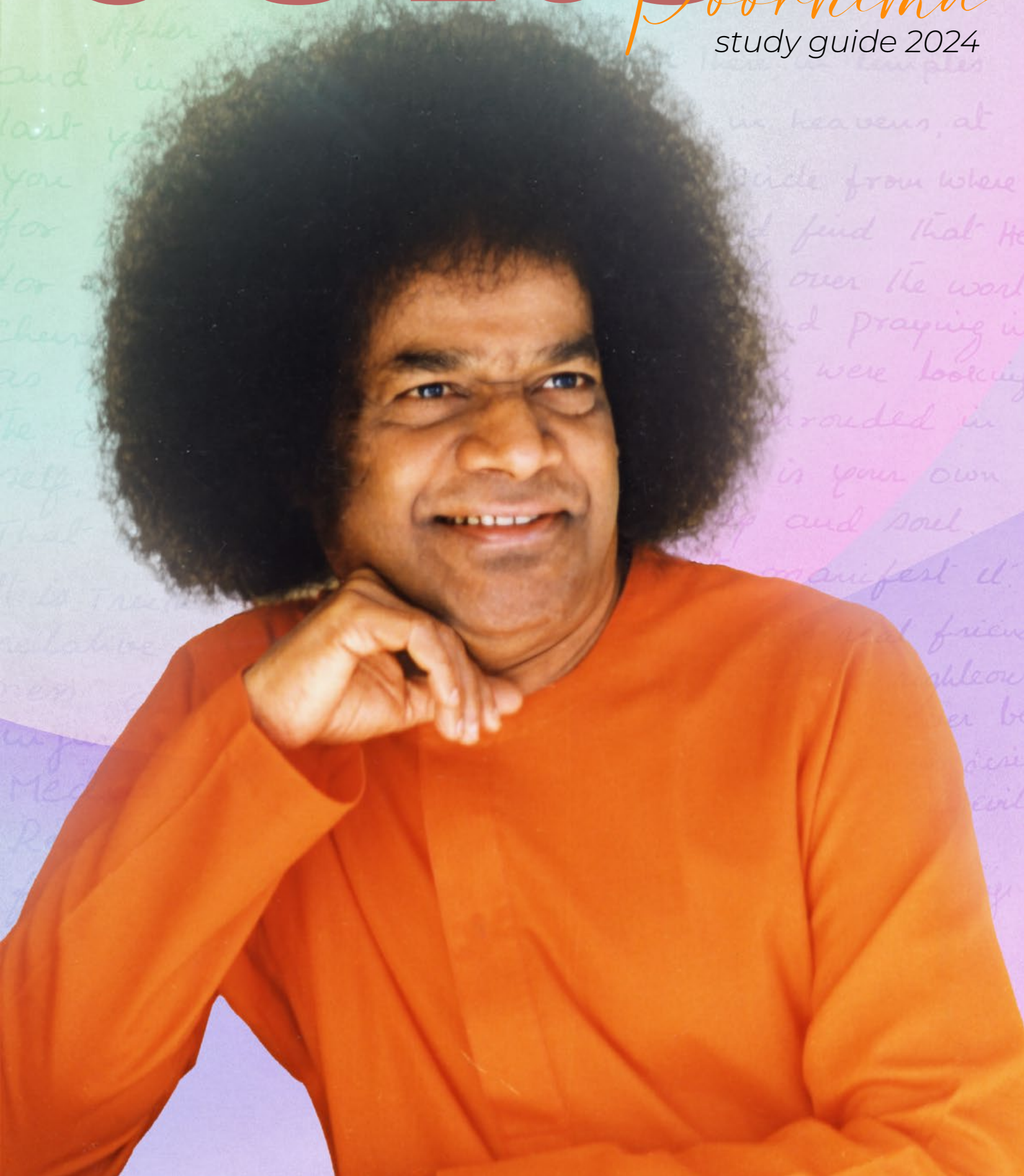


SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

GURU



Poornima
study guide 2024



OFFERED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE AT THE LOTUS FEET OF
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Foreword

With His loving grace, the Sri Sathya Sai Scriptural Studies Committee is pleased to release a study guide for 2024 Guru Poornima. We can read Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's words and gain knowledge. We can receive, appreciate, and digest His words. But the real outcome of our endeavor is to become knowledge itself. In this light, we have selected two discourses of our beloved Bhagawan, delivered on July 26, 1991, and November 23, 1983.

This deep dive into His teaching requires patience and sincere effort for inner reflection. These discourses provide an invigorating invitation to experience the depth of His divine teachings. We encourage study groups and readers to read every paragraph slowly so that sufficient time is spent to contemplate the implications of Swami's divine nectarine words.

May the blessings of our beloved Swami, the Guru of all Gurus, bless and guide us in the endeavor.

With love,

Sri Sathya Sai Scriptural Studies Committee



Table of Contents

Divine Discourse, July 26, 1991

Know That by Which Everything Else Becomes Known	2
Enquiry into the Self Leads to Liberation	3
The 'Seer' and the 'Seen' are Different	4
The Actor and His Role Played on the Stage	5
Different Names for "I" in Different States of Consciousness	6
Give up Selfishness and Self-centeredness	7

Divine Discourse, November 23, 1995

Keep Reminding Yourself: "I am not different from God"	8
References	9

Know That by Which Everything Else Becomes Known

EMBODIMENTS OF DIVINE LOVE! What appears to the eyes, whatever reaches the ears, whatever occurs in the mind, whatever moves the heart—all these are deluding the person. The whole cosmos is an expression of the combination of the seen (*dṛiśya*) and the Seer (*Draṣṭā*). The world is the seen and *Brahma*,¹ the Absolute, is the Seer. Creation is a manifestation of the union of the Seer and the seen.

In this land of Bharat, the ancient sacred relationship between preceptor and disciple has vanished. The treasure of Truth and Self-discipline has been lost. Faith in God and devotion have declined. Assertion of freedom without responsibility has grown beyond bounds. Wealth has become the

sole aim, and righteousness has receded to the background. What else can I convey to you, oh good and noble people assembled here?

In this vast universe, wherein there are innumerable things which have to be learnt, what is the inner reason for the emphasis placed by *Vedānta* on the search for the meaning of the word 'I' used by everyone in common parlance? In fact, if man is able to grasp the meaning of the infinite Self (*Ātmā*),² he will be able to comprehend everything else in the world. "*Knowing That by which everything else becomes known*" is the declaration of the Vedas.³ When man is able to understand the meaning of "I," he will be in a position to understand everything.

Questions

1. How does the statement "Creation is a manifestation of the union of the Seer and the seen" shift your relationship towards the Divine, other people and the physical environment?
2. What can you do to nurture this shift for an even more intimate relationship with creation?
3. How do we experience the Seer in our everyday life?

Enquiry into the Self Leads to Liberation

“He who knows My divine birth and action comes unto Me, O Arjuna,”⁴ “Know Me as the knower of the field,”⁵ “I will liberate you from all sins, do not grieve!”⁶ In the Bhagavad Gītā in a number of places you find references to different forms of the pronoun “I.” In the great scriptures and epics, you find the statement: “The enquiry into the Self leads to Liberation.”⁷ All scriptures enjoin: “Know thyself.” In the world, when anyone introduces himself, he declares: “I am Ranga,” “I am Linga,” “I am Rāma,” and so on.

Even animals and birds use the term “I” in their own respective language to indicate what they are—whether a fox or a dog, a leopard or a tiger, an eagle or a parrot. “I” runs like a continuous thread in a garland in all beings, whatever their name or form. Hence, every man has to recognize the significance of this ubiquitous term “I.”

Unfortunately, man is becoming a prey to innumerable difficulties by mistakenly identifying this “I” with body. The Śruti (Veda) declares: “I am not this.”⁸ The Śruti teaches in this statement that the “I” is different from the form. The Śruti also teaches the profound truth about *Sat-Chit-Ānanda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

In the statement, “I am not this,” there are three distinct terms: “I,” “am not,” and “this.” What is the “I?” On the authority of the Vedas, the “I” has been described under various names as *Ātmā*, *Paramātmā*, *Brahma*, *Pratyagātmā*, and the like. It must be noted that this “I” is present in every man as *Vaiśvānara*.⁹ In the form of *Vaiśvānara*, the “I” principle digests the food taken by a person and, converting into blood, circulates it to every part of the body. Thus, in the Gītā, Lord Krishna declared:

“Assuming the form of Vaiśvānara I am present in the bodies of all living beings, and through the life-breaths of prāṇa and apāna I consume the four kinds of food.”¹⁰

The significance of the term *Paramātmā* is that He is the one who transcends the five organs of action, the five senses of perception, the mind, intellect, will and *Ahamkara* (the ego). *Paramātmā* is the Supreme Absolute (*Brahma*). *Brahma* is characterized by all-pervasiveness. The “I” principle is present in every human being. This omnipresent “I” is *Brahma*. “I” is, therefore, a manifestation of *Brahma*.

Questions

1. When you understand the “I” principle is the *Ātmā* and is present in every human being, how does it transform your sense of self-identity?
2. How can you heartfully and practically make your Atmic self-identity the basis of your relationships with friends, family and work colleagues?

The 'Seer' and the 'Seen' are Different

Then, there is the term "this." "This" indicates every object in the phenomenal universe. "This is a mike," "this is a glass," "this is a cloth," "this is a fan." "This" is also used when referring to the sun, the moon, hill or dale. The term "this" refers to everything that can be perceived. If a pointed reference is not made by the use of "this," the question will be asked to what one is referring when using a word like "cloth." By stating that "this is cloth," the precise object is indicated.

Thus, in all objects, "this" is present as an all-pervading characteristic. "This" is seen (*dṛiśya*). "I" is Seer (*Draṣṭā*). It follows that the Seer is not the seen. "I am not the body; that is my vesture. Even as I see other things, I am also seeing my body." This is how one should recognize the distinction between the Seer and the seen. If this logic is understood, is it not a sign of ignorance to identify the body with the "I?" The body is like other perceived objects. Hence, to identify the body with one's Self is absurd.

In the states of dream, deep sleep and *samādhi*, one is not aware of the body. Hence, you are not the body. You are the Seer. In this vast creation, with its myriad forms and names, there is one unshaken Basis (*adhiṣṭhānam*) sustaining everything. It is from this Basis that everything else has

emerged. Nothing can be installed without a base. A variety of ornaments are made from gold. The ornaments may vary in form and name, but their basic substance is the same gold. The gold remains even when the jewels are melted. The metal itself remains unchanged.

Likewise, for the world of perception with its myriad names and forms, which is the seen (*dṛiśya*), the Seer (*Draṣṭā*), which is the "I," is the Basis. Hence, the commonly used term "I" (*nenu* in Telugu) should not be interpreted in a superficial sense. It is only when man recognizes the basic truth "I am the Self" that he can overcome the troubles he encounters in the phenomenal world, and experience real Bliss (*Ānanda*).

All the myriad forms cannot be perceived without a Perceiver. Therefore, the basic truth underlying all the forms is the existence of the Perceiver, the "I." The first sound that emanates from every man and from all beings is "I." "I" is even anterior to *Praṇava*, the sacred syllable Om. But just because the "I" is in common use and is part of the daily experiences of everyone, it tends to be treated as a banality. Because of this tendency, man becomes a prey to innumerable troubles and difficulties.

Questions

1. What is the true "I" and how is it different from the commonly used "I"?
2. Baba says that gold is the unchanging basis of all ornaments. What is the part of you that has never changed through all the experiences of your life?
3. How can you increasingly welcome and deepen this experience in your everyday life?

The Actor and His Role Played on the Stage

You must remember that the divinity in man is not divisible or separable. For instance, take the case of an actor called Rāma who was appearing in the role of *Hiraṇyakaśipu*.¹¹ When he appeared on the stage, the stage director asked him: “Who are you?” In his garb as *Hiraṇyakaśipu* he was oblivious to his original name Rāma. In stentorian language he answered: “Don’t you know that I am the all-powerful, universally dreaded monarch of the world, *Hiraṇyakaśipu*? Don’t you know that I have mastered my senses and control everything in the world?” He answered boastfully in this manner.

The actor was Rāma. The role he was playing was that of *Hiraṇyakaśipu*. It was one and the same person who was playing two roles as Rāma and as *Hiraṇyakaśipu*. The individual (*jīva*) is in the body, the Divine is in the heart (*hrdaya*). Both sport together and part from each other. There is a supreme Puppeteer who runs the puppet show using the individuals as dolls.

The actor Rāma in the role of *Hiraṇyakaśipu* on the stage is recognized only as *Hiraṇyakaśipu* by the audience. Similarly, all human beings with their different names and forms are playing different roles on the stage of

life. But the one indwelling principle in all of them is the Self (*Ātmā*). Forgetting this basic truth about the inherent divinity of man, believing in the manifold forms and vestures worn by human beings, men are involving themselves in numerous difficulties. When you find out who is the person who has put on the garb for a certain role, you will discover the transient nature of the role.

In every man, the all-pervading Divine is present. When one becomes aware of the Divine in him, he becomes the Divine itself.¹² “The knower of *ma* attains the Supreme,”¹³ “The knower of the Self overcomes sorrow,”¹⁴ “There is no multiplicity here,”¹⁵ “There is only One without a second.”¹⁶ These are the truths declared by the Vedas. Because man has ignored these Vedic truths, he is forgetting his true divine nature.

Man should endeavor to know that by knowing which everything else is known. For instance, if the nature of clay is known, all about objects made from clay can be known. Similarly, when the nature of the Seer (*Draṣṭā*) is known, all about the seen (*dṛśya*) is known.

Questions

1. List all the different roles you play in your everyday life. What has been your experience of being the “Seer” (and not the “doer”) in all of these roles?
2. What is a short phrase or sentence you could use to remind yourself of this lesson on a daily basis?

Different Names for “I” in Different States of Consciousness

Recognize the fact you are the Seer. This Seer is known by many names. In the waking state, He is pervading all creation and is called *Virāṭ svarūpa* or *Viśva* (Cosmic Person).¹⁷ He is also termed *Vyāvahārika*, i.e. the One who is engaged in a variety of activities in the waking state. In the dream state also, the “I” is known by different names. He is known as the creator of dreams. As the mind alone functions in this state, He is known as *Pratyagātmā* (Inner Self) or *Taijasaḥ* (consisting of light). In the deep sleep state, the “I” is pure undifferentiated Consciousness from which all experiences of waking and dream states arise, therefore is called *Prājñāḥ* (the Knower of all).¹⁸

Although the universe is filled with innumerable objects, with different forms and names, the one thing that is present in all of them is the “I.” The principle of “I” is omnipresent! *Aham* or “I” is the primary sound

that emanates from one and all equally. When you call anyone by his name—Rāma, Krishna or Vijay—the response is “I.” This common word emanating from everyone equally is the Self (*Ātmā*). You cannot find any human being or animal without the “I” consciousness. The expression “I” is used by a *yogī* (ascetic) or a *bhogī* (pleasure lover), by a mendicant or a millionaire.

Every man has to understand the inner significance of the “I.” You use the expressions: “This is my body; this is my house,” and so on. But who are you? Without knowing who you are, how have these relationships arisen? When you say, “My body,” the body must be different from you. It follows that you are not the body. The body is an object of perception. The senses, the mind, the *chitta*, the *antahkārana* are all just seen (*dṛiśya*). The “I” is the Seer. This is the truth proclaimed by *Vedānta*.

Questions

1. How can you move from mentally understanding the concept that “I am the Self” to having a direct experience of that?
2. How might the practice of cultivating unconditional love assist you in having this direct experience?

Give up Selfishness and Self-centeredness

What is *Vedānta*? It is not mouthing some abstruse words without knowing their meaning. Wisdom or Awareness (*Eruka*) consists in recognizing one's true Self. Failure to recognize one's Self is ignorance. Awareness is *Brahma*. Viewing the world as apart from *Brahma* is ignorance. To be awake in all the states of consciousness is Awareness. The wisdom that "I am the Self" should blossom in every human being. It is only when this wisdom dawns that man can have direct experience of the Divine.

Embodiments of the Divine Self! Give up your selfishness and self-centeredness. How long can you be immersed in selfish concerns, forgetting the real essence of life? All things have to be given up sooner or later, including the world (*jagat*).

The word *Jagat* itself means that which comes and goes. To regard these ephemeral

things as permanent is a mark of ignorance. You are the Truth! The role assumed by you is not true. All the 'acting' you do and all your experiences are not true. They are illusory. It is only when one can get rid of the delusion to regard the temporary as the permanent can one experience the Divine.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Today is Guru Poornima day. What is its inner significance? There is no Guru other than the One Divine. As long as you consider yourself a mere human being, you may regard yourself as a disciple. But when you realize that you are the embodiment of *Ātmā* you become your own Guru.

In going after gurus and teachers, men are deluding themselves and forgetting *Brahma*. Seek refuge in yourself. Recognize your Reality. That is the right path. And that is the way to revere the Guru.

Questions

1. How do these words deepen or broaden your understanding that there is no Guru other than the One Divine in yourself?
2. How might that change the way you see your spiritual evolution and practice?

Keep Reminding Yourself: "I am not different from God"

God is neither distant, nor distinct from you. You are God. You are *Sat-Chit-Ānanda* (Being, Awareness, Bliss). You are *Asti* (Being), *Bhāti* (Splendor), *Priyam* (Delight). When will you cognize this Truth? When you shake off the delusion which hide it. If your yearning to experience the *Sat-Chit-Ānanda* is sincere and pure, from this day, keep ever in your memory what I am about to tell you:

1. "I am God; I am not different from God." Be conscious of this always. Keep it ever in mind. "I am God; I am God. I am not different from God." Be reminding yourself of this. Pray that you may not fail in this spiritual practice.
2. "I am the Indivisible Supreme Absolute (*Akhaṇḍa Param Brahma*)." This is the second Truth to be established in the consciousness by unremitting repetition and prayer.

3. "I am *Sat-Chit-Ānanda* (Being, Awareness, Bliss)." Divine Bliss is the goal to be ever kept in view.
4. "Grief and anxiety can never affect me." Develop this faith and convince yourselves of this Truth by repeated assurance and prayer.
5. "I am ever content; fear can never enter me." Feel thus forever.

Pray that this conviction grows stronger and stronger. Exhort yourself, "O Self! Utter *Om Tat Sat*, the threefold symbol of *Brahma*. As the physical body is maintained healthy and strong by the five vital functions (*prāṇas*), these five prayers will endow you with the awareness of *Brahma*, which is the same as the status of *Brahma* Itself."

Questions

1. How can you grow in your conviction that you are "Being Awareness Bliss, the Indivisible Supreme Absolute?"
2. How could you turn this lesson into a daily practice that makes a true difference in how you live?
3. What difference could this make for strengthening your experience of the divinity in all?

References

SECTION ONE

1. In most English publications the word Brahma—meaning “the impersonal Absolute Divine”—is written as Brahman, but it should be written without the letter “n” at the end. It is through continuous wrong practice that the spelling Brahman has become familiar to us. In fact, Brahma is the form used in all Vedic texts. Nowhere will Brahman be found in Sanskrit quotes meaning the Absolute Divine.

Here are some common examples: *Brahma-arpanam Brahma havir* (food prayer, Bhagavad Gita 4.24); *Brahma vid Brahma iva bhavati* (the knower of Brahma becomes Brahma); *Aham Brahma asmi* → *Aham Brahmāsmi* (I am Brahma); *Satyam Jñānam Anantam Brahma* (the well-known first verse of the second chapter of Taittirīya Upaniṣat); *Ekam eva advitīyam Brahma* (There is only One without second, and that is Brahma), etc.

SECTION TWO

4. “*Janma karma cha me divyam evam yo vetti ... mām eti so Arjuna,*” Bhagavad Gītā 4.9.
5. “*Kṣetrajñam cāpi mām viddhi,*” Bhagavad Gītā 13.3.
6. “*Aham tvā sarva pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyami mā śuchaḥ,*” Bhagavad Gītā 18.66.
7. “*Svavimarśo mokṣaḥ*”

SECTION FOUR

11. A king noted for impiety, son of Kaśyapa and Diti. He had obtained a boon from Brahmā that he should not be slain by either god or man or animal; hence he became all-powerful. When, however, his pious son Prahlāda praised Viṣṇu, He appeared out of a pillar in the form of Narasiṃha, ‘half man, half lion’, and tore Hiraṇyakaśipu to pieces. Sathya Sai Baba often mentions the story of Hiraṇyakaśipu and Prahlāda in His discourses. This is an excerpt from a discourse given in May 1972:

“We must try to strengthen our mental capacity. The mind has immense potency and there is no other power that is equal to it. The mind itself is the sole cause for everything, either for bondage or for freedom, for happiness as well as for misery, and for so many other things. A small example to illustrate this is in the story about Prahlāda and Hiraṇyakaśipu. Prahlāda is the son and Hiraṇyakaśipu is the father.

We must try to know the distinction between the father and the son. Because Lord Narayana killed his brother, Hiraṇyakaśipu was very angry with him and he tried to search for Narayana. When he could not see him anywhere, he told his son that Narayana or God is nowhere in this world. Prahlāda argued with his father and asserted that God Narayana is everywhere. He said, “Do not doubt, God is not only here but He is everywhere. Wherever you search for Him, He will be present there.”

Then Hiraṇyakaśipu told his son, “Mad boy, I have searched every place, there is no place which I have not searched, I have searched even the ocean, but I could not find Him.” But Prahlāda had complete faith and confidence in God and he told his father, “It is only a defect of your vision and the malady of your mind if

SECTION FIVE

17. *Virāṭ svarūpa* or *Viśva rūpa* is the material manifestation of the Lord. The whole material creation of this universe is nothing but His various limbs. *Viśvarūpa* has innumerable eyes, faces, mouths and arms. All creatures of the universe are part of Him. He is the infinite universe, without a beginning or end.

Grammatically speaking, Brahman is the “etymological” stem of the word, which is normally used in dictionaries, and this is why it is used in most publications. However, all Sanskrit nouns are usually written without the consonant forming the stem (the “nominative” case) and not using the etymological stem

Another misunderstanding involves the notion that *Brahman* means the Absolute Divine and *Brahma* the Creator, the first person of the Hindu Trinity. The fact is that the word *Brahma* is grammatically neutral and different from the masculine *Brahmā* (with a long ā at the end), which refers to the Creator.

2. The correct form is *Ātmā* (nominative masculine) and not *Ātman* (etymological n-stem). As in the case with the word *Brahma*, through continuous wrong practice in most English publications the form *Atman* has become the norm.
3. “*Yad vijñānena sarvam vijñātam bhavati*”, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣat 1.1.3.
8. “*Aham etat na*”
9. It means relating to all men, omnipresent, universal, general, common.
10. “*Aham Vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇinām deham āśritaḥ | prāṇāpāna samāyuktaḥ pachāmyaham chaturvidham,*” Bhagavad Gītā 15.14.

you could not find Him. Search for Him sincerely and with faith, you will be able to find Him.”

Then the father asked, “Is he present in this pillar?” “Yes, He is there without fail,” said the son. Then Hiraṇyakaśipu broke the pillar. Instantaneously, God appeared in the form of “Nara-Hari,” half-lion and half-man. God was not found by Hiraṇyakaśipu when he searched for Him everywhere, but He made Himself visible in the pillar when Prahlāda told his father that God is everywhere.

The reason is this: Hiraṇyakaśipu never believed in his heart that there is God, but Prahlāda believed with great faith that God is there and that He is omnipresent. Therefore, according to the idea Hiraṇyakaśipu had, he could not find God; and according to the idea Prahlāda had, he could find God everywhere. All these sacred stories and texts will be preaching to us an inner meaning. When we read the story of Prahlāda, we will be thinking that Prahlāda is good and that Hiraṇyakaśipu is an atheist. But we must also think about what happened to them. If we go deep into the story, it will teach us that when we think in a good way, good things will happen to us; and if we think in a bad way, bad things will happen to us. It means that the mind or our sankalpa, the desire, is the cause for everything.”

12. “*Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati,*” i.e. “The knower of Brahma becomes Brahma.”
13. “*Brahmavid āpnoti Param,*” Taittirīya Upaniṣat 2.1.
14. “*Tarati śokam Ātmavit,*” Chāndogya Upaniṣat 7.1.3.
15. “*Neha nanāsti kinchit*”
16. “*Ekameva advitīyam*”

18. The names Viśvaḥ (or Vaiśvānaraḥ), Tajasaḥ and Prājñaḥ used in this paragraph for the three states of the Self in the waking, dreaming and deep sleep respectively are mentioned in verses 3, 4 and 5 of Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣat.



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