of beauty and vigour, etc. In due course, it is overtaken by the ravages of old age, resulting in loss of vitality and susceptibility to diseases. Thus the body is subject to many a change.

Yet another name for the body is *mandir* (shrine or temple), because it enshrines the *jiva* (individual soul), which in fact is no other than the eternal God (Supreme soul). Being the sacred and holy abode of God, the body should, therefore, be not misused but utilised for entertaining good thoughts, for speaking good words, and for performing good actions. Hence, to facilitate such right use of the body, it should be kept in good trim.

Any instrument should be maintained in a fit condition if it is to give satisfactory performance. For instance, you can write comfortably with a fountain pen only if it is filled with the required ink and when the nib also is in good condition. So also, a knife can be used for cutting provided it has the required sharpness and suitable handle etc. Likewise, the body, which is an instrument to perform righteous actions, should be kept in a suit-

able condition for that purpose. You can use a knife for cutting vegetables, fruits etc., but not for cutting a piece of iron. So also we should use the body with discrimination to achieve the purpose for which it is meant. Every time before you do anything, you should ask yourself, I am the Brahman dwelling in this body as the individual *Atman*. As such, is it proper for me to do this action or not? Only then will you be using the body in the right manner. Just because you have this body, you should not use it according to your whims and fancies, forgetting the fact that it is the temple of God, which should, therefore, be used for sacred purposes.

The body has also been called *kshetra*. The one who cognises this *kshetra* is the *kshetrajna* (the knower of the *kshetra*). You are the knower of the *kshetra* and the body is the *kshetra*, which is known by you. Hence, you are the witness of this body. *Kshetra* means a sacred place associated with the Divine and filled with holy vibrations, as for instance the places of pilgrimage like Kasi, Varanasi, Tirupati, Badri, etc. These *kshetras* are meant to be used for the performance of worship, redeeming religious vows, giving charity, and such other sacred activities. Similarly, in the *kshetra* of the body, good thoughts and good actions alone should prevail. This is the inner meaning of the appellation *kshetra* used for the body.

Another meaning of the term *kshetra* is field. In this field of the body, the fruits we reap are dependent on the seeds we sow. If we sow good thoughts, we can harvest good fruits. Bad thoughts will only yield bad results. The body is thus a field in which the seeds of *punya* (merit) and *papa* (sin), are sown. We should, however, remember that the body as a field has certain advantages when compared to the agricultural field. In cultivating a field for raising crops, we have to wait for the right season and the optimum conditions to sow a particular variety of crop. The suitability of a land for growing a particular crop has to be taken into consideration. Sowing cannot be done indiscriminately. However in the case of the field of our body, there are no such constraints. It can be cultivated in all conditions and at all times including night and day. When you sow seeds on an arable land, you may get a good crop or poor crop. You may not realise your expectations. But in the case of the human body, you are bound to reap the fruits of the good or bad thoughts and actions, which you sow as seeds. You are sure to have cent percent return. As you sow, so you reap. This is an immutable law. You must therefore ensure that only seeds in the form of good thoughts and deeds are sown. You should not misuse the body as you like. You should discriminate between the transient and the permanent and utilise your body for achieving the ultimate good.

Those who wish to use the body properly and ensure that they entertain good thoughts, perform good acts, and reap good results should scrupulously follow two things, viz., regulation of diet and regulation of other living habits. You should not consume any and every type of food merely to appease hunger or the palate. You must eat only *sathwic* (pure) food. Our thoughts are determined by the kind of food we consume. For instance, as in the firewood so is the fire as well as the smoke; if you use sandal wood, you will get the fragrant smoke; if you make use of a foul-smelling kind of fuel, you will get a foul-smelling smoke. Thus, the kind of smoke depends on the kind of fire; again as is the smoke, so is the cloud; as is the cloud, so is the water, as is the water, so is the rain; as is the rain, so is the crop; as is the crop, so is the food; as is the food, so is the head—thoughts. Our thoughts, therefore, are the result of the type of food we eat. The body is cleansed by water, while the mind is purified by Truth. It is only when we take food that is conducive to truth that we can pursue the path of truth. As the body is a sa-

cred shrine, you should strictly avoid taking any intoxicating substances. Articles of food that promote *rajasic* qualities, which inflame passions, should be eschewed.

What is the meaning of *sathwic* food? The prevalent notion is that fruits and milk constitute *sathwic* food. But that is not all to it. What is consumed by the mouth is not the only food that enters the body. The other sense organs, like the eyes, the ears, the nose, and the hands, also consume objects from the external world. Hence, just because a person takes fruits and milk through one of the five sense organs, he cannot claim to have taken *sathwic* food, unless the food taken by him through all the five senses is *sathwic* in nature. Through the eyes, you have to see only what is pure. To see all kinds of things indiscriminately will spell disaster. The power of sight should be used only for sacred purposes. Unfortunately, however, the vision of youth today is getting increasingly perverted like *keechaka drishti* (lustful vision). The result is that they will meet with the same fate as Keechaka of the Maha-bharatha, who was destroyed by Bheema. Students should be particularly careful in this regard. It is only when they use their eyes in a pure and sacred way will they be receiving *sathwic* impressions through the eyes.

The ears also need pure food. This means we should listen only to sacred words and to accounts relating to the Divine. Let us always hear good and pleasant things about others. In this way, we must safeguard the ears from being polluted by hearing bad things. Only thus can we ensure consuming *sathwic* food through the ears.

Only fragrant sweet-smelling scents should be absorbed through the nose. Inhaling bad odours will result in disease. If you inhale foul air, you will be breathing in disease-producing organisms. You must inhale pure air, in a clean open space.

The hand also should be used to consume pure food. In other words, you must perform only good acts with your hands, befitting the appellation of temple, used for the body.

When you get rid of the five evils associated with the pollution of speech, sight, hearing, thought and action, you will be able to realise your own Divinity and become *Paramatma* (Supreme Soul). If the senses are fed with polluted food, you cannot become pure merely by taking milk and fruit. You must partake of pure *sathwic* food through all the five sense organs.

Usually a temple will have many gates. These gateways are intended to let in only devotees who seek to worship the deity inside the temple, but not all and sundry. Similarly for this temple of the body there are five gates. What is the purpose of these doorways? If we build a house and erect doors in it, they are intended to let in our kith and kin only and not all stray animals like dogs, pigs and donkeys etc. If such unwanted animals try to enter, the doors are shut against them. Likewise, the doors of the five senses in this sacred body should be kept open for sacred and divine entrants alone. Only then will it deserve the name *kshetra* or *mandir*. On the other hand, if unholy objects and ideas are allowed to enter, it ceases to be a holy temple. Thus it may be seen that *sathwic* food is very essential for putting the body to proper use.

Next comes *vihara*—movement or association with places, persons, objects, etc. You must consider seriously what sort of places you may visit, what kind of environment in which you should live and what type of persons with whom you ought to associate yourselves. Tell me your company and I shall tell you what you are, goes the adage. You should eschew all bad company, because your thoughts are influenced by the company you keep. Young people today are readily cultivating evil company. They take easily to bad ways. This amounts to belittling and devaluating the human body, which the scrip-

tures have declared to be the most precious and rare possession among all created beings. Realising this fact, the sages of yore chose to live in solitude in order to engage themselves in sacred thoughts and actions like devotional singing, meditation and penance. But even this may be considered a sign of weakness, in a way. For instance, if you want to subdue anger, can you do it by retiring into a forest and doing austerities for any number of years? As your anger arises in the midst of people, it has to be conquered only in the same milieu and not in unpeopled forest. You may remain tranquil as long as you are in the forest, but when you come back to a crowd, you will be the same old irate person. If you want to control your senses, it is a delusion to imagine that you can do so by resorting to religious penance. It can be achieved easily if you understand the subtle workings of the body, but not by any other means. Suppose you buy a new car, you must know how to drive it properly. Just because you have purchased it with your own money and got it duly registered, you cannot sit at the steering wheel and drive as you like, it would then be dangerous to your car, to yourself and to the public as well. Although the car may be yours, you must know how to use it properly. It should be noted that all the problems and troubles of man are due to the fact that he does not know how to make proper use of his body. Hence, he becomes an easy prey to sorrow and disease. One thing should always be remembered. No one can go against the divine Will. No one can alter the Lord's Law which is immutable.

The body is inert. Many may argue as to how the body can be called inert, when it is seen to be capable of growth. The answer to this doubt is that when you clean your house daily and go on dumping the sweepings in one place, it will grow into a big heap. Likewise, when you go on dumping into your body various kinds of food so many times per day, your body, though insentient, will grow like the heap of garbage. It should however be realised that the body is able to function by way of eating, talking, walking and growing etc., because of the *chaithanya* (consciousness) within it. In this respect, the body may be compared to a car. Eyes are like the headlights, tongue like the horn and ears like the loudspeakers. It is because of the battery inside the car that the above-mentioned parts of the car are also able to function. Similarly, the various organs of the inert body are able to function only because of the *Atmic* Power inside the body. To cite another analogy, the inert iron filings are able to move hither and thither when attracted by the power of a magnet. So also, the operation of all the organs of the body, which are inert by themselves is made possible by the presence of the *Atma* inside. It is a pity that we spend a lot of time, effort and money to beautify the transient and inert body, forgetting our real *Atma*, Self, which is permanent and sentient.

Man is prone to three kinds of misconceptions in relation to his body. One is to mistake himself to be something that is not his real Self. Another is to regard persons or objects that do not belong to him as his own. The third is to believe the evanescent to be the everlasting. Man considers the body as his real self. If that is the case, why should he say, this is my body. This statement clearly implies that he is different from the body, because the owner is different from what he owns. For instance, when a man says, this is my kerchief, he is apart from the kerchief. Hence, how can one say that he is the body? This is the first and basic blunder.

Secondly, in worldly matters man is misled by the belief that he is the owner of various kinds of properties like houses, lands, vehicles etc. You build a house and call it yours. When you sell it, it is no longer yours. Likewise, you buy a car and call it yours. When it is sold, it ceases to be yours. So, things are yours only as long as you own and

use them. Forgetting that all these possessions are temporary, like fleeting clouds, you develop undue attachments for them. In fact, nothing is yours. How can those that belong to the body be yours? All these misconceptions are caused by the veil of *maya* (delusion) and the resultant sense of possessiveness and the aberrations of the mind. Prior to marriage, no one can say who is the husband and who is the wife. Before birth, nobody can say who is the mother and who is the child. Only after marriage do you say this is my wife. It is only after birth do you declare that he is my son. But these relationships are transient and not permanent and are based on the wrong identification of oneself with the body. Nobody brings with him even a tiny piece of cloth at the time of birth, and nobody leaves his address even, at the time of death. If they are really yours, why won't they give you their address at the time of final departure? Nothing belongs to you. Forgetting your own reality and mistaking the unreal as the real in this illusory world, you are creating problems for yourself. You are always yourself only. You don't belong to anybody, nor does anyone belong to you. There is only one thing that exists. Despite the unequivocal declaration of the scriptures that Reality is One, but sages call it differently—we continue to believe wrongly that diversity is real.

Let us consider the case of the head of a household or family. His wife calls him—My dear husband. His son calls him—My dear father. His mother calls him—My dear son, while his daughter-in-law refers to him as—My dear father-in-law. Thus, one and the same person is called in different ways according to various relationships with the body. As the scriptures declare—the One has become many. Therefore, there is unity underlying the diversity. There is only One. That one is the Hero—God; all the rest—i.e. the entire world, is zero. When you put one zero by the side of that one, it becomes ten; with one more zero it becomes a hundred, and with a third zero, it becomes one thousand, and so on. Wherefrom do all these zeros get their value? It is only from the Hero. If you remove the Hero, there is no value for any number of zeroes. Therefore, God alone is the Hero. The delusion of the body, mind, intellect, etc. are only zeroes. So, it is important that we should hold on to the Hero—God. That does not mean that you should give up the world or abandon your worldly duties.

You have to do your duty by your kith and kin. But while thus discharging your duties, you should never deviate from the spiritual path. Your secular life should be harmonised with your spiritual life. So long as you live in the world, you have to conform to the rules and regulations governing the worldly affairs. But whatever you may do, you must not lose sight of the supreme spiritual goal of life. You should recognise the fact that nothing belongs to you whether mother, father, brother, kinsmen, wealth, house, etc. All these ephemeral things are related to the changing body, which is the basis for all mental aberrations.

The body undergoes various changes due to food and other living habits. Whatever be such changes in the body, the individuality remains unchanged. The changes of name and form such as childhood, boyhood, manhood, and old age pertain to the body and hence illusory. You should not therefore consider the body as real and permanent at all. Nevertheless, it is your duty to ensure that the body is not subjected to disease and is maintained as a fit instrument. As long as you sail in the river of life, you must see to it that the boat of your body does not develop holes or leaks thereby preventing water from entering into the boat. The boat may be in water, but there should be no water in the boat. Remain in the world and attend to your duties, but don't allow worries to enter your mind

and make your body susceptible to all kinds of diseases. Consider the body as only an instrument.

To keep this instrument of the body in good trim, you have to regulate your food and other habits. Also, look upon the body as your vesture or clothing, and resort to washing it clean from time to time, just as soiled clothes are cleaned by the washerman. All that the washerman does is to remove the dirt from the cloth enabling it to regain its original whiteness. So too, purity is natural to the human body, but it becomes dirty due to improper use; and therefore you should get it cleaned with the help of God as washerman, by resorting to such practices as prayer, *japa*, meditation, and love of God. The washerman alone can wash the clothes, but not a barber. So also, God alone, and none else, can cleanse your heart of its impurities. Never forget that this body is only a garment. It is due to the ignorance that you look upon the body as your real Self. Only when you get rid of this ignorance, will you shine as the effulgent Sun of Wisdom.

Students! Besides the body, you have to recognise the role and importance of the other related entities like the sense organs, mind, and intellect and keep them in good shape. If you keep *laddu* (an Indian Sweet), or cloves in your shirt pocket and forgetfully give the shirt to the washerman, you will find that the pocket has developed stains when the washerman brings the shirt back to you after washing. Likewise the mind is stained with bad impressions if you allow bad thoughts to enter it. It is only when the nature of each of these constituents of your personality, viz., body, senses, mind, and intellect is properly understood will you be able to lead an integral and purposeful human life. Otherwise, you will become a victim of all sorts of difficulties and problems. You need not waste your time in the routine spiritual practices like *japa* and *dhyana* (meditation). To recognise the truth is the real *sadhana* (spiritual exercise). When food is cooked, there will be no longer any need for firewood. Likewise, when truth has been realised, there is no need for *sadhana*.

During this fortnight if you are able to grasp the nature and significance of the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, and also the *Atma* (God), which is the supreme witness presiding over the rest of them, you will be in a position to master the mystery of the Cosmos made up of the five basic elements (*pancha bhuthas*). Ultimately, as God is the basis of everything, students have to develop faith in God.

THE MOVING TEMPLE

This body is a valueless iron safe;
 Like the precious jewels kept in an iron safe,
 There is the Divine inside the body.
 This Sai's word is the path of Truth.

What you call God is not in some far off place,
 That God is in your very body;
 What you call sin is not in a distant country
 It is there in the very actions that you perform.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Although the human body is worthless in itself and is impermanent, it has to be carefully looked after, because it enshrines the divine *Atma*. This is man's primary duty. Without a healthy and strong body, man will fall an easy victim to numerous ailments. Body is verily the foundation for human life. That is why the ancient Romans, who were aware of this truth and who were the pioneers of modern civilisation in the West, used to carefully undertake various measures for the proper upkeep and development of the body.

The body is a world in itself. It is not merely the outer form. It is the collective assemblage of many organs and limbs. Each organ has its own beauty, which has to be fostered. A weak and unhealthy body is incapable of any resolute action. Pure, noble, and sublime ideas can emanate only from a strong and healthy body. All religions are agreed on this point. Although the body is impermanent, special care should be taken to maintain it properly because it provides residence for the eternal *Atma*. The divine spirit illumines the body although the latter is composed of flesh, blood, faeces, urine, and other foul-smelling and impure things. *Atma* does not grow with the body, nor does it decay along with the body. The *Atma* principle is not subject to growth or decay. It is ever pure, precious and immutable.

Even if a big and brilliant diamond is found in a garbage heap, it does not lose its lustre or value. Just because a good variety of pumpkin is grown in a thorny fence, there will be no change in its taste or cooking quality. Even though the peahen's egg is hatched under the warmth of the ordinary hen or fowl, the young peacock that emerges will not lose its beautiful plumage. So also, the splendour and effulgence of the selfless, stainless, eternal *Atmic* Principle will in no way be diminished although it is associated with the human body which is full of impurities.

What is the reason for people, professing different faiths, being agreed on the need to nourish the health and happiness of the body? It is because all of them regard the body as the temple of the Lord within. Therefore it is man's primary duty not to neglect this holy temple called the body, but to take utmost care for its proper maintenance and for using it for the discharge of one's duties and obligations in life. Persons who do not recognise this truth subject the body to various ordeals in the name of worship, religious vows, fasting, and penance. Thereby they are missing the goal of recognising the eternal *Atmic* Principle. By hitting the anthill, can you kill the snake inside it? By subjecting the body to tor-

ture, can you realise the *Atma*? By giving up good food and water, can you attain liberation? Self-realisation is possible only through knowing your own real nature.

Therefore, the first step in the quest for Self-knowledge is to understand the nature of man. Whatever the number of lives one might have had, the body one has now assumed is new. This shows that Divinity is inherent in man. The discovery of this Divinity, or real Self of man, calls for appropriate enquiry leading to the perception of the Real. When one perceives his real Self through prolonged contemplation on the Self, he becomes a *drashta* (seer). The ultimate aim of *bhakti* (devotion) is to become such a *drashta* and to experience the world with this spiritual perspective or background. Without this attainment, man remains a human being in form only, with no realisation of his true Self. The Sanskrit word *manava*, used to designate man, means “not new”, because his reality is the *Atma*, which is ancient and eternal. Another meaning of the word *manava* is “*ma*” (*ajnana*, ignorance), “*na*” (without); “*va*” (conducting oneself). In other words, he alone deserves the name of *manava* (man) who conducts himself without ignorance. Can all green birds speak like a parrot? Can every insect found on a flower be called a bee? Can a donkey become a tiger by merely putting on the skin of a tiger? Just because a pig has grown huge like an elephant, can it be called an elephant? Likewise can every one that has the human form be considered a real man? He alone can be rightly called a man, who has harmonised his thoughts, words, and deeds.

The body is like a water bubble, which emerges from water, stays on water for a while, and merges back in water. So also the bubble called “*nara*” (man) has emerged from the water called “Narayana” (God) and merges back in Him. Only when we recognise this divine origin of the human being will we take care to maintain and use the human body in an appropriate manner. Although the body is a mere instrument, its use has to be regulated according to prescribed standards and limits. Every object in the world is governed by certain regulations. It has rightly been said that we cannot achieve any success or progress without observing such discipline. The body too is governed by certain regulations. We should develop purity in our thoughts, feelings, looks, and actions. If, on the other hand, one uses one’s senses and limbs in impure ways, one’s nature would degenerate from human to demoniac.

Our life can be compared to a business enterprise. The body’s normal temperature is 98°, if the temperature goes up to even 99°, it is a symptom of disease. Our blood pressure too is 120/80mm, if it becomes more or less it is considered as disease. Even our eyeball can see light only within a particular range. Any deviation from the range will result in damage to the retina. Similarly our ears can hear sound within a given range; beyond that limit, the eardrums will be damaged. Thus our body may be called a limited company. Hence we should observe these limits while making use of the body. Whether in the food we eat, or water we drink, or the words we speak and hear, in fact in all our living habits, moderation should be observed as the keynote. Exceeding the limits will entail danger. Excessive eating or talking results in mental aberration, while moderate eating or talking is conducive to pleasantness in life. Therefore the body should always be used in such a manner only that confers happiness on man’s life.

Man’s knowledge can be classified into five categories. The type of knowledge that is most widely prevalent nowadays is book knowledge. We are wasting our entire lives for acquiring such book knowledge, which is merely superficial. On account of this, general knowledge and common sense have become conspicuous by their absence. These two, namely, general knowledge and common sense, cannot be gained from books, but only

from various experiences in actual day-to-day living, especially through service to society. The fourth one is discriminative knowledge. This type of knowledge is nowadays being used perversely for selfish ends. This is not the right use of discrimination. What is wanted is the kind of discrimination which keeps in view not the selfish individual good but the collective good of the society at large. Young people should particularly avoid justifying the wrong use of their discrimination for self-interest. They should develop what may be called “fundamental discrimination”, which is equally applicable to all people, irrespective of the country to which they belong. Unlike in the case of ordinary arithmetic, $3-1 = 1$ according to the spiritual arithmetic. You may argue that this equation is incorrect, but I firmly assert that it is correct. Why? Because it is based not on selfish worldly calculation but on selfless *Atmic* calculation, which aims at universal welfare. Of the three entities God, *maya*, and the Universe, God is the object, *maya* is the mirror, and the Universe is God’s reflection. If the mirror be removed, there will be no *maya* and Universe. Then only God remains. Therefore, $3-1 = 1$. People are not in a position to understand such things because they lack the fifth type of knowledge viz. practical knowledge. This practical knowledge is highly essential for man; but it is woefully lacking today, because every individual thinks that it is enough to take care of oneself only. He should realise that he is a part of society and that he should be equally concerned about the welfare of the society as a whole. There is no difference at all between the sun and his rays, or between the sea and its waves. Likewise, there is no difference whatsoever between God and Love, because God is the source of Love. Similar is the relationship between the body and the *Atma*, which are interdependent and intimately associated with each other.

Although the body is transient, it should be properly cared for until *Atma* is realised. Not recognising this truth, many persons neglect the body and expose themselves to the onslaught of many diseases. Even for achieving the four *purusharthas* (goals of human life) viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*, bodily health is highly essential. Man today is subject to more maladies caused by mental worries than by consuming bad food. What is the shape of worry? It is only a mentally created fear. There should be a limit to speculation, anxiety and worries. Otherwise they will lead to mental troubles and derangement. A study of university students showed that 80 to 90 percent of the students in several universities were suffering from one or the other kind of mental disorders. Students should see that, in this most precious stage of their lives, they do not become a prey to physical or mental ill-health. They should keep their minds away from unnecessary thoughts and worries and also avoid excessive reading, playing, singing, and sleeping, etc., because excessive indulgence in any of such activities will have an adverse effect on the body.

Moreover, you have been told, off and on, about the programme of “Ceiling on Desires”, which has four important components. The first one is: “Don’t waste food.” Why? Because food is God. Food is indispensable for human life, since the body cannot survive without food. The second one is: “Don’t waste money.” The misuse of money is an evil. Today’s youth especially are wasting money in a number of ways. This will lead to bad habits, loss of peace of mind, and the ruining of your life itself. Our country is today facing grave economic problems, so indiscriminate spending of money for selfish purposes should strictly be eschewed in the interest of the society at large. The spirit of cooperation has to be promoted. National unity and integrity should be safeguarded.

A balance has to be maintained between individual interests and national interests. Everything in life depends on maintaining the proper balance, whether it be walking, sitting, cycling or driving a car. Today this balance has been lost because of excessive knowledge and its misuse. If knowledge is to be put to right use, it should be transformed into skill. However, instead of skill, young people in particular are killing knowledge. You are wasting knowledge and energy in seeing, hearing, talking, thinking etc., in wrong manner and in excessive measure. Therefore the third item in the “Ceiling on Desires”, says: “Don’t waste energy.” A small illustration in this connection. You have turned the radio to a particular station. Whether the volume is kept high or low, whether you listen or not, so many units of electrical energy will be wasted. Likewise your body is a radio. You are constantly engaged in thinking as well as talking in a loud or low tone, talking to others or to yourself, talking while awake and even while asleep. Due to such continuous talking day and night, how much of energy is being wasted, thereby causing allergy in your lives. Every action involves the use of energy. If the energy in the body is properly utilised, then balance will be maintained and the body will be in good shape.

The fourth dictum of the “Ceiling on Desires” is: “Don’t waste time.” Students, only when the body is strong, healthy, and happy can you enjoy the proper state of balance in life. Man’s life is wasted in brooding over the past and worrying about the future. What is the root cause of man’s sorrow and sickness? Not being content with what he has, and hankering after what he does not have, man forfeits peace of mind. There is no need to think about what is past or about what is in store in the future. Of what avail is it to think of the past, *which* is irrevocable, or to worry about the future, *which* is uncertain? It is a sheer waste of time. Past is past, future is future. You can do nothing about either. What is most important is the present. This is not ordinary present. It is Omnipresent. The result of the past and the result of the future are both present in the present. You are reaping in the present what you had sown in the past. And what you are sowing in the present you will reap in the future. Thus, both the past and the future are contained in the present only. So, make the best use of the present. Give up all sorts of worry and lead ideal lives leading to immortality and fulfillment of the purpose of human life.

Students! Don’t underestimate the value of the body. Everything in this world is impermanent; on that account, are we neglecting such things? So, even though the body is transient, you should take good care of it so long as it lasts, because it is a moving temple of God. Develop self-confidence instead of confidence in the world. Self-confidence may be compared to the foundation for the edifice of life, self-satisfaction is like the walls, self-sacrifice is the roof, and Self-realisation is the happiness of living in the mansion of human body. Therefore, with self-confidence, you can accomplish anything and secure joy. You will be able to face and surmount any difficulties in life.

What do you mean by Self? Self is of two kinds. One is the single lettered “I”. The other is the three-lettered “eye”, which stands for the body. The single-lettered “I” refers to the *Atma*, which is present in all. There may be some people who may not have the three-lettered “eye” or even if it is there, it may be covered by cataract or suffer from other defects or diseases. But the single lettered “I” exists equally in all persons irrespective of whether one is a *bhogi* (hedonist or pleasure-seeker), *rogi* (diseased person), *yogi* (realised person), *viragi* (the renunciate or monk), or *byragi* (mendicant).

Whenever a number of people are called severally by their names, each of them will respond saying “I”. Although their names and forms are different, the “I” in all of them is one and the same. That is why the *Vedas* have declared, “*Ekam Sath vipra bahudha*

vadanti,” which means: “Truth or existence is one, but the sages call it by various names.” You should, therefore, try to experience the unity underlying the diversity in the universe. It is because you see the diversity, ignoring the unity, that there is so much restlessness and lack of peace in the world. For instance, nations are many but earth is one; stars are many but sky is one, beings are many but breath is one. Therefore, if man remembers this unity in diversity, there will be no room for differences, quarrels or wars in the world.

Students, you are now in the most precious period of your life. You should never give room for any differences and discrimination in your thoughts, words, or deeds. Such unhealthy ideas arise from an unhealthy body. Each of you can judge for yourself whether you are strong and healthy or weak and unhealthy, based on the nature of ideas that arise in you. That is why it is said “*Yat bhavam tat bhavati* (As you think, so you become.)” Just as you take care of the iron safe for the sake of the valuable jewels inside, so too you should take care of your body for the sake of the precious *Atma* in it. You should eat to live but not live to eat. If you have self-confidence, the required food will come walking to you, as it were. You need not go in search of food. That is why it is said in the *Bhagavatha* that one who seeks the *Atma* is a *gopi* (devotee) while one who seeks food is a *papi* (sinner). It is a pity that having got the invaluable human birth, people are running after *anna* (food) instead of seeking the *Atma*. *Vedanta* has been exhorting man to find out who he really is. Instead of using the mirror of your intellect for looking at your Self, you are placing the mirror in front of others to see them. That is why you are not able to see yourself.

Develop self-confidence, which will lead you to bliss. Never give room for worries and anxieties. Gain sufficient strength of the body and mind to face boldly the difficulties, losses, and sorrows that may confront you in life. This will be facilitated if you practise the four F’s taught in our educational system viz., “Follow the Master (your conscience),” “Face the Devil,” “Fight till the end,” and “Finish the game.” What is the inner meaning of the first three letters of the alphabet, A, B, C in the English language? They mean Always Be Careful. The same dictum is given by the *Upanishad* by exhorting a man to “arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.”

However long you may live, whatever scientific knowledge you may acquire, whatever position you may occupy, some time or other you have to know the Truth about yourself. Start knowing it from now itself. You should be on the alert all the time, because you can never know when the Lord’s Grace, His Love and Benediction will be showered on you, at what time and at what place and in what circumstances. Unlike in the case of worldly matters, you cannot understand what is happening in the spiritual domain or what the Divine plans are. Therefore, if you go on discharging your duties and obligations in the proper manner with enthusiasm and joy, that itself will confer bliss on you. Don’t worry about the future. Don’t brood over the past. All are passing clouds only. In this world, there is nothing permanent whether persons, objects or other things. The very name *jagat* (universe) means “coming and going.” Knowing this truth, why should you worry at all? So give no scope whatsoever for any kind of worry. Only then can man be entitled to become divine.

It is only man that is endowed with the capacity to discover his Divinity. In this context, food habits play an important role. Out of 84,000,000 living beings on earth, 83,999,999 species of creatures like insects, birds, animals, and beasts, etc., live on what is provided by God in nature, and hence they do not generally suffer from any diseases.

Man is the sole exception in this regard. By becoming a slave to his palate, he relishes only cooked and spicy foods of various kinds, without realising to what extent such foods are curtailing his own longevity.

Besides this, it is significant to note that those who live on vegetarian food are less prone to diseases whereas non-vegetarians are subject to more diseases. Why? Because animal food is incompatible with the needs of the human body. Doctors speak about proteins being present in non-vegetarian food, but the fact is that there are better quality proteins in food articles like vegetables, pulses, milk, curd, etc. Non-vegetarian food not only affects man's body but also has deleterious effect on his mind.

Food, Head, God—these three are interrelated. By consuming animal food, animal tendencies are aroused. As is your food, so are your thoughts. Men today are behaving in a manner worse than that of wild animals in the forest. They have become cruel, pitiless, and hard-hearted. There is no sympathy or understanding even between man and man. The main reason for this condition lies in the kind of food that is consumed. Students, be careful about the food you eat. See that it is conducive to your health and happiness. Our ancestors used to take food twice a day and our ancient sages used to eat only once a day. They declared that the man who eats only once is a *yogi*, the one who eats twice a day is a *bhogi* (enjoyer), and he who eats thrice a day is a *rogi* (sick man). Today, people go on consuming food at all times, not to speak of drinks and snacks in between. How then can they escape from indigestion and other diseases? Man needs food that supplies him energy equivalent to about one calorie per minute. Young people should be satisfied with 2,000 calories of food per day. For healthy life, man needs only 1,500 calories per day. But nowadays, the food intake has increased up to 5,000 calories. As a result, people suffer from indigestion and sleeplessness. Loss of sleep gives rise to many ailments. Don't worry about sleep. If you go to bed without any worry, you will get sound sleep automatically.

Observe moderation in your intake of food as well as in other living habits, to keep your body in good shape and to perform your duties properly. However, do not develop undue attachment to the body. The two feelings of "I" and "mine" are solely responsible for all the problems and evils prevailing in society. You should try to minimize, if not eliminate altogether, the feelings of "doership" and enjoyership". Then only will you be able to lead ideal lives.

We suffer from ill health due to psychological reasons also. If you examine your pulse, blood pressure, temperature, etc., with feeling or fear that you are unwell, you will get abnormal readings. If you have the apprehension that you will not get good sleep, it will happen accordingly. So, always try to have a positive outlook and self-confidence that your health is all right. Our ancients wished to live long for the sake of a Godly life and therefore tried to preserve the health of their bodies as well as minds accordingly. Today, one is called an old man at the age of sixty or seventy. But in olden days, people were considered young even at the age of 80, 90 or 100. Students, you might have read in the Mahabharata that at the time of the *Kurukshetra* war, Krishna and Arjuna were 86 years and 84 years old respectively. But they were in youthful condition and participated in the war with vigour, vitality, and valour. Who was the Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army? It was the 116 year old Bhishma. If it were to be today, a 116 year old man would be confined to his cot, with his body shaking all over and needing others' help even for getting up from bed. But Bhishma fought fiercely for nine days. How do you account for this? It was because of their mental strength, nourishing food, and above

all Self-confidence (confidence in the real Self, *Atma*). Today such spiritual strength is totally lacking among the people. Self-confidence is constantly going up and down. Their minds are unsteady and subject to jumps and bumps from moment to moment. If their wishes are fulfilled, they will install ten pictures of God instead of one in their shrine room. In case their desires are not complied with, they will remove even the one picture that they used to worship previously. This is an indication of the waywardness of their mind. This is not the right attitude.

You may worship a picture as God, but not God as a picture. If your mind wavers from moment to moment, how can there be steadiness or stability in life? Every one must endeavour to develop the courage to face the vicissitudes of life, joys or sorrows, gains or losses, with equanimity.

Today, many who profess themselves to be believers in God. But because these so-called believers do not conduct themselves properly, many are becoming atheists. Talking about *bhakti* (devotion), they resort to *bhukthi* (hedonism). This is no genuine devotion. A devotee should be ready to gladly accept anything as God's gift. Can you get sugar by merely requesting the sugar cane, instead of crushing it to extract the juice from it? Even if it is the best kind of diamond, will it shine in all its effulgence unless it is subjected to cutting and polishing? Similarly, it is only when man undergoes trials and tribulations, hardships, losses and sorrows that his real worth will shine forth. *Bhakti* (devotion) is the nectar obtained as a result of churning the essences of many *Upanishads* and Scriptures. Real devotion is that which is buttressed by firm faith and is steadfast and unchanging under all circumstances. Only then does one deserve to get the fruits of real *bhakti* (devotion).

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Although you may have body-consciousness, your lives should be guided by the *Atmic* awareness. The body, the senses, the mind, the intellect and the *Atma* are to be considered as your five-breaths (*pancha pranas*). Once you have understood the mysteries or subtleties of each of them you need no other spiritual discipline. Truth is everything. Without realising this, what is the use of troubling yourselves with all sorts of *sadhanas* (spiritual practices)? I am explaining to you, during this summer course, about the subtle truths relating to the five vital constituents of your personality, in compliance with the request of your Vice-Chancellor. You speak about meditation. What do you do in meditation? You are merely sitting in a comfortable posture, with your eyes closed. But your mind is wandering in the barber's shop, or washerman's laundry or in the bazaar (market place). Instead of engaging yourself in such futile exercises, you had better enter into the society and undertake selfless service. Without understanding what real meditation is, your attempts at meditation will result only in sound sleep. First of all, try to understand the nature of the mind. Then only will you be able to control it. Once, an old woman came to me and complained that her mind was giving her endless trouble by its restless wanderings. Then I asked her, "Where is that mind which is troubling you? Show it to me and I shall destroy it." She replied "Swami, I don't know where it is." I told her, "If you do not know where the mind is, how do you say it is troubling you? Is it the mind that is troubling you or are you troubling yourself?" So without understanding anything about the mind, to blame it is meaningless and to sit in meditation is sheer idleness. You must, therefore, have a thorough understanding of the nature of the mind as well as the senses. Everything in the world has some useful secrets to reveal. God does not create anything without a purpose. All things are purposeful, meaningful, blissful, and valuable. But we

are not making any effort to understand their mysteries. Hence I hope and bless that during this fortnight you will understand thoroughly the nature and the role of the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, and the *Atma* so that you may blossom forth as ideal students endowed with purity and equanimity.

MASTERY OF THE SENSES

One may acquire great scholarship and come out
 victorious in assemblies of scholars;
 One may be a great hero and win battles galore;
 One may be born as a king of kings and rule a vast empire;
 One may generously give away in charity gold and cows;
 One may be able to count the countless stars that adorn the sky;
 One may be able to name the innumerable species of living beings;
 One may be well-versed in *ashtanga vidya* (the eightfold path of *yoga*);
 One may be successful in reaching the Moon;
 But no one can control their body and senses,
 Nor conquer their mind and keep it
 In a state of constant introversion and unshakeable equanimity.

It is true that the body wields some influence over the senses. But the senses have even greater influence on the body. There can be no body without the senses nor senses without the body. These two are inseparable and interdependent. Negative without positive, or positive without negative (in the case of electric current) will serve no purpose. Likewise, a body without senses, or senses without a body cannot function. Hence it is imperative for every person to take proper care of the body.

The role of the senses is remarkable. The wonders performed by the Divine defy description. But the part played by the senses is even more marvelous and mysterious. Strange, unpredictable and indescribable indeed are the ways of the sense organs. The senses are subtler than the body. Although the faculties of speech, touch, sight, hearing, and taste as well as gas, bile, and phlegm exist in the body, the senses exercise extraordinary control over all of them equally. Joy and sorrow, heat and cold, etc., are experienced only when the sense organs come in contact with external objects. Without the sensory objects, the senses cannot function even for a moment. All the activities of the senses are oriented toward the objects in the environment. It is not possible for us to comprehend or describe the myriad facets of sense organs and their activities.

The senses are also called by the name *maatrah*, which means “measuring instruments”. How is this measuring done by the sense organs? Take a fruit, for instance. Which of the senses has the capacity to determine whether it is sweet or sour? Which sense organ measures or decides the taste of an object? It is the tongue. The tongue determines the taste of an eatable, decides whether it is good or bad, and makes it known to all concerned.

Which organ is capable of declaring whether a picture is attractive or ugly? The eye alone is the measuring rod for this purpose. Similarly, the power to determine whether an object is fragrant or foul-smelling is vested in the nose. Likewise it is the ear that can discriminate between a melodious musical note and a discordant one. Thus, the sense organs are called *maatrah* in as much as they are endowed with the capacity to measure and determine the particular quality or characteristic of different sense objects.

In the *Kathopanishad*, the senses are described as horses yoked to the chariot of the body. What is the inner significance of naming the senses as horses (*aswa* in Sanskrit)?

Aswa means that which is always restless. It is common knowledge that a horse, whether it is standing or running or even sleeping, moves some part of its body or the other all the time, whether a tail, or the leg, or the back, or the nose, or the jaws. It is because of this restless nature of the horse that it is called *aswam*. Similarly, take the case of the *peepul* tree (*Ficus religiosa*). Whether there is any breeze or not, its leaves are constantly rustling. Hence it is called *aswatha* tree.

In ancient times, the Indian rulers used to perform a sacrifice (*yaga*) by name *Aswa-Medha Yaga*. “*Aswa*” means fickle. “*Medha*” means “*buddhi* (intellect)”. Thus, “*aswa medha*” means “fickle-minded”. Hence, the horse that is used in the sacrifice symbolises a fickle mind. Whosoever is capable of capturing and controlling that horse is described as *dheemantha* (a man of heroic intelligence), worthy of combat. Here we see the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the term *aswa-medha*. It is only when both meanings are taken together that we get at the whole truth. Today, it is the duty of every person to control the horse-like senses. Only then can he be called a hero in the true sense. Whatever *yagas*, *yajnas*, or other rituals one may perform, whatever Scriptures one might have mastered, if one has no control over his senses, all these accomplishments are worthless.

The term *maatrah* as applied to the senses has yet another meaning. It indicates that the limit to what can be experienced by each sense organ has been prescribed by the Lord Divine. For instance, the eye can only see but cannot hear. The mouth can only speak but cannot see. Thus, each organ has been endowed by God with a specific talent only. Only those who use these organs according to the divinely prescribed functions will be acting up to the Will of the Divine. Those who violate the prescribed limits will be transgressing the divine Will, thereby becoming liable for punishment.

Everyone, therefore, should make use of the sense organs with due regard to the functions and limits prescribed for each of them. For example, the nose has been allotted a specific assignment of inhaling and exhaling air for preserving one’s health and of distinguishing between good and bad smells, and take in only what is good and fragrant. Ignoring this specific role ordained for the nose, today’s man unfortunately is misusing it for taking snuff and inhaling foul odours. By such practices, he is violating the injunctions pertaining to the use of the nose. Thereby he commits a double offence; one, violating a divine injunction, and the other, causing damage to his health. No wonder, therefore, that man today has become a prey to all kinds of disease.

In the same manner, the tongue has been given to man to consume wholesome food that promotes his health as well as to speak gently and sweetly, so as to give joy to others, and to communicate his innermost thoughts and feelings to others. The tongue, which has been bestowed on us for such edifying purposes, is being grossly misused nowadays. It is being used for consuming drugs and narcotics, eating animal food, smoking, indulging in abuses of others, carrying tales, backbiting, speaking harsh words that hurt others, etc. Through such perverse use of the tongue, the divine injunctions are violated by setting at naught the ordained limits. Consequently, man has to experience numerous troubles.

It is only by properly using the God-given senses for the purposes for which they are intended that man can rise to divine heights. Just because you have the sense organs, you should not use them as you please. They are like horses yoked to a chariot. You must know how to handle them properly so that the chariot can run smoothly and safely along the right road to the ultimate goal of life. The horses must be in front of the chariot. Today, on the contrary, the horses are placed behind the chariot. This is leading to dangerous consequences. If, on the plea that the senses should be respected and given a place of

honour, you place the horses (senses) inside the chariot, how can the chariot move at all? While fostering the senses, no effort is being made to bring them under control internally. This amounts to feeding a horse excessively and unduly fattening it but not giving it adequate work. This is sure to have untoward results. Today, we are pampering the senses but not giving them any work. That is why they are running amuck, spelling disaster to the master himself. The senses should be put to right use as ordained by God; otherwise, man will have to suffer from lack of peace.

This situation may be compared to that of a man with many wives. King Uttanapaada had two wives, and, because of the differences between them, the child Dhruva had to go to the forest to perform penance. King Dasaratha had three wives. To comply with the demands of his youngest wife, he had to endure the exile of his dearest son, Rama, to the forest, eventually to lose his life due to the pangs of separation. If this is the plight of those having two or three wives, imagine the condition of one who has to manage ten wives! For, this V.I.P. (very important person), namely the mind, has to manage ten wives—the five sense organs and the five organs of action. Each organ insists on enjoying objects of its own choice. For example, the nose is attracted by the smell of *masala dosa* (a South Indian delicacy) and wants to have it. The ear wants the radio to be tuned, so that it can enjoy melodious music. The eyes hanker after a new film. Thus when all of them are keen about their own particular desires, how can the master (the mind) satisfy them all at the same time? Unable to satisfy them, the mind gets frustrated. How then can this mind wedded to ten wives enjoy peace? It is only when the senses are kept under proper control that man can be happy himself and share that happiness with those around him.

There is a method by which the demands of the senses can be reconciled and harmonised. This is by treating both good and bad with equal-mindedness. Tukaram is an illustrious example in this regard. He was a great devotee, and very gentle by nature. His wife was a shrew. Nevertheless, by his calmness and forbearance, Tukaram managed to get on well with her. Only when one is in the habit of retaliating word for word, tit for tat, tooth for tooth, and nail for nail does one have to face discord and trouble. But Tukaram was the very embodiment of forbearance. He used to cultivate his small farm of half-an-acre to maintain his family. At the insistence of his neighbours, he once raised sugarcane crop in that small plot of land. When the crop was mature taking undue advantage of Tukaram's good nature, many passers-by used to pluck a couple of sugarcanes and chew them. Finally, Tukaram harvested whatever crop was left behind, bundled the canes, and was taking them home in his cart. On the way, the children of the village gathered round him and pleaded for a piece of sugarcane each. In his usual generosity, Tukaram allowed the children to help themselves to the canes in the cart. At last when he reached home, there was only one cane left in the cart. Seeing this, his wife flew into a rage and strongly scolded Tukaram, condemning him as unfit for family life; she took out the only cane on the cart in a fit of anger and struck Tukaram with it. The cane broke into three pieces, out of which two fell on the ground, and the other was in her hand. Tukaram calmly remarked, "I was wondering all along the way how to distribute the remaining cane to the three members of the family. I am glad you have nicely solved the problem for me. You can eat one piece, which is in your hand, and give the other two, which have fallen on the floor, to the two children." Such forbearance and equanimity can rarely be found except in a few high-souled persons. These qualities can be acquired only through devotion and faith. You need not feel disheartened with the fear that you will not be able to control the

senses. By developing one-pointed devotion and complete surrender to God, the senses can definitely be brought under control.

Kabir is an example of another godly man in a different situation. Unlike Tukaram's wife, Kabir's wife was highly devoted and faithful, totally dedicated to serving the husband and obeying him implicitly. One day Kabir was plying his handloom, chanting, as usual, the name of "Ram" all the time. Suddenly he called his wife and saying that one thread has snapped, he asked her to bring a lamp. It was noon, and when she brought the lighted lamp, Kabir asked her to take it back as it was not necessary (because of daylight). Any other wife in her position would have retorted, saying, "Have you no eyes to see the daylight? Why did you waste my time and effort by unnecessarily asking me to bring a lighted lamp and to take it back? Do you think I have no other work?" etc. But Kabir's wife was made of a different stuff. She silently took back the lamp, without a murmur or uttering even a single word of resentment. Hence, with such a dutiful and obedient wife, Kabir was able to develop his devotion unhampered, and expressed his gratitude to God for His Grace in giving him such a good partner in life.

Here you have two examples of saintly men who, despite their contrasting family situations, pursued their spiritual path equally well. Hence, it is not the environment that matters in the control of one's senses and emotions. It is the purity of one's impulses, sincerity of purpose, and determination in treading the divine path that count rather than the environment which is of little or no consequence in this regard.

You must have heard about Einstein who was a great scientist as well as a man of wisdom—a rare combination. He had a very stupid woman. She was not only uneducated but also rude in her behaviour. Einstein was always engaged in experiments, investigations, and also contemplation. He was so much absorbed in his work that he never used to go in time for his food and refreshments, even though frequently reminded by his wife. His wife was upset and disgusted with the behaviour of her husband and used to lose her temper quite often. One day, she was feeling very hungry. She served all the dishes on the dinner table and repeatedly requested her husband to come and have his food. But Einstein paid no heed to her words, as he was engrossed with his thoughts forgetful of the world outside. His wife became enraged at this and rushed to him with a jugful of water and emptied it on her husband's head along with a shower of rebukes. Einstein was not upset, though fully drenched. He smiled at his wife and coolly remarked, "Everyday, it used to be only lightning and thunder. But today it is a heavy downpour on my head! Just imagine the forbearance, composure, and humour of Einstein in such a highly trying and provoking situation! If it were to be any other husband, he would have smashed the wife's head with the very same empty jug snatching it from her hand. But Einstein never thought in terms of such retaliation or even retort for that matter. Such was the control over his senses.

The ancient sages regarded sense control as a form of penance. To discipline the senses, one should understand how the senses function. Here is a small story to illustrate how a Christian priest learnt a lesson in sense control from the driver of a horse carriage in which he was traveling. The priest noticed that the driver was beating the horse severely as it was approaching a railway crossing. The priest, who was a strong believer in Christ's message of love and compassion, took pity on the animal and asked the driver why he was beating the horse unnecessarily, although it was running all right. The driver explained that at the level crossing there were some white painted stones, which created a fright in the horse. He was beating the animal because it was more afraid of the whip than

the white stones and would therefore proceed through the level crossing without halting due to the fear of the white stones. So the priest learnt the lesson that when the attention of any sense organ is distracted by something, it should be diverted to another desirable thing by means of a stronger incentive or disincentive. Then only will it give up its crazy digressions and take to the right path.

Suppose there is an animal that has developed the bad habit of stealthily grazing the crops in others' fields. How to wean it away from the bad habit? If you feed that animal in your cattle-stall with green fodder, which is even more palatable than the field crops, it will get used to stall-feeding and will thereby give up its bad habit of grazing field crops. Likewise, the senses should be weaned away from their bad habits and trained properly to take to good habits.

The senses have been compared to *pasu* (animals). The word *pasu* means the one whose vision is externally oriented. The one having an inner vision is called *pasupati* or "the Lord of animals" (Siva). Man should aspire and strive to become a "*pasupati*" or master of the senses, but not a *pasu*, a slave of the senses. It is a pity that today's man has become a slave of the senses. There are several ways of taming the senses and putting them on the proper path. In this connection, it is important to avoid pampering the senses.

If you investigate carefully about the birthplace of the sense-pleasures, you will find that they have their origin only in sorrow. That is why every sense pleasure carries with it the sting of sorrow. The pleasure derived from the senses is momentary and ultimately ends up in grief only. Desires arise this moment and subside the next moment. Suppose the desire to eat *laddu* (sweet) arises in you today. No sooner have you eaten two *laddus* than you develop satiation or aversion for the sweet. Desire this moment and disgust next moment! Pleasure and pain in quick succession! By thus contemplating the momentary and deceptive nature of the so-called sense-pleasures, we can develop discrimination and detachment and keep the senses under check. Another important point you should note is that, if the senses are kept busy in the right way, there will be no trouble from them. Otherwise, you will become their slave.

Even though I may not be physically present, I know what is going on at a particular place at a particular time as well as the inner feelings of the people concerned. For instance, this afternoon, Dr. Hemalatha, Principal of the Women's College, Anantapur, entertained all of you with a very illuminating lecture on Prahlada, interspersed with melodious songs and poems in Telugu. One of the most important things she mentioned was how Hiranyakashipu, who hated and abused Hari (Lord Vishnu), was killed by the latter and was redeemed thereby. Similarly in the case of Lord Krishna, he was being always abused strongly by people like Sisupala and Dantavakra. Once, in the great assembly hall of Dharmaja (Yudhistira), packed with a distinguished gathering of eminent people, the question arose as to who should be given the first offering (or primacy) of respect and honour, i.e. "*Agra Thamboolam*" (literally, meaning the first offering of *pan supari* or betel leaves and arecanut). Although there were several men of distinction like Bhishma, Drona, etc., the Pandavas decided to give this unique honour only to Sri Krishna, who was their all in all, who stood by them through thick and thin, and who came to their rescue during many a crisis. Dharmaja washed Krishna's feet and gave him the first offering of respect and honour.

Wicked persons cannot understand the inner meaning and motives of other people. Guided merely by external formalities and selfish considerations, they criticise and abuse others out of malice and envy. This was exactly what the narrow-minded Sisupala did on

that occasion. He could not tolerate Krishna being honoured thus in that great assembly of eminent personages. Right in front of the great teachers, great sages and great men of honour and distinction, the wicked Sisupala began showering virulent abuses on Sri Krishna, mentioning for instance that Krishna was a thief who stole butter from others' houses, and who robbed the innocent cowherd girls of their saris, outraging their modesty and indulging in fun and frolic with them, and that therefore it was a wanton affront to the august assembly to give the primacy of honour to Krishna. When this type of vituperative abuse by Sisupala exceeded the limits, Krishna suddenly threw at Sisupala the very plate in which Dharmaja made his offering to Krishna. Some say that Krishna threw His *Sudarshana Chakra* at Sisupala. But that is not correct. It was only with the throwing of the plate that Krishna severed Sisupala's head. Dharmaja was exceedingly happy that the wicked Sisupala was slain by Krishna. But the very next moment, his happiness turned into utter surprise and bewilderment, as if his mind was struck by a severe cyclone, when he witnessed the blood from the severed neck of Sisupala falling on Krishna's sacred feet, and what was more surprising when the life flame emerging from Sisupala's body merged in Sri Krishna. Amazed at this strange phenomenon, Dharmaja questioned Narada how such a traitor and vicious enemy of Krishna like Sisupala could have such a glorious end, by way of the merger of his spirit in Sri Krishna—a consummation that even devotees who have surrendered themselves to the Divine can hardly expect. To this Narada replied, "Abuse or praise, vilification or veneration pertain to the body only and not to the *Atma*, which is beyond all pairs of opposites. The one Supreme *Paramatma* alone dwells in all beings. That being the case, who is the reviler and who the reviled? Who is a friend and who a foe? All are the same. The blood that is saturated with the constant remembrance of God becomes an offering dedicated to God. Whether out of hatred or love, lust or envy, ego or surrender, whatever be the feelings, it is enough if the Lord's name is remembered incessantly." Sisupala remembered Sri Krishna's name more often than many devotees. Devotees remember God only when they see the temples and their towers or pictures and idols installed therein. But Sisupala, out of his intense hatred for Krishna, had Krishna in his mind in all places and at all times whether waking or sleeping. It was because of this ceaseless remembrance of Sri Krishna that Sisupala's soul could merge in Him.

Worldly persons look only at the superficial and external aspects of things and actions. But the Lord does not see things that way. He is free from hatred or envy, likes or dislikes. When these are attributed to the Lord, they are but a reflection of your own feelings. God is like a clean mirror. What you see therein is but a mere reflection of your own actions and postures—grin for a grin, smile for a smile, salute for a salute, and so on. For God, there is no action or reaction. God neither punishes nor rewards anyone. You are punished or rewarded by your own actions. Hence no one is entitled to question the actions of God, accusing God of favouritism to some and indifference to others. Who has the authority to dictate to God how He should conduct Himself? The Divinity present in every one may find expression in various types of behaviour. But the actions of the Divine are always full of love and entirely free from selfishness and therefore totally taintless. That is why God has several appellations like "attributeless, taintless, ancient, the abode for all, eternal, pure, enlightened (consciousness), free," etc. God's eye does not see purity or impurity. It is all in your vision only. As you think, so you become. You look at the world through coloured glasses and wrongly attribute those colours to the

world. It is your defective vision that makes you see defects which do not exist in creation.

The defects that you attribute to the senses are, in fact, the defects in your own thought processes and feelings. If the senses are properly used, they will offer you the right impressions. For example, Tukaram had good feelings and so gave a favourable interpretation to even the rude and negative behaviour of his wife; his senses did not stand in the way of his spiritual progress and equanimity, despite trying circumstances in his family. Likewise, Kabir was always engaged in remembrance of God, so his wife's behaviour was harmonious and conducive to his spiritual advancement, Einstein, too, had the quality of equanimity in him and was therefore not at all upset by the boisterous behaviours of his wife. From all these instances, it is evident that what you need to do is to harmonise your own thoughts and feelings through proper *sadhana* (spiritual discipline), rather than blame the environment or other persons for your shortcomings.

However, some stubborn people given to vain argumentation, blame God for giving an outgoing orientation to man's senses. They argue that God has given them eyes with doors that open to the outside world; ears that can hear external sounds; and noses that can only inhale the air from outside. They contend, therefore, that the fault lies with the creator only and not with them. They try to justify their sensuous behaviour, by saying that, "to err is human." Such misleading rationalisation is a travesty of truth and is worthy of strong condemnation, especially when it is indulged in by the youth. If animals behave wrongly, it is quite understandable, because they are not endowed with the faculty of discrimination to control and guide their senses. But if man, who is blessed by God with the power of discrimination, takes to the wrong path, yielding to his senses, it is highly unpardonable. How paradoxical and ridiculous it is to be born as a man and to behave as an animal; behave, therefore, as befits a human being.

Some students who consider themselves to be very smart, try to argue thus, "Look at the birds, cattle, and beasts. They are having full freedom to eat what they want, to mate as they like, and to fly or wander as they wish. Why should man be denied such freedom as is enjoyed by these lower animals?" A specious argument indeed! But let us ask these wiseacres, "What kind of freedom do the animals enjoy?" The answer undoubtedly is, "animal freedom". Animals enjoy animal freedom. There is nothing wrong in it. But being a man, is it not wrong and unbecoming of you to want to enjoy animal freedom? You try to give several wrong meanings and misleading interpretations to the word "freedom". What you should strive for is freedom from the senses and not freedom of the senses. True freedom is to control the senses and the lower self in an attempt to attain the higher (real) Self and experience the eternal bliss of the *Atma* (*Atmananda*).

Along with knowledge, it is important to have character also. Then only you can enjoy a perfect balance in life. It is a pity that today's education caters only to the development of intelligence and cleverness, ignoring character and human values altogether. What is the use of acquiring any amount of knowledge available in the world, if one does not have character? This is the reason for the loss of balance in the case of the modern men in general and the educated men in particular. If you lose your balance while riding a bicycle, you are liable to meet with accidents. Similarly, if there is a lack of balance between knowledge and character in your life's journey, you are surely exposing yourself to serious accidents. Therefore, you have to control the senses on the one hand and develop virtuous living on the other. It is highly essential for students to maintain the balance between the two. Students! It will not do if you merely exercise control over your senses.

You should also harmonise them. According to Patanjali, *yoga* is the control of the wanderings of the mind. However, such control of the mind is most difficult, if not altogether impossible, to achieve. The appropriate and easy method, on the contrary, is to achieve mental harmony or balance. Concentrate on what is good; then you will be automatically keeping yourself away from what is bad. It is the weakness of your mind that is responsible for all your problems. There was a foreigner by name Carlyle. He was highly intelligent, but due to lack of control over his senses, he became very weak. He was suffering from insomnia. One day, he called his neighbour and complained to him that he was unable to sleep during night time, because of the crowing of the cock in that neighbour's house. The neighbour replied that no cock would crow throughout night, but only twice or thrice and that in spite of having the cock in his house, he (neighbour) was able to sleep well. Carlyle's reply to this was that he too knew that the cock crows only two or three times, but he was unable to sleep because he was always thinking of the cock and its crowing at any time of the night. The lesson of the story is that Carlyle's loss of sleep was not due to the crowing of the cock as alleged by him but only due to his own imaginary fear. Likewise most people nowadays suffer not on account of their senses but only due to all sorts of wrong imaginations. So, man should completely give up such imaginations and baseless fears, which are detrimental to him. In the next few days, we shall consider some more aspects of the senses, their mastery and harmonisation.

ROAD TO DIVINITY

In the worthless mens' hearts devoid of purity,
Do abide the vices of anger and envy.
Don't bats abound in dens of darkness?
Never should you forget this wise saying.

He alone is a man who seeks the One
Who blest his ears with the power to hear
And endowed his eyes with the glow of sight.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Control of the senses must be the primary aim of students, but not the fleeting pleasures of the sense objects, which give but a little momentary joy followed by endless misery. The sensory perceptions, namely, hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, and smelling, are more powerful than the sense organs. The most important among the sense organs is the tongue. If the tongue is conquered, it virtually amounts to mastering all the senses. The tongue has two important functions: eating and talking. Whoever is able to conquer these two faculties of the tongue can merge himself in the divine Self. When the tongue stops talking, the mind starts chatting. To control the mind's prattling, the intellect has to be awakened. Then one should gently persuade the intellect to turn gradually toward the *Atma*.

True *sadhana* (spiritual practice) consists in the technique of merging the *vaak* (faculty of speech) in the mind, the mind in the intellect, and finally the intellect in the *Atma*. Forgetting this sacred and royal road available to man, it is sad that he chooses to indulge in sensual pleasures, which ultimately drown him in deep sorrow. No one tries to find out what the ultimate source of animation for the insentient senses is, nor does one seek to know who the real enjoyer is of all the pleasures derived through the senses. Students should recognise that there is an intimate relationship between the external world and the internal world within oneself. Is it the body or the senses or the *Atma* that experiences the pleasures of eating delicious food or seeing a beautiful sight, or smelling a fragrant object? It is not the body, much less the sense organs. The real experiencer in all these cases is the *Atma*, which is the causeless cause of all that exists and which fosters, sustains, presides, and rules over all the things in the universe. *Atma* is the basis for the manifested world and the original source of motivation for the internal world. Only when we recognise the cardinal role of the *Atma* as the root cause of everything will the deceptive and transient sense organs cease to have dominance over us.

Of all the sense organs, the tongue has an overriding importance and influence. Mastery over this one sense organ will enable one to master easily all the other sense organs. The *Kathopanishad* has compared the senses to horses. A horse can run fast; but once a bridle is put in its mouth and held tight, its entire movement can be easily controlled. How can a small bridle control such a large, strong and fast-running animal? Because, the mouth is the most important and vulnerable part of the horse from the standpoint of keeping it under control. Once the mouth is bridled, the entire animal comes under control. Likewise in the case of man also, the mouth is the most important among the five

sense organs. With the help of a small rudder, we can save a big boat from a fierce cyclone. With a small spark we can kindle a bonfire. The power of speech is like a spark of fire. By controlling the tongue, one can virtually acquire control over the world itself. The power of speech can be used either for a noble and sublime purpose or misused in a mean and mischievous manner. It can be utilised for blessing people or for blaming others. Bilwamangal, alias Jayadeva, sings thus addressing the tongue in words that combine compliments with counseling: “Oh my dear tongue! You are sweet. You have the capacity to discriminate between good and bad taste. So I am telling you the supremely benevolent truth. Do not indulge in idle talk; instead of it make yourself busy by singing the sweet and glorious names of the Lord—Govinda! Damodara! Madhava! etc.” There is a familiar saying “A slip of the foot may not cause much harm, but a slip of the tongue will land you in hell.” A reckless use of your tongue can grievously hurt others’ hearts. And no doctor on earth can heal the wound caused by a harsh word.

When the senses come in contact with sense objects, they can give rise to immense pleasure as well as endless pain. For instance, someone outside is abusing you; as long as the abuse is beyond the range of your sense organs, you are not in any way affected by it. But once the abusive words reach your ears, you become enraged and excited beyond control. What is the reason for your being upset like that? As long as there was no contact between the sound waves and your ears, you were unruffled. It was the subsequent contact between the two that provoked the strong reaction in you. To take a contrasting example: someone outside is praising you, extolling your admirable qualities. As long as you have not heard his words of praise, you derive no joy nor do you entertain a feeling of endearment toward him. But once his words of praise have reached your ears, you rejoice in them and develop great love for the speaker. What is the reason for the hatred in the first example and for the love in the second one? It is only the contact between the senses and their objects. Thus it becomes clear that the senses can enjoy peace only when they do not come in contact with sense objects. In the alternative, one should be able to maintain a feeling of equanimity without giving way either to elation or agitation in spite of a contact between his senses and their objects and irrespective of whether the outcome of such a contact is pleasant or otherwise.

It should, however, be recognised that it is neither easy nor always possible to prevent the senses and their objects from coming into mutual contact. On the contrary, it is possible, with some effort, to develop an attitude of equipoise, notwithstanding such contacts, which are more often unavoidable. To foster such an attitude, you should resort to the path of enquiry and thereby develop the firm conviction, “I am neither the body nor the sense organs. I am the ever-blissful *Atma*.” Only when you are unshakeably established in this conviction will the sense organs cease to trouble you. It is only through the pursuit of the path of enquiry accompanied by the constant contemplation on the idea that you are nothing other than the *Atma* that you can transcend the human limitations and experience your divine Self under all circumstances.

You may have heard about the great philosopher, Philip Sydney. As a boy, while he was staying away from his parents to attend school in another town, his father wrote him a letter giving some words of advice as follows. “My dear son! Every day offer your heartfelt prayer to God. Always strive to turn your mind toward God. Conduct yourself with respect and humility toward your teachers and fellow students. Do not give room for anger, disappointment, or discontentment. Don’t get distressed when others criticise and abuse you or get elated when they praise you. Never criticise others.” The father con-

cluded his letter with the following important caution to his son, “If ever you have to make a promise, make it only to God and to none else. Speech is God’s gift. Hence you have no right to give a pledge to any one else. The plighted word should be offered only to God. If you follow this rule, you will grow in wisdom and your glory will shine. Always exercise control over your tongue and never allow it to run amuck. Thus you will stand forth as an ideal student in society.” Philip Sydney scrupulously followed his father’s advice and achieved great eminence as a philosopher.

Students should note that too much talking is harmful to their mind. They should not concern themselves with any matters other than their studies. They must remember that they are seekers of knowledge and not seekers of extraneous things. Only after finishing your studies can you engage yourselves in other activities. Even then, you should be guided by the rule of moderation; never exceed the limits either of talking or in other matters relating to your daily life. The tongue is prone to four types of lapses: (1) Uttering lies, (2) Carrying tales against others, (3) Criticising or scandalising others, and (4) Excessive talking. It is these four tendencies that deprive man of his peace of mind. One should speak only the truth. Of course, in some rare cases, it may be dangerous to speak the truth. Under such circumstances, you should be discreet enough to avoid speaking either truth or untruth. Only thus can you be a success in society.

The senses are extremely powerful. They are the root cause for all the joys and sorrows of mankind. You should, therefore, try to understand thoroughly the nature and role of the senses and harness them to your best advantage. An eminent poet sang thus about the havoc that the senses are capable of: “If the head harbours wicked thoughts, if the tongue indulges in calumny, if the eyes are keen to observe others’ lapses, if the ears are alert to overhear others, if the mind and heart are bent upon deceiving others—at the very sight of these monstrosities, justice and fair play will not survive at all.”

Man’s stronghold should be to adhere to the path of truth, rectitude, and justice. But man’s tragedy is that he becomes a helpless victim of his five senses, which lead him astray and land him in endless problems. We have the classic examples of each kind of animal or insect being trapped and even losing its life on account of its weakness for one sense alone—the deer for the sense of sound, the elephant for the sense of touch, the moth for the sense of sight, the fish for the sense of taste, and the bee for the sense of smell. Hence, one can easily imagine the plight of man who is the unfortunate victim of all the five senses. In this context, the students should follow the shining example of the young devotee Prahlada. Despite all the tempting allurements designed by his father, despite all the ingenuous tutoring by his teachers at the insistence of his father, and despite all the intimidations and tortures as well as all the cruel attempts to kill him outright, Prahlada never succumbed to the sensual ways of worldly life but stuck tenaciously to the spiritual path, with the Lord’s name ever dancing on his tongue. He even used to lead his fellow-students also on the spiritual path, inspiring them with his melodious devotional songs and stories. Here is a sample of an interesting story that he had learnt from the Sage Narada and that he narrated to his young friends:

There was a king who had many wives. He had no peace of mind because of them. One day he wanted to find out whether there was any man in his entire kingdom who was free from worries due to a nagging wife. So after giving wide publicity, he arranged two big tents (pandals), the first one for those who were under their wives’ control and the second one for those who had control over their wives. By sunset, the first tent was filled to capacity, whereas there was not a single man in the second tent. At last, one man came

suddenly and sat in the second tent. The king felt happy that there was at least one man who had control over his wife. He met him inside the tent and asked him courteously to speak the truth as to whether he had control over his wife. The man replied that he would never speak a lie and that the truth was that he was squarely under his wife's control. The king then told him about the impropriety of his sitting in the wrong tent and ordered him to go and stand in the other tent. That henpecked husband replied in agony, "Your Majesty! I have strict orders from my wife to sit in this tent only at any cost. I dare not disobey her and go to the other tent, whatever punishment you may give me or even if you take my life." The lesson of this story is: the mind, which is supposed to be the husband of his wives, namely the senses, is in the pitiable plight of being a helpless slave to them. In fact, the order of control based on the increasing order of subtlety ought to be as follows: the body, the sense organs, the mind, the intellect, and the *Atma*, each of them controlling the preceding one. This means that the *Atma*, being the subtlest of all, should hold sway over the rest of them.

Since the sense organs are highly potent, the first and foremost task for man is to bring them under his control for leading an ideal life. Because young people today have lost control over their senses, all their actions and behaviour are devious. They do not know how to sit properly in the classroom, how to walk about, how to read, how to sleep, and how to behave towards their parents, teachers, elders, and friends. They betray lack of concentration even while talking to somebody, by casting their looks hither and thither. They make unnecessary gestures and odd movements of all their limbs as if they are dancing while engaged in conversation or speech making. While walking on the road, students should have their eyes on their feet so as to avoid distractions and prevent accidents. While sleeping they should stretch their body straight and not curl themselves like a coil of wire, which is bundled. By constant practice of the right way of doing things they will develop good habits and acquire mastery over all their senses.

Students should avoid unnecessary curiosity in respect of matters that do not directly concern them. If they indulge in excessive talk with all and sundry or if they go on interfering in others' affairs, they will make themselves unpopular and unwanted by others. Everybody will try to avoid such people and thus they will lose the respect of all. It is a very bad habit for students to be standing and talking in the bazaar. If at all talking is necessary, they should do it in their hostel rooms but never in the market place. The observance of discipline in all these matters is of paramount importance to the students.

Today young people do not know how to sit properly while reading or writing, etc. They sit with their backs bent and drooping like 80-year old people. This causes various ailments and leads to premature old age. While walking or sitting, you must be straight like a rod, keeping the spine erect. There is a physiological reason for this. A very important nerve called the *sushumna naadi*, runs through the spinal column, from its base in the *mooladhara* to the *sahasraara* at top of the head. If this gets bent, serious results will follow. The importance of the *sushumna naadi* is known only to those engaged in the practice of *kundalini yoga*.

When the situation requires, we should not hesitate to carry our footwear. For instance, when we have to cross a rivulet on foot, or if it rains heavily when we are walking, it is convenient to carry our shoes. Although the worth of the footwear is very little, we should give due respect to it, because it protects our feet when required. Here is a story about how and why Sri Krishna carried the shoes of a woman. On the ninth day of the Kurukshetra war, Bhishma, the Commander of the Kaurava Army, took a serious vow

that he would kill all the Pandava brothers in the next day's battle. Droupadi, the wife of the Pandavas, came to know about this. In her great anxiety and worry, she ran to Sri Krishna, fell at His feet, and prayed to Him to save the lives of her five husbands. It was 10 p.m. Sri Krishna hit upon a strategy. He asked Droupadi to hasten to the tent of Bhishma and prostrate before him making sure that there is jingling of her bangles in the process of prostration. Further he asked her to leave her footwear with him and go to Bhishma with bare feet, because if she went with her footwear, Bhishma would be alerted by the sound of her footwear and might recognise her, in which case, His strategy of getting her blessed by Bhishma would not succeed.

According to Krishna's advice, Droupadi, with her head veil, went softly barefooted to Bhishma's tent. At that time, Bhishma was restlessly walking to and fro in his tent. He was upset by a strong feeling of remorse about the vow he had taken on the battlefield that day to kill all the Pandavas in the next day's battle. He could not eat or sleep that night because his conscience told him that the Pandavas were the very embodiment of *sathya* and *dharma* (truth and righteousness) and that it was, therefore, a great sin on his part to kill them mercilessly without any justification. Engrossed in these thoughts he was pacing up and down when Droupadi entered the tent and swiftly prostrated before him, making a jingling sound with her bangles, as suggested by Krishna. Since the sound of bangles indicated that a woman was a "sumangali", i.e. a woman whose husband was alive, Bhishma in accordance with the Hindu tradition and custom blessed her, saying, "Deergha sumangali bhava," which means "May you live long together with your husband(s)," not knowing the identity of the woman who was prostrating before him. Now Droupadi knew for certain that Bhishma's blessing would never go in vain. So, no sooner did she hear Bhishma's blessings than she joyously sprang to her feet and removing her head veil, thanked Bhishma profusely, and told him that it was for the sake of this very blessing that she came to his tent at that odd hour. Bhishma was highly surprised when he discovered that it was Droupadi whom he had blessed in a manner that ran counter to the vow he had taken. He began questioning her, "Who has designed this strategy for you? Who has shown you the way to my tent? Has anybody accompanied you?"

As he was questioning her thus, Krishna made His dramatic appearance before Bhishma and Droupadi. It did not take Bhishma long to guess that Sri Krishna, the Master Strategist of the whole universe, was behind the entire plot and the scene being enacted in his tent. Beside himself with joyous excitement, Bhishma exclaimed, "O Lord Krishna! It is quite evident now that this is all your divine plan and your impeccably perfect game!" Bhishma now felt relieved of his sense of remorse, and, in fact, he even felt glad about the whole affair, because it served the dual purpose of saving the lives of Pandavas on the one hand and saving himself on the other hand from the ignominy and sin of slaying the virtuous Pandavas.

Now that Bhishma was relieved of his tension and anxiety and became his normal self, he felt the pangs of hunger; because due to the worried state of his mind till a little while ago, he did not feel hungry and hence he had not eaten anything that night after that day's fierce fighting in the battlefield. He then noticed some packet that Krishna was carrying in his armpit. Thinking that it might be a packet of some eatables that could relieve his hunger, he eagerly asked Krishna about the contents of the packet. The playful Krishna suddenly let go the packet from his armpit, and when it got ripped while falling on the ground, what did Bhishma as well as Droupadi see to their utter amazement? Lo and behold, a pair of shoes! With a mischievous smile Krishna pointed His finger toward

them saying, “They are Droupadi’s slippers.” Both Bhishma and Droupadi could not contain themselves, because, leave alone Bhishma, even Droupadi never expected or suspected that Krishna would carry her slippers. Both of them began shedding profuse tears of ecstasy at what the Lord did. Choked with emotion, Bhishma exclaimed, “O Lord Krishna! Who can understand Your divine *leelas*? There is no limit to the troubles You undergo in order to protect Your devotees who have surrendered themselves at Your Lotus Feet. In order to save Your devotees, You never hesitate to do even such things which others would consider as demeaning, degrading, or debasing. What a Merciful Lord You are!”

The lesson that students should learn from this story is that they should not consider anything as mean and beneath their dignity, as long as it serves the purpose of helping the needy, without deviating however from the path of rectitude. Our ancient scriptures like the *Vedas*, *Sastras*, *Puranas* —mythological books— and *Ithihasas* —Epics— provide plenty of shining examples of people who led such noble and ideal lives. But the students of today are so ignorant about our scriptures that they do not know what is meant by *Sastras* or *Ramayana* or *Parayana* —recital of scriptures. Thus, they are forfeiting the rich heritage of their glorious culture and tradition. Students of the Sai Educational system should, therefore, become pioneers in imbibing a judicious and harmonious combination of both secular and sacred learning i.e. acquiring both scientific and spiritual knowledge.

You hear people talking about “culture” and “spirituality” as if they are two different things. In My view, culture is only the essence derived from spirituality. Just as sugar is common to all the varieties of sweets, which are seemingly different from one another, spirituality is common to the seemingly different cultures of all lands and nations. In short, you should recognise that culture is a part of the all-inclusive spirituality. You must cultivate and develop this all-inclusive unitary vision. The various organs and limbs of the body are not different from the body. *Viswam* (the universe) is not separate from Vishnu (God). Likewise, you have to recognise that what you call “secular” and “sacred” or “worldly” and “spiritual” are not two discrete and unrelated things but only two facets of one indivisible Reality or Truth. You can easily grasp this fact if you consider the example of a bean seed, which consists of two cotyledons covered by a common seed-coat. When the bean seed is sown in the field and when it germinates, you can see the sapling consisting of the two thick cotyledons with the plumule in between them. The seedling grows, deriving its nourishment from both the cotyledons. So also, the seedling called human being requires for his growth and full development both the secular and sacred aspects of life. These two aspects of life neither exist nor can they thrive independently in isolation from each other. They are both intimately and inextricably related. The sum total of these two aspects is what you call “culture”. People lacking in such broad-minded unitary vision see the apparent and even imaginary differences between the culture of one nation and another. True wisdom lies in discerning and discovering the fundamental unity behind the superficial differences in the world culture. The same thing applies to the concept of religions too. To say that Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, etc. are different religions betrays not only narrow-mindedness but also the lack of understanding about the meaning of “religion”. “Religion” means “Realisation”. Since realisation is one and the same, irrespective of whatever religion is professed by different men, it logically follows that basically all religions are one; or to be more accurate, there is only one religion.

In this connection, there is a small story. When Krishna went to Dhritharashtra as an ambassador on behalf of the Pandavas, Dhritharashtra asked Him, “O Krishna, the Pandavas and Kauravas are the sons of two brothers. Being divine, why are you partial to the Pandavas? Why don’t you love the Kauravas, too? Krishna replied, “O King, I am sorry to say that you are blind not only physically but also spiritually. You should understand that I cannot but support and help those who take refuge in Me and who surrender to Me without any reservation. The celestial Sage Narada once asked Narayana about His correct address, since He had many “branch offices”. Narayana answered Narada saying that His “Head Office” or permanent address, where He stayed always, was the heart of the devotee who constantly remembered Him with supreme love and devotion. Apart from this, let me tell you the nature of the relationship between the Pandavas and Myself. Dharmaja is My head, Arjuna My shoulder, Bheema My stomach, Nakula and Sahadeva My legs. I am the heart, so we are all inseparable parts of one and the same body.”

The implication of the above reply of Krishna, in answer to Dhritharashtra, is that the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, and the *Atma* together constitute the integral human personality, illustrating the truth of the *Vedic* declaration “*Ekam Sath,*” i.e. “Existence is One.” Just as the body has several parts, the one Lord has also several names.

Students! Till now, in the Summer Course, you have been told about the body and the senses and their relationship. From tomorrow, we shall consider the interrelationship between the mind and the senses, between the intellect and the senses, as well as the *Atomic* Principle that runs as the common undercurrent that integrates and animates the entire human system.

HOLD THE REINS

Mind alone is the cause
 For man's rise and fall in life;
 Mind alone is responsible
 For man's bondage or liberation;
 This mind alone makes man forget
 His reality and land himself in hell!

Dear Students!

Man is a combination of body, mind, and *Atma*. These three together constitute the steps for man's ascent to the highest stage. The body is the instrument for actions. The mind is concerned with cognition. The changeless and permanent Reality is the *Atma*, which is the divine aspect of man. Thus, doing, knowing, and being are the triune manifestations of the human personality. Although the body, mind, and *Atma* have different names and characteristics, their harmonisation and unification help man to raise himself from the human to the divine level. On the contrary, their alienation from one another degrades him to the animal level.

The word "*antha karana* (inner instrument)" is used in everyday worldly context as well as in the spiritual parlance. What is its form, its nature, its role, its importance, and its destination? When we enquire along these lines, we will find that mind itself assumes the subtle form of *antha karana*, consisting of four aspects, namely, *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *chitta* (memory), and *ahamkara* (ego), the last three being the subtle aspects of the mind. The particular name is given, based on the functions performed, just as one and the same Brahmin is called a priest (*pujari*) when he performs worship in a temple, a cook when he works in the kitchen, a teacher when he teaches students, and a "*panchaanga brahmin*" when he interprets the almanac (*panchaanga*).

In the same manner when the mind is engaged in wavering thought processes, it is called *manas*. When it is busy in the process of enquiry and discrimination between right and wrong, it is named as *buddhi* (intellect). When it functions as a repository of memories—it is known as *chitta*. When it identifies itself with the physical body, assuming the doership for various activities, it goes by the name of *ahamkara* (ego). Thus, it may be seen that the mind, although basically one, displays these varied forms on account of the different roles assumed by it. In fact, the mind alone is the cause of all things. "Mano-moolam idam Jagat" says the Scriptures. It means the whole cosmos is nothing but a projection of the mind.

Man derives his name from the possession of the mind. As a man thinks, so he becomes. Man means mind, and mind means man. Mind is only a bundle of thoughts. Thoughts give rise to actions, and what we enjoy or suffer in this world are the consequences of these actions. It follows, therefore, that only when man's thoughts are good will his life be good. Thoughts are highly potent. They survive the death of man. Hence it is essential to keep out bad thoughts from our minds. It is bad thoughts that separate man from man and make them forget their common divinity. When men realise that the *Atma* in every body is one and the same, there will be no room for differences. Man should try to expand his relationship gradually from the individual level to the level of the family,

the community, the nation and finally the whole world. The peace of the individual as well as of the world depends on the mind, hence the need for proper disciplining of the mind. Like a fish swimming against the current to save itself from dangers, man should combat the evil thoughts within and protect himself from dangers.

Man today is creating all sorts of trouble for himself, because of his wrong thoughts. None else should be blamed for his pleasures or pains, gains or losses. Mind is the root of the tree of *samsara* (cycle of births and deaths), and the manifested universe in general. To destroy this tree, lay the the axe at the root itself. In other words, the mind should be destroyed by diverting the thoughts to the enquiry about the *Atma*, the real Self or the real “I”.

Based on the differences in the nature of the mind, different colours are attributed to it. For instance, the mind filled with anger is red in colour. A selfish mind is wheat-brown. An egotistic mind is of the orange hue, while the mind dedicated to God is pure white.

Today the world is riddled with fear. Whether at home or out in the street, or while travelling in a train, bus, or plane, people are haunted by fear. The root cause for this ubiquitous fear is the absence of pure and sacred thoughts in the minds of men. The whole world appears like a maze filled with fear at every turn. The tragedy of Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna and a hero of Kurukshetra war, was that he knew how to enter the maze called *Padmavyuha* but did not know how to get out of it. Likewise, you know how to enter the maze of worldly pleasures, but do not know how to get out of it. You will know the way out only when you submit your thoughts to the scrutiny of the *duddhi* (intellect).

In the Kathopanishad, the body is compared to a chariot, the senses to horses, the mind to the reins, and the intellect to the charioteer. This means that the mind is in between the senses and the intellect. If the mind follows the dictates of the intellect, it will be safe. If, on the contrary, it follows the whims and fancies of the senses, it will become a bondsman of the senses and a victim of endless sorrow and suffering. Allowing free rein to the senses is the *pravritthi marga* (the external path), while controlling the senses is the *nivritthi marga* (the internal path). Most people are content to pursue the external. Few are concerned to explore the internal. Many people today employ their thoughts and efforts in harming others. They do not realise the fact that the harm they do to others will recoil on themselves many fold. An outstanding example of this is the vicious Kauravas led by Duryodhana and Dussasana subjecting the virtuous Pandavas to innumerable hardships. What was the ultimate result of this? Although the Pandavas suffered temporarily, in the final reckoning the Kauravas were utterly destroyed forever. Students! Always remember this and never think of hurting others. Don't criticise or condemn others. If you deceive your friends, they in turn will cheat you. If you disobey your parents, your children will pay you back in the same coin. If you hurt others, they will hurt you in retaliation. This kind of reaction, rebound, and reflection are inherent in man's mind. Hence you should scrupulously follow the maxim, “Hurt never; help ever.” There are some sinful persons who cavil not only at other men, but even against God. This seems to be their very nature, although God never harms any one at any time.

In this context, the lowest category of people are those who take sadistic pleasure in hurting other people without any provocation whatsoever. They may be compared to the moths whose nature is to damage all clothes indiscriminately—whether it is a valuable sari costing one thousand rupees or a worthless soiled rag in the kitchen. This highly des-

picable tendency on the part of some persons to harm others is traceable to their bad thoughts. We try to dispel foul odours from our living rooms and toilets by using substances like air-fresheners, incense sticks, and other deodorants. Similarly we should try to counteract our bad thoughts with good ones. Good thoughts will eventually lead us to the fulfillment of our lives, while bad thoughts will degrade us to the level of beasts. No doubt the replacement of bad thoughts by good ones, calls for sincere and determined effort, because as Arjuna complained to Krishna the mind is fickle (*chanchalam*), turbulent (*pramathi*), strong (*balavath*), and stubborn (*dridham*).

Everyone clamours for peace. But peace is not any-where outside; it is right there within us only. However, if you want to enjoy that peace, you have to resort to practice (*abhyasa*); what type of practice? First of all give up selfish thoughts. Then persistently engage yourself in the constant enquiry of what you really are. If you merely repeat thrice, saying "I am a man. I am a man. I am a man," you will be half-a-man only. To realise your manhood in full, you should also repeat, "I am not an animal, I am not an animal, I am not an animal." For, people nowadays call themselves men but behave as animals. In the light of this fact, the animal is better than the man, because the animal thinks of itself as an animal and behaves accordingly, whereas man claims himself to be a man but behaves like an animal! You got the name "man" because you are endowed with *manas* (mind). However to deserve that name, you should mould your mind in the proper manner which befits a man but not a beast.

Mind is a priceless possession. It is God's greatest gift to man. The Scriptures have declared that the mind alone is responsible either for man's bondage or for his liberation. So, how can you condemn the mind as bad, when it is capable of leading you to the supreme goal of liberation? A knife can be used to cut fruits and vegetables. But in a fit of anger and frustration, if you make use of it for cutting your own throat or others' throats, is it the fault of the knife? Likewise, you cannot blame the mind if you misuse it. Whether the mind contributes to your upliftment or downfall depends on how you use it.

The mind is often compared to a cat. A cat gently catches hold of its young kittens with its mouth and carries them from place to place to ensure their safety and nourishment. In utter contrast, the cat uses the same mouth for fiercely pouncing upon rats and tearing them to pieces. Similar is the case with the mind. It serves as the supreme benefactor of those who engage themselves in the contemplation of God, in good thoughts, good words, and good actions. On the other hand, the same mind brings disaster to those who take to the wrong path of un-righteousness or outright wickedness.

The way in which the mind functions may also be likened to mono-acting. Because, one and the same mind assumes different forms and plays different roles, depending on the needs of varying situations.

In the beginningless beginning God was one. The thought arose in Him, "I am one; let Me become many," and thus the One became the many. However, despite the many, the unity still persists unaffected by the diversity. Thus, whether for the unity in diversity, or for the diversity in unity, only thoughts (*samkalpas*) are responsible. What is needed is to regulate our thoughts in the right manner. As soon as a thought arises, we should not rush into action, but should subject the thought to the scrutiny of the intellect for a correct decision before implementing the thought. But nowadays most people have the tendency to be in a hurry to put their thoughts into action without any such deliberation. That is the reason for the statement, "Haste makes waste, waste makes worry, so do not be in a hurry." Therefore, action undertaken after deliberation alone results in peace.

People talk of world peace. But how can you ensure peace in the world? Here is the formula for it. "If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home. If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world." It may thus be seen that the first link in the chain leading to world peace is righteousness or *dharma*. *Dharma* is only another name for right action. But the prerequisite for right action is right thought. In other words, peace should start with the individual and gradually spread wider and wider right along the line—from the home or family to the village to the nation, etc., till finally, it encompasses the entire world.

You chant, "Peace, Peace, Peace"—i.e., three times after meditation, *bhajan*, etc. By merely uttering thrice with your tongue, you cannot obtain or ensure peace. The significance of the three chants is that man is in need of three kinds of peace; (i) *adhi bhoutik* (peace unhampered by other beings), (ii) *adhi Atmic* (peace undisturbed by ones' own body and mind), and (iii) *adhi daivic* (peace undisturbed by forces beyond human control). Of these three, *adhi daivic* signifies the need for divine Grace, which can be earned only by absolute surrender to God. This concept of "surrender to God" is often misunderstood. Surrender does not mean the abandonment of all activities, foolishly thinking that "God will do whatever is necessary for me, because you have surrendered everything to Him." That would be sheer laziness. It is like sitting before a plate of chapatis with potato curry and idly expecting your hunger to be satisfied without eating the stuff. On the other hand, the correct meaning of surrender is to make use of your God-given faculties and energy to perform your legitimate work, dedicating all your activities to the Lord, without the false sense of doership and without undue concern for the results of your actions.

Students! If you want to have good thoughts, you must resort to the spiritual path. The starting point for spiritual path is *sathsanga* (holy company).

Thoughts are contagious. Hence the adage, "Tell me your company, and I will tell you what you are." You should therefore, scrupulously eschew bad company. Sri Shankara eulogised the value of holy company in glowing terms as follows: "The company of the wise begets detachment, detachment leads to the destruction of delusion, followed by the acquisition of steady wisdom, and culminating finally in *jivanmukti* (liberation, while alive)." Therefore, the essential point you should remember is that only good company will engender good thoughts in you.

Students! Cultivate and develop only sacred thoughts and thus sanctify your lives. Become ideal men, so that others may also derive and benefit by following your example. Bad company, bad thoughts and sensuous ways of living may give you momentary pleasure but will eventually drown you in untold misery and utter ruin. Remember that you cannot but reap what you sow. When you are born from your mother's womb, your neck is not bedecked with flower garlands or with necklaces of gold, pearls or diamonds but rest assured that your neck does carry on it an unseen heavy garland given by Brahma (the Creator) the garland of the fruits of good and bad actions done by you in previous lives.

Let me conclude with a word about gratitude. For want of gratitude, man is degrading himself to a lower level than even the animals. You say "thanks" to somebody who picks up and gives to you your own handkerchief that you happened to drop on the ground. But how very strange and surprising that you never think of thanking God for all the precious things He has so graciously bestowed on you. He has placed you in this vast and wonderful universe, providing for you pure air to breathe, clean water to drink, mother earth to

live on, etc. In short, but for the five great elements created by Him, you cannot live even for a moment. Therefore, is there a greater sin than forgetting to offer your thanks to such an all-merciful God?

You buy a plot of land with your own money and construct a house thereon with your own money. But the Corporation wants you to pay the house tax, just for providing electricity and water, of course levying separate additional taxes for these amenities. But tell me, what tax are you paying to God for providing you with facilities like the sun who illumines the whole world, the wind which refreshes all living beings with cool breeze, the torrential rain that not only cools the earth but also sustains life, and so on and so forth? Not to give any thought to such things, indicates not only ingratitude on the part of man but also the *thamo guna* (inertia) that is polluting his mind.

VAGARIES OF THE MIND

It is the mind that matters, wherever one may be,
 Neither home nor forest can give you liberation;
 It makes no difference—whether you are in the temple or forest,
 As long as the mind is not up to the mark.

Dear students!

“The universe is like the reflection of a city in a mirror,” declared Dakshinamurthy. What man has to achieve primarily is the purification and final annihilation of the *anth karana* (inner instrument) not so much the *purusharthas*, viz., *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (fulfillment of desires), and *moksha* (liberation). The whole world along with its joys and sorrows, vices and virtues, truth and untruth, justice and injustice etc. is in the mind only.

The mind is like a clean mirror. It has no intrinsic power of its own to directly experience the sense objects except through the concerned sense organs. For instance, it can see only through the eyes and hear only through the ears but can neither see nor hear by itself independently. Consequently, the offences committed by the senses are reflected in the mirror of mind. No blame attaches to the mind *per se*. It is the association with the wayward senses that pollutes the mind. According to the Scriptures, the mind is subject to three kinds of pollution: *mala*, *vikshepa*, and *avarana*.

What is *mala*? Man commits many offences, knowingly or unknowingly, not only in this life but also in previous lives. The imprint of these actions is carried by the *chitta* (memory), life after life, like dust accumulating on the surface of a mirror day after day. Thus, the mirror of man’s mind gets covered up by such dirt, which is technically named as “*mala*”. On account of this *mala*, man is unable to see clearly the reflection of his real identity in the mirror of his mind. Hence, it is necessary to cleanse the mirror of the impurities covering it. This cleansing is done by regulating one’s food and other living habits, including recreation. Young students particularly should strictly avoid eating impure food. Purity should be ensured with regard to the vessels used for cooking (*patra suddhi*), the food materials used for cooking (*padaartha suddhi*), and thirdly, the process of cooking (*paaka suddhi*). In this connection, an important point which is generally overlooked is the fact that many of the ills from which people suffer today are due to consuming things obtained through unfair means as well as polluted by the bad vibrations from cooks of questionable character. It is extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, especially in the present day context, to ensure such purity in all these respects and at all times. To get over these practical difficulties, the way out suggested by the scriptures is to offer the food to God before eating it, duly regarding it as God’s gift. To the question, “Where is God?” the answer is given in verse 14 of Chapter 15 of the Gita—“*Aham Vaiswanaro bhutva*” etc.—which declares that the Lord dwells in every one as *vaiswanara* (the digestive fire and digests the different kinds of food that is consumed). If you eat food without first offering it to God, you will be affected by all the impurities and defects present in it. On the contrary, if you offer the food to the Lord before eating, as suggested in verse 24 of Chapter 4 of the Gita “*Brahmaarpanam*” etc., it becomes *prasada* (gift from God), and consequently all the impurities in the food are thereby eliminated.

This helps the process of gradually cleansing the mind of its impurity or dirt called Mala. It should, however, be borne in mind that the complete removal of *mala* cannot be done in a day or a month. This requires persistent and prolonged practice. If raw gold or ore is to be converted into pure gold, it has to be melted on fire repeatedly to remove the impurities. So also the impurity of man's mind, called "*mala*", can be eliminated only by constant practice over a period of time.

The second distortion of the mind, called *vikshepa*, is due to the constant wavering of the mind, like the movements of the reflected image in a mirror that is kept moving or shaking frequently. To control this waywardness of the mind, one should undertake various spiritual practices like meditation, prayer and the nine modes of devotion mentioned in the scriptures, viz., (1) *sravanam* (listening to the Lord's stories, *leelas*, and *mahima*), (2) *kirtanam* (singing His glories), (3) *smaranam* (remembrance), (4) *Pada sevnam* (service to the Lotus Feet), (5) *archanam* (worship), (6) *vandanam* (salutation), (7) *daasyam* (master-servant relationship), (8) *sakhyam* (companionship), and (9) *Atma nivedanam* (offering oneself to the Lord i.e., Self-surrender).

If the young students of today, who will be the leaders of Bharath tomorrow, cannot control the fickleness of their minds and cleanse the impurities thereof, the future administration and politics of the country cannot but be deplorably impure and corrupt. Students should realise that education is for life but not for making out a livelihood. They should strain their every nerve to acquire steadiness of mind, which is a prerequisite for concentration. For this, you should bend the body, mend the senses, and end the mind and this is the process of attaining immortality. If you want to be masters and not slaves, you should keep your body, senses and mind under your control.

Why is the country today torn by strife, indiscipline, violence, and chaos? Because people, both young and old, are preoccupied with external material things, totally ignoring the spirit within. The entire educational system is riddled with selfishness. Educated persons want to amass wealth quickly by any means, fair or foul, hook or crook. It is the same motive that is impelling many students to go abroad and acquire money for selfish ends, without any regard for their parents or their motherland. Such self-centred intellectuals, who suffer from the craze to go abroad, should remember the declaration of the Scriptures that "one's mother and motherland are much superior even to heaven." They should give up their obsession for acquiring wealth and realise that real wealth consists in leading virtuous lives coupled with love and service to the land of their birth. Your foremost duty is to show gratitude to your parents to whom you owe everything including your food, blood, and head. You have to take care of them, especially in their old age. If you discharge your duties properly and lead your lives on these lines which broaden and purify your minds and hearts, your mind will automatically become free from the distortion of *vikshepas* and you will acquire steadiness and concentration of mind without the need for any other spiritual disciplines.

Now, we come to the third distortion of the mind: *avarana*. This may be likened to a thick cloth covering the mirror of man's mind, which does not at all permit of any reflection whatsoever of the image of the Self. Thus, while *mala* does not enable us to have a clear and correct image of the Self, and while *vikshepa* results in seeing the Self as wavering, *avarana* altogether hides the Reality (Self) and makes one identify himself wrongly with his body.

Students! Recognise that what you are experiencing as the real world is only the "reaction", "resound", and "reflection" of your "Real Self." Now, the question arises, "What

exactly is the thick cloth that covers the mirror of one's mind"? This cloth is made up of the *arishad-varga*—the gang of six internal enemies of man—viz. *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (attachment), *mada* (pride), and *maatsarya* (jealousy, envy). Out of the six, pride may be considered as the worst enemy. Pride is of eight kinds: pride of money, learning, caste, affluence, beauty, youth, position or authority, and *tapas* (spiritual pride). If you ponder over two facts you can overcome this enemy namely pride.

Firstly, if you look around instead of being like a frog in the well, you will find that in respect of each of these eight items that cause pride in you, there are many other people who are superior to you. Secondly, all these items—money, authority, youth etc.—are highly transient. Therefore, get rid of pride as well as the other five enemies included in the *arishadvarga*, if you want to remove the *avarana* covering your mind's mirror. The best means to remove this thick cloth of *avarana* is to develop love for all. Love is God. Live in Love.

Love is the only bond that can unite all and make us realise the one Reality behind all the seeming diversity. A simple illustration will make this point clear. You have a candle light. You cover it with a vessel having several holes in it. Although there is one light, you see light through each and every hole, giving the impression of there being several lights. Now, you cover the vessel with a thick cloth. You see no light at all. Next you remove the thick cloth. You see many lights again. Now break or remove the pot. You see the one and only real candle light.

Similarly, the *Atma* inside you is covered by the body having nine holes through which you see the multiplicity and diversity in the world. You have covered this nine-holed body of yours with a thick cloth, which is woven with the warp for woof of "I" or *ahamkara* and "mine" (*mamakara*). When you remove the cloth made up of "I" and "mine", and when you get rid of the wrong identification with the body, the *avarana* of the mind disappears, and you see the light of your Real Self (the *Atma Jyothi*), the only Light (*Eka Jyothi*), dispelling the darkness of the illusory multiplicity.

The mind, the intellect, the memory, and ego, which together constitute the *antha karana* (the inner instrument), are formless, but the external instruments, the sense organs, which are the media through which the *antha karana* perceives the phenomenal world, have forms. The *antha karana* is subject to four kinds of defects, viz., *bhranthi* (delusion), *pramadam* (hazard or danger), *karanaapaatavam* (weakness of the instruments), and *vipralipsa* (jealousy). These four defects result in the malfunctioning of the *antha karana*.

Bhranthi refers to the deluded state of mind in which a person mistakes, for instance, a rope for a snake and vice versa. In other words, he regards the unreal as real and the real as unreal; the temporary as permanent and the permanent as temporary.

Such delusions invariably lead to accidents or dangerous situations (*pramadam*). If you hold a snake thinking it is a rope, you are certainly in for trouble. Man today regards the body as real, not knowing that it is as unreal as a water bubble, which is sure to burst at any time, at any place.

Students! You must carefully note one point. If it is the sense organs that enable a man to see, hear, talk, and so on, how is it that even when all the organs are there intact in a dead person, he is unable to see, hear, talk etc.? It is because the power that animates the organs is not there. The body may be compared to a torch light. The eyes are like the bulbs. The intellect is the switch. If with all these, you don't get light, what could be the

reason? Obviously there are no battery cells inside. The blood cells in our body are like those battery cells. They carry the divine energy in them. The blood cells may be there, but if the divine power has left them, they can no longer make the senses function. So it is clear that in the presence of the divine power the body can do many wonders; in its absence, the body becomes not only inert, but also decomposed and rotten.

Once a *Vedantin* came to Me and asked, “Swami! Sankaracharya has said that Brahman alone is real and the world is illusory. But we are directly perceiving the world as substantial and deriving so many experiences from it. How can we deny its existence?” I told him, “My dear one! Leave to the world itself the question of its reality or unreality. First of all, find out whether you are real or unreal.” Like that *Vedantin*, the students of today also want to learn about everything else but not about their own reality. You seem to be more concerned with the “news” outside than the “nuisance” inside you. First get rid of this nuisance of your ignorance; realise your true nature. Reform yourself first, before thinking of reforming others. Otherwise your *bhrama* (delusion) will land you in *pramadam* (danger).

The third defect of the mind, *karana apaatavam*, means weakness or debility of the instruments. This weakness affects both the inner instrument (*antha karana*) and the external instruments (the sense organs.) Here is a small story to illustrate the weakness of *antha karana*. There was a rich farmer in a village. He was the undisputed leader of the village. There was another middle-class farmer in the same village. One day, the cattle belonging to both these farmers were grazing together. Unexpectedly there started a fierce fighting between the two bullocks, one belonging to the rich farmer and the other to the middle-class farmer. During the fight, the rich man’s bullock died due to the injury to some vital and vulnerable part of its body. Now, the middle-class farmer who was there at that time became deeply worried. He ran to the village to inform the rich farmer about the fatal accident to the latter’s bullock. But due to the highly nervous and confused state of his mind, he was trembling with fear, and he told the rich farmer that the latter’s bullock had killed the bullock of the farmer; i.e. the opposite of what actually happened. The rich farmer very calmly received the news. He consoled the small farmer, saying that, when human beings endowed with intelligence are killing each other, there is no wonder if the rich farmer’s bullock has killed the small farmer’s bullock, because after all the animals are devoid of any intelligence; in the meanwhile, the small farmer realised his mistake in giving a wrong report and told the rich man, “Respected Sir, I have unwittingly committed a blunder by giving a wrong version of the accident. I am very sorry to tell you that it is my bullock that has killed your bullock.” On hearing this, the rich man was beside himself with anger. He rebuked and abused the small farmer in very strong terms and demanded from him a penalty of five hundred rupees. This story betrays the *karana-apaatavam* in respect of the rich man’s *antha karana*, which obviously was weak because of its inconsistent behaviour based on the feeling of “I” and “mine” as opposed to the “other” man.

Now, let us consider some examples of *karana-apaatvam* relating to the external instruments, the sense organs. When a person is suffering from malarial fever, even *laddu* (delicious sweet) will taste bitter. This is due to the diseased condition of the tongue but not due to any defect in *laddu*. Similarly, a jaundiced eye will see everything as yellow, irrespective of whether the actual colour is white, red or black etc. It must, however, be noted that the ailments of the external instruments have an adverse effect on the internal

instruments, because of their relatedness. Anyway, the net effect of *karana-apaatvam* as a whole is to undermine *maanavatwa* (human nature).

The fourth deficiency of the *antha karana* is “*vipralipsa*”, which means jealousy or envy. It is one of the worst qualities of man. He cannot endure or tolerate the prosperity or happiness of others. There is no cure for this disease. Feel happy when others are happy. Do not give room for envy. Develop fraternal feelings towards your fellow students. Rejoice in their curricular and extra-curricular achievements, without any feeling of envy. The reason for envy is selfishness, which is rampant nowadays both among the students and non-students. For instance, able-bodied students rush in and occupy the front seats in buses, even pushing aside the old people, women, and children who are standing in a long queue. Why don't you give preference to such people? Even if you don't get a seat in the bus, you can afford to walk a mile or two, thereby deriving the double benefit of saving the bus fare and giving much needed exercise to your body.

Students! All that you have to do to achieve purity in thought, word, and deed is to follow these five injunctions

Think no evil; think what is good.
 See no evil; see what is good.
 Hear no evil; hear what is good.
 Talk no evil; talk what is good.
 Do no evil; do what is good.

When you adhere to these five injunctions as the very breath of your life, you will be able to overcome all four defects of the *antha karana* and achieve purity of mind and the other three components of the *antha karana*, and thereby experience ineffable bliss.

Students! You are aware that water is stored in tanks during the rainy season and is used later on during summer to irrigate the agricultural lands. Similarly, from this moment you should cultivate control of the body, the senses, and the *antha karana*, because now you have the vigour and vitality of youth. Acquire God's Grace in abundance now, when the time is opportune. It will stand you in good stead in your future, which will then be bright, secure and prosperous. Also remember that God will never forget His devotees. It is the devotees who forget God. God never forsakes His devotees; only the devotees forsake God.

Students! The body, the mind, and the senses are like water taps, while the intellect is like the water tank. As the water in the tank, so is the water in the taps. So, in the days ahead, we shall be discussing about this important faculty of *buddhi* (intellect).

BUDDHI THE CHARIOTEER

Purity of mind is the pathway to progress,
 Purity of mind means mighty power;
 A pure mind is like a precious pearl in the sea;
 Never forget these words of wisdom.

See no evil, speak no evil;
 Hear no evil—anytime, anywhere, in the world;
 Remember always the picture of the three monkeys;
 What I say is truth, indeed!

You have been told previously that, according to the *Upanishads*, the human body is a chariot, the sense organs being the horses, with the mind as the reins. However beautiful the chariot may be, however dependable the horses, however firm and secure the reins, all of these are of no use if there is no charioteer. So also, however efficient the body, the senses and the mind may be, they serve no purpose in the absence of the charioteer, namely, *buddhi* (intellect). In life's journey, the intellect is of supreme importance. It is called *nischayatmika buddhi*, which means that the *buddhi* has the decision-making capacity. In daily life, many difficulties, problems and disturbances arise from time to time. For overcoming all these obstacles, *buddhi* is our mainstay. Without the intervention of the *buddhi*, none of our problems can be solved. "*Samsayaatma vinasyathi*", says the *Gita*, which means that a man filled with doubts will perish. Because the *buddhi* destroys doubts, the *Gita* affirms, "*Buddhi grahayam athindriyam (buddhi can grasp that which is beyond the grasp of the sense organs).*"

The *Bhagavad Gita* has laid down two banks to channelise its message. In the absence of these banks, the river of life will be subject to many problems, difficulties, and hazards. The two banks are symbolised by two *mantras*. One is: *Sraddhavaan labhathe Jnanam* (the man of faith acquires supreme wisdom). The other is: *Samsayaatma vinasyathi* (the one filled with doubts will perish). When the river of life flows in between these two banks of *mantras*, it will be blessed with peace and happiness and ultimately reach the sea of Divine Grace which is its goal.

"*Antarvaani*" (inner voice) is another name for the *buddhi*. Man is guided by this inner voice in the conduct of his life. Whenever problems arise, he awaits the directives of the inner voice. If satisfactory answers are not forthcoming from his inner voice, man will have no satisfaction in life. In other words, his satisfaction with the external world is a function of his satisfaction with his inner world, represented by the inner voice. Sometimes you hear people saying, "My conscience is not satisfied; or my conscience does not approve of this." Here conscience refers to the inner voice. So when you are exhorted to "Follow the Master," the Master stands for your conscience. Only when you follow the dictates of your conscience can you reach the right destination.

The name *vijnana* is also sometimes attributed to the *buddhi*. But it is not correct, because *vijnana* means the so-called scientific or mundane knowledge, which helps man to discover facts relating to the objective or phenomenal world, whereas *buddhi* is con-

cerned with the subtle realm of the inner world. Hence, the role of the *buddhi* should be correctly understood.

Off and on, the *buddhi* tends to be covered by *ahamkara* (the ego sense). In this context, one should remember that the senses are subtler than the body, the mind is even more subtle than the senses, and the *buddhi* is far more subtle than the mind. The *Atma*, of course, is subtlest of all. In the light of this fact, when we say that *ahamkara* is able to envelop the *buddhi*, it means that *ahamkara* is subtler than the *buddhi*. Thus, *ahamkara* being extremely subtle, is all-pervasive and permeates all our actions. This is why man is unable to transcend *ahamkara* and experience the *Atma* (the Self).

Once, a king summoned an assembly of great scholars to his court. He posed the following question before them. "You are all distinguished scholars who have mastered the scriptures. Can you tell me how many among you are capable of attaining liberation?" Despite all their academic learning, none of the *pundits* had the courage to stand up and give an affirmative answer. The whole assembly was stunned into silence. At that stage, an ordinary man from among the public got up and said boldly, (In Telugu), *Nenu pothe povachchunu*. His reply has two meanings: (i) "I may possibly go to *moksha*" and (ii) "If the I goes, one can attain liberation." The second meaning did not occur to any of the scholars. So, taking the first meaning only, all the *pundits* felt outraged by the audacity of that uneducated person, who appeared to be totally ignorant of the scriptures and had done no spiritual *sadhana*. When the scholars began murmuring among themselves, the king asked that ordinary-looking person, "On what grounds did you make your claim? It appears to be an affront to all the scholars present here." The man politely replied, "Your Excellency! Please forgive me. The meaning of my statement is that if the 'I' goes, liberation can be attained. I am sure no one has any objection to this statement of mine." So, the purpose of this story is that the *ahamkara*, which veils the *buddhi* and which leads one to the wrong identification of the body with the Self, should be removed before one can realise the *Atma*.

The *buddhi* is very close to the *Atma* and therefore well located to receive 90% of the *Atmic* energy and illumination. The mind derives its power from the *buddhi*, the senses from the mind, and the body from the senses. In this process of the flow of power from the *Atma* to the body in stages, there occurs a gradual quantitative and qualitative diminution of the power. Here is a simple illustration for the quantitative decrease. Suppose there is a dark room, which cannot directly receive sunlight. If you want to illuminate that room, you can do it by holding a mirror in the open vicinity and by directing the sun's rays reflected on the mirror towards the interior of the room. However, when compared to the direct rays of the sun, the reflected rays on the mirror are less powerful, and the reflected light in the room is much less powerful. Regarding the gradual deterioration in the quality, let us consider the example of a river. At the source of the springs that give rise to the river, the water will be pure and crystal clear. But as several rivulets and tributaries join its course, and as it wends its way through the countryside, the river gets more and more polluted as people begin making use of the water. Similarly, the purity of the *Atma* gets gradually contaminated as it passes through the *buddhi*, the mind, and the senses and finally reaches the body. Nevertheless, it is possible, through effort, to minimise this quantitative and qualitative deterioration, by sanctifying and purifying the *Buddhi* and by facilitating the direct influence of the *buddhi* on the body.

In the *Taithiriya Upanishad*, which is one of the important among the ten principal *Upanishads*, the *buddhi* is described as a bird. "*Sraddha* (faith)" is the head of the bird.

Its right wing is “*ritam*” (the cosmic rhythm), and its left wing is “*sathyam*” (truth.) The main body of the bird is “*Mahat Thathwa*” (the Great Principle), its tail is called *yoga*. The *buddhi*, in its complete form, is thus composed of five constituents and is extraordinarily powerful.

Once, King Vikramaditya convened an assembly of great scholars and asked them for their opinion regarding which is the most important among the three, viz., *sraddha*, *medha*, and *buddhi*. The scholars came out with different answers. However, they finally expressed their consensus that *medha* (talent) was the most important. Disappointed with their conclusion, the king told the assembly, “Oh *pundits*! ‘*Aastha*’ means *asakthi* or *sraddha* (zeal and faith); ‘*swaastha*’ means *sthiratva* and firmness. Without *asakthi* and *sthiratva*, *medha* (talent) is useless. In other words, it would be futile on the part of man to depend only on his talents and cleverness for leading a purposeful life. He should develop faith and zeal together with steadiness and firm determination. Then only will he be able to accomplish great things in his life. *Sraddha* or faith is of paramount importance. Without *sraddha*, you can achieve nothing. If you have a small spark of fire, you can fan it and create a big blazing fire from out of it, provided you have *sraddha*. If you lack *sraddha*, you will allow even a blazing fire to die out. Similarly with faith, you can produce a mighty banyan tree from a minute seed. Today’s man has *sraddha* no doubt, but only in securing the fruit and not in the labour required for getting it. He does not have the spirit of work in him. The advances in science and technology have made man a lover of comfort for ease with no interest in hard work. There is nothing wrong with science as such. It is the improper use of science that is leading man astray. What is needed today is to pay attention to love and spiritual advancement along with scientific progress. The difference between science and spirituality is brought out vividly, albeit succinctly, by the two simple equations:

- i. Spirit of love = Spirituality
- ii. Split of love = Science

When the pleasure-giving objects are transient, and when the body that enjoys the pleasures is also impermanent, how illogical it is to expect permanent happiness from the conveniences and comforts offered by science and technology! If you want permanent happiness, you have to purify your *antha karana* and develop universal love by following the spiritual path.

Today, we are witnessing rapid and radical changes in almost every field of life—political, economic, social, scientific, etc. However, there is no mental ethical and spiritual transformation. This is because no effort is made to understand the nature and role of the human mind. The food consumed by man provides the source of origin, sustenance and development of his mind. After digestion, the grossest part of the food is thrown out as excreta. The subtle part becomes blood and flesh, while the subtlest part assumes the form of the mind. So the nature of the mind depends on the quality and quantity of food consumed. While the gross body or the food sheath (*annamaya kosa*) is chiefly derived from food, the subtle part of the water we drink contributes to the life sheath (*pranamaya kosa*). The grosser part of the water goes out as urine. The food sheath and the life sheath provide the basis for the other three sheaths, namely, the *manomaya kosa* (the mental sheath), the *vijnanamaya kosa* (the intellectual sheath), and the

anandamaya kosa (the bliss sheath). This shows the paramount importance of food and drink in moulding and developing the human personality.

Reference has been made earlier to the supreme need for ridding the *buddhi* of the *ahamkara* that often envelops it. You should understand the difference between *ahamkara*, the ego and the *Atma* (Self). *ahamkara* is the father of *ahamkara*, grandfather of the mind or thought, the great grandfather of *vaak* (speech). Thus, the *ahamkara*, the *ahamkara*, the mind (*manas*), and *vaak* are all members of the same family. *Ahamkara* is the one that comes and goes, whereas there is no such coming and going for the *Atma*. Usually, the Sanskrit word *ahamkara* is translated into English as “ego”. Both these words are employed in common usage to mean self-esteem or pride born of delusion about one’s wealth or scholarship etc. This is a wrong usage of the words. Their correct meaning is the mistaken identification of oneself with the body. All may not be proud of their wealth or knowledge, but everyone is a victim of *ahamkara* in the sense of considering oneself to be the body. It is this *ahamkara* that shrouds the *buddhi* and misleads it on the wrong path. Hence, if the *buddhi* is to develop *sraddha*, we should first eliminate *ahamkara*.

As mentioned earlier, *ritam*, is the right wing of the bird of *buddhi*. In *Vedantic* parlance *ritam* and *sathyam* have been used as synonyms. However, there is a difference between the two, *sathyam* means putting your words into action, and factually reporting in words what you have done. *Ritam*, on the other hand, has a wider connotation, namely, purity, harmony, and unity of the *trikaranas* (thought, word, and deed). We may also say that *sathyam* is concerned more with the external world, while *ritam* relates more to the internal world of mind and its modifications. *Sathyam* is said to transcend time—past, present, and future, while *Atma* transcends time and space.

Yoga is the tail of the *buddhi*-bird. This tail of *yoga* is needed to maintain the required balance between the two wings of *sathyam* and *ritam*, just as the tail of an aeroplane serves the purpose of balancing the two wings of the aircraft. *Yoga* as envisaged here should not be confused with *asanas*, physical exercises of various kinds. *Yoga* here means the control of the mind and senses.

Then there is the *Mahat Thathwa*, which is the body of the bird of *buddhi*. *Mahat Thathwa* signifies the realisation of the *mahavakya* “*Thath-thwam-asi*—the great *Upanishadic* declaration That Thou Art.” In other words, it is experiencing one’s real Self as *Sath-chith-ananda*. *Buddhi* should not therefore be confused with *medha*, which refers to the possession of worldly talents, intelligence, and cleverness etc., without having Self-knowledge. Thus *buddhi* consisting of *sraddha*, *sathyam*, *ritam*, *Mahat Thathwam*, and *yoga* may be considered as the resound, reflection, and reaction of the *Atma*. On the other hand, *medha sakthi* (the power of worldly knowledge) corresponds to *maya sakthi* (the divine power of delusion).

On Rama’s return to Ayodhya after finishing His 14 years of exile in the forests, Kaikeyi, who felt penitent about this grievous wrong she had done to Rama, approached Him when He was alone and prayed, “My dear Rama, even though I knew about your divine nature, I caused you a lot of unnecessary hardship, blinded by narrow feeling of ‘I’ and ‘mine’. Kindly give me some *upadesh* (spiritual instruction), so that I may be absolved of the heinous sin I have committed against such a noble person like yourself.” In response to her request, Rama did not give her the *upadesh* directly but gave her some hints indirectly. This is characteristic of all *Avatars* from time immemorial. *Avatars* seldom give advice directly. Whatever they wish to communicate they convey more often by way of

indirect suggestions and only rarely by the direct method of instruction. The reason for this is there is divinity inherent in every human being, which he can manifest spontaneously, if favourable conditions are provided, just as a viable seed will germinate and grow into a tree because of its inherent nature, if only suitable facilities are provided for the manifestation of its potentiality. Man should be enabled to correct himself by his own efforts, by merely giving timely suggestions, rather than by stultifying his freedom and dignity through directives imposed from without. In short, the best maxim for helping people either in worldly matters or in the spiritual field is “Help them to help themselves” or “Self-help is the best help.”

Following the same strategy, therefore, Sri Rama, in the present instance told, Kaikeyi, “Mother! Please take bath in the holy Sarayu river and come back for My *upadesh*. But while bathing in the Sarayu please observe what is going along the riverside.” Kaikeyi went along with her retinue to the river and returned to Rama after bath. Rama asked her, “Mother! Now tell Me what you noticed on the banks of Sarayu.” Kaikeyi replied that she saw a number of sheep and goats grazing the green grass on the banks, bleating “mae, mae,” as usual, every now and then. Then Rama told her promptly that “mae, mae” was His *upadesh* for her. He disclosed to her that the bleating of the sheep and goats meant, “Who am I? Who am I?” He further remarked that when even sheep are concerned with the question of, “Who am I?” if a man does not concern himself with this question, he is worse than sheep.

Everyone should first seek to know the answer to the question, “Who am I?” Without knowing who you are, what is the use of trying to know everything about others? At birth you cried out “*Koham* (Who am I)?” You should not die with the same question on your lips. When you die, you should be able to assert cheerfully “*Soham* (I am That or He)”. Then alone can you justify your birth as a man and enjoy the satisfaction of having fulfilled the purpose of human life. There is only one path to get rid of *ahamkara*, namely pursuing the Godly way of life. Whenever you feel the sense of ego, sit silently in a corner and observe what your breathing is telling you. It is declaring, “*So...Ham*”. “*So*” while inhaling and “*Ham*” while exhaling. The two syllables “*So*” and “*Ham*”, which together constitute the word *Soham* convey the meaning: “I am Brahman.” If you constantly meditate upon this, your ego-sense characterised by the idea: “I am the body,” will cease to bother you. This “*So-ham*” mantra repeats itself in each of you 21,600 times per day. Thus “I am Brahman” is the message of your inner voice all the time. Ignoring this, however, everyone identifies himself with the temporary, artificial name given to the body. Thinking yourself to be Ramaiah, Krishnaiah, or Seenayah (the names given to your body) however long you may engage yourself in spiritual practices, you will not achieve any progress. You will continue to be what you have been according to the name given to your body. “*Soham*” is the name with which you were born. That alone is your natural and permanent name. That indeed is your Reality or Truth. Realise it and experience *Sath-chith-ananda*. Krishna is known as *Partha Sarathi* (the Charioteer of Partha). Partha does not mean Arjuna alone. It applies to all children of *prithvi* (the earth). So, make Krishna your charioteer. As the *buddhi* is a reflection of the divine *Atma*, make use of it as the charioteer in your journey to realise the *Atma*. Also remember that for success in every endeavour, *prema* (universal love) is essential. The Lord is the embodiment of Love, the Sun of Truth. Therefore, through Love, seek to know your true Self with the help of the *buddhi* and purify your mind. This is what I expect of you.

EGOISM AND ATTACHMENT

I am not merit, nor sin,
 Neither happiness nor sorrow,
 Neither *mantra* nor holy water,
 Neither *Veda* nor *yajna*,
 Neither food nor the enjoyer of food.
 I am *Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram*
 —Truth, Goodness, Beauty
 The embodiment of *Sath-Chith-Ananda*
 —Being-Awareness-Bliss.

The above *mantra* is applicable to everybody. Man is a seeker of happiness and an aspirant for bliss. He strives ceaselessly day and night to achieve happiness and bliss. In all spheres of his life, he aims at two things: attainment of happiness and removal of sorrow. What is the inner significance of this perennial quest of man for happiness? Man's very nature is bliss. He is indeed the embodiment of happiness. He is, therefore, entitled to seek this birthright, happiness. If sugar were to lose its sweetness, it would cease to be sugar. If a rose were to lose its fragrance, it would no longer be a rose. Likewise, if a man loses his natural condition of happiness and bliss, he has forfeited his human state. If, for instance, one notices on the road a man with a sorrowful face, he enquires from him the cause for his sorrow. Such enquiry is made by every passer-by, because it is not natural for a human being to be sad. In the same bazaar, however, if somebody is going in a happy mood, no special notice is taken of him and no one questions him why he is not unhappy. For, it causes no surprise if a man is happy, because it is his natural condition.

Man has been endowed with the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect in order to experience his natural state of bliss. But unfortunately, because these faculties or gifts of God are polluted and misused, man is drowned in misery. The body is tainted with the dirt of *raga* and *dwesha* (attachment and hatred). The senses are shrouded in the soiled cloth of desires and sensuous pleasures. The mind has been polluted by all of these impurities. As a result man is unable to recognise his true nature. He is labouring under the mistaken notion that the worldly pleasures are both dependable and natural to him. In fact, these are all highly transient and ephemeral like the passing clouds.

Recognising that man's moral weaknesses are on the increase, because of the defects in the food that he takes, our forefathers devised simple but sacred ways and means for purifying the food before eating. They used to sprinkle some water on the food, chanting the *mantra*: "*Annam Brahma, Raso Vishnuh, Bhoktaa Maheswarah*" (the solid food is Brahma, the drinking water and the liquid essence of the food is Vishnu, and the enjoyer of the meal is Maheswara). In performing this purificatory rite, the partaker of food prays to the Trinity to protect him with *sathyam* and *ritam*. The invocation to the deities is to endow him with *trikarana suddhi* (the triple purity of thought, word, and deed). By this rite, the food was being sanctified as *prasad*. The so-called intellectuals of today, puffed up with pride of their talents and skills, are ignoring the efficacy and potency of *sathyam* and *ritam*.

Sankaracharya, during his victorious philosophical pilgrimage through the length and breadth of India, had to engage himself in a debate with a scholarly intellectual by name Mandana Mishra on the subject of “*medha sakthi*” (intellectual prowess). Both of them agreed on Ubhaya Bharati to be the umpire to decide who was the winner in the debate. Ubhaya Bharati was not merely a distinguished scholar but also possessed divine qualities like a pure heart and *buddhi* enriched with *sathyam*, *ritam*, *asakthi* or *sraddha*, and *stirathva* (steadfastness, cosmic rhythm, zeal or faith, and firmness respectively.) Ubhaya Bharati was none other than wife of Mandana Mishra. The choice was unique in many respects. It was remarkable that Sankara was willing to have his opponent’s wife as the judge. It was the greatest testimony to his faith in the utter impartiality of Ubhaya Bharati, because her *buddhi*, endowed with the power of discrimination and objectivity, was superior to the mere intellectual ability, which is termed *medhas*.

Students must understand that *buddhi* is more powerful than *medhas*. *Buddhi* is not mere intellectualism, as commonly understood. It is a peaceful state of the intellect endowed with *aastha* or *asakthi* (zeal or faith) and *swastha* or *stirathva* (firmness or steadfastness). This *buddhi* is the intellect, which is enriched by *ritam* and *sathyam* as well as by *yoga* and *Mahat Thathwa*. This *buddhi* has not only the power of deliberation and discrimination but also the power of deep insight, enquiry and impartial judgement. Because Ubhaya Bharati had this kind of *buddhi*, she declared that Sankaracharya had won the debate. Sankara was extremely pleased with Ubhaya Bharati’s unbiased verdict. Ubhaya Bharati then declared that in accordance with the understanding between the two contestants before the commencement of the debate, Mandana Mishra, as the vanquished, should take to *sanyasa* (monkhood) and become a disciple of Sankara. At the same time, as the devoted wife of Mandana Mishra, she decided to become a *sanyasini* (nun) herself, in conformity with the ideals of womanhood, according to which the wife should follow the husband in weal and woe. Although she was under no obligation to adopt a monastic life, she did so in order to set an example to the world. After taking *sanyasa*, Ubhaya Bharati established an *ashram* with the purpose of showing to the arrogant scholars, who relied on mere intellectual acumen or *medhas* that it was inferior to *buddhi*, which is a synthesis of several divine qualities, as mentioned above. One day when she was going to the river for a bath along with her women disciples, she saw an ascetic, who was known for his renunciation of everything in life, sleeping on the wayside, resting his head on a hollow water jug, made of a dried bottle-gourd, using it as a pillow and at the same time ensuring that nobody could steal it from him. In order to convey a lesson to the monk, Ubhaya Bharati spoke within his hearing, the following words to her disciples; “Look at that monk who has ostensibly renounced all attachments. Is it not strange that he has not given up his attachment to his worthless water jug?” On hearing these remarks, the ascetic got enraged. He thought, “After all she is a woman. Is she entitled to teach me how I should behave?” In a short while, when he saw Ubhaya Bharati returning from the river after bath, he flung his water jug at her feet as a proof of his sense of renunciation. Ubhaya Bharati quickly reacted to this, by remarking about him, to her disciples in these words: “Alas! He is not only filled with *abhimana* (attachment), but also with *ahamkara* (egoism).” Immediately the monk ran up to her, fell at her feet regardless of her being a woman, and pleaded for forgiveness of his shortcomings.

From the above episode, it is clear that the root causes of man’s bondage are *abhimana* or *mamakara* (attachment or the possessive sense of “mine”) and *ahamkara* (egoism).

Both *ahamkara* and *mamakara* are the result of consuming improper food. Bad kinds of food or food earned by foul means will plunge a man in ignorance in several ways and suppress pure thoughts from arising in him. He will forget what to talk with whom, when, where and how. The following episode in the *Mahabharatha* illustrates this point. Bhishma was a great *jnani* (man of wisdom) and also a man of great renunciation (*maha tyagi*). Sri Rama, the hero of *Ramayana*, is famous for having obeyed his father's orders for only 14 years. But Bhishma followed his father's commandments throughout his life. He got the name "Bhishma" because of his great determination and strict observance of his vows, which are unparalleled in human history. Such a great hero was very grievously wounded by Arjuna's arrows and, as a result, he fell down on the battle field on the ninth day of the Kurukshetra war.

According to his own grave determination even at that critical period of the fag end of his life, he was lying on a bed of arrows. When the Pandava brothers, along with their spouse, Droupadi approached their grandsire Bhishma to pay their homage to him he began expounding to them all aspects of *dharma* from his bed of arrows. After hearing him for a while, Droupadi suddenly burst into laughter. All the Pandava brothers were very much upset by Droupadi's unaccountable levity and considering it as an affront to the venerable Bhishma, they frowned upon her with angry looks. Understanding their distress, Bhishma calmed them down with his soft and sweet words, and told them that Droupadi, being an exemplary woman in every respect, must be having a valid reason for her laughter. He then asked Droupadi to explain the reason for her laughter, and thereby remove the misapprehension of her husbands. She replied "Revered grandsire! The lessons of *dharma*, which you should have taught to the evil-minded and wicked Kauravas, you are now teaching to my noble and virtuous husbands. This appeared to me both ironical and futile. Hence I could not refrain from laughing, although I knew it would seem impolite."

Bhishma then explained that he had been serving the Kauravas and living on their bounty. He said, "As a result of consuming the food received from such ignoble and vicious persons, my blood became polluted and all the pure thoughts in me were thereby suppressed. Now that Arjuna's arrows have drained away all that impure blood from me, the *dharma* that was lying buried deep in me, is gushing forth, inducing me to communicate it to your husbands." From this episode, students must realise what a crucial role is played by food in determining one's thoughts, words and actions.

In this connection, it may not be out of place to mention that Droupadi was a "*Maha Pativrata*"—the doyen among women who worship their husbands as veritable representatives of God and serve them in that spirit moreover there is an esoteric meaning for her name. "Droupadi" does not merely mean the wife of five husbands, namely the Pandavas. Every human being has, within him or her, five husbands in the form of five life-breaths, *prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana*, and *samana*. When it is said that Droupadi lived harmoniously with all her five husbands, the allegorical meaning is that she ensured the maintenance of harmonious equilibrium among her five life-breaths, which is a prerequisite for a balanced living. In the case of most persons, one or more of these life-breaths become excited beyond the optimum limit, resulting in a loss of equilibrium and harmony among the five life-breaths, and the consequent lack of balance in life as a whole. All should try to follow the example of Droupadi in the matter of leading a life full of contentment and harmony as well as in being satisfied with simple but pure food.

You must realise that food is mainly responsible for your feeling of attachment and hatred (*raga* and *dwesha*) as well as for *ahamkara* and *mamakara* (I and mine). Regulating your food habits is extremely important for the healthy functioning of your mind and intellect. The ways of the mind are really enigmatic. The verdict of the scriptures is that when man follows the senses he becomes an animal. When he is guided by the mind, he becomes a man. One who acts according to the *buddhi*, becomes great among men, while the one who is guided by the *Atma* becomes Brahman. If you cannot follow the *buddhi*, you should at least follow the mind, so that you may at least keep up your human level. But many of you may have the doubt whether the mind itself is not prone to bad tendencies and if so, how to rely on it. The fact is that the mind is pure by itself. It is by implicitly obeying the senses that it becomes impure. Instead of indiscriminately consuming whatever the senses bring to it, if the mind places all such intake through the senses, before the *buddhi* for scrutiny and if it acts according to the decisions of the *Buddhi*, *buddhi* the mind will remain unsullied and retain its pristine purity.

Students! Till now, in this Summer Course, we have considered the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect which are all insentient and which together constitute the *kshetra* which is also insentient by itself, but which is animated by the *Kshetrajna* (the knower of the field.) The *kshetra* and in fact the entire *srishiti* (creation) is governed by the three *gunas*—*sathwa*, *rajas*, and *thamas*. Tomorrow we shall discuss in detail about these three *gunas*, which are remarkably wonderful.

THE THREE GUNAS

Students! Embodiments of Divine Love!

The Divine shines in the rays of the Sun. It is the Divine that reveals to man through his eyes the vastness and glory of the world. The whiteness and coolness of the moon, which confer peace on men, are derived from the divine. The universe, which is based on the triple nature of time and which is sustained by the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara—, is permeated by the Divine in the form of the three *gunas*—*sathwa*, *rajas*, and *thamas*. In short, everything in the Cosmos is indeed Brahman—*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*.

Nature presents a marvelous picture. No one can fully comprehend it. Whether it is blessing or bereavement, joy or sorrow, gain or loss, it comes from nature (*prakruthi*). Nature presides over the destinies of all creatures. This nature is comprised of the three *gunas*. The Trinity represent the three *gunas*. The three *gunas* account also for the processes of creation, sustenance, and dissolution—“*sristhi*, *sthithi*, and *laya*”. All the varied experiences in the world arise from the three *gunas*. Man should aspire not for a long life, but for a divine life. In the Cosmos, which is permeated by the divine, man should seek primarily to divinise or deify his life by transcending the three *gunas*.

The secret of creation is known only to the Creator. Others cannot hope to fathom it. Scientists are engaged in exploring the secrets of creation. But none can plumb the depths of Nature’s mystery. In scientific investigations, today’s discovery is superseded by tomorrow’s findings. That again becomes obsolete in its turn day-after-tomorrow. Continual change is in the very nature of creation. It is not permanent or immutable. The Creator is the only eternal, unchanging Reality. The spiritual path aims at investigating the nature of the Creator and ultimately becoming one with Him.

The entire Cosmos consisting of living and inanimate objects is permeated by the three Gunas. Man should strive to understand the principle that transcends the three *gunas*. God is the embodiment of *Atma*. The terms like *sathyam*, *jnanam*, *anantam*, *Brahma*, *Atma*, *Bhagavan*, and *God* are synonyms.

To start with, the *pancha bhuthas*—the five subtle elements of space, air, fire, water, and earth—emerged from the *Atma*. Each of the five subtle elements is constituted of the three *gunas*. Under the influence of these three *gunas*, the five subtle elements evolved into the five gross elements and the entire Cosmos, through the process of *panchee-kritam* (fusion by permutation and combination).

The Cosmos is permeated by the three *gunas* —*sathwa*, *rajas*, and *thamas*. At first, the nature of creation due to the *sathwa guna* has to be clearly understood. The *antha karana*—the inner instrument in men—represents the total *sathwic* quality of the five elements. *Akasa* (space) is the first among the five elements. From *Akasa* emerged what is known as *suddha sathwa* (pure *sathwa*). This accounts for the human form. The *sathwic* aspect of *Akasa* accounts also for the emergence of the organ of hearing, the ear. The second element is air. The skin is the product of the *sathwic* component of air. The eye is the organ representing the *sathwic* principle of the fire element. The individualised *sathwic* aspect of the fourth element, water, is the tongue. The nose represents the individualised *sathwic* aspect of the fifth element, the Earth. Thus, the *sathwic* components of these five elements account for the five faculties of *sabda* (sound), *sparsa* (touch), *roopa*

(sight), *rasa* (taste), and *gandha* (smell). As each of these faculties has emerged from one particular element only, the five faculties are distinct in every person and perform different functions without any overlapping.

Akasa is represented by sound and the corresponding sense organ is the ear. The ear can only hear and not perform any other function. Likewise, the skin can only experience the sense of touch associated with Air. The eye, which is the organ associated with fire, can only see and do nothing else. The tongue, representing the element water, can only taste. The nose, representing the element Earth, can only smell but cannot taste. Thus each sense organ reflects in its functioning, the faculty of the one particular element from which it is evolved.

While each of the sense organs is limited functionally to its specific role, the *antha karana* combines the functions of all five organs, because it is the cumulative product of all the five elements. This alone has the capacity to experience all the perceptions of the five senses—the five *jnanendriyas*. Are these organs of perception functioning externally or internally? The answer is that they perform a dual role—both internal and external. If only the physical organ, the ear, is present, but if the faculty of hearing is absent, the ear cannot hear. If the faculty of hearing is present, but there is no ear to receive sounds from the outside world, the faculty is of no use. It is the combined operation of the (*jnanendriyas*) external organs of perception and the corresponding invisible internal sense-centres in the brain that accounts for the functioning of the human personality. For example, if you want your voice to reach a vast audience, you should have the mike inside and the loudspeaker outside. Loudspeaker without mike or vice versa cannot serve the purpose.

While the combined operation of the five elements in their *sathwic* aspect is seen in the *antha karana*, the collective functioning of the five elements in their *rajasic* aspect expresses itself as the life-force (*prana*). Among the five elements, in their individual expression of their *rajasic* quality, *akasa* is represented by the *vaak* (voice). *Vayu* finds expression in the hand. *Agni* expresses itself in its individualised *rajo guna* as the foot. The fourth and fifth elements, water and earth, find *rajasic* expression in the two excretory organs in the body.

In this context, you must take note of some significant facts in the functioning of these elements. In its *sathwic* aspect, *akasa* expresses itself as ear. But the same *akasa*, in its *rajasic* aspect appears as the *vaak* (faculty of speech). It may be inferred from this that *akasa* has two children, the ear representing *sathwa* and the voice representing *rajas*. The ear, which is *akasa*'s first child, receives the sounds coming from outside. The second child, namely voice, sends its reaction from the inside to the outside, in the form of words. Likewise the skin is the first child of *Vayu* in its *sathwic* aspect. The second child, in its *rajasic* aspect, is the hand. For instance, the skin recognises an ant crawling on the body. Immediately the hand tries to remove it. It will be seen from these examples that the *sathwic* quality is concerned with receiving impressions from outside, while the *rajasic* quality is concerned with casting them out by way of reaction. In other words, the *jnanendriyas* originating from *sathwa* receive stimuli from outside and the *karmendriyas* derived from *rajas* respond to the stimuli.

In the world today what is happening is the exact opposite. What is *rajasic* is being taken in and what is *sathwic* is being rejected. In the natural scheme of creation, what should be received is that which is *sathwic* and what should be rejected is all that is *rajasic*.

The primary quality of Nature (*Prakruthi*) is *sathwa*. *Prakruthi* is called “*Stri*” made up of the three syllables—*sa*, *ta*, and *ra*. The significance of this term is: first of all, you have to take in what is *sathwic*, secondly *ta* implies developing some *thamasik* qualities, like submission, humility and modesty. *ra*, representing the *rajo guna*, implies that there are occasions in life when some firm resolutions and stern actions will have to be taken. The *rajasik* quality comes last, and it means that *rajasik* actions have to be done as a last resort when they are unavoidable.

In the cosmic process, it is the *sathwic* quality—the “*sa*” kara or the syllable “*sa*” that comes first. Hence the duty of everyone to develop the *sathwic* quality in every aspect—in thoughts, attitudes, words, and deeds.

The next aspect to be understood is that under the influence of *thamo guna*, the five subtle elements evolve themselves into the five gross elements by the process of *panchee-kritam* (fusion through permutation and combination.) This highly complicated process may be illustrated by the following example for purposes of easy understanding. Suppose the five elements come together as five individuals each having a one rupee coin. Now, each of them exchanges his one rupee coin for one-half rupee coin and four two-anna coins. A two-anna coin is equivalent to one-eighth of a rupee. Then, *akasa* retains half a rupee and distributes among the other four elements one-eighth of a rupee each. The second element, *vayu*, also does likewise and retains half a rupee for itself. Fire, water, and earth also follow the same procedure. As a result of this redistribution, each has one rupee, but its composition is affected by the exchanges among the elements, of parts of their respective nature. Originally each element was whole by itself. The process of mixing has resulted in the presence of all five elements in every “rupee”. This means that ultimately each element is composed of half of its original nature, the second half consisting of one-eighth of each of the other four elements. For example, the composition of earth will be $1/2$ earth + $1/8$ th space + $1/8$ th air + $1/8$ th fire + $1/8$ th water. Similar will be the composition of the other four elements. In relation to the human being, the process of *panchee-kritam* makes man a mixture of the five elements and creates diversity from unity. These have been described in spiritual parlance as *shodasa kalas* (the sixteen aspects). What were these sixteen aspects? They are, the five *jnanendriyas* (organs of perception), the five *karmendriyas* (organs of action), the five elements, and the mind. Every man has these sixteen constituents, although the sixteen *kalas* are attributed only to the Divine. The implication is that man has to realise his divinity.

Today man’s desire for worldly pleasures has exceeded all limits, and what is more, he wants quick fulfillment of his innumerable desires, by resorting to short cuts. But he must realise that short cuts are always dangerous and riddled with thorns, stones, etc. The highway is always preferable, though it may seem longer. The ways of the Divine are not easy to comprehend. Wishing the welfare of everyone in the universe, the Divine uses a myriad of methods. It may be illustrated by the story of a devotee aspiring for riches, who performed a severe penance for securing a boon from the Goddess of Wealth, Lakshmi. Man is prepared to undergo any ordeal for achieving material wealth but will not take any trouble to realise the Divine. Lakshmi appeared before the devotee and asked him what he wanted. He replied that he wanted Lakshmi Herself. She agreed and said that adorning Herself with all ornaments, She would follow him and asked him to go ahead. She said she would come to his house and hand over all her ornaments to him. She imposed, however, one stipulation. “You must go ahead of me and never look back. If you look back, I will stay back at the spot.” Filled with joy, the devotee strode ahead toward his home.

The Goddess's jewels were making all kinds of sounds as She walked behind. Unable to restrain his curiosity to find out what were all the jewels she was wearing, he turned back to have a look at her. He could not repress his desire till he reached home. The moment he looked back, Lakshmi stopped there and did not follow him. This is what happens when one cannot control one's desire. Even though he got the grace of the Divine, the devotee could not benefit from it. This means that even if you are blessed with an abundance of divine grace, you must acquire the capacity to benefit from it. To get this capacity, you have to obey implicitly the injunctions of the Divine. If the devotee in the story had adhered to Lakshmi's conditions, he would have benefited from her bounty. Failing to abide by her conditions, he forfeited what he had been offered.

The situation in the world is something similar to this. The world is permeated by the potency of the three *gunas*. Even our vision of the world is influenced by the three *gunas*. Examine your eye. The outer rim of the eye is red, representing the *rajo guna*. After that, you have the white area, representing *sathwa*. At the centre is the black circular cornea, representing the *thamo guna*. Thus even our vision is tainted by the three colours, red, white, and black representing the three *gunas*.

When you pose the question, "Where is God?" the answer is given by nature herself. The revolution of the Earth on its own axis at the speed of 1000 miles per hour accounts for the phenomenon of night and day. The earth's rotation round the Sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour accounts for the various seasons, for rainfall, and for the cultivation of food crops. Thus the divinely-ordained motions of the earth enable living beings to get their food. This is a visible proof of the existence of God. The scriptures declare that the foolish person, even while seeing the acts of God, declares he has not seen God. He does not realise that Nature is the vesture of God. What is the lesson to be learnt from the observance of Nature? It is "*Kriyaseelata* (being always active in the performance of one's duty)." It is because Nature ceaselessly performs its duty that the world is able to derive so many benefits.

The secret and mystery of creation lies in the due performance of one's duty with earnestness and sincerity. In the pursuit of the mirage of sensual happiness, men are going on the wrong path. This can be seen in the life-style of people going to work, or carrying on business. After what they consider as a day of hard work, they go to clubs, where they become slaves of drink and ultimately ruin themselves, because:

First the man drinks the wine,
Second the wine drinks the wine,
Third the wine drinks the man.

Real happiness can be got only by rendering service to the public. Go to the help of the poor and the forlorn. You will derive strength as well as peace from such service. Your conscience also will feel satisfied. It is a pity that neither the rich among the public nor the administrators are inclined to do such service. It is all the more essential that students should have some ideals before them and look forward to serving society selflessly. You should realise that you are a part of society and that your welfare is bound up with the good of the society as a whole. You should utilise your knowledge and skill for the benefit of society, duly recognising the fact that "Knowledge without action is useless, and action without knowledge is foolish."

Whatever *sadhana* (spiritual exercise) you may or may not do, your primary concern must be to develop the love of God. When you develop that pure love, you can achieve anything.

In this context, the advice which Hanuman gave to Vibhishana when the latter lamented that though he had been chanting the name of Rama since long, he had not had the benefit of a vision of Rama, is relevant. Hanuman told Vibhishana that it was not enough to merely chant the name. One should also engage himself in the service of the Divine. Hanuman declared that while meditating on the name of Rama, he was also engaged in constant service to the Lord. That was how he had earned Rama's grace and become near and dear to Him.

On another occasion, Vibhishana complained to Hanuman, saying, "My dear friend, I am in the midst of cruel *rakshasas* (demons), just like the soft tongue which is surrounded by the sharp teeth. Hence I am unable to calmly concentrate on Rama." Hanuman promptly replied, "My dear Vibhishana! Do not be worried on that account. In old age the teeth fall away but the tongue remains in tact. Likewise the demons will be destroyed in due course like the teeth, and you will remain safe like the tongue. So be happy."

That is why Vibhishana used to praise Hanuman as *Gunavantha* (highly virtuous), *Balavantha* (extremely strong and powerful), and *Saantha* (always calm and peaceful). Remember that like Hanuman, you too can derive strength and peace only through love and service, together with control of the senses. The young student Prahalada told his father, Hiranyakasipu, "You have conquered all the worlds in a trice, but you are unable to control your senses. How can you call yourself a ruler, when you are yourself ruled by your senses?" So, students should strive to control their senses, and develop love of God, fear of sin, and morality in society.

KNOW THYSELF

O Gudakesa!—Conqueror of sleep, Arjuna!

I am the *Atma* residing in all beings.

I am also the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings.

Gita (ch. X, verse, 20)

Embodiments of Divine Love!

In the above verse of *Gita*, Krishna tells Arjuna, “I am the *Atma* (the Self) residing in all beings; I am also the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings.” That is to say, the entire Cosmos consisting of moving and non-moving objects is only the *Atma*. Nothing exists other than the *Atma* or the Self. What today’s man needs to do is to constantly contemplate on the Self, to realise the Self, to be firmly established in the Self, and to experience the bliss of the Self.

Atma is also known as “Awareness”. It is this awareness that is responsible for the “I” consciousness in all beings, which is called “*aham*”. When this *aham* identifies itself with the body, it becomes *ahamkara*. This is the false “I”, and not the real “I”. What hides the *Atma* always, is the mind. The clouds that are formed due to the Sun’s heat hide the Sun itself. Likewise, the mind, which is the offspring of the *Atma*, hides the *Atma* itself. As long as the mind is there, man cannot hope to understand anything about the Self, not to speak of realising and experiencing the bliss of the Self. That state in which one is established in the Self, at all times and under all circumstances, is called “*Sakshatkara* (Self-realisation)”.

The first sound that emanated from the Self is “I”. The entire creation began only after the emanation of this “I” sound. If there is no “I”, there is no creation. The terms “I”, Brahman, *Atma*, and Self are all synonymous. The “I” sans mind is the *Atma*, or the Self, in its pristine purity. The “I” associated with the mind is the false self or *mithyatma*. There is only one *Atma* or Self and that is the “I”.

The paradox, however, is that to experience his own Reality—what he already is—man is undertaking several *sadhanas* (spiritual practices). All such practices undertaken for seeking the Self are activities in which man engages himself during the state of *ajnana* (ignorance) only. You will not find the *jnani* (the realised one) doing such *sadhana*, because for him, there is no distinction such as the means and the end. If man is practising *sadhana*, it is for his mental satisfaction. Such practices that are pursued for mental satisfaction will only serve the purpose of strengthening the mind instead of destroying it, as recommended in the teachings of *Vedanta*. If at all you want to do *sadhana*, the only right approach to it, is to dispel the “*anatmabhava*” (the false notion of the “non-self”). If, instead of doing this right thing, you go on worshipping three million Gods and Goddesses, disregarding the common truth taught by all the scriptures of the world that there is only one God, or if you pursue all sorts of so-called *sadhanas* to attain Self-realisation and liberation, what does it indicate other than your mental aberrations, hallucinations and delusions?

It is important to recognise that as long as the mind is there, desires will not leave you. As long as you have desires, the false notion of “I” and “mine” will not leave you. As long as the feeling of “I” and “mine” is there, *ahamkara* (your wrong identification

with the body) will not leave you. As long as *ahamkara* does not leave you, *ajnana* (ignorance) too will not leave you. In effect, it means that there is no way other than the annihilation of the mind to attain *Atma jnana* (knowledge of the Self), or *Atma darshan* (vision of the Self), or *Atma ananda* (bliss of the Self), whatever you may choose to call it.

The mind, the *buddhi* or intellect, the *chitta* or memory, the *ahamkara*, or the ego sense—what is the substratum from which these four have emerged, by which they are sustained, and into which they will merge back? That substratum is the Brahman; that is the *Atma* or the Self. So, instead of recognising the source of your origin and your own identity, what is the use of your trying to attain it by taking recourse to other pathways? It looks as ridiculous as a thief putting on a policeman's dress in an effort to catch the culprit i.e. himself!

What is the need for all other *sadhanas* in order to recognise yourself? There is a small story in this connection. Once a party consisting of ten fools happened to cross a river. After fording the river, one of them wanted to verify whether all ten of them had reached the bank safely. He counted all the others, forgetting himself, and began weeping, telling them that one member of the group was lost in the river. The other fools in turn also did the same mistake by repeating the counting in a similar manner. As a result they all began making a hue and cry. In the meanwhile, a passer-by who noticed their miserable plight approached them and asked them the reason for their piteous lamentations. When they told him that one of the ten members of their group was washed away in the river while crossing, the passer-by understood their ignorance and asked them to stand in a row. Then he counted them aloud one by one, thereby convincing them that all the ten of them were intact, and that their wrong conclusion about the loss of one man was due to the fact that everybody forgot himself while counting.

One who has forgotten himself cannot recognise the truth proper. When you are yourself the *Atma*, how can you recognise it by praying to some other being or doing such other Sadhana. Because the "One has become many" (*Ekoham bahusyam*), you have developed a liking for the diversity, forgetting the unity. All these things that you see around you are your own reflections, as if in a mirror. Leaving the actual object, you are running after the reflected images. Your own *bhrama* (delusion) is binding you hand and foot. One who is bound by *bhrama* cannot reach Brahman (God). All your *sadhanas* are futile if you want to experience the Self. All these *sadhanas* will serve only the purpose of quietening the mind. The quietened mind may again become agitated. What is important is to get rid of the mind, by understanding its true nature.

The right kinds of *sadhana* for seeking the *Atma* are only those that are directed toward the destruction of the mind. Because of his identification with his body, man is being helplessly tossed hither and thither in various ways by his ego. "I am doing this; I am enjoying that; I have conquered this" thus saying to himself, man is lending strength day by day, to his sense of doership (*kartritva bhava*). Students! Remember that success and failure do not depend on your efforts or *sadhana* and such other activities. You are simply inflating your ego (*ahamkara*), by deluding yourself that you have been able to achieve things by your own effort. Look around and see the many instances where the best of efforts have not been crowned with success, while with little or no effort victory has come unsought in the case of many others. Instead of getting frustrated due to failures by depending on your efforts have not been crowned with success. While with little or no effort only, you can surely win success by dedicating all your activities to the Divine, by considering them as the Lord's work, and by undertaking them with unwavering faith in

God. You should have the firm conviction that nothing happens due to human effort. Proof for this assertion need not be sought for in some far-off place. It can be found right within your own body. For instance, what effort are you making for the ceaseless beating of your heart or for the incessant breathing of your lungs? Does the digestion of the food eaten by you take place, because of your will? Are you able to live because you want to live, or die because you want to die? Does your birth take place according to when and where you desire? If you ponder deeply along these lines of thought, you will discover that your feelings of “I” and “mine” (*ahamkara* and *mamakara*) are being unduly fostered by your false sense of doership and enjoyership (*kartritva* and *bhoktritva*).

Today, we are preoccupied with various activities just for our mental satisfaction. But the mind never knows any satisfaction, whatever we may do and for how long. Mind alone is *maya* (illusion). Mind alone is desire. Mind itself is *avidya* (ignorance). Mind alone is Nature (*Prakruthi*). And mind alone is delusion (*bhranthi* or *bhrama*). Deeply immersed in this *bhrama*, how can you hope to attain Brahman, without getting rid of your *bhrama*? Seeing your own shadow, you are trembling with fear! You are afraid of your own feelings and imaginations! However, “Reality is one” (*Ekam Sath*). And that is “*Atma*”. Scholars describe God as the embodiment of *sath*, *chith*, *anandam* (existence, awareness, bliss). It is not correct. He is *sath* itself, He is *chith* itself, He is *Ananda* itself. These three are not different or separate from God.

“There is some mighty power, unknown to me, different from me and far away from me,”—thinking thus, some people resort to meditation. “There is some secret and sacred divine power distinctly separate from me and I must acquire it”—imagining thus, some others observe many vows, perform several rites and undertake various austerities. All this is sheer ignorance. As long as you think there is anything different from you, so long are you submerged in ignorance. There is nothing in the universe other than you, or higher than you. To think otherwise or to try to prove otherwise is nothing but your “*Mano Bhranthi*” (mental delusion), resembling a dream. In your dream you see many sights and experience various things, but for how long are they real? Only as long as your dream lasts. When the dream ends, they are all unreal. Similarly, your hardships, losses, worry and sorrow etc. are real, only as long as your mind is under delusion. Once the delusion leaves you, they will all be unreal. They will then turn out to be castles of myths created by your mind. Relying on the false “I,” you are rejecting the real “I.” You are boosting your *Ahamkara* by thinking continually that you are the body.

If only we can understand one small but subtle truth, we can expand the horizons of our thoughts and feelings to any extent. There is nothing other than the Self in the universe. All the things you see as existing in the phenomenal world are but reflections of the One Self. In the case of mundane affairs, the subject, the object, and the predicate—all these three are present. But in spiritual matters relating to the *Atma* or Self, there is only the subject but no separate object or predicate. In fact all these three aspects get merged into one *Atma Thathwa*—the principle of the Self, which pervades everywhere as *chaitanya* (consciousness). There is no place where consciousness does not exist. This very *chaitanya* has been partitioned, so to say, into three aspects of *Sath*, *Chit*, *Ananda* for the satisfaction and understanding of the laity. These three aspects have been described by the *Vedantins* as mutual reflections of one another. They have used the terms *Asthi*, *Bhathi* and *Priyam* for *Sath*, *Chith* and *Ananda* respectively. But all these three refer to one and the same entity. For example, here is a tumbler. It exists—hence it is *sath*. When it is seen by us, it creates in us an awareness that it is a tumbler—so, it is

chith. We are making use of it—therefore it is *ananda*. But the tumbler has not become three; it is only one in which all the three aspects are united. This illustrates the unity in diversity relating to the Self. The Self is formless, but it appears in different forms. Let us consider the example of air. It is formless, but we cannot deny its existence, just because it has no form of its own. Actually it assumes the form of the container that is used to hold it—the form of a balloon, or football, or air-pillow. Although the Self has no form, it has the quality of *chaitanya* (consciousness).

It is difficult to understand the nature of this principle of consciousness. There are three aspects of this consciousness, depending upon its association with specific aspects of the human personality. When this consciousness or awareness is associated with the senses, we use the term “conscious”. When it is associated with the mind, we call it “conscience”, and when it is associated with the Self, it is pure consciousness. These three terms are being used in daily parlance for convenience, just as we call one doctor a heart specialist, another doctor an E.N.T. specialist, and so on. But all of them are doctors. Likewise all men are embodiments of one and the same Self, although they may be engaged in different occupations like agriculture, business, government service, labour, etc. As long as you have the body, the senses, and the mind, etc., it is very difficult to experience the unity of the Self. But just because it is difficult, you should not give up or relax your effort to experience it, because it is worth much more than all your effort.

We have till now understood the human body as the chariot, the senses as the horses, the mind as the reins, and the *buddhi* as the charioteer. But we should recognise that all these are only meant to serve the master (the *Atma* or Self). Our wakeful state represents *rajo guna* (the state of activity); the deep-sleep state symbolises *thamo guna* (the state of inertia); and the transition between the waking and sleeping states represents the *sathwa guna* (the state of equilibrium and equipoise), which is of the nature of the Self. You have to understand what Self-knowledge is to appreciate the nature of the Self. We shall discuss the subject of *Atma jnana* or Self-knowledge tomorrow.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Dear Students!

God is more taintless than the sky. The sun, the moon, and the stars are His eyes. He is all-pervading, like the air. It is only when we thoroughly recognise the nature of the *upadhis* or vestures of man like the body, the senses, the mind, and the *buddhi*, that we can understand the sacred, pure and infinite *Atma* or the divine Principle.

Know Me as the *Kshetrajna* (Knower of the fields) in all *kshetras* (fields);
The knowledge of the *kshetra* and *Kshetrajna* is alone true knowledge, in My view.
(*Gita*, Ch. 13, Verse 2)

The whole world is a combination of *kshetras* and *Kshetrajna* (the fields and the knower of the fields.) The *kshetra* of the human body is but a reflection of *Prakruthi* (Nature). All the sentient and insentient aspects of the universe are in the human body. The entire universe is a reflection of the inner being of man. It will not suffice to know only about the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect. There is a distinct *Kshetrajna*, who animates all the *kshetra*. If you understand the *Kshetrajna*, there is no need to know about the *kshetra* but till then you should pay the required attention to the *kshetra*. To understand the *Kshetrajna*, you need a special kind of knowledge. Book knowledge, superficial knowledge, general knowledge, discriminative knowledge, experience knowledge, practical knowledge—all these pertain to inert matter and mundane things and have an individual bias. All these kinds of knowledge will not help in understanding the Self. You need a diamond to cut another diamond. You need a thorn to remove another thorn that has pierced your foot. To experience the Self (*Atma*), you require only Self-knowledge, *Atma jnana*. Today what we regard as knowledge (*jnana*) in this physical world is nothing but ignorance (*ajnana*.) Self-knowledge alone is true knowledge. In fact, whether you call it *Atma* (Self) or *jnana* (knowledge), they are both one and the same. True awareness is *jnana*. *Jnana*, *jneyam*, and *jnanam* (the knowing, the known and the knower) predicate, object, and subject respectively—such triads are not applicable to this *Atma jnana* or Self-knowledge.

These triads and such other classifications pertain to the level of the mind, whereas Self-knowledge reveals itself after the annihilation of the mind. The still and peaceful silence that follows the destruction of the mind is itself true knowledge. This true knowledge is our very nature, and not something to be newly acquired. However, this knowledge is hidden by the mind and its aberrations, like the cinder covered by the ash, generated by the cinder itself, like the water shrouded by the moss produced by water itself and like the eye covered by the cataract arising from the eye itself. Remove the cataract and you get back your sight. Remove the mind and the self-knowledge stands revealed automatically.

This knowledge can neither be obtained from books, nor given by *gurus* (the spiritual teachers) nor can it be conferred as a boon by the *Paramatma* (the Supreme Soul). Indeed you are yourself *Paramatma*, *Atma*, or *Jnana*. Sitting in solitude, when you calmly enquire how this *jnana* is present in all, you will hear from within yourself a spontaneous voice that is eternal and changeless. All the things in this manifested world are subject to

constant change due to the process of union and separation of atoms, that goes on endlessly. However, this divine voice within is not only the same in all beings, not only eternal but also it remains unchanged by anything. The changes due to the changes in the age of a person, or due to the changing states of consciousness like waking, dreaming and sleeping affect only the gross, subtle and causal bodies, but they do not, in any way, affect the voice referred to above. What then is that voice? It is the divine inner voice emanating from the *Atma* as I, I, I—*Aham, Aham, Aham*. It is this *Aham* that is the source of *Soham mantra* that goes on repeating itself, without any conscious effort, in all of us during the process of breathing. It is this *Aham* again that appears as *ahamkara* when it identifies itself with the body. *Ahamkara* is human; *Aham* is divine. This *Aham* can be realised only by purifying one's heart, never by studying scriptures and becoming a scholar.

You see the phenomenal universe, only as long as you have not crossed the threshold of the mind. Once you go beyond the mind, you will experience nothing but the Self. On reaching the sea, the river loses its individuality, its name and form and becomes one with the sea. So also the knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman.

When there is a pot, and also water in the pot, you will see the reflected image of the sun in the pot, but even when all these are absent, the Sun is ever present. Similarly, even when the reflecting media of the body (the pot), the mind and the water are not present, the Self will always be present, although one may not be able to see the Self or even its reflection. A noteworthy point, in this connection is that the image of the *Atma* that you get through the media of the body and mind is not true to the original *Atma*. It is similar to the reflection of your face in water, wherein your left eye appears as your right eye and vice versa. So also, when you are traveling in a train, your sight deceives you by giving you the impression that the trees and mountains etc. outside are in motion. These two examples serve to illustrate the point that all the distinctions you see in the phenomenal world are due to the distortions of your mind only. You have to go beyond the mind to realise the eternal truth.

People believe that every man has a free will. It is an entirely wrong belief. They imagine that it is because of man's will, determination, *sadhana*, and effort that he is able to achieve success. This is all due to the aberrations of their *ahamkara* and the reflection of their false sense of doership. Take the case of Karna, the hero of the Kurukshetra war in *Mahabharatha*. He had all the wherewithal needed for victory, mighty weapons, great physical and intellectual prowess, dauntless courage etc. etc. But with all his resources and assets, he suffered a crushing defeat and humiliating death in the battlefield. Why? Because he lacked only one thing, namely, the grace, help and support of the Divine. So, even for attaining success in the matter of attaining Self-knowledge, it is foolish to rely on one's physical, mental, and intellectual abilities and resources. What is needed is to recognise and cultivate the spirit of oneness of all that exists.

It is an undisputed fact that today a number of modern facilities, conveniences, and gadgets like aeroplanes, automobiles, cinemas, television sets, computers, radios, and videos, etc. are available in plenty. However, the basic and pertinent question that should be asked in this connection is: "Who is the beneficiary of all these amenities?" No doubt, the answer to this question will be "I". If only the "I" is there to start with, all the rest will follow. In the absence of this "I" there is no producer and no consumer; hence, no need to produce. Thus, it can be seen that everything centres around the "I". In other words, "Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world." However, it is important to

recognise that, man is essentially divine. And this divinity cannot be experienced except through *Atma jnana* (Self-knowledge).

Bhakthi (devotion) is the best means to experience this *Atma jnana* and enjoy *Atma ananda* (the bliss of the Self). What is *bhakthi*? It is constant contemplation on the Self. *Bhakthi* and *jnana* are not two different things. *Bhakthi* itself is *jnana*. And *jnana* itself is *bhakthi*. They are closely interrelated and interdependent. The singular bond that unites *bhakthi* and *jnana* is *prema*—Divine Love. With this sacred cord of *prema*, you can bind the Lord Himself.

The *Bhagavad Gita* exhorts, “*Uddareth Atmanaa Atmaanam* (Elevate yourself by your own efforts).” Contrary to this exhortation, many persons are labouring under the wrong notion that if they beget sons, the latter will help them to reach heaven after their death, by performing the *sraaddha* ceremony. It is foolish to think that those having sons reach the higher worlds and those having no sons will go down to the nether worlds. Further, *sraaddha* does not mean inviting the Brahmin priest, washing his feet, feeding him sumptuously, and obtaining his blessings. The real meaning of *sraaddha* is to offer *pinda* and *sraddha* or faith at the Lotus Feet of the Lord. And what is *pinda*? *Pinda* is not the rice ball as usually understood but the human body. Therefore, the true *pindadana* is to offer your body, all your physical and mental faculties and skills in the service of the Lord who has manifested Himself as the universe.

In *Vedantic* parlance, the human body is also called “*tunga-bhadra*”. *Tunga* means very high, vast, great etc. *Bhadra* means good, sacred, auspicious, effulgent, etc. The implication of calling the human body “*tunga-bhadra*” is that it is intended to undertake such noble activities as will bring about the welfare of the society. Therefore, to be worthy of this name, you should dedicate your body and mind to the loving service of all beings. In this context, you must remember the shining example of the great musician, Saint Thyagaraja, who proved himself worthy of his name, which literally means the “King of renunciation”. When the ruler of Tanjavur sent him a number of precious jewels and provisions necessary to run a household, he refused to accept them and sang extempore, addressing his mind thus, “Oh my dear mind! What is it that gives real happiness, wealth or the Lotus Feet of the Lord? Please tell me the truth.” Then he also sang a prayer to the Lord as follows, “Oh my beloved Lord Rama! Do you want to tempt me with these riches, and make it an excuse for deserting me? I have held fast your Lotus Feet with both my hands. How can these hands now leave your sacred feet, which are my permanent and precious treasure, in order to receive this transient tinsel of tempting wealth?” Therefore, just like Thyagaraja who proved himself worthy of his name, you should also prove yourself worthy of the name “*tunga-bhadra*”, which the scriptures have given to the human body.

Students! This Summer Course is a golden opportunity for you. So many elderly and eminent persons with rich experience behind them are giving you very valuable information. You should, however, utilise all this information for your transformation, which is possible only when you put into actual practice at least a few things out of the many things you have been hearing.

WHAT IS FREEDOM?

How glittering and quivering is the waterdrop on the lotus leaf!
 So is man's life in this transient world.
 Life is rife with strife, disease, and delusions.
 Alas! Sorrow and suffering reign supreme in this sordid world.
 Therefore, O foolish mind! Take refuge
 In the Name of Lord—Govinda, Govinda, Govinda!

Dear Students!

People in general cannot understand what is *aadhyaatmikam* or spirituality and what is individual freedom. Spirituality does not mean living in solitude, far away from society. On the other hand, true spirituality consists in sowing the seeds of love in the hearts of all people and facilitating the blossoming of peace and divine love among all mankind. If you enquire deeply into the nature of the divine principle, there are not two things like spirituality and individual freedom.

If one is allowed to express one's feelings and thoughts from a public platform without any let or hindrance, it is said to be freedom for the individual. But the truth is that no one has absolute freedom in this universe. The word freedom has been used freely and frequently in the political field. What is freedom? To get rid of foreign rule and to establish the rule of the natives of the nation was considered as freedom before India got her political independence. But that was neither individual freedom nor fundamental freedom. It was only a replacement of foreign rule by indigenous rule, with little or no change in the aspect of freedom as such. After the departure of the foreigners, we thought that the natives got their freedom. But in what aspect did we get freedom? What is the use of simply repeating "freedom", "freedom". It is only when we have achieved unity that we can claim to have attained freedom. Without achieving unity, if we talk of freedom, it is merely the freedom of words but not the freedom of the individuals. True freedom springs forth from the level of the heart.

What is meant by the heart? Not the physical heart full of flesh and blood. The real heart is that which has no connection with any particular place, time, individual or country. It is the divine principle, which is equally present in all persons at all times, in all places, and in all countries. This heart has no form. What we consider as the heart inside the human body comes in the middle and goes in the middle. But what we call as heart in the spiritual parlance knows no coming or going. It is eternal and changeless. Therefore, true freedom consists in recognising and realising this heart or divine Principle, knowing which, one becomes the knower of everything.

"*Yatha Andande tatha Brahmande.*" As is the microcosm, so is the macrocosm. Microcosm refers to the individual and macrocosm to the aggregate or sum total. One who knows one's Self knows all. Today's man tries to know everything about the world. He feels proud that he knows everything. But he forgets that he does not know himself. Mention is made in one of the *Upanishads* of a great sage by name Uddalaka, who sent his son Svetaketu to another *guru* for his education. Svetaketu took twelve years to acquire proficiency in all the branches of learning. Puffed up with pride, he returned to his father and told him about his profound scholarship. Then the father questioned him, "Oh

my son! have you known that, by knowing which you would be knowing everything.” The son was baffled by this question which gave a shattering blow to his pride of learning. Of all the kinds of pride, the pride of learning is the worst. By putting that question which intrigued his son, Sage Uddalaka made him recognise the superiority of Self-knowledge or *Atma jnanam* as compared to *loka jnanam* or secular knowledge.

When you ask someone, “Who are you?” and if he replies, “I don’t know who I am,” what will you think of him? You will consider him to be a mad fellow. Similarly, if you try to know about everything else without knowing who you are, are you any better than that mad fellow? Therefore, first of all, you should try to know who you are. You may say, “I am Ramaiah,” but Ramaiah is the name given to your body. But who is that “I” in your reply, who is separate from Ramaiah? You should understand the nature of that “I”. That “I” is nothing other than the “hridayam” or the heart. That “I” is the *Atma* or Self. That “I” is Brahman or the Supreme Reality. This heart is All-pervasive or Omnipresent.

Consider this illustration: A painter has painted a beautiful picture of a dancing girl on a sheet of paper. The picture shows her body and limbs with several bends and curves, ups and downs in the process of dancing. In another painting, there are high mountains and low valleys. But if you feel the paper by touching with your fingers, you will not find actually any ups and downs or elevations and depressions in either painting. So also, in the phenomenal world, you find many differences like ups and downs, good and bad, sins and virtues, truth and untruth, pain and pleasure etc. But at the level of the heart, you will not at all find these dualities or pairs of opposites.

Let us consider another example. Here is a tumbler. It has a name and a form. If you remove or ignore the name and form, what remains? Only silver. It was silver before becoming a tumbler. When it has the form of a tumbler also, it is only silver. If the tumbler is destroyed and made into a round mass, it will continue to be silver only. So it is nothing but silver in the beginning, the middle and the end. The name and form of tumbler were there only in the middle, but neither in the beginning or at the end. That which does not exist in the beginning and the end but exists only in the middle is considered to be really non-existent even in the middle also. Its apparent existence in the middle is only a myth or illusion. That is why the phenomenal world is called *mithya jagath* (illusory universe.)

Ekam Sath (Existence is One). When there is no second, how can the question of freedom or bondage arise? So these concepts of freedom and bondage are the concoctions of your own mind. We give attention and value to the moon, only when there is no sun. Why do we give value to the moon when there is no sun? The moon has no effulgence of its own. It shines only due to the reflection of the sun’s rays. Similarly, when we do not see the sun of Self, we give value to the moon of the mind. The *Vedas* have revealed that the mind is a reflection of the moon. Therefore we cherish the mind and nourish it by devoting more and more time and attention to it, as long as we do not engage ourselves in *Atma vichara* or Self-enquiry. It is only when you have the mind, that you see all such differences as spiritual and secular, sacred and mundane, freedom and bondage, man and woman, *Prakruthi* and *Para Thathwam*, Nature and Absolute Reality. All the dualities are the creations of the mind.

I wish to clarify some points relating to the debate that took place here on the subject of freedom and bondage. Suppose a man is suffering from dire poverty. He is very hungry. Even in spite of begging no one gives him food. Then he feels that he has the freedom to resort to stealing, in order to appease his hunger. Although he may rationalise

thus, because of his selfishness, his conscience does not approve his stealing. So how can it be called freedom, when it is disapproved by his conscience? It may, at best, be called freedom with bondage. When does one have real freedom? Only when the mind is destroyed. When you use words “*swabhava*” and “*swechcha*,” you have to understand their true meaning. “*Swa*” means Self or *Atma*. Hence “*swabhava*” means the nature of *Atma*. Likewise, *swa* + *ichcha* = “*swechcha*”, which means the volition of the *Atma*. Strictly speaking, it should be understood as volition that is in line with the *Atma*, since *Atma per se* has no volition. In the light of these meanings, it is incorrect to use the terms “*swabhava*” and “*swechcha*” in connection with matters relating to the activities of the body, senses, mind, and intellect. It should be recognised that man’s life is regulated by the laws of nature on the one hand and by man-made rules and regulations on the other. Such being the case, there is no validity in everyone thinking for himself that he has freedom to act as he likes. It is only God that may be said to have freedom. Even this is a relative truth, because in absolute terms, Existence is only one, so the word “freedom” is out of place in this context.

People talk glibly about surrender. Some persons complain, “I have completely surrendered myself to Swami, but there is no end to my problems, hardships, suffering, and sorrow.” In My view, this is no surrender at all. True surrender never takes into cognisance the presence or absence of sorrow, suffering or misery, and the like. There are some others who say, “When I sit in meditation, I sometime go into *samadhi*.” But what is *samadhi*? In books written by worldly people with mundane views, one may find various descriptions of *samadhi*. While in meditation, a person may lose body-consciousness. But this cannot rightly be called *samadhi*. It may be a symptom of weakness, fits, hysteria or emotion, but never a sign of *samadhi*. Merging the mind in the *Atma* is alone *samadhi*. In that state, one does not see or experience duality. *samadhi* = *sama* + *dhi*, which essentially means equal-mindedness. In that condition, there will be no trace of such differences like pleasure and pain, gain and loss, virtue and sin, or “*Prakruthi* and *Paramatma*” (Nature and God). This alone is the evidence of equal-mindedness. This truly is “*swabhava*” (nature of the Self). In contrast to this, if a man aspires for something in his life and pursues various paths to achieve it, you may take it all as an indication of mental aberrations.

As long as the mind is there, no one can claim to be enjoying freedom. In the worldly parlance, one may say, “I have money, I am giving it to him. This is my freedom etc.” But truly speaking, this is neither freedom nor free will. The mind is a mixture of the three *Gunas*—*sathwa*, *raja*, and *thamas*. One or more of these three may become dominant at a given time in a given person. In the present instance, the mind of the man who is giving some money to another person is motivated by the *sathwa guna* to give something in charity to the needy person. Hence, when a man acts under the influence of the *gunas*, how can he claim to have freedom of will? It is, therefore, impossible for any body who is a part of the creation to have freedom. Justice Khastagir told you, a little while ago, that a person has freedom to take exercise by waving a stick as he likes in the compound of his house, but he has no such freedom to do so in a public road, because it is against governmental rules and regulations, and he is liable to be arrested by the police. However, strictly speaking, where the man takes exercise by waving his stick in the premises of his residence, what is involved is not freedom but only the fulfillment of his wish or desire. Whenever a man does something for the sake of his personal benefit, it signifies

only his desire for that thing. That alone can be termed as true freedom that emanates from the Heart, irrespective of the place, time, person, or thing.

The highly talented persons in different walks of life have not acquired their skills from somewhere outside. All these are but manifestations of their own innate potentialities. It is sheer ignorance to think that any person can be developed by some other person. Everything is in you alone. All that you do by way of your effort is to manifest or give an outer expression to what is already inherent in you. So, even in the spiritual field, all the *sadhana* that you need to do is to remove the obstruction, namely, the ignorance that is preventing the manifestation of the divinity already present in you. Krishna too taught this very truth to Arjuna as follows:

“Arjuna, you did not know the art and science of archery when you were born. You are under the impression that Drona instructed you and therefore you acquired the skills of warfare from somewhere outside. It is not correct to think that Drona taught you and that you learnt these skills afresh. All that Drona did was to facilitate the manifestation of what was already in you. Remember that any teacher or even any great man endowed with extra-ordinary powers cannot bring out what is not already inside you. Luck or ill luck, bliss or misery—all these are in you only. Suppose you are digging a well. On reaching the depth of, say, 100 feet from the ground-level, you strike a good spring with copious supply of water. Now, have you created the water or brought it from somewhere? No, no. Water was there all the while. It came to view because the earth that was hiding it was removed. So too, there is divinity ever present in you. But you have forgotten it. Why did you forget? Because of your wrong identification with your body.

As long as there is mind, man cannot escape from thoughts of various kinds. These indicate the freedom of the mind, but not freedom of the man. Sampath told you that a student has the freedom to question the teacher and obtain answers. But this does not come under “freedom”. It comes under duty; the duty of a student is to abide by the regulations of the educational system, which provides for asking questions and obtaining answers. You should understand the difference between freedom and duty. Duty may be considered under three categories: *sambandham* (relationship), *nirbandham* (compulsion), and *kartavyam* (obligation). The differences between these three will be clear if we consider some examples.

You wanted to give a tea party to your friends on a Sunday evening. Accordingly, you invited your friends in advance. But at 4 p.m. on Sunday you developed high temperature. So you informed all the invitees that the tea party is postponed. In this situation, you may or may not have the tea party, as you wish. But this is not freedom; it is “*sambandham*” (relationship), something voluntary and optional.

Next, about “*nirbandham*”. You are in the office. Suddenly, you are attacked by high fever. On that very day, your director or boss is coming to inspect your office. So you cannot go on leave of absence. Therefore, you run to the doctor, take an injection and some tablets for your illness, and attend office compulsorily in spite of your suffering from fever. This is a case of “*nirbandham*” or compulsion.

Thirdly “*kartavyam*”. Due to some reasons, a quarrel arises between you and your wife. In a fit of anger you beat your wife. She goes away into the bedroom and lies down, weeping in agony. She does not attend to cooking. You are sitting in the drawing room. You are extremely angry on two accounts: firstly for the reason that led to your quarrel and secondly because your wife has not cooked food and you are very hungry. So, due to the combination of both anger and hunger, you are very restless. Just then, a good friend

of yours comes to visit you. You greet him with a smile, saying “hallo, hallo” and after offering him a seat, you go inside and tell your wife in a hushed voice but with an angry tone, “My friend has come; prepare coffee.” You show an angry face to your wife but a happy countenance to your friend. You don’t want your friend to know that you are angry with your wife, nor do you want your wife to know that you are jolly with your friend. Since you are thus obliged to adjust your behaviour to suit different persons and situations, in conformity with the social norms and etiquette, it is called *kartavyam* or obligation.

Nowadays, people in general, have given the go-by to all the three—*sambandham*, *nirbandham* and *kartavyam* (relationship, compulsion, and obligation). Hence there is “*dharmaglani*” (an all round decline of righteousness in the modern society). It should be noted that there is no freedom for man in acting according to “relationship, compulsion, and obligation” as illustrated above. There is freedom only at the level of the *Atma* or Self.

Engage yourself in any activity, but always keep in view your true nature as the Self or *Atma*. If you do so, you will surely enjoy real freedom. There are not two kinds of freedom—individual and spiritual. “*Adhi atmikam*” or spirituality alone is “*swatantryam*” or freedom. Freedom alone is spirituality. It is not possible for these two to exist separately. There is only one entity that has assumed different names and forms. Just as the same milk assumes the different names and forms of curd or yoghurt, buttermilk, cream, butter, etc. Similarly *saalokyam*, *saameepyam*, *saroopyam*, and *sayujyam* are different names for the same spiritual experience. These four, however, are progressive steps in the process of God-realisation. “*Saalokyam*” means always thinking of God and living in the spiritual world or God’s world, so to say, as against the material world. “*Saameepyam*” indicates moving closer to Swami or God. “*Saroopyam*” means becoming one like Swami. “*Sayujyam*” is the final stage of becoming Swami Himself i.e. complete merger without any trace of duality.

If anyone in this phenomenal world says he is having freedom, we can call it only “*verri swatantryam*” or crazy freedom. It may also be called “*ahamkara swatantryam*” i.e. freedom of the ego, and “*abhimana swatantryam*,” i.e., freedom of infatuation or attachment. It is foolish on your part if you think you have the freedom to scold and beat your wife or children. If you want to enhance your freedom by suppressing the freedom of others, it is utter selfishness only. True freedom lies in not interfering with the freedom of others. You do not find such freedom in this world. What you find in this world is a hierarchy of controls, the one at a higher level controlling the one at a lower level. This results in lack of freedom for all except perhaps for the one top-most person in the hierarchy. But, strictly speaking, even this one person occupying the top-most rung of the hierarchical ladder cannot be said to have freedom because the question of freedom does not arise when there is only one without a second. What we call “individual freedom” and “fundamental rights” may serve the purpose of enabling us to carry on our mundane affairs. But in the absolute sense, there is no true freedom involved in these matters.

From the above discussion, we arrive at the conclusion that, from whatever angle we may consider the matter, there is no freedom for man and there can be no freedom for man. In fact, man does not know what true freedom means. One who has freedom does not take birth in this world. One who enters the world with a body, cannot have freedom. Jayamma gave you the example of an animal tied to a peg or stake with a rope of ten feet length to illustrate that the animal has a limited freedom within a diameter of ten feet. But

how can you speak of freedom when the animal is tied by a rope to the stake at one end and to its neck at the other end, and when it cannot go beyond ten feet? Anything that is bound by any limitation whatsoever cannot and should not be said to have freedom. This only shows that we are in the habit of using words without knowing their correct meaning.

If you understand the true meaning of the “heart”, you will recognise that it is beyond all limitations. The same heart that is within you is also within all others including even those who are hated by you or who hate you. You may have the doubt that if all have the same heart, why should their thoughts, attitudes, and actions be different. Students! Remember that all these differences are created by the mind, and they have nothing to do with the heart. This is not the physical heart but the spiritual heart, which is omnipresent. It has no form, but it is the substratum for all forms, just as sugar is the common basis for all kinds of sugar dolls of different animals, which are liked by different children.

All the differences you find in the world are only reflections of your mind. Whether you love someone or hate someone or ridicule someone, they are all only your reflections. If you gave up these “reactions, resounds, and reflections” of your mind, which appear to you in the phenomenal world, and get hold of the Heart called Reality, then all these differences in thoughts, feelings, action; etc. would disappear. God does not have thoughts and feelings of any kind. But He appears to respond suitably according to the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and actions like worship, prayer, etc., of the devotees. He has no likes and dislikes. Nor is He angry with some and pleased with some others. He does not have moods that change from time to time in respect of the same person or different persons, as is imagined by many of you. Of course, as a result of putting on a body, the *Avatars* also appear to have such reactions, resounds, and reflections but it is only to set an example to others and to help them to reform themselves, so that they may make the needed progress in their spiritual journey. God does not differentiate or discriminate between “high” caste and “low” caste, between the young and the old, between men and women, between people of one country and another etc., etc. These are all mundane differences pertaining to the phenomenal world but have nothing to do with Divinity. It is only narrow-mindedness to think that Rama was born in a Kshatriya family, Krishna in the Yadava or cowherd family, or Sai Baba in Raju-Kshatriya family and so on.

God will never have such differences. If one understands rightly the nature of the divine principle of the *Atma*, there will be no scope for such petty, narrow-minded differences and discriminations.

Living in this vast universe, you must develop broad thoughts and feelings, to understand the nature of the infinite *Atma*. Spirituality should not be approached from a narrow standpoint. Doing worship, Bhajans or devotional singing, meditation and the like are considered by many as signs of spirituality. But all these are only mental aberrations, and serve to give only mental satisfaction to the practitioners. You praise God, saying, “Lord, you are my mother, my father, my friend,” and so on. But why all this mumbo-jumbo or gibberish? Why not simply say, “You are I; I am you,” and be done with it? In this connection, it is not correct to say, “You and I are one,” because you and I are we, but never one. It is better to say, “We and we are one,” because I am in you and you are in Me. Therefore, when we come together, we become one. However in the statement: “We and we are one,” there is duality, because the “we” consists of the physical body and the divine principle of the *Atma*. If you understand the nature of these two aspects of your personality, you will not think of the relationships like mother, father, friend, etc. between

yourself and God. You are both one, although you may appear as two. Here is a concrete illustration for this. The mike in front of Me appears as two but functions as one only in the process of amplifying my voice so as to make it audible to all of you. Similarly you should visualise and realise the unity of the body and the *Hridayam* or *Atma*. This is the one *sadhana* you should practice.

Students!

Spirituality means merger with God. You are not different from God. You are God, God is you. If you are firmly established in this faith, you need not undertake any other *sadhana* or spiritual practices. Of course, some people repeat parrot-like, “I and you are one,” but they do not live up to it. Here is a small story to illustrate this. A *guru* gave the *mantra* “*Sivoham*” to one of his disciples and told him that the *mantra* means “I am Siva.” As the disciple was uttering, “*Sivoham, Sivoham,*” a friend of his came and asked him about the meaning of the *mantra*, the friend questioned him, “If you are Siva, how is Parvathi related to you?” The immediate response of the disciple was: “May God forgive my offence! Goddess Parvathi is far superior to me and deserves my adoration and worship.” The point to be noted here is that if the disciple had real faith and conviction in the *mantra*, “*Sivoham*”, which implies that there is only one God who appears to have assumed all the names and forms of all gods and goddesses, as well as of all beings in the entire universe, then the correct answer to his friend’s question would have been, “I am Parvathi too.” Instead of that, this wrong reply was due to his belief in the traditional husband-wife relationship—that Parvathi was Siva’s consort. Therefore, this kind of complications will arise if you think of God in terms of such worldly, physical relationships like mother, father, etc. Instead of that you should have unshakeable faith in the unity of Godhead and assert, I am you, you are I; we are not two, but one.” This is the true freedom inherent in you. In this context you should understand the correct meaning of the terms “*swa dharma*” and “*para dharma*” used in the *Gita*. The meaning of “*swa dharma*” is *Atma dharma*, and not the *dharma* or duties enjoined on the different castes like *Brahmana dharma*, *kshatriya dharma*, and so on. Like-wise, “*para dharma*” means “*deha dharma*” (*dharma* pertaining to the body). It is in this sense that you should understand the declaration in the *Gita*, “*Paradharmo bhayavahah*”, which in effect means that if you follow the “*deha dharma* or the *dharma* of the physical body, fear will be your lot in life. On the other hand, if you follow the “*Atma dharma*”, there will be no fear for you. If you thus understand the real meanings of the verses and words in the *Gita* and if you mould your lives accordingly, you will have no fear of calumny, ridicule, sorrow, and suffering.

Students! You may or may not believe Me, when I say, “I do not know what sorrow is, what worry is, or what hardship means!” Some may praise Me and worship Me. Others may criticise and vilify Me. It is their will and pleasure in either case. I am not at all bothered. My attitude toward others abusing Me is: if they abuse or scold Me aloud, I say, “Gone with the wind,” if they abuse Me silently within themselves, I say, it hurts only them, for it does not reach me.” In either case, why should I be worried at all? Therefore, if you are established in Truth, you will never be affected by praise or blame, by joy or sorrow. People come to Me and complain about the bereavements in their family or some suffering or pain etc. I respond to them by saying, “*Challa santosham,*” which means “Very happy.” You should note that this kind of happiness remains the same under all circumstances, because it is based on the “*Atma Thathwa*”—that is, “Everything is *Atma*.” However, sometimes I pretend to be angry with students because of

their wrong behaviour. But it is only outward anger; it does not come from inside. I may not speak to some persons for months together. That is the medicine to cure them of their disease of misbehaviour and to set them right. What right has anybody to ask why Swami is not talking to him?

A small example for this. Four patients come to a doctor. They have all come with the same complaint of stomach ache. The doctor examines them one after the other. He sends one of them away with the advice to have hot water fomentations. For the second patient he gives a mixture of mag sulph and soda bicarb and tells him that he will be relieved of his stomach ache, which is due to gas trouble. For the third person, he gives some tablets. But he wants the fourth person to undergo a surgical operation immediately, because his stomach pain is due to appendicitis. Similarly, I give different treatments to different persons based on their needs and for their own good. I don't look at all at some people. I don't speak to some. I avoid or bypass some people although they try to attract my attention. These are all my prescriptions for their respective diseases. Why do I administer such medicines or treatments? I have got principles. My word is very precious. Even if you don't give value to My word, I attach great importance and value to My word. If somebody does not heed My word, I don't like to waste My words by speaking to him. Hence in order to save the value of My words, I stop talking to such persons. Instead of complaining that Swami does not talk to me, why don't you blame yourself for not acting according to Swami's instructions? This is not "One-way traffic". It is a matter of "give and take". If Swami's orders are implicitly obeyed by you, His Grace is showered on you automatically. You need not specially pray for His Grace. First of all, attach value to your own words. Remember the wise saying, "Truth is the life of a word; a battalion of brave soldiers is the life of a fort, modesty is the life of a woman, and signature is the life of a promissory note or bond."

All cannot understand the nature of Divinity. God is never elated or depressed. Even if the whole world blames and reviles Me, I will not be depressed. Even if the entire world extols Me, I will not be elated. This is because I am established in Truth. There will be no room for any worry or anxiety if you are firmly established in the Heart or *Atma* or Truth,—all of which mean the same. Try to understand the divinity of Swami, who is the changeless support or *adhara* of all that changes (*adheya*), and thus sanctify and justify your stay here for this summer course.

PRACTICE AND PRECEPT

Dear Students!

The world in which we live is impermanent. Youth comes in the middle and goes in the middle. It is not a sign of the educated to gloat over their impetuous and turbulent youth. As for wealth, it is as momentary as the lightning. Wife and children join you midstream and leave you midstream in the river of life. Before marriage, who was the wife and who was the husband? So also, before birth, who was the mother and who was the child? Wife, children and other relatives are like the travellers who meet and depart overnight from a caravanserai. All these are transient. What then is permanent? Only two things: *dharma* (righteousness) and *keerthi* (fame). As the scriptures have declared: “*Yat drisyam tat nasyam* (whatever is visible is perishable). The entire manifested universe will be washed away by the river of time. The eye that sees and the world that is seen—both are short-lived.

Without developing the *jnana chakshu* (the eye of wisdom), if a man is content with the *charma chakshu* (the physical eye) only, he is no better than the birds and beasts. Human life is invaluable, purposeful, and worth experiencing and enjoying. For the fulfillment of such a precious and sacred human life, the acquisition of *Atma jnana* (Self-knowledge) is highly indispensable. The scriptures proclaim, on the one hand, that among all beings in the animal kingdom, it is a rare privilege to be born as a human being. They also declare on the other hand, that a man devoid of *jnana* is equal to a brute. The physical eyes of man can see only the gross external world but not the inner divinity, which is highly subtle. As a matter of fact, the physical eyes cannot even see all the gross things; for example, the eyes cannot see themselves without the aid of a mirror; they cannot see some parts of the very body to which they belong, for example the head and the back. So, when these physical eyes are incapable of seeing even the entire gross body to which they belong, how can they see the subtle mind? When they cannot see even the subtle mind, how can they see the *Atma*, which is the subtlest of all? Therefore, the physical eyes are helpful to man, only for carrying his mundane activities in the phenomenal world.

The eye of wisdom is highly essential to every man. *Jnana netram* (the eye of wisdom), *divya netram* (the divine eye), *Atma netram* (the eye of the Self), *Brahma netram* (the eye of Brahman) —all these names are synonymous. Only when you have the firm faith that all is Brahman (*Sarvam Brahman*), you will see the entire universe as Brahman. That is why the scriptures have exhorted: fill your vision (*dhristi*), with *jnana* (wisdom), and you will see the *srishti* (creation), filled with Brahman (The Supreme Absolute). The colour of the entire *Prakruthi* (Nature) depends upon the colour of the glasses through which the physical eyes look at it.

All things that are visible are subject to change. However, the substratum of all this changing phenomena is the changeless Divine Principle (Brahman), just as the stationary road supports the movement of the fast running buses and cars. Only if you recognise the changeless Divine Principle that supports the changing universe can you easily understand the entire secret of the universe. Your mind is the cause of your inability to understand the real nature of this world. The characteristic of the mind is *pravritthi*—external orientation. Man is wasting his life, night and day, for acquiring external things like houses, lands, vehicles, wealth and other so-called “properties” which, in fact, are not

“proper ties”. Is it for the sake of these trifles that man is born? No. No. No. To realise God is his foremost task in life. Man must realise God, feel God, see God and talk to God. This is realisation. This is religion. It serves no purpose if one knows everything else but does not know God.

A few minutes earlier, Anil Kumar spoke to you about botany. The flowers and fruits that we want from the tree and that are seen on the tree top depends on the unseen roots below the ground for their growth and development. So, in order to get a good harvest of flowers and fruits, we need to apply water and manure not to the visible flowers and fruit, but to the invisible roots, which alone can give them nourishment. Likewise it is the Divine Principle (*Atma Thathwa*) that serves as the root for the tree of this world. It is mentioned in the *Gita* that God is the seed of all beings. What is the significance of this statement? When you plant a seed in the soil, it germinates and in due course of time it grows into a big tree with several branches. Each branch puts forth many flowers, which develop into so many fruits. Each of these fruits will have a seed in it similar to the seed that gave rise to the tree. Thus from one seed, you have got hundreds of seeds of the same type.

Now, according to the *Gita*, God is the seed that has given rise to the tree of this vast universe. Each country is a branch of this tree. In each branch there are a number of fruits, namely, various kinds of living beings, each of which carries within it the seed of Divinity. It means that in every being, God is there in the form of the spirit or *Atma*. Students of today are not making effort to recognise this subtle truth behind the gross universe. They spend all their time for specialising in one of the subjects like physics, chemistry, zoology, botany, mathematics, commerce, etc. so that they may earn their livelihood, never giving any thought to the goal of life, which is more important than making a living.

According to one of the most important *mantras* in the *Veda*, immortality can be obtained only by *thyaga* (renunciation) but not by good action, progeny, or wealth. etc. But what exactly is renunciation? It does not mean giving up one's wife and children, or house and other properties. What actually is your bondage? It is the delusion of your identification with the body. You must give up the false idea that you are the body and imbibe the truth that you are the *Atma*. Only then *alone* can you achieve liberation (*moksha*). *Deha virakthi* (detachment from body consciousness) will free you from the grief of bondage, and *Daiva asakthi* (attachment of God) will give you the bliss of *moksha* and merger with God. How to get rid of *deha bhranthi* (body-consciousness)? Not by giving up food and drink, reducing the body to a skeleton, and courting death but by asserting with faith that “I am not the body. The body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect are all my instruments (*upadhis*).” You must give up your body consciousness, just as you remove your soiled clothes.

In the debate that took place the day before yesterday, it was argued that one has the freedom to eat when hungry and drink water when thirsty. But how can you call this freedom? You are forced to eat food to appease your hunger and drink water to quench your thirst. Here you are simply following the law of nature. There is no question of freedom in this. It is only bliss that is connected with freedom. How can you have that bliss? Can you get it from the body or the mind? Not at all. The bliss that you may derive through the body and mind is but momentary. You have not been born just for this kind of transient and trivial joys. You have yourself put on this human body to enjoy everlasting bliss.

All things happen according to the divine will (*Daiva sankalpam*). By your own effort you cannot achieve anything. The day before yesterday, I told you how, in several instances, men could not achieve things in spite of all their efforts and how success came seeking those who had not tried for it. It is only due to *ahamkara* that you wrongly appropriate to yourself both doership and enjoyership (*kartritwa* and *bhoktritwa*). You are the very embodiment of bliss. Bliss is your very nature. But it is a tragedy that you are unable to recognise it and experience it. This bliss is veiled by likes and dislikes, the sense of “I” and “mine”, hesitation and doubt, pleasure and displeasure etc. *Raga* and *dwesha* (attachment and hatred) are the thick clothes that shroud the bliss in you. When you get rid of attachment and hatred, you can discover your own real nature. How strange and foolish it is that despite yourself being the very embodiment of bliss, you are searching for bliss elsewhere! Although everything is within you, you are unfortunately running after petty desires and silly sensual pleasures in the phenomenal world. What is the reason for this mad race? Ignorance of the truth that you are yourself the source of all bliss.

Students! You know that the gigantic elephant with a giant’s strength meekly submits to the control of the puny driver holding the spur. Why? Because the elephant is ignorant of its own strength. Similarly, the black bumble bee can burrow holes into a very hard wooden beam, and go in and out of it. But the same bee enters into a tender and soft lotus flower, gets entrapped, and dies because it knows not its own strength. Likewise, man does not try to recognise his innate divinity, sacredness, and bliss. Leave alone his failure to try, what is still worse, he refuses to believe even when told about it. Students! If you put forth the required effort, you will definitely experience the truth of your own divinity and bliss. The musk-deer, not knowing that the musky fragrance emanates from its own navel, roams about restlessly all over the forest, in search of the source of that smell. At last it becomes very tired and lies down in the shade of a tree for taking rest. While lying down, it keeps its nose near its navel, and then recognises that the fragrance is coming out of its own navel. And now it says to itself, “Alas! what a great fool am I! Not knowing that I myself am the source of the fragrance, I was searching in vain all through the forest, putting myself to unnecessary trouble!” This is the nature of ignorance. This exactly is the plight of man too. *Nityanandam* (eternal Bliss), *Brahmanandam* (infinite Bliss), and *Adwaitanandam* (non-dual bliss) are the very nature and form of man. But, lured by the momentary sensuous worldly pleasures, man is unable to seek, to understand and to enjoy this supreme divine bliss. Unlike the so-called bliss derived from material things, the bliss of the *Atma* is never tainted by sorrow. If you fill up a vessel with *payasam*, a sweet made by boiling a cereal in milk with sugar, and then make several holes in the vessel, what comes out of any or all of these holes will be only the sweet *payasam*. Similar is the case with *Atmananda* (the bliss of the *Atma*), which manifests itself in various ways. That is why the sages have named the *Atma* as *Ananda* and described it variously as eternal bliss, supreme bliss, absolute bliss, bliss of wisdom, bliss transcending all the pairs of opposites, pure bliss, unshakeable bliss, bliss that is beyond the grasp of the mind, bliss which transcends the three *gunas*, and so on. When such priceless treasure of bliss is readily available within you, why should you foolishly run after this phenomenal world, which brings you trials and tribulations, sufferings and sorrow?

The treasuries and banks that contain huge sums of money are provided with the required safety and security measures—strong iron gates, steel chests, and huge locks, besides night and day watch by fully-armed watchmen. Likewise, the invaluable treasury of bliss is being constantly guarded by the highly poisonous serpent called *ahamkara*. But

what is the cause of this *ahamkara*? Is it wealth, strength, position, power, or learning? No, none of these. The root cause of *ahamkara* is *deha bhranthi* (mistaken identification of oneself with his body). As for the other things like wealth, position, power, etc., it must be clear to you that all the past history and the present happenings in the world, as well as the teachings of the *Gita* and scriptures, reveal that all these are highly transient. They do not follow you even up to the grave, not to speak of beyond the grave. What accompanies you even after death is the good or the bad done by you during your lifetime.

Students! Don't forget that "as you sow, so you reap." This is the inviolable Law of *Karma*, in which Indians have firm belief. Before entering into action, ask yourself thus: "I am the embodiment of the divine *Atma*; is it proper for me to engage myself in this mean, despicable action?" If you practise such self-restraint and self-discipline, you will be able to keep yourself away from evil and move closer and closer to the *Atma*. Make use of your talents and resources for the welfare of the world rather than for making quick money by resorting to treachery and corruption in pursuit of self-interest.

Patriotism—love for the land of one's birth—is extremely important. Once when Subhas Chandra Bose was a student of the Calcutta University, a British Lecturer spoke disparagingly about India and Indians. Young Subhas Chandra was upset by this but restrained himself from retaliation for quite some time. However, when he found the Lecturer exceeding the limits of decency and decorum, he could not contain himself any longer. He sprang to his feet, swiftly jumped across the benches and pouncing upon the Lecturer, thrashed him with his shoe. In a few minutes the news spread like wild fire throughout the University Campus. The authorities held an emergency meeting and passed orders debarring Subhas from the University for a period of five years. Thus Subhas sacrificed his education for the sake of upholding the honour of his motherland. Consequently his father sent Subhas to London for his higher studies. There, too, Subhas evinced his sense of patriotism. He had distinguished himself in his studies there and hence ever had good opportunities to stay back in London, had he been interested in his self-advancement. But prodded by his patriotic fervour, Subhas returned to India after passing I.C.S. (Indian Civil Service) examination with a high rank and entered politics instead of Government service. Students should follow his example and sacrifice their "*swartha*" (selfish interest) for *parartha* (the welfare of others) and attain *Paramartha* (the supreme goal of life).

Remember that *Bhagavad Gita*, *Bible*, *Koran*, *Granth Sahib*, and other holy scriptures are not intended for "*parayana*" (mere recitation). They are meant for *acharana* (practice). It is not a sign of *Bhakthi* (devotion) to memorise all the 700 verses of the *Gita* or give learned commentaries thereon. It is only a proof of ostentation.

Today, what the world needs are men of action (*aachara manavas*), and not men of words in human form (*aakara manavas*). By your intellectual acumen, you may aspire for such titles of honour like Padma Sri and Padma Bhushan, but you cannot hope to win the title of Amrita Putra (children of immortality) the title that the *Veda* proclaims as the birthright of man. There can be no other title equal to, or higher than this title of Amrita Putra. And it is for this title that you must all strive. You should develop *desabhimanam*, *Daivabhimanam*, and *dharma-bhimanam* (love of country, love of God, and love of *dharma*). There is no *Dharma* higher than *sathya*, and no *sathya* higher than *dharma*. *Sathya* and *dharma* are inseparable and interdependent. Try to practise them to some extent, at least, and spread the benefits to the society at large. Only then will you understand what bliss is. Bliss is the goal for which you undertake any activity—mundane or spiri-

tual. Bliss is the goal of all religions. The paths may be many but the goal is one just as jewels are many, but gold is one, and cows are many, but milk is one. Therefore you should never criticise any religion. Along with your education, try to develop equal-mindedness, and universal love, so that you can experience the unity in diversity.

ASCENT OF MAN

It is God's greatness, grandeur and majesty that you see in the sky-scraping peaks of the high mountains.

It is His sublime silence and His supreme peace that you find in the remote forests and the vast deserts;

It is His glorious effulgence and beautiful splendour that you witness in the sun, the moon, and the countless galaxies in the sky;

It is His love and creativity that you find reflected in the inhabitants of villages, towns and cities that adorn the earth.

Whatever thing of beauty you come across in this universe is a reminder of, and a tribute to the "Source of All Beauty"—the Divine Lord!

Mallamma of Karnataka State gave a simple but charming description of God's omnipresent beauty in the following words: "Lotus flower is the ornament for the lake. Houses are the ornaments for a village. Waves are the ornaments for the ocean. Moon is the ornament for the sky." Whatever things of beauty you see in the world are but the reflections of the one source of all beauty—the divine Lord. That is why the *Upanishads* have described God as *Sathyam*, *Sivam*, and *Sundaram* (Truth, Goodness and Beauty). The ornament for mankind is "*mana-vatvam*". This "*mana-vatvam*" is indispensable for human society. Whether one is a reputed scholar, an eminent scientist, or a great administrator, the development of human qualities is most essential for everyone. The development of society, the state, and the nation is proportionate to the development of *mana-vatvam* or the human state. If human qualities are lost, the honour of society and the nation will be lost.

The honour of mankind depends on its morality and integrity. It is essential for the students of today to foster the human qualities. The human values can progress and thrive only in a spiritual environment. It is only when seeds are sown in the soil and watered regularly that they will sprout and develop into big trees that yield good fruits. Instead of this, if the seeds are kept in a tin and watered, they will only rot and perish. Likewise, morality and integrity can thrive only in the human heart. Morality is the fulfillment of character and conduct. Morality elevates man to a higher level. Since time immemorial, India has been sharing her spiritual wealth with the other nations of the world and spreading among them the message of morality and integrity. Morality and integrity alone are the real and eternal temples of God. In the absence of morality, the human race will go to rack and ruin. Today, the supreme need of this country and the world is morality. It is extremely necessary to observe morality in all places and in all situations. Marshal Pope taught that morality should not be violated even in times of war or any crises including risk to one's life. William Gladstone, Prime Minister to Queen Victoria, strained every nerve to safeguard morality at all times, so people respected him more than even the queen.

Morality is achieved through the control of the senses. He alone can control others who can control himself. How can one who has no self-discipline enforce discipline on others? Only when there is harmony between one's words and actions can a man achieve great things in his life.

If a man practises what he preaches,
He is not an ordinary man, but a *mahatma* (great man).
If a man says one thing and does another thing,
He is only a beast, not a man.

In modern society, there is no concord between words and deeds. If there is harmony between one's words and action, it is *sathyam*. If there is harmony between one's thought, word, and deed, it is *ritam*.

Today's students do not know what is sense-control. This is called *samyama* (self-restraint). Only man is capable of this *samyama*. Man is forfeiting his divinity by giving a free reign to his senses. The control of sense organs is called *damam* in Sanskrit. One who has achieved *damam* is called a *daanta*. What we need in today's world are *daantulu* (people with control over their sense organs), but not *Vedaantulu* (people well versed in *Vedanta*). Today, *Vedanta* is confined to oratory and ostentation; the practising of *Vedanta* is on the decline. No wonder, therefore, that there is scarcity of *Ananda* or bliss.

Every student should become a *daanta*. Even before acquiring knowledge, today's student is becoming saturated with egoism, pride, and ostentation and is running amuck in society. Students are not even aware of discipline and obedience. They do not know how to talk and behave with elders. Of course, the students are not to be blamed entirely for this state of affairs. The parents and the teachers are neither setting a proper example to them, nor encouraging them in such matters. That is why the condition of students is deteriorating day by day. Students should try to behave properly, to control their senses, and thereby to foster peace in society. The youth of today are fond of frivolous talk. This has become a hobby for them. They are allergic to good and gentle words. Spirituality is a matter of ridicule for them. Such deplorably bad atmosphere among the students is ever on the increase; so much so they are not in a position to understand even the purpose of education. They should, first of all, disabuse their minds of the wrong notion that the purpose of education is for securing jobs and earning money. They should not forget the fact that education is intended to help them to reach the goal of life. Of course, they need to take up some jobs for earning their livelihood. But they should scrupulously adhere to morality and integrity in performing their duties, without stooping to indulge in immoral practices like corruption and cheating etc. Knowledge and money are not bad in themselves. Goodness or badness depends upon how you make use of them.

Students! The air that we inhale has to be exhaled. Otherwise the lungs will be damaged. Likewise, the knowledge you learn and money you earn should be used for the good of the society. Otherwise they are as worthless as the dust under your feet. You should repay your debt to society, which has contributed to your education and earnings. This is real *seva* or Service. This kind of spirit of sacrifice is conspicuous by its absence among the present-day students. Earning and hoarding—this sort of one-way traffic seems to be their ideal in life! Many of you know how to swim. You must be aware that unless you push back the water, you cannot move forward in the process of swimming. This shows that without sacrifice, you cannot achieve progress in life. You have to sacri-

fice not only your money, but also your bad qualities. Giving up bad qualities is the true sacrifice or renunciation. Renouncing your wife and children, or wealth and property, is not a great sacrifice. It is easier than giving up your evil propensities. And the latter alone will lead to the full blossoming of the human personality.

Students! To live as a true human being is the great task of man. It is a blot on the human state for a man to live like an animal. The humanness in man is being crushed to extinction by the *arishadvarga* (the gang of the six internal foes), namely, *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *matsarya* (desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy). The moon can shed her cool, bright light on the earth in full measure only when she has developed all her sixteen *kalaas* (attributes in full). Man, on the other hand, can shed his effulgence on society only when he gets rid of the sixteen bad qualities, namely the six internal enemies (*arishadvarga*), eight kinds of *mada* (pride), and the two qualities of *rajas* (restlessness) and *thamas* (inertia). He must also give up *kartrithva* and *bhoktrithva* (the sense of doership and enjoyership). With the faith that all is Brahman (*Sarvam Brahman*) if one engages oneself in good actions and dedicates them to the Divine, one will receive God's grace and the help needed by Him. Potana, the great devotee and poet who wrote the Telugu *Bhagavatam*, dedicated his work to Lord Rama at the outset, by saying that Rama was the real writer and he (Potana) was a mere instrument in Rama's hands. There is a great spiritual significance to Potana's verse of dedication, which is a restatement of the famous *mahavakya*, viz. *Thath-thwam-asi* (that-thou-art). In the present instance, *Thath* or *That* is represented by the divine Lord Rama, *Thwam* or *Thou* by the poet-devotee Potana, and *Asi* or *Art* by the book *Bhagavatham*. In other words, *Bhagavan*, *Bhaktha*, and *Bhagavatha*—God, the devotee, and the scripture—are three in one. Moreover the five letters, “*Bha-ga-va-ta-mu*” have their own spiritual significance. These five letters may be considered as the five elements, five senses, five sheaths or *pancha koshas* and five life-breaths or *pancha pranas*. The letter *bha* stands for *bhakthi* or devotion, *ga* for *gyan* or *jnana* or wisdom, *va* for *vairagya* or renunciation, *ta* for *thathwam* or realisation, and *mu* for *mukthi* or liberation. Thus, these five letters represent the progressive steps for man's liberation from bondage or ignorance.

Students! You celibates or *brahmacharis* are the foundation for the mansion of life. The life of a householder may be compared to the walls and that of the recluse or *vanaprastha* to the roof. If the foundation is not secure, the whole mansion will collapse. Hence you have to develop good qualities without which there can be no peace for you or for society. Unfortunately, today's man thinks only about himself and his family, ignoring society. Without society, where are you and where is your family? This kind of narrow selfishness is prevalent among the so-called devotees also. The devotee thinks about himself and his work first, and about God and His work next, if at all. It is because of this kind of self-centredness that man is unable to enjoy peace or bliss. The Kauravas' formula for life was: “First I, next world, and last God. That is why they lost everything, including their lives. On the contrary, the Pandavas' formula was “First God, next world and last I.” Hence they came out victorious. There are a number of such instances in our history, which illustrate the prime need to kill the ego.

Students! It is natural for you at your young age to be proud and hasty or impetuous. But true education should result in humility. Sanctify your life, your body, your youth, your time and your actions. Study well and pass with distinction. Make use of your knowledge for the benefit of the society. Recognise that pride and spirituality are the opposite sides of a see-saw. If pride goes up, spirituality goes down and vice versa. It is due

to *ahamkara* only that man forgets himself. The greatest and the real bondage is to forget one's own reality. To recognise one's own reality is the true *sakshatkara* or realisation. If there is no change in your attitude, all your spiritual practices like *japa*, meditation, *yoga*, *karma*, *seva* or service will serve no purpose. It is not the man but the mind that should change. The change of character is more important than the change of clothes.

There are three things you should never forget, "*sathya*, *dharma*, and *nyaya*" (truth, righteousness, and justice). Our ancestors were staunch followers of these three principles in their daily lives. But nowadays these values are being neglected in India itself, not to speak of the other nations. As future guardians of Indian culture and tradition, you have to restore these values, by actually putting into practice what you have learnt here during this fortnight. Cultivate love for your country, your culture, and your religion. But on no account should you hate or criticise other countries, other cultures, other religions, and other persons. Give up narrow-mindedness and cultivate broad-mindedness. Always pray for the welfare of the entire world in accordance with the *Vedic* chanting: "*Lokaasamastah Sukhino Bhavantu*" (Let all the world be happy).

Develop love for God. Don't give up your devotion to God even if others ridicule you on that account. Don't lose faith in Him when you are in difficulties. Consider everything—pain and pleasure, loss and gain, joy and sorrow—as God's Prasad (divine gift or grace.) Don't forget to chant His Name under any circumstances. God's Name is the only reliable boat to ferry you across the river of life.

VEDIC WISDOM

There is no disease equal to greed.
 There is no enemy greater than anger.
 There is no sorrow that is greater than poverty.
 There is no happiness equal to wisdom.

Belief in God has declined.
Dharma has disappeared.
 Atheism is on the increase.
 There is no respect for the *guru*-preceptor.
 Devotion to God, respect for our ancient culture,
 and tradition have been given farewell.
 There is no patronage for true education.
 Only bread-earning education has become the order of the day.
 These, alas! Are the signs of modernity!

“I am in the Light;
 The Light is in me;
 I am the Light.”

The *jnani* who has realised thus will surely become one with Brahman.

Dear Students!

The *Vedic* literature is the most ancient in the world. It is a treasure house of wisdom. It has contributed to the all-round development of man. The *Veda* is the first-ever book in human history. It is the birthplace for human culture and the basis for all kinds of powers. All branches of learning have their origin in the *Veda*. All *dharmas* and virtues have sprung from the *Veda*. The *Veda* is endless, unfathomable, indefinable, and blissful. The word *Veda* is derived from the Sanskrit root *Vid*, meaning knowledge of *jnana*. *Easwara jnana* (knowledge of the Lord) is *Veda*. *Atma jnana* (knowledge of the Self) is *Veda*. *Brahma jnana* (knowledge of the supreme Absolute) is *Veda*. *Adwaita jnana* (non-dual knowledge) is *Veda*. *Veda* is *vijnana* (knowledge par excellence). All these terms are synonyms for Self-knowledge or *Atma jnana*. The divinity of the *Veda* is all-pervasive and has eight aspects of splendour, viz., *sabda Brahma-mayee* (sound Brahman), *charachara mayee* (movable and immovable), *jyothirmayee* (effulgence), *vaangmayee* (speech and literature), *nityaananda mayee* (everlasting bliss) *paratpara mayee* (transcendental), *maya mayee* (delusion), and *sree mayee* (prosperity). This is indeed the *Prajnanamaya Brahma* (constant integrated awareness). It does not pertain to one individual, one place or time. It is universal. Knowing that it is not possible for ordinary people to understand such sacred *Vedic* literature, Sage Vyasa compiled it into four volumes.

The *Veda* consists of three “*kandaas*” or Cantos, namely, *Karma Kaanda* (cantos dealing with rituals and other actions), *Upasana Kaanda* (cantos of devotion), and *Jnana Kaanda* (cantos of wisdom). These three divisions represent the progressive steps in

man's spiritual evolution. Man starts with actions, recognising that the human body is meant for achieving *dharma* (righteousness) through *karma*. When he goes on performing good *karmas*, he will in due course become fit for understanding *Upasana* (devotional practices). When he worships God over a period of time, with love and in a spirit of dedication, he attains the final stage of *Jnana*. On the whole, *karma*, *upasana*, and *jnana* may be considered as three stages of one process, comparable to the flower, the raw fruit, and the ripe fruit respectively. Since the common people cannot understand and practise the teachings of the *Veda*, subsidiary literature has been created later in the form of *Puranas* (mythological treatises) and *Ithihasas* (epics), so that even the lay people can practise *karma*, *upasana*, and *jnana*.

The end of the *Veda* is *Upanishad*, which is therefore, called *Vedanta*. The *Upanishads* have named the three paths of *karma*, *upasana*, and *jnana* as *yogas*. The essence of *karma yoga* is to dedicate all actions to God or to perform all activities as offerings to the Lord, for His pleasure. *Upasana yoga* consists of loving God whole-heartedly and with *trikaranasuddhi* i.e., harmony and purity of thought, word, and deed. It is not true *upasana* if one loves God for the sake of achieving his worldly desires. It should be love for love's sake. The followers of *jnana yoga* consider the whole universe as the manifestation of God. Believing that Divinity resides in all beings in the form of *Atma*, is called *Jnana*. Students may wonder how there can be *Ekatwa* (Oneness) when there are so many different forms and names, different kinds of behaviour, and different doctrines etc. This doubt can be cleared by considering the example of an ocean. In the fathomless ocean, there are numberless waves. Each wave is different from the other in its size, shape, etc. and it looks as though there is no connection between one wave and another. But a little thinking will reveal to you the fact that they are all different manifestations of one and the same water, and also that they are not different from the ocean. In the same manner, all the different names and forms in the universe are the waves or manifestations of the one and the same ocean of *Sath-Chith-Ananda* (Existence-Awareness-Bliss). Hence, the essence of all manifested beings is only *Sath-Chith-Ananda*, despite the superficial or apparent differences in names and forms and their behaviour.

The *Bhagavad Gita*, which came into existence later, is the essence of the *Upanishads*. However, it deals with the path of *karma*, *upasana*, and *jnana* in three *shatkas*, each *shatka* comprising six chapters, thus making up the total of eighteen chapters in the *Gita*. The first *shatka* deals with the path of *karma*, the second one with the path of *upasana*, and the third one with the path of *jnana*. To sum up, the *Veda* gave rise to the *Upanishads*, which in turn gave rise to the *Bhagavad Gita*, which serves as a practical guide for human conduct. The *Bhagavad Gita* is not the property or monopoly of the Indians. It is the word of God and is, therefore, a universal scripture. There is only one God for all, although there may be different religions and different names and forms of God. In whatever name and form one may worship, it reaches the one and only God. There is only one sun. There are no separate suns like American sun, British sun, Chinese sun, Indian sun, Pakastani sun, and so on. Each country may see the sun at a different time. Just because all of them cannot see the sun at the same time, it will be foolish to think that there are different suns for different countries.

Vedas have very vast, profound and deep meanings. The *gurus* or preceptors of ancient times used to adopt stern measures and enforce strict discipline while teaching the *Vedas* to their students. That is why the *Vedas* have survived till today, successfully withstanding the onslaught of time. Actually, the *Vedas* are not books in the usual sense of

that term. No one claims authorship for them. They are called *Sruthis* or knowledge acquired through hearing. Since time immemorial, the *Vedas* have been coming down through a succession of *gurus* and disciples through the process of hearing. The *gurus* used to utter the *mantras* with particular intonations, which were prescribed for the purpose and scrupulously followed by the disciples. The *gurus* of those days were selfless, pure-hearted, and overflowing with love for their students, but unsparing in the matter of discipline among the students. The students too were generally observing the required discipline very scrupulously. If anyone disobeyed the master, he would be summarily dismissed from attending the classes. The *gurus* would never tolerate any student who was guilty of one or more of the *akara panchaka arishtas* or the five transgressions beginning with the letter “A,” viz., *alakshyam* (negligence), *avinayam* (disobedience), *ahamkaram* (ego), *asuya* (jealousy), and *asabhyata* (lack of social etiquette).

Vysampayana was the foremost among the disciples who learnt the *Vedas* from the Sage Vyasa. Vysampayana sanctified his life by implicitly obeying his *guru* and by learning his lessons studiously and thoroughly. After completing his studies, Vysampayana established a *Gurukula*—for teaching the *Veda* to his disciples. By *Gurukula* is not meant a separate institution with its own set of rules and regulations like the present-day schools and colleges. The *guru*’s house itself constituted the *Gurukula*. Whatever kind of food the *guru* ate was given to the disciple as *prasad*—holy food. The disciple should stay with the *guru* day and night. One disciple by name Yajnavalkya joined Vysampayana’s *Gurukula*. He had a keen intellect and could learn his lessons very fast. The *guru* was also highly pleased with him. People who knew Yajnavalkya began praising him with the result that he developed *ahamkaram* (ego) followed gradually by *alakshyam* (indifference) and *asabhyata* (lack of decorum.) Vysampayana noticed these lapses on the part of Yajnavalkya. One day, he called him and told him sternly, “Yajnavalkya! You don’t deserve to stay in this *Gurukul* any longer. You must leave this place immediately. Before you leave, you must return all that you have learnt from me.” Accordingly, Yajnavalkya, who recognised his own shortcomings, vomited all that he had learnt from his *guru*. His vomitings were eaten by *tittiri* birds, and the latter began chanting the *Upanishad*, which was therefore named as *Taittiriya Upanishad*.

There are two traditions or *sampradayas* in the *Veda*, viz., *Brahma sampradaya* and *Aditya sampradaya*. That which was vomited by Yajnavalkya came to be known as the *Brahma Sampradaya*, also called the *Krishna Yajur Veda*. After leaving the *Gurukul* of Vysampayana, Yajnavalkya sincerely repented for his delinquency and atoned for it by giving up food and drink and practised *Suryopasana* (Sun worship), undergoing severe austerities by way of penance. Pleased with this penance, the Sun God appeared before him in the form of Vaaji and told him, “My child! What is past is past. You should guard yourself against such lapses in future. Betraying the *guru* or God is highly dangerous. Be careful hereafter, I will now teach you the *Vedas* again.” So saying, the Sun God taught him the *Vedas*. The reason for the Sun appearing in the form of Vaaji was that Yajnavalkya’s forefathers always used to do *anna dana* (free distribution of food), so their family got the name Vaajasam. The *Veda* taught by him was also called by the alternative names of *Sukla Yajur Veda*, *Vajasas Khanda*, and *Aditya Khanda*. *Yajur Veda* has been divided into two. For this reason, although the *Vedas* were originally four in number, they have subsequently become five, namely *Rig Veda*, *Krishna Yajur Veda*, *Sukla Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda*, and *Atharvana Veda*. Recognising that the Sun appeared before him as Vaaji and taught him the *Vedas* because of the free distribution of food by his ancestors, Yajna-

valkya gave primary importance to *anna daana* in his teaching which, among others, included the following:

“There is no gift higher than the gift of food and no God higher than the parents. There is no truth higher than *japa* and *thapas* (reciting the holy Name and doing penance). There is no *dharma* higher than compassion and no gain higher than the company of the good. There is no enemy more dangerous than anger and no disease more serious than indebtedness. There is no death more horrible than ill-fame and no wealth more valuable than fame. There is no ornament more beautiful than *smaran* (remembering God through chanting His names).” Yajnavalkya, moreover, emphasised specially in his teachings to his disciples the extreme importance of service to parents and *guru*, as well as *anna dana* (free distribution of food).

Students! we began these classes on the holy *Ekadasi* day—day eleven of the lunar fortnight, and we are also concluding the classes on this *Ekadasi* day. Hence, you should consider all these classes as *Ekadasi Vratam* (observance of the vows of *Ekadasi*). During the fortnight, you have had the valuable opportunity of listening to the lectures from highly distinguished speakers, with rich experience behind them. What they taught you with wholehearted zeal and enthusiasm you have listened carefully with much interest and faith. But what is more important than listening is to put into practice at least some of the things you have learnt and thereby to set an example for others to follow.

You must always remember the five life-breaths relating to the *Vedas*, which I mentioned earlier. You should avoid these five things: (1) indifference to what the *guru*, parents, and other elders teach you, (2) disobedience to the aforesaid, (3) *ahamkara* (ego), (4) jealousy or envy toward those who are better off, and (5) violating the social etiquette or decorum.

Students! What has been taught to you during these fifteen days is the essence of the sacred *Vedanta*. What has been given to you is the nectar obtained by the churning of all the holy scriptures—*Sastras*, *Puranas*, and *Ithihasas*. You are the future leaders, pleaders, and patrons of Mother India. You should lead exemplary lives, treading the path of *sathya* and *dharma* (truth and righteousness). Under no circumstances should you deviate from this ideal path. Let your secular education go hand in hand with spiritual education.

The *Vedas* have taught about two kinds of *dharma*: *vihita dharma* and *nishiddha dharma* (prescribed *dharma* and prohibited *dharma*); in other words, the Do’s and Don’ts for regulating one’s life. Unfortunately, today, the prescribed things are being given up and the prohibited things are being taken up. This is sheer folly and ignorance. The prohibited things should be rejected, even though you might have taken lots of trouble to acquire them. For instance, you have purchased from the market a big mango fruit for five rupees. Just because you have spent five rupees on it, will you eat the skin outside and the stone inside the fruit? No, no. You will eat only the pulp and reject both the skin and stone. Similarly this world is like a fruit, and you have to accept what is good in it and reject what is bad for you.

Students! You are highly fortunate. Even though there are several millions of people in the world, is it not your exceedingly good luck that only you, who are but a few hundreds in number, have been able to get the benefit of this golden opportunity? However, the purpose of this Summer Course will be served only if at least some of you stand as exemplars to others. You may take up any job, business, or agriculture and occupy any position in your life, but it is extremely important that you do not lose self-confidence while discharging your duties. Lack of Self-confidence is the main cause for all the pre-

sent-day problems like foul play, injustice, losses, failures, sorrow, and pain. People do not believe in themselves, not to speak of believing others. First of all, develop Self-confidence, and that in turn will give you self-satisfaction. Without self-satisfaction, you cannot have contentment. Once you have gained self-satisfaction, then automatically you will be ready for self-sacrifice. Needless to say, where there is self-sacrifice, there will be Self-realisation naturally.

Every student should undertake *sathkarmas* (good actions) which lead to *chitta suddhi* (purity of mind). Where there is purity, there will be *jnana siddhi* (dawn of wisdom). These are all within yourself only. You need not search for them anywhere outside. In this connection, let us consider the example of the wall-clock over there. It has three hands to indicate seconds, minutes, and hours respectively. There are sixty points, and twelve hours marked along the circumference of the clock. When the second-hand moves across all the sixty points, the minute-hand moves by only one point. When the minute-hand moves over sixty points or the full circumference, the hour-hand moves by only one hour-mark or one-twelfth of the circumference. Now, the second-hand may be compared to our actions. If a large number of good actions are done, the minute-hand, which represents *chitta suddhi* (the purity of mind), will move by one point. *Chitta suddhi* is the stage of *upasana* when one engages himself in loving God and worshipping Him in various ways over a period of time, leading to *Atma viswaasam* (Self-confidence), which represents the hour-hand. The perceptible move-ments of the second-hand and the minute-hand should bring about the imperceptibly slow movement of the hour-hand. Otherwise, no purpose is served by the second-hand and minute-hand. So also, unless your good actions, worship and love of God, lead to *Atmaviswas* or Self-confidence, the former two will be futile.

Whenever you have time, it will suffice if you take up at least one of the nine modes of *bhakti* (such as *sravanam*, *kirtanam*, etc., already explained to you in My earlier discourses). God does not consider how wealthy or how learned you are; He is concerned only with the sincerity and purity of your mind and heart and about how whole-hearted and genuine your love is. Valkimi was a hunter. Nanda was an untouchable. Kuchela was a pauper. Dhruva and Prahalada were mere lads of five years. Sabari was a tribal woman, illiterate and uncivilised. But all of them had won God's Grace in abundance, because of their wholehearted devotion, love and surrender. Follow the example of Sabari, who always thought of Sri Rama and His happiness, and dedicated all her thoughts, words, and deeds to Him alone, so much so that every action of hers was transformed and sublimated into the highest *thapas* (penance.) From her example, you must learn the lesson that meditation does not mean sitting idle in a particular posture of the body, as if you are posing for a photograph. As in her case, your entire life must become a continuous meditation wherever you may be staying and whatever you may be doing. Whatever you eat or drink must be offered to God as *naivedya* or holy offering. In this manner, if you offer everything to the Lord, you will naturally be prevented from engaging yourself in bad actions or evil ways in your life. Therefore, students! I am bringing My long discourse to a close, with the hope and blessing that you will practice with your hands what you have heard here through your ears, and thereby sanctify your lives and also contribute your share to make the future of Bharath (India) bright and prosperous.