

SERVICE TO MAN IS SERVICE TO GOD

*People can say that this is Brahman,
None can say, however, that this is not Brahman,
God only exists always,
The world is illusory, look! (Telugu Poem)*

Embodiments of Love!

Today, everybody is enthusiastic about New Year's Day. Significantly, this New Year's Day has started on a Thursday. It is one's foolishness to single out a particular day in a year and celebrate that day with great joy. For a true devotee, everyday is a festival day. Therefore, it is essential that we have to consider every minute, every day as new and celebrate it with joy. In fact, every day is a New Year's Day.

Everything in this objective world is impermanent and unreal. Hence, we have to contemplate upon the eternal truth and reality. We should not waste our time brooding over the past or anticipating the future. It is great foolishness to worry about the future or the past, forgetting the present. The present is only real. Past is past, you cannot get it back, however, much you may pray for it. The future is hidden in the womb of time. It is not possible to visualise it. Therefore, only the present is important. Unable to realise this truth, people are worried about the past and future.

The foremost activity man should engage in, is service to the fellow human beings. Instead, people are wasting their precious time worrying about either the past or the future. Therefore, embodiments of love! You should always engage yourself in service to the fellow human beings. There is no greater *sadhana* than such service. Considering the nine paths of devotion, namely Sravanam (listening), Kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), Vandanam (salutation), Archanam (worship), Dasyam (servitude), Sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (self-surrender) as the only important means for salvation, people are engrossed in these activities. They totally forget the importance of service. Only the fruits of service will be eternal. We must constantly engage ourselves in service to others. God has given us this body for that purpose only. This body is not meant to be engaged in mere eating and drinking and thus wasting our valuable time. We must realise the truth that God has given us this body for serving others and thus help others. There is nothing greater than service to humanity. *Service to man is service to God.* All great men have sanctified their life only by serving humanity. Therefore, you start serving humanity at least from now onwards. Service is more important than *Bhajan* and all other *Sadhanas*.

Embodiments of Love!

What, according to you is service? You consider helping people in difficulties is service. No. It is not as simple as that. Your body should be constantly engaged in serving others. The human body consists of several limbs. All these limbs are meant to be engaged in serving the fellowmen and not for other activities. Unfortunately, we are forgetting this basic fact. Every limb in the human body has been granted by God for *Karmopasana* (worshipping God through service). *Karmopasana* is the only means by which the human life can be sanctified. We are building several temples. We are undertaking various *sadhanas*. But, all these *sadhanas* can give us only temporary satisfaction, not eternal joy. Our ancient *Rishis* have been able to achieve eternal joy through a conscious effort. Therefore, you must develop firm faith in the truth that nothing can provide eternal joy, except service to humanity. Undertake service to the suffering humanity. Service is not merely confined to health services. Service encompasses every possible help to the fellow human beings.

The ancient culture of Bharat is still preserved in the villages and not in towns and cities. In fact, our culture is defiled in all possible ways in the cities. Therefore, go to the villages, find out their necessities and undertake such types of services that will alleviate their sufferings. Today, several people shift to the towns and cities in pursuit of comfort and luxuries. In the process, they end up in sorrows and difficulties. This is their own making. *Na Sukhat Labhyathe Sukham* (happiness cannot be obtained out of happiness). It is only through suffering, happiness can be achieved.

You should undertake service. In fact, the hands are given to you to serve humanity. *The hands that serve are holier than the lips that pray.* Therefore, undertake selfless service and attain glory. When you undertake good work, you enjoy peace in your life. Today, the boys who sang Bhajans are former students of the Institute. They

have undertaken several services to please Swami. God is not interested in worship and other *sadhanas*. He is interested only in service. Hence, undertake service and more and more service. *The best way to love God is to Love all and Serve all.* God is interested only in love and service. If you can recognise the importance of these two *sadhanas* and conduct yourself accordingly, there can be no greater *sadhana*. You need not have to spend a lot of money in service. Sanctify your life by undertaking loving service. Today, the old students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning have brought a cheque for Rs. 48 lakhs for presenting to Swami as a token of their love and service. This amount has been saved by them from their salaries, by undergoing lot of difficulties. But, to whom should the amount belong really? This amount is meant to be utilised for service in the villages. It is for serving the poorest of the poor. Therefore, I told them, "My dear ones! You deposit the money in the bank and undertake the service activities with the interest accrued on the amount." Money is of no help in developing good qualities. Sacrifice alone can develop noble qualities. It is only in sacrifice, there is real *yoga*. That is why it is said *Thyagenaike Amrutatthwamanasu* (it is only by sacrifice that man can attain immortality). Today, however, people want *bhoga* (enjoy material comforts). By such *bhoga*, only *roga* (disease) will be contracted. They cannot attain *yoga*. Hence, you try to attain *yoga* by *thyaga*. Only then can you attain eternal joy.

Embodiments of Love!

There is no use contemplating on God without making sacrifice. By contemplating on God, you may perhaps derive some mental satisfaction. But, that is of no use. Therefore, you develop firm faith in the truth that every living being is permeated by God and act accordingly. God lives in every living being and experiences bliss. The Upanishads declare, *Easwarah Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings) and *Isavasyam Idam Sarvam* (the entire universe is permeated by God). You should not be under the impression that God is confined to some temple or a structure somewhere. It is said *Deho Devalaya Proktho Jivo Devah Sanathanah* (the body is a temple and the Indweller is God). The real temple for God is the body itself. God is installed in the temple of our Heart. That is why it is given the name of *Hridaya*. *Hrid + Daya = Hridaya*. It is only when you cultivate compassion in your heart, it can be called *Hridaya*. Therefore, cultivate the quality of compassion. Whatever service you undertake with a compassionate heart, it becomes sanctified. Consider every human being as a living divinity. God is present everywhere. Forgetting such an omnipresent divinity, we are hankering after petty and trivial bodily pleasures. The fact, however, is that we can never attain real happiness with the body. This body has several limitations. With such a body, you can never attain limitless *Ananda*. (bliss).

The body is made up offive elements and is bound to perish sooner or later but the Indweller has neither birth nor death. The Indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness. Truly speaking, the Indweller who is in the form of the Atma is verily God Himself. (Telugu Poem)

You must be able to recognise such a divine Atma. Today, we are worshipping idols and pictures, thinking that God is somewhere in the outside world. But, God is very much present in the human being. That is why our ancient *Rishis* have proclaimed, *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God incarnates in the form of a human being). Of what use is it to worship unseen God, while at the same time causing suffering to the living beings around us? Every human being you come across is an embodiment of divinity. No purpose will be served by worshipping the idols and pictures, forgetting the living gods in front of us. Therefore, give less importance to such indirect methods of worshipping God. Consider the human being standing in front of you as an embodiment of divinity. Even if you come across your worst enemy, say, 'hello' to him lovingly. Address him as brother. Then, he will also respond by saying, 'hello brother'. On the other hand, if you hate him and start scolding him, he will reciprocate the same thing to you. Respect every individual and you will be respected. Man, today expects others to respect him; but he will not respect others. If you do not respect others, how can you expect others to respect you? *Manava* (human being) means an individual deserving respect. Since you are born as a human being, give respect and take respect. This is the quality you have to cultivate today. When you respect others, others will also respect you. When you offer your Pranams to somebody, to whom does it go actually? You are not merely offering Pranams to the physical body consisting of the five elements. It reaches in fact, the Indweller in that human body who is none other than God. Now, what is the nature of this body?

This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara. It is nothing but a structure of bones. Oh mind! Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet. (Telugu Poem)

What can you achieve by relying on such a body? It is only sin that you accumulate. You should sustain the body for the purpose of serving others. You have taken upon this human body only for the purpose of serving your

fellow human beings. Develop firm conviction in that truth. What happiness do you derive with the body? In fact, nothing. Whatever pleasures you enjoy with the help of this human body, you will have to leave all those pleasures as well as the body itself in a trice one day or the other. Should you have to undergo so many trials and tribulations for the sake of these momentary pleasures? You have to respect the *Jiva* in the human body. That is the real *Daiva Seva* (service to God). You have to dedicate your body to such service. If you do that, every minute of your life is fresh and new. Every day is a festival day. On the other hand, if you undertake service once in a year, that is not real service. Your *deha* (body) is *Mrinmaya* (made up of five elements). The divinity residing as Indweller therein is *Chinmaya* (consciousness). Therefore, rely upon such a divinity and earn salvation.

You all know about Abraham Lincoln. He used to go to school in the company of wealthy boys, in his childhood. Those boys were wearing costly clothes and ornaments. Lincoln, however, had to go to school with worn out clothes that were mended by his mother. One day, his friends made fun of his poor dress. He could not control himself. He went straight to his mother crying and told her, "Mother! I will not attend school hereafter. My classmates are making fun of me. They are looking down upon me as a poor boy unable to wear decent dress." Then, the mother took him into her arms lovingly and consoled him saying, "My dear son! You need not have to feel sorry for such a trivial issue. All this is going to help you in your future life. You keep our family condition in view. Do not give credence to what others say. Lead a life of self-confidence and self-respect. Respect every individual and be respected by every individual." From that day onwards, Lincoln put his mother's advice into practice and started respecting everybody. He used to be courteous with even a cobbler saying "Sir! How sacred is your life! You are doing great service by stitching sandals for us so that our feet are protected from thorns". Gradually, Abraham Lincoln could command respect from all people by his good behaviour. He earned a very good name for himself. After sometime, elections were held in America. He was persuaded by his friends and well-wishers to contest the elections. He expressed his inability saying, "I am a poor man. Who will vote for me? I do not want these positions and power". Today, Indians are spending crores of rupees to contest elections, but refuse to part with even a rupee as alms to a beggar.

The good words taught by Lincoln's mother made a lasting impression on his mind. He started respecting every individual. He used to speak courteously with everybody. As a result he earned a very good name for himself. At last, he bowed to the wishes of his friends and well-wishers and contested the elections. He scored a spectacular victory and was elected the President of the United States of America. Then, he went to his mother and said "Mother! I am able to rise to this exalted position and command the respect of the people of America, because of your noble teachings those days".

It is the mother that is responsible for the children earning reputation and fame. If children wish to earn good name, they should obey the command of their mother. That is why, the Veda has conferred the supreme position on the mother and father and declared *Matru Devo Bhava, Pithru Devo Bhava* (Mother is God, Father is God). The mother is like the body and the father, the Atma. Hence, we have to respect our father and mother. Then, we can earn any amount of respect. Abraham Lincoln could earn great name and fame and became the president of America, only on account of his respect for his mother. What do the children earn today? Nothing. They simply waste the money earned by their parents. They bring bad name to their parents. This is not what the children are expected to do. They should properly utilise the money given by their parents. In fact, every drop of your blood is the contribution of your parents. You owe your existence in this world to the love of your parents. Hence, whenever there is a need for blood donation, you should come forward to donate your blood. Thereby fulfil your obligation to your parents and society. Do not ever work for your selfish interests. In fact, selfishness and self-interest are the main causes degrading the human being. You might have heard about Winston Churchill, the former Prime Minister of England. He once declared "man has conquered all, but not conquered himself".

Children should cultivate good habits and good qualities and reach good position in life. Thus, they should bring good name to their parents. You can earn good name not by money, but by sterling character. No matter how wealthy a person is, his reputation will be tarnished if his character is not good. A wealthy person may be living in great mansions and enjoying the luxuries of life; but, he will not have peace of mind and happiness. People crave to earn more and more money. But, of what use is the money they earn? They waste all their money in worthless things. One has to utilise the money earned by him for undertaking good and beneficial activities for the society. He should conduct himself with good behaviour and good habits. Only then, will he have real peace in life.

Embodiments of Love!

Today, everyone is literally crying for Peace. But, what is this Peace? It is in you itself. You are most sacred souls.

Love is within you. Peace is within you. Unfortunately, today you are losing the peace and happiness that is within you and craving to earn something in the outside world. You want to earn great wealth and build big mansions. Devoid of good qualities, all the wealth that you earn becomes mere waste. Therefore, cultivate good qualities. There can be no greater wealth in the world than good qualities. The more you spend the good qualities, the more you accumulate. They will never exhaust.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

Prepare yourself for sacrifices. You will find eternal bliss only in sacrifice. One who does not make sacrifice will not find peace anywhere. People of every country in this world pray for peace chanting ‘Santhi, Santhi, Santhi’ But do they get peace? No. They are engulfed in disappointment and despair. Therefore one should develop faith in the truth that the eternal Lord is always with us. How can you obtain peace by ignoring the Divinity immanent in you and worshipping some unseen God?

Embodiments of Love!

Share your education and wealth with your fellow human beings. In fact, God is the real owner of the wealth acquired by you. The money you earn belongs to God’s Trust. God Himself is the President of the Trust. Keep your trust on God and make proper utilisation of your money. Do not hanker after money and other forms of wealth. Constantly contemplate on God. You need not have to go to the forest or caves in the hills in search of God. He is always with you. Develop that faith and win over demonic qualities. Today, wherever you see, demonic qualities and violence are rampant. People do not hesitate to acquire wealth by sinful ways. What ultimately comes along with you at the time of leaving the body is the sin or merit you have accumulated and not the wealth you have acquired. Share at least a morsel of food you eat, with others. Help yourself and help others. This is the greatest sadhana. In fact, it is so easy to practise. Leaving aside this simple sadhana and forgetting the noble quality of love, you are going in search of peace in the wide world. Is it not foolishness on your part?

Embodiments of Love!

Develop the quality of love. Do not hate anybody. Develop the faith that whatever happens is for your own good. Whenever you encounter any difficulty or suffering, you alone are responsible for it. Respect others. That alone will protect you. On the other hand, if you insult somebody that alone will punish you. Pleasure or pain, they are the products of your own making. The merit or sin committed by you will follow you like a shadow. Man today is giving sermons to others. But he himself is not following his precepts. What values such teachings will have? All this is mere deception. Whatever teachings you may read or listen to, can never help you if you do not put them into practice. Help your fellow human beings at least in a small measure. That alone will help you. Do not blame others for the difficulties you face. Do not ever abuse others. Love all. Treat all people as your brothers and sisters. Cultivate the feeling of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God.

Embodiments of Love!

The Bharatiyas are really fortunate. They have all facilities. But the quality of love is missing in them. If only they cultivate love, none can excel them. Therefore, enhance your honour and prestige by cultivating the quality of love. Follow the twin principles of *Sathya* and *Dharma* with love. Love alone can protect you.

Embodiments of Love!

What for are you given the hands? Is it for feeding the mouth? No, no. You have to sing the glory of God with your tongue. The hands are given to you for the purpose of keeping the beat in accordance with the tune. Bharatiyas are those who worship God with *Bhava* (feeling) *Raga* (the tune) and *Thala* (the beat). The syllable ‘*Bha*’ also stands for *bhakti* (devotion) ‘*Ra*’ for *Raga* (tune) and ‘*Tha*’ for *Thyaga* (sacrifice). You have to sing the glory of the Lord combining these three aspects. They alone are the real Bharathiyas. Every individual born in the country of Bharat is sanctified. We do not need heaven. Let’s participate in seva chanting the divine name. There can be no greater wealth than this. Why should we suffer when we have such a great wealth with us? Consider all your education and the service you undertake as God’s work. The Gitacharya has given a clarion call, *Sarvadharman Parithyajya Mamekam Saranam Vraja* (surrender unto Me all your activities and seek refuge in Me alone). Hence, dedicate all your activities to God. Only then will you attain peace in every possible way.

Bhagawan concluded the Discourse with the bhajan, “*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho ...*”