

Ugadi Festival

(Divine Discourse – April 13, 2002)

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Embodiments of Love!

People have been celebrating Ugadi (dawn of the New Year) for the past many ages and generations. The Bharatias have been conferring peace and security on all the nations with their strength of spirituality. Since time immemorial to this day, the motto of Bharatias has been *Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the people of the world be happy!) But the present day condition is just the opposite. Man has progressed in the worldly sense, but morally has regressed. He is not able to give up his narrow-mindedness and criticism of others. If one enquires into the reason for this, one will realize that one's selfishness and self-interest are the cause for this. Man does not love objects or individuals for their sake, he does so for his self-interest. He does not love his country and work for its welfare. All his thoughts, words and deeds are motivated by selfishness. He would have celebrated Ugadi in its true spirit only when he gives up such narrow-mindedness.

On this day, people get up early, have a sacred bath, put on new clothes and partake of sweets and various delicious items. They are interested only in external cleanliness and are not concerned about purifying their hearts which are tainted with evil thoughts and feelings. It is rather easy to have external cleanliness and to wear new clothes, but that is not the purpose of celebrating festivals. True celebration of Ugadi lies in giving up evil qualities and purifying one's own heart. The human heart in its pristine state is highly sacred and human birth is difficult to attain. *Janthunam Narajanma Durlabham*

(out of all the living beings, the human birth is the rarest). Having attained such a precious life, man is not making efforts to live a true human being. Today he has become a bundle of desires. He is beset with desires and he craves for their fulfillment day in and day out. He is under the mistaken notion that fulfillment of desires will confer happiness on him. He should realize that only annihilation of desires will lead to ultimate bliss. True happiness is the state of desirelessness.

Embodiments of Love!

Ages have gone by and the world has undergone change but there is no transformation in the human heart. The field of education has made rapid strides. People think that education leads to transformation but it has only added to the confusion. Instead of bringing about transformation of the heart, the modern education has given rise to perversion. Man is not learning what he is supposed to. He is wasting his human life by cultivating bestial qualities and indulging in demonic deeds. This is contrary to our ancient culture. The culture of Bharat lays great emphasis on the underlying unity in diversity. It wants us to understand this principle of unity and work for our own redemption. But, today, on the one hand, there is a rise in the number of the so-called educated and intellectuals who fragment unity into diversity. On the other hand, the number of noble souls who visualize unity in diversity is on the decline. It is unfortunate that the Bharatias themselves have not understood how sacred and noble their culture is! The Bharatias way of life is concerned

with the welfare of everyone. They find fulfilment in giving happiness to others. Man today lacks such broad-mindedness. He is not able to realize and experience his innate noble qualities.

Time is highly sacred and precious. Each one has to introspect whether he is making proper use of time. Time once lost is lost forever. Future is not in your hands. So, man should make proper use of the present. This is the teaching of the Bharatiya culture. Time is God. Hence, the Vedas extol Him as *Kalaya Namah*, *Kala Kalaya Namah*, *Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah*, *Kalateetaya Namah*, *Kalaswarupaya Namah*, *Kalaniyomitaya Namah* (Salutations to the embodiment of time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time and to the one who ordains time). *Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad* (God has thousands of heads, eyes and feet). In Vedic times, the population was in thousands and our ancients considered that all heads, all eyes and all feet belonged to the Purusha (the Cosmic Being). They sanctified their lives with such noble feelings and exemplary behavior.

The ancient sages and seers stressed on the need for unity and cooperation among the human beings. They said, "Let us move together, let us grow together, let us grow in intelligence together, let us live in harmony with each other without giving room for conflicts." But such spirit of unity is lacking in modern society. These days there is no unity even among the members of the same family. Unity is the essence of human life. Only through practice of unity, can one attain the goal of human life. Such divine principle of unity is forgotten today.

Oh the sacred souls of Bharat!

So far no one has been able to understand fully the value of Indian culture. Bharatiyas are endowed with unlimited potentialities. But they are unaware of their mighty strength. Man aspires for happiness. In order to attain everlasting bliss, he studies sacred texts, listens to the discourses of noble souls, undertakes pilgrimages and performs various spiritual practices like penance, meditation, etc. But none of these confer bliss on him. There are five sheaths in every human being, namely, *Annamaya Kosha* (food sheath), *Pranamaya Kosha* (life sheath), *Manomaya Kosha* (mental sheath), *Vijnanamaya Kosha* (wisdom sheath) and *Anandamaya Kosha* (bliss sheath). Though man has bliss sheath in him, he is unable to experience it. There is no trace of bliss in him. The happiness that man derives out of worldly comforts is limited. It is utter foolishness to think that worldly properties, possessions, comforts and conveniences bestow on him unlimited joy. None of these can give true happiness. True happiness has no limits. How can it be attained? It cannot be attained from outside. It originates from our heart. The heart is the dwelling place of God. To experience true happiness, man should develop firm faith. Where there is faith, there is love. Only when man has love in him, can he practice righteousness. Righteousness leads to truth, which in turn leads to God. God alone can confer bliss on us. God is the basis of bliss. Truth is the basis of God. Righteousness is the basis of truth. Love is the basis of righteousness. Faith is the basis of love. But man today has no faith in himself. One without *Viswasa* (faith) can be compared to one without *Swasa* (breath). It means one without faith is equal to a living corpse. The ancient sages and seers stressed on the need to have faith. But today, people have become blind having lost the eyes of faith. What are the two

eyes of man? One is the *Sastra* (scriptures) and the other is *Dharma* (righteousness). But today even the Brahmins who are supposed to study the scriptures are neglecting them. "Oh Brahmins! Lead your lives in accordance with the teachings of the Vedas and scriptures. Oh Kshatriyas! Be prepared to lay down your lives to safeguard the interests of your country. Oh Arya Vysyas! Sanctify your wealth and other possessions by using them for charitable purposes. Oh Sudras! Take care of agriculture and lead your lives in a happy manner." Instead of discharging one's duty, man is wasting his life in mean pursuits. Consequently, he is unable to enjoy even a fraction of peace and happiness.

Gratitude is the most fundamental virtue of man. People while performing *Suryanamaskaras*, extol the Sun god in various ways. One of them is *Kritagnagnaya Namah* (salutations to the one who punishes the ungrateful). The effulgence of the Sun god is present in our eyes in a subtle form. *Chandrama Manaso Jataha Chaksho Suryo Ajayata* (the moon was born out of the mind and the sun out of the eyes of the Supreme Being). It is said that the Sun god withdraws his effulgence from the eyes of the ungrateful. One without the sense of gratitude can be called a blind person. Whoever he may be, one should always remain grateful to one's benefactor. One should show gratitude even without caring for one's own life. God is helping man in ever so many ways, but man does not show gratitude to Him. He is all the time engaged in selfish pursuits. How can such a foolish person be called a human being? What is *Adhyatmika* (spirituality)? It is not just contemplating on the *Adhi Atma* (the primordial Spirit). Spirituality lies in destroying the bestial nature and rising to the level of Divine. But instead of ascending to Divinity, man is degenerating

to animality. He has forgotten the principle of spirituality. He is celebrating festivals by merely partaking of sweets and is wasting his time in pomposity. One should ponder over the inner significance of each festival and celebrate it in a meaningful manner. He should have the total faith that he is not just a human being but there is God within. Only then will the animal nature in him be subdued. As man has forgotten his human nature, he has become bestial. You may belong to any country, religion, race, caste and sex, you should firmly hold on to humanness. Do not waste your time keeping selfish goals in mind.

Once Lord Narayana wanted Narada to search for a true devotee who spends his time in a sacred way. Then Narada asked the Lord for the qualifications of a true devotee. The Lord said, "A true human being is one whose heart is pure. Whoever chants the Divine Name with a pure heart is a true devotee. He may involve himself in worldly activities, but he should not be attached to them. His mind should be constantly focused on God. He is a fool who does not think of God." Then Narada said, "Swami, I chant Your Name wholeheartedly at all times and under all circumstances. There is not a single moment when I don't remember You. Can there be a greater devotee than me?" Narada became egoistic with the feeling that he was the greatest devotee. Lord Narayana replied, "Narada, there are many devotees like you. You find them in every house and in every place. But this is not true devotion. Just as the food partaken gets digested in the stomach and its essence is supplied to all limbs of the body, likewise, when you fill your heart with the Divine Name, its effect should spread to your eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, etc. When the sacred effect of the Divine Name spreads to your eyes, you will develop sacred vision. Likewise, you

will utter sacred words and hear sacred things. Your hands will undertake sacred deeds and your feet will take you to sacred places. Thus, a true devotee will sanctify each of his limbs with sacred activity." Lord Narayana wanted Narada to search for such a devotee. Narada went round the world, but his ego prevented him from accepting anybody as a devotee greater than himself. As he was returning, he found a tribesman in a forest. He was sitting under a tree and chanting the Divine Name. He was carrying a big sword in his hand. Narada out of curiosity asked him, "May I know who you are?" He replied, "Sir, I am a hunter and an ardent devotee of the Lord." Narada asked, "If you are a devotee, then why should you carry a sword in your hand? Whom are you going to kill?" The hunter replied, "Sir, I want to kill four persons. The first of them is Draupadi." Narada was startled to hear this. "Don't you know that Draupadi was constantly chanting the Name of Lord Krishna? Pleased with her devotion and surrender, Krishna came to her rescue and protected her honor when Kauravas tried to disrobe her in the royal court. Why do you want to kill such a great devotee?" The hunter said, "No doubt, she was a devotee. But she called out to Krishna while He was having His food. Immediately, my Lord left His food and rushed to her rescue. As she was responsible for my Lord not having food on that day, I want to kill her." "Who is the second person whom you intend to kill", queried Narada. The hunter said, "My Lord could not have proper food and rest because of Prahlada, who chanted His Name continuously and time and again sought His help. When he was being trampled by elephants, he prayed to the Lord for succour. In order to protect him, the Lord had to take upon himself the pain of being trampled by elephants. As he was the cause for my Lord's suffering, I want to kill him. The third person is Mira.

She was all the time chanting the Name of Giridhari. As a result, all the blows that were inflicted on her by the mother-in-law had to be borne by the Lord Himself. So, she should be killed." Narada asked, "Then who is fourth one?" "There is a person called Narada, who carries a Tanpura and keeps chanting the Name of Narayana. His is only *Swartha Bhakti* (devotion intended for selfish gains) and not *Parartha Prema Bhakti* (devotion filled with pure love for God). So, he also should be killed." Narada was afraid and did not want to prolong the conversation with him. He realised that it was his ego which was responsible for this predicament. He immediately went to Lord Narayana and gave a detailed account of his encounter with the hunter, and said, "Swami, according to him, even those who chant your Name continuously are wicked." Lord Narayana said, "Narada, you are mistaken. This incident only reflects the intense love the hunter has for Me. He is a true devotee who considers God's happiness as his own. He always aspires to give happiness to the Lord and does not want to cause any inconvenience to Him either physically or mentally. Only the one who gives happiness to the Lord is a true devotee." This incident was an eye-opener for Narada. He said, "Swami, now I realise that you enacted this play only to crush my ego." The culture of Bharat teaches many such sacred stories in order to spread the message of the Lord to mankind.

One should never cause inconvenience to God in the name of devotion. If you cause displeasure to God, it will reflect on you. God's happiness is your happiness and vice-versa. You should understand the unity of both. "I and God are one." Develop such spirit of oneness. Today most of the devotees are selfish. They have only *Swartha Bhakti*. They are concerned about their own happiness and

not that of God's. God is the embodiment of love. Such divine love is present in all. You should see to it that your love is always pure and share it with everyone. This is what God expects from you.

Since ancient times, the Bharatiyas shared their sacred culture with rest of the world. They never considered God as a separate entity. They believed in the Vedic statement: *Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad* (God has thousands of heads, eyes and feet). It does not mean that there is someone with thousands of heads. It only means that all heads are His. God is present in everyone. He resides in every heart. So, do not confine God to a Mandir, a Masjid or a Church. Where man is, there God is. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God takes the form of man). As you do not realize this, you indulge in criticism of others. Whom are you criticizing? Whom do you adore? Enquire yourself. God is present in all. So, when you criticize others, it amounts to criticizing yourself. When you love others, you love yourself. So, never criticize anybody. *Sarva Jeeva Namaskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (whomsoever you salute, it reaches God) and *Sarva Jeeva Tiraskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (whomsoever you criticize, it reaches God).

Embodiments of Love!

Today is Ugadi, the beginning of the New Year. Since ancient times, man has celebrated many Ugadis, but he is yet to give up bad qualities. True Ugadi is the day when man gives up bad qualities, fills his heart with love and takes to the path of sacrifice. Do not limit the celebration of Ugadi to merely putting on new clothes and partaking of delicious items. Today you may wear a new shirt, but how long will it remain new. Tomorrow it becomes old. Nobody reads the same newspaper everyday. Today's newspaper becomes a waste paper tomorrow. Our life is like a

newspaper. Once you have finished reading a newspaper, you do not like to read it again and again. You have been given this birth which is like a newspaper, and have gone through varied experiences of pleasure and pain. Enough is enough. Do not ask for one more newspaper, i.e., another birth. You should pray, "Oh God! You have given me this 'newspaper' and I have gone through the experiences of this life. I don't want to have another birth."

Adi Sankara said,

*"Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam
Punarapi Janani Jatara Sayanam
Iha Samsara Bahu Dustara
Kripaya Pare Pahi Murare"*

(Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death and time and again experiencing the pain of lying in the mother's womb. It is very difficult to cross this ocean of *Samsara*. Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.)

Sankara was a great scholar and was well-versed in all forms of knowledge. Yet he propagated the path of devotion. Once while he was going to the river Ganges with his disciple, he noticed a person sitting under a tree and trying to learn the concepts of Panini's grammar by rote. He was repeating "*Dukrun Karane*". Sankara who was very young at that time took pity on him. He went near him and said,

*"Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam
Govindam Bhaja Mooda Mathe
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane"*

(Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda, the rules of Panini grammar will not come to your rescue when the end approaches.)

Sankara authored many Vedantic texts, but ultimately he also took to the path of devotion. *Namasmarana* (chanting of

God's Name) is the easiest path to liberation. This was his teaching. Even today there are many people who are doing *Namasmarana* but they are not experiencing its essence. What is the use of being born again and again? Many things are taking place in this world. Man is performing various tasks and undergoing many experiences. But what is the use of all this? He is unable to enjoy the everlasting bliss. Neither by wealth nor by action nor by study of texts nor by *Darshan*, *Sparshan* and *Sambhashan* (vision, touch and conversation) of noble souls can man attain the eternal bliss. He can visualize the manifestation of God and experience bliss only when he purifies his heart. Love all. Have faith that God is present in all. Make everybody happy. Only then can you attain happiness. It is impossible for you to attain happiness without making others happy.

On this day of Ugadi, take a firm resolve to purify your heart. Past is past. It cannot be retrieved. When you are walking on the road, you should look at the path ahead of you. What is the point in looking behind? Likewise, there is no point in brooding over the past. Future is not certain. What is the guarantee that you will be alive until tomorrow? So, do not worry about your future. Live in the present. It is not ordinary present. It is omnipresent, meaning the results of past as well as the future are contained in it. So, when you make proper use of the present, you can be rest assured that your future is safe and secure.

Embodiments of Love!

Today is Ugadi, the New Year Day of Andhrites. Tomorrow happens to be the Tamil New Year Day and also "Vishu", the New Year Day for Keralites. Thus, there are any number of festivals in a year. You should celebrate them understanding

and experiencing their true significance. Right from this moment, embark on a new life giving up bad thoughts and bad qualities and purify your heart. Only then will your life be blissful. There is no point in reading sacred texts or visiting noble souls unless you purify your heart in the first instance. Let your thoughts, words and deeds be sacred. This is the true purpose of celebrating Ugadi.

Tomorrow is the New Year Day for Tamilians. Hence, many of them have come from Madras (Chennai) and other places of Tamil Nadu. Madras is not new, since long it has been an important centre for the Bharatiyas. Later on, due to political considerations different states have been formed. But I do not have any differences. All are one, be alike to everyone. This is My ideal. At present, the people of Madras are suffering due to scarcity of drinking water. The rich can afford to buy water and quench their thirst. But what about the poor? They are drinking impure water and spoiling their health. Hence, I have decided to provide them pure drinking water so that they can lead happy and healthy lives and develop it further for the generations to come. In this connection, Chakravarthy (the Secretary of the Central Trust), Srinivasan from Madras (President, All India Sri Sathya Sai Organizations) and Indulal Shah from Bombay (Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai World Council) have approached the World Bank authorities and explained to them about the selfless service activities that we have undertaken. They told the World Bank authorities that all our activities are purely service-oriented and we do not expect anything in return. They just repeated like parrots whatever Swami had told them to convey. The World Bank people were very much impressed. They said that they had never

heard about or seen such stupendous service activities undertaken by a charitable organization anywhere else in the world. They were happy that Sathya Sai Baba was providing drinking water to a distant place like Madras. They have agreed to bear the expenditure involved in this project. On this sacred day of Ugadi before I came out to give *Darshan*, we received a telephone call at about 7 AM conveying this message. If the feelings are sacred, the result is bound to be sacred. They told us "You don't need to be concerned about the funds and you don't need to come to us again. We are prepared to give any number of crores to meet the expenditure." With broad-mindedness, they have come forward to extend their help.

When you undertake any task with a sacred heart, you will certainly meet with success. I am the living proof for this. There is no trace of selfishness in whatever task I undertake. Whatever I do is for the benefit of humanity. Many are not making efforts to understand this. Some people think that it is done with

some expectation. But I do not expect anything from anybody nor do I get any benefit out of this. I derive only one benefit, i.e., I feel happy when everybody is happy. As you claim to be Sai devotees, you should strictly adhere to the Sai path and make everyone happy. When you follow in My footsteps, you will certainly achieve sacred results and attain good reputation. Being Sai devotees, you should give up selfishness and dedicate your lives for the welfare of society. Fill your lives with love. Stop criticizing others. Offer your respects to even those who hate you. Hatred is a mean quality. It will ruin you. Hence, do not give room for hatred. Cultivate love. Help the poor and needy to the extent possible. Help ever, Hurt never. Sage Vyasa has given the essence of eighteen Puranas in two sentences, *Paropakara Punyaya, Papaya Parapeedanam* (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). When you help others, you will receive help tenfold. If you harm others, you will be put to harm ten times more. Keep this in mind. On this sacred day, fill your hearts with love and undertake sacred activities.

