

*God Is*

.....

*I Am I*

.....

*Love All - Serve All*

NINE DISCOURSES BY BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND REVERENCE  
AT THE DIVINE LOTUS FEET OF

*Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

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## God Is

### **The Five-Letter Mantra**

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*Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*  
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Man is the only being endowed with the unique weapon of the mind. Whoever is able to master it will be victorious in life. A slave of the mind cannot achieve happiness or peace.

The body with all the sense organs, made up of the five elements, is the dwelling that the mind has established for its fulfilment. It is like an armour. The mind is the basis for the body. It is the cause of all worldly activities and experiences. A body without the mind is like a school without a teacher, a crop withering for lack of water, a temple without a deity, an electric wire without the current—utterly useless and lifeless.

Men are generally prone to regard the mind as intimately bound to the body. Believing that the body, a composite of the five elements, is real and permanent, they devote all their time and actions to its well being. Life is wasted in pursuing mundane objects. The highest realisation consists in using the intelligence (*buddhi*) to acquire higher wisdom (*vijnana*) and conquering the mind through that wisdom. The *Upanishad* declares: *Prajnaanam Brahma* (Realisation of *Brahman* is the highest wisdom). This consummation is attained only through good thoughts.

Good thoughts the most precious possession. They are charged with immense power, purity, and divinity. They are life-giving and life-sustaining. They will yield the desired fruits according to the way they are used.

#### **Transformation of sinners to saints**

The mind, it should be noted, is not like a blank paper. It is a palimpsest that carries on it the imprint of the experiences and actions of many past lives. It manifests as a reflection of the *Atma* (spirit). *The Atma + the Mind = Man*. *Man – Mind = Atma*. The mind is the cause of bondage or liberation. If one can fill himself with good thoughts in any situation, one’s life will become sanctified. Hence, it is necessary for everyone to try to cultivate good thoughts and make them govern the life and actions.

The prime requisite for the cultivation of good thoughts is association with good people (*sath-sang*). The scriptures have expatiated on the value of good company with appropriate examples. The highway robber Ratnakara supported his family by attacking wayfarers and robbing them of their possessions. He was so completely transformed by association with the seven great sages (*Saptarishis-Vasishta* and others) that he later became Valmiki, the great *Adi Kavi*, who wrote the epic *Ramayana*. Not only was he the first among poets, he achieved the same status as the sage Vyasa. The seven sages hailed Valmiki as the giver of the verse (*Sloka daata*), coming after the giver of all things (*Lok-daata* Bhagavan).

Another example. During Buddha’s time, there was a very cruel and wicked man known as Angulimala. Like Ratnakara, he was engaged in waylaying travelers, robbing them of their

wealth, and cutting off their thumbs to use them as a necklace round his neck. The Buddha was able to reform even such a cruel man and turn him into a spiritual seeker.

### **Power of faith**

Gauranga belonged to a community called *Jagayi-Madhayi*, who were noted for their wicked ways and cruelty. Through his association with holy men, he became a great devotee of the Lord and acquired the appellation *Chaitanya* (since he was always immersed in Krishna Consciousness). He devoted his entire life to glorifying God in song and dance.

Thus, through all ages, there have been men who have been transformed into saints and sages by associating with good and holy men. Coming to more recent times, we have many good examples. In Tamilnadu, some decades ago, there was a young lad, belonging to a poor Brahmin family. At that time Gandhiji was emerging as the leader of the national struggle for freedom. Everyone was talking about the lawyer who was voicing the country’s aspirations and demonstrating its determination to win freedom from foreign rule. The Brahmin boy’s mother was keen that her son should become a lawyer like Gandhiji. She told him: “My dear son! You should study like Gandhi and try to relieve the sufferings of the poor. You must become a great hero like him. You must adhere to *dharma* and fight for justice.”

From that day, the young lad devoted himself to his studies, remembering his mother’s advice. He resolved to become a lawyer and serve the poor and distressed. He overcame innumerable difficulties and handicaps. Since he could not afford lamps at home, he used to study under street lamps and prepare for his examinations. Often he had to go without food. Once, on the eve of an examination, he was studying under a street lamp when he felt drowsy. Since he could not afford a cup of tea—though it cost very little those days—he washed his face with cold water from a tap and continued his study. He passed the law examination with distinction.

He always kept in mind his resolve to live up to his mother’s words. He worked with several seniors at the Bar, picked up practice, and progressed as a lawyer. He had a deep faith in God. Whatever difficulties he encountered, he regarded them as intended by Providence for his own good. Because of his faith in God and association with good men, a great change occurred in his career. He was appointed Judge of the Madras High Court—the first Indian to be chosen for that honour. It was a fitting recognition for his character and abilities. Such was the career of T.Muthuswamy Iyer.

When devotion to God is coupled with good resolutions, anything can be accomplished. As in the case of Muthuswamy Iyer, there are instances of young men in other countries who started their careers to earn a living by polishing shoes or selling newspapers or washing dishes in hotels but who rose to high positions because of their good resolutions and their unswerving faith in God. Some of them became great scholars and led dedicated lives.

### **Man has unlimited potentialities**

In Britain, there was a poor lad who used to make a living by writing addresses on covers for illiterate persons and to give tuitions to children. Each time he wrote an address, he used to say, “May God bless you.” He used to tell the young children before they went back to their homes after their lessons, “May God shower His grace on you.” He had firm faith that some day God would raise him to a position where he would be able to render service to the people. He always told his young students, “Have faith in God.” He himself had firm faith in God.

In course of time, he became the Prime Minister of Britain. He was James Ramsay MacDonald. From a poor address writer to the Prime Minister of Great Britain—what a change in fortune wrought by the grace of God!

The union of good resolutions with faith in God is like bringing together the positive and negative ends of electric wires; through this combination, any great thing can be accomplished.

We do not realise the unlimited potentialities of man. Not only in respect of his physical form but also in regard to his intelligence, man is far above all other beings on earth. He can achieve whatever he wills to do. He can even become the master of the world. But, superficially, man appears as weakling. The life of man is subject to certain limitations. However intelligent one may be, one should not forget that life is governed by these limitations. One should use the intelligence one is endowed with, within the limits inherent in the human condition, to lead an exemplary, ideal life. If the intelligence is not properly used life becomes futile.

### **Talents are misused for selfish purposes**

Owing to absence of right thinking and right attitudes, the powers of the intellect are being misused now. Talents are being employed for selfish purposes. Though man has prodigious intellectual ability, it is being used for wrong purposes. Self-interest and self-centredness are distorting men’s outlook and leading them astray from the righteous path. Truth and integrity are at a discount. Moral standards are declining. Caste and creedal differences are mushrooming. Parochial differences are breeding mortal enmity and hatred. The spiritual consciousness is weakening. Envy and hatred are reigning supreme. Fear of sin has given place to fondness for sin. Anything spiritual is viewed with levity.

What is the reason for all this? Absorbed in sensual desires and worldly pursuits man has lost all sense of morality and goodness. He has lost sight of his own divine nature. Greed has turned man against man. Bad thoughts and ill-conceived desires have wrought havoc.

Concerted efforts must be made to change this situation by influencing men’s thoughts and attitudes. The primary requisite is to develop the will power of people along right lines. When will power (*ichhasakti*) is developed, other powers like discrimination, intelligence, retentivity, articulation, analysis, contemplation, and creative action, can be developed. Without a strong will, nothing can be accomplished. Will power is needed to get rid of entrenched habits like smoking. Through will power, desires of all kinds can be brought under control. The ancient sages were able to conquer all desires by austere penance, renouncing all worldly objects. The will should be directed toward God.

### **Deepen your faith in God**

Faith in God is the bedrock on which one’s life should be built. All the scriptures one may read, all the rituals one may practice, the mastery of the Upanishads or the Gita—all these will be of no avail if there is no deep faith in God. They will be only mere physical or intellectual exercises. They may even strengthen the delusions regarding the body-mind complex.

Deepen your faith in God. Without God how can all the marvels in the cosmos be accounted for? By whose power are millions of stars held in their places? How does the earth turn on its axis without an axle? How does the wind blow to give gratuitous comfort to one and all? These phenomena are beyond human power. All these are the work of the unseen Power acting from behind the screen. It is the Unseen that sustains the seen. It is the power of God.

### **Eight types of gurus and their functions**

Today is the sacred day of *Guru Poornima*. *Bharatiyas* (Indians) have held the view that one should try to sublimate one’s life by seeking a *guru* and acting according to his teachings. There are eight types of *gurus*: (1) *bodha guru*, (2) *Veda guru*, (3) *nishiddha guru*, (4) *kamya guru*, (5) *vachaka guru*, (6) *soochaka guru*, (7) *karana guru*, and (8) *vihita guru*.

The *bodha guru* teaches the scriptures (*sastras*) and encourages the pupil to act up to scriptural injunctions.

The *Veda guru* imparts the inner meaning of *the Vedas*, establishes the pupil in spiritual truths, and turns his mind toward God.

*The nishiddha guru* imparts knowledge about rites and duties and shows how one’s welfare here and in the hereafter, can be ensured.

The *kamya guru* makes one engage oneself in meritorious deeds to secure happiness in both the worlds.

The *vachaka guru* imparts knowledge of *yoga* and prepares the disciple for the spiritual life.

The *soochaka guru* teaches how the senses are to be controlled through various types of discipline.

The *karana guru* reveals the unity of the individual soul (*jivi*) and *the Atma*.

The *vihita guru* clears all doubts, purifies the mind, and shows how Self-realisation can be attained.

Of these eight *gurus*, the *karana guru* is the foremost. Through various teachings and practices, he helps the individual to progress from human to divine consciousness. Only the divine can act as such a teacher. All other *gurus* can be helpful only to a limited extent. There are, moreover, persons who claim to be *gurus* but who are really after the disciple’s money. They trade in *mantras* and *tantras*. Self-realisation is not to be got through *mantras or tantras*. Only by the purification of the mind can the Omni-self be realised.

### **God is present in everyone**

*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath* (The Universe is permeated by Vishnu). *Sarvam Brahma-mayam Jagath* (Everything in the Cosmos is *Brahmam*). Vishnu and *Brahmam* refer to one and the same Universal Consciousness, which pervades everything in the Cosmos.

The Divine is present in everyone. Holding firmly to this belief, one should not cause harm to anyone because one would be causing harm to God who is present in everyone. Today we talk about peace in the world. How can that peace be found outside? It has to be found inside you. How can you find peace in a world that is in “pieces”? Holding the atom bomb in one hand, is there any meaning in talking about peace? When haunted by fear, how can you have peace?

You can have real peace only when you throw away the atom bomb. Real peace can come only when thoughts about the world are replaced by thoughts of God. **God is** the author and the guarantor of peace. Only when we rely on God can we have genuine peace.

### “**God is**”—the powerful five-letter *mantra*

On this Guru Poornima day, I do not intend to give you any eight-letter (*ashtakshari*) or five-letter (*panchakshari*) mantra based on any particular deity’s name. Nor am I enjoining you to study any *Upanishad*, or the *Gita*, or the *Brahma Sutras*. There is a simple five-letter pronouncement. “**God is**” (*Devudunnaadu*, in Telugu). Make this your sheet-anchor. If you go on reciting it, thinking over it, acting up to it, and conveying it to others, immersing yourself in the bliss of this experience, you will be making the greatest contribution to the welfare of the world. (Bhagawan recited a poem on the glories of God’s creation to prove *Devudunnaadu*).

Consider this mantra as the message for this *Guru Poornima* and proclaim it in all circumstances and places with all the conviction and strength you can command. The world can be turned into an earthly paradise if you strengthen your faith in God and demonstrate it in your actions. You must have the courage and determination to face any kind of problems and difficulties. By propagating this mantra, you can promote love of God and fear of sin among the people. The mantra “**God is**” can be more powerful than a mantra based on any particular deity’s name. Moreover, mere repetition of any mantra is of little use. Greater than the power of mantra or *yantra* is the power of a pure heart (*chithasuddhi*). Your faith must stem from the heart, which is the seat of the Divine.

In the *Gita*, the Lord has revealed the part of the body in which the Divine resides. He has declared that taking the form of Vaiswanara, the Lord enters the body of every being to consume food and digest it. This means that the Divine dwells in the stomach, digests whatever food is taken, and supplies nourishment to all parts of the body. If bad food is eaten, the effects will be bad. The digestive energy turns out pure or impure products in the system according to the nature of the food supplied to it.

### **Keep the five-letter *mantra* as constant companion**

Spiritual disciplines determine the character of a person. Character determines destiny—whether good or bad. Character is built up by constant practice of good actions. Actions, in turn, are based on one’s thoughts and intentions. Whenever any thought arises in the mind, one should examine whether it is right or wrong, whether it will do good to society or cause harm to it. Actions should be based on such enquiry. It would be wrong to blame anyone for our misfortunes. Our thoughts and actions alone are responsible for our plight. One entertains pure thoughts and does all actions with firm faith in God will be favoured with God’s Grace.

Have this five-letter mantra as your constant companion and strengthen your faith in God. This will lead in due course to God-realisation. Unwavering faith in God will promote spiritual power (*Atma-sakti*) and confer indescribable bliss. Doubts should not be allowed to sprout. Faith is essential for accomplishing anything in life. Without faith, even ordinary things in life are not possible.

From today, develop your faith in God. Engage yourselves in dedicated service to society, and make your lives purposeful and helpful to those in distress or need. Remember that whomsoever you may serve, you are serving God. This is my benediction for all of you.

## God is Pure Bliss

*Summer Showers 2000, Chapter 10*

*Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

*Brindavan, 23 May 2000*

*The Embodiment of Supreme Bliss,  
The Embodiment of Transcendental Happiness,  
The Embodiment of Transcendental Wisdom,  
The One beyond duality, The One in Eternal Bliss,  
The Embodiment of Oneness,  
The Supreme One, The Eternal One,  
The Unsullied One, the Ever-steady One, and  
The Eternal Witness.*

In the *Anandavalli* portion of the *Rig Veda*, there is a beautiful and poetic reference to *Brahmananda* (Supreme Bliss). *Brahmananda* refers to bliss that is limitless and beyond description by words; it is also something that cannot be comprehended by the ordinary mind. Unless one leads a calm, pure, noble, virtuous, peaceful, and unsullied life, one can neither understand nor experience this Supreme bliss. It is beyond the physical, mundane, and transient world.

### From ephemeral pleasures to divine bliss

Our ancients have categorised the various types of joy and happiness that can be experienced. The lowest type is *manavaananda*, which refers to the pleasure that humans experience in the course of their normal life and which is connected with worldly objects, entities, and matters. Thousand times greater is *gandharvaananda* or the happiness experienced by celestial beings. *Daivaananda* is the next higher level of happiness; it is a thousand times greater than *gandharvaananda*. It refers to the joy experienced by the demi-gods (*devas*). Far greater than *daivaananda* is *Brihaspathiananda*, the bliss experienced by Brihaspati, the preceptor of the *devas*. A thousand times greater is *Prajapatiananda*, the joy experienced by Prajapati (in ancient Indian scriptures, Prajapati is the one associated with the practical aspects of Creation). *Brahmananda* is a thousand times greater than *Prajapatiananda*, the highest joy that can be measured on a finite scale. You can see what an immense gulf separates *manavaananda*, which man hungers and normally settles for, and *Brahmananda*, which he really ought to seek.

People use the word *Brahmananda* quite casually, without the faintest idea of what it actually means. Thus, every petty pleasure is glibly described as *Brahmananda*. For example, a person has a nice meal and describes the experience as *Brahmanandam*. People do not understand the infinite gulf separating *manavaananda* and *Brahmananda*. The pleasures that one normally enjoys is not even a tiny spec of *Brahmananda*. People do not realise that while worldly pleasures can be described in words, *Brahmananda* is indescribable.

Sandeepan Chatterjee [who spoke earlier] said that divine love and bliss transcend the bounds of space and time and that they are beyond season and reason as well. Indeed; *Ananda* (Bliss) is *Ananda* at all times and under all circumstances. Since Brahman and *Atma* are synonymous, *Brahmananda* can also be referred to as *Atmananda*. Supreme bliss is verily the same as the bliss



of the Self. In fact, *Ananda* is just another name for Brahman or God. Worldly happiness, which man is so crazy about, is insignificant compared to the vastness that is *Brahmananda* or *Atmananda*.

You are aware that air is present everywhere, without specific form. Yet, when this formless air that is present everywhere fills a balloon, it acquires a form — that of the [inflated] balloon. If you go on inflating the balloon, a stage will come when the balloon will burst. The air inside the balloon then merges with the air outside to become formless and vast once again. What a great difference there is between the trapped limited air and the vast free air! Similar is the comparison between the tiny spec called *mananvaananda* and to the infinity that is *Brahmananda*.

Our ability to experience happiness is one of the many gifts of God. However, owing to his limited vision, people make only a minimal use of their capacity to enjoy happiness. They are ever ready to settle for just *manavaananda*; this will not do. Like the exploding balloon and the merger of the air inside with the air outside, people must break out of human bondage, soaring to the level of *Brahmananda*.

***Brahmananda*** is one of the Names of God. It conveys the idea that **God is** ever in a state of Supreme Bliss. Bliss is thus the Form of God, and therefore it is that God who is called *Brahmananda*. There are many other such names, which were mentioned in the beginning.

***Parama sukhadam*** (Transcendental Bliss): The next in the list is *Parama sukhadam*, meaning real ecstasy. What is this *sukham* (happiness or ecstasy)? Is it connected with the body? Is it physical, sensual, or intellectual? It is beyond all these. Our ancients said, “*Tasmai Namaha.*” Meaning, “I offer my salutations to the Embodiment of Happiness.” Our ancients did not try to describe this supreme ecstasy but knew that **God is** its very Embodiment. So, they hailed God as *Parama Sukhadam*. **God is** the personification of Happiness that is beyond the constraints of space and time, and also human reasoning. If one is to describe this Transcendental Bliss, all one can say is that it is neither physical nor has it a form that can be comprehended. Nectar has an appearance, and its taste could possibly be described; but Transcendental Bliss is beyond both form and words. **God is** Eternal Bliss —what else can one say? **God is** totally unaffected by all pairs of opposites like praise and blame, worldly joys and sorrows, etc. He is ever supremely happy.

***Kevalam Jnanamurtim***: *Kevalam* means that which transcend space, time, and circumstances. *Jnana* means wisdom, so *jnana moorthim* means embodiment of wisdom. What sort of wisdom is this? Can it be acquired from books? Is it connected with the physical world? Can it be acquired by yogic practices? *Jnana* is not of this type. It is supreme, transcendental wisdom, which is beyond thisworld, beyond space, time, and beyond circumstances as well. This *jnana* is also known as *Brahmajnana* (Knowledge of the Brahman) or *Atmajnana* (Knowledge of the *Atma*). It is eternal. But worldly knowledge can be acquired from books, and one can compare scholars, saying one is better and so and so is less learned, etc. *Brahmajnana* is total; it is beyond textual and academic knowledge.

God alone is the Embodiment of *jnana* – in fact, He *is Jnana* itself. *Brahmajnana* is Eternal, Total, and Omnipresent. It is the knowledge of the Self. Since the Self is in you, this knowledge also is in you. The moment you realise your True Self, you acquire this knowledge. Acquisition of this knowledge confers supreme wisdom. Since this knowledge also confers supreme bliss, acquisition of *Brahmajnana*, automatically elevates you to the state of *Brahmananda* and Transcendental Bliss.

**Dvandvatitham:** The state represented by *Brahmananda* has another name: *dvandvateetham*. It is a state that transcends all dualities like pain and pleasure, good and bad, praise and blame, merit and sin. It is a unique state of Total Oneness. The *Vedas* say, *Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti* (Truth is only One though scholars describe it in various ways). Truth is One, not two — that is what *dvandvateetham* implies. It means that Brahman or **God is** infinitely beyond duality in which man is imprisoned. Next,

**Gaganasadrisa:** This means that, like space, Supreme Bliss is both ethereal and all-pervasive. Who is called by the name Gavana Sadrisam? God, of course! In fact, all the words Swami has mentioned so far — *Brahmanandam*, *Parama sukhadam*, *Kevalam jnana moorthim*, *Dvandvateetham*, and now *Gavana Sadrisam* — all these are Names of Almighty God.

**Tatvamasyadilakshyam** (The Ultimate Goal): The four *Vedas* proclaim four *mahavakyas* or fundamental truths: (1) *Prajnanam Brahma* or **God is** Pure Consciousness. (2) *Ayam Atma Brahma*, meaning that *Atma* (the Self) and Brahman (God) are one. (3) *Aham Brahmasmi*, meaning I am God. (4) *Tat Twam Asi*, meaning That thou art! All four statements imply the same, namely, there is only God and that, therefore, man also is divine. They underscore the Unity of Divinity. Thus **God is** also described as *Tatvamasyadhi Lakshyam* or the Ultimate Goal [which represents Total Unity].

**Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Acalam:** These four words are also Names of God. *Ekam* means One. Everything in this vast Universe is just God [though, it may be in “disguise”]. However, man is carried away by physical appearances, so he perceives and experiences only diversity, totally missing the underlying divine Unity. The diversity that man sees is purely physical and superficial. He sees only diversity because his vision as well as outlook are both entirely worldly and external.

Let us say you have the numeral one (1). Appending a zero adjacent to it gives you a number that you call ten. Add another zero and get hundred. Go on adding more and more zeroes, and you progressively get larger and larger numbers. You get hundred, thousand, ten thousand etc. In this way, with a mere string of zeroes, you can increase the number to million, trillion and so on. You can get astronomical numbers by just adding zeroes to 1. Remove this 1, and you are left with a mere string of zeroes! You may have a large number of zeroes but they carry no value. But place the number 1 before this string of zeroes, and you get numbers that carry value. That 1 makes all the difference! In the Universe, That One is God, one of whose Names is *Ekam*. **God is** just One, no matter by what Name you choose to call Him or what Form you wish to ascribe to Him.

**Nityam:** Next we have *Nityam*, which means Eternal. **God is** not only Eternal but also Changeless. He remains so in all the three periods of time — past, present, and future — in all the three worlds, and in the presence of the three qualities (*gunas*) (purity, passion, and inertia (*sathwa*, *rajas*, *thamas*)) too. This divine constancy is described in the scriptures by saying that He is beyond *trikalam* (three periods of time), *trilokam* (three worlds), and *trigunam* (three *gunas*). Thus, **God is** *Nityam, Nityam, Nityam!*

**Vimalam:** After this, we have *Vimalam*: Pure. Today, contamination and pollution are everywhere. Air and water are polluted. Food too is contaminated and polluted. What is even more serious, man’s mind is polluted. God, on the other hand, is the personification of Total Purity. He is absolutely unsullied, crystal clear, and pristine pure.

*Achalam* means steady and not wavering. All objects and entities made up of the five elements are subject to changes with time; in fact, change is an inherent part of their nature. The Sun changes with time, as does the Moon. The stars also change with time. The Earth is always in motion. You know that in a movie, sixteen frames change per second. So it is in Creation — changes all the time, everywhere, and in everything. But **God is Achalam**: steady and constant.

*Calanam Acalameva Ca*: **God is** no doubt steady and unchanging, but He is also immanent in things that are subject to change. Even so, constancy being the basic nature of the Absolute, **God is** known as *Achalam*.

*Sarvadhi Saksibhutam*: In addition to all the names mentioned so far, **God is** called the Eternal Witness. He is a witness to everything and all the time.

### Names of God not given by man

Pious and noble *rishis* of the past gave so many Names to God. Keen to experience Divinity, they sacrificed everything worldly and material, and did intense penance. Induced by his inner feelings, each sage ascribed an attribute or form of his choice to God and then gave a name to God appropriate to his conception. **God is** actually both Formless and Nameless – all the descriptions of God are due to the *rishis* of old. However, Names of God like *Brahmanandam* have nothing to do with worldly or physical descriptions. They transcend all these and relate to a superior plane. In this plane, **God is** beyond all normal and conceptual description. He is the Supreme One beyond all duality, and is described as:

*Brahmanandam, Paramasukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim,  
Dvandvatitam, Gaganasadrisam, Tatvamasyadilaksyam,  
Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Acalam, Sarvadhisaksibhutam.*

God alone is entitled to all these glorious Names.

### The all-comprehensive nature of God’s Name

Once, sage Narada came across young Dhruva, who was undertaking an intense penance to propitiate Lord Narayana. Narada said, “Dhruva, you are so young. Is it possible for you to undertake such an intense penance? How are you going to contemplate on God? In what form will you meditate on Him?” In this manner, Narada asked many questions.

Dhruva smiled and replied, “O sage, the idea that I should do penance was planted by Him. The seed of thought becomes a sapling due to Him. The sapling grows into a giant tree because of Him. And He it is who also makes the tree to bear fruits. I have no doubt that the very same God will take care of me. I have not studied the *Upanishads* or other sacred texts. I know only the Name of God.”

Narada asked, “What Name will you chant?”

Dhruva thought for a while and replied, “I shall chant: *Gopijana Vallabhaya Namaha.*”

Here, the word *gopi* does not just refer to the *gopikas* of Brindavan. *Gopa* means the Earth, the *Vedas*, the *Word*, and cows. The root word for all these four words is *Go*. *Gopis* are those who worship and take care of these four sacred entities. They worship the Earth, foster the *Vedas*, are true to their word, and also protect the cows. In essence, the *gopikas* of Brindavan did all these. God does not have any names per se, but various names are given to Him.

Dhruva said to Narada, “I am one among the *gopis*. I am a part of the Earth, a part of the *Vedas*, etc. In short, I am one among the many created by the Lord. Who protects and sustains the many? God. That is the One I am worshipping with this chant.” Swami said the other day,

*Kleem, Krishnaya, Govindaya, Gopijanavallabhaya, Svaha.*

You will recall that *kleem* means earth, *krishnaya* means water, *govindaya* means fire, and the other two words mean respectively air and space. These five words thus symbolise the five elements, which are the very personification of God. Thus, even a chant of the names of any one of the five elements amounts to calling out to God. All five words mentioned are also the Names of God, and there is no particular need to chant the name Krishna, Vishnu, or Siva. It was only after the emergence of sects like Vaishnavites and Saivites that the fashion of chanting particular names like Vishnu and Siva emerged. This practice not only narrowed one’s perspective about God but also promoted unwanted controversies. God does not have any specific name.

### **Become free from desires and attain Perfect Happiness**

*Tasmai Namah.* This is short salutation hails God as: “O God, the Embodiment of Supreme Happiness!” When are you truly happy? You feel that way when you are free from all worries and anxieties. God has no desires and that is why He is always happy. Try to be like that, free from desires, and you too will always be happy. It is desires and worldly expectations that destroy happiness. To achieve permanent happiness, you must be totally free of desires. You may or may not believe this: Swami has no worries whatsoever and is therefore always in a state of bliss. Swami has no thoughts relating to Himself. However, because He has come with a physical form and on account of His contacts with people, He might, at times, appear to be concerned and worried. But truly speaking, Swami is beyond both desires and worries. He wants nothing for Himself from anybody at any time. What He wants is only your welfare and that is the feeling dominant in Him all the time.

### **The true meaning of Self-satisfaction**

Suppose you want to eat a fruit. Do you want the fruit for your sake or the sake of the fruit? No. You want the fruit because you wish to enjoy it. You are attracted by a nice piece of textile. Do you want it for your sake or because you wish to give some satisfaction to that cloth? Obviously, the latter is not true; you want the cloth for your sake. It is the same with food. In this manner, every desire you have is for the gratification of your own self. There is something in you that drives you, and that driving force arises because you are either consciously or unconsciously seeking satisfaction for yourself. However, in almost all these cases, it is the lower self that is involved; that is why one describes all such actions as selfish. In spirituality, one must focus on the Higher Self; all actions must spring from the desire to satisfy this Higher or real Self. This is true Self-satisfaction. Actions aiming at satisfying the Inner Self are not selfish in the worldly sense because they are far from worldly desires and petty expectations.

This Real Self within is nothing but the *Atma*, and *Brahmananda* is Happiness connected with providing satisfaction to the *Atma*. Apart from the names already mentioned, the *Atma* is also known as *Paramatma*, *Paratma*, *Ekatma*, etc.

### The journey to God must be by way of selfless service to society

You are an individual (*vyashti*). You are part of society (*samashti*). And society is a part of God (*Parameshti*). The *vyashti* must journey to *Parameshti* through *samashti*. The individual must involve himself with society in some manner or the other, and serve it selflessly. If in the name of your individuality you cut yourself off from society and give preference to the pursuit of your personal ambitions etc., you can never become one with God! Such selfishness is contrary to the spirit of unity and Oneness that God represents. He who yearns to experience *Brahmananda* must first develop Love for God and the longing to become one with God. This longing must be translated into practical terms by first becoming one with society. How do you become one with society? By selfless service. When you serve society in a selfless manner, you will start realising that all are one.

### Enlightenment can occur in a flash

The *Vedas* proclaim,

*Vedahametam purusam mahantam  
adityavarnam tamasah parastat*

The *rishis* of old declared to mankind: “O man! We have seen God [in man]. He has the effulgence of the Sun latent in him but he lies in the darkness [of ignorance].”

People then asked the *rishis*: “Where did you see this God? Inside or outside?” To this the *rishis* replied:

*Antarbahisca Tatsarvam Vyapya Narayanassthitah.*  
**God is** everywhere, inside as well as outside.

They then added, “Man, there is God in you. You have the effulgence of the Sun, but the darkness of ignorance is eclipsing this radiance.” The *rishis* saw God everywhere. Since **God is** Omnipresent, Bliss is also everywhere, since bliss is God’s Form. God has no desires, and that is why the state He is in is described as Supreme Happiness (*Parama Sukhadam*). If there are no desires, then one can truly experience Eternal and Supreme Happiness, which is what **God is**.

Absence of desires also makes God the personification of Supreme Knowledge. Supreme Knowledge exists when there is Supreme Bliss — the two go together. Thus, Supreme Knowledge, Supreme Happiness, and Supreme Bliss — all these are synonymous with God. These aspects of God are not the result of causal effects; they are intrinsic to God. The Almighty transcends reason, is beyond causality, and is also beyond both space and time. He is not bound by circumstances either.

Here is an example. You are now here in Brindavan. You are sleeping in your room, and you dream that you are in Calcutta. Why did you go to Calcutta? How did you travel to Calcutta? Who accompanied you? How long did it take you to reach Calcutta? There are no valid answers to these questions because dream is beyond space, time, and circumstances such as one experiences in the waking state.

Suppose you actually want to go to Calcutta. You catch a flight at 7am, and in about three hours you are physically there. At Calcutta Airport you take a taxi and go to a house. What for? To meet your relatives. Thus, in real life, there is a purpose for the travel — you wish to meet your relatives, that is the purpose. The mode of travel is air, and the journey is made in the morn-

ing. The duration of the journey is three hours. The time of departure is a.m. Experiences in the waking state are thus governed entirely by time, space, reason, and circumstances. On the other hand, experiences in the dream state are completely beyond all such considerations.

The dream-state experience illustrates another important point. You are fast asleep at night. At 1:30am, you get up to go to the bathroom. You come back and fall asleep again. The time now is 1:35am. You drift into a dream. In the dream you see yourself growing up, getting educated, securing a job, getting married, having a son and later playing with this son. In the dream, the child cries. With a start you wake up. You look at the clock. It shows 1:40am. In just five minutes of dream, you have experienced so many stages in life that take nearly forty years in real life. In the same way, if you are able to rise to the transcendental state of *turiyavasta*, you can experience God in just a fraction of a second. You may wonder, “Is this possible?” Well, can anyone explain how it is possible in five minutes of dream to go through what takes forty years in real life? No one can. In the same way, though no one can explain it, it is possible to experience Divinity, literally in a flash.

Here is another example. You are living in a house. Circumstances arise and you go abroad, locking up the house. You return after spending ten years overseas. You open the lock and enter the house. You then put on the switch. The room you are in has remained dark for ten years but in just one moment, it is filled with light. It took just one second to put the switch on, and in a flash the darkness is removed. In the same way, it does not necessarily take ages for the darkness of ignorance to be removed and for enlightenment to occur. Enlightenment is a process that is beyond reason and season. Why? Because God who confers enlightenment is also beyond reason and season. Intensely directing your intellect toward God amounts to flicking the switch. When the spiritual switch is flicked, Supreme Bliss can be experienced immediately. Therefore, the realisation of this exalted state described variously as *Brahmanandam*, *Parama Sukhadam*, etc., can happen instantaneously, without any apparent reason. To have this experience, you do not have to withdraw to the forest as people mistakenly imagine; it can happen to you right here.

### **Offer service, and receive love!**

Peace is right within you. To experience what is right within you, why think of withdrawing to the forest? Such thoughts are foolish; peace is in one place and you are thinking of looking for it elsewhere. Peace is within you! If you want to discover this treasure within you, then, as Swami said earlier, you must serve others and experience love. If you do so, then you would automatically discover peace. Enlightenment is nothing but experiencing peace and love within, and this enlightenment is nothing other than Supreme Bliss and Absolute Happiness.

### **When the mind wavers, faith also falters**

Everything is in you. That is why it is said,

*Sarvatah Panipadam Tatsarvato'ksi Siromukham  
Sarvatah Srrtimaloke Sarvamavrtya Tisthati.*

With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads, mouths, and ears everywhere,  
He exists enveloping all. He pervades through all these means.

Once, Krishna asked Arjuna, “How old are you?”

Arjuna replied, “I am seventy.”

Krishna then said, “Arjuna, do you know My age? I am seventy five!”

For this body also seventy-five is coming! [Obviously, this is a reference to the forthcoming Seventy-fifth Birthday. Perhaps, Swami was dropping a hint to those who forgot that He is none other than Krishna come again!] Bhishma was then one hundred and thirteen. At that age, he served as the Commander-in-Chief of the Kaurava forces in the Kurukshetra war. Can you think of such a thing in this day and age? People lived long those days.

When the mind is not steady but wavering, there are aberrations. Once, Krishna chided Arjuna, “I taught you the *Gita* and gave you much spiritual advice; but you don’t remembering anything. Do you know why? Because you do not consider My teachings to be important. You are indifferent to them, and that is why you have forgotten all that I taught you. Had you regarded them as important, you would have remembered all My teachings. You have also forgotten that you and I have been together in many lives.”

Arjuna felt sorry and with humility asked, “Lord, how is it that You remember everything and recall them all, while I am not able to do so?”

That is forgetfulness.

The Real You or the Inner Being  
Is ever aware in all states,  
Be it the waking state,  
Or the dream state,  
Or the deep-sleep state.  
It knows no forgetfulness.

You, however, are not in the *Taraka* state, or the one of Perfect Awareness, but in the *tamasic* state, which is one of torpor.

Arjuna was baffled and asked, “How can that be Lord? I am not all that dull.”

Krishna smiled and replied, “Is that so? Now tell Me; we have been together for so long; can you remember all the events? You do not. But you do remember your birthday, and also the day of your wedding with Subhadra, even though the marriage took place decades ago. Arjuna, where were you last year on *Chaturdasi* [fourteenth] day in the month of *Margashirsha* [approximately, November]?”

A crestfallen Arjuna replied, “I don’t remember.”

Krishna continued, “You can recall precisely the date of your marriage that took place fifty years ago, but cannot remember where you were on a particular day just last year! This reflects the human tendency of forgetfulness, caused by a wavering mind.”

A short time after this conversation took place, the death of Arjuna’s son Abhimanyu occurred. But Arjuna was not aware of this. When he returned home, he wondered, “Every evening as I returned from the battlefield, my son used to receive me. Today, why hasn’t he come?” Krishna, who was then by the side of Arjuna, knew even earlier about Abhimanyu’s death but did not reveal it to Arjuna; there was a time and place for everything, and in due course, Arjuna would become aware of the news. In God’s Drama, there is a time and a place for everything.

When Arjuna came to know of Abhimanyu’s death, he could not bear the shock and collapsed. He shouted at Krishna calling Him “*Vamsanaasi!*” [destroyer of the clan] for not having

protected his son. Arjuna continued, “We all are now too old to have children again. With the death of Abhimanyu, our lineage has come to an end, and You are responsible for it!”

Krishna smiled, “Arjuna, your mind is wavering. Right now you are in the grip of grief, and swayed by emotion, are speaking without thinking. But it does not matter; this mood will pass.”

Some time later, Abhimanyu’s wife delivered a baby, but unfortunately, it was still-born. Draupadi took the dead child in her hand and said, “Alas, even this child is dead.” Sahadeva was sent to fetch Krishna. Krishna came. Draupadi placed the body of the still-born child on a plate, took it to Krishna and said, “O Krishna, have You given us the gift of a dead child?”

Krishna was smiling as usual. It was Krishna’s habit to always smile, no matter what the situation. Others might be worried, anxious, upset, or in despair but Krishna was always smiling. Grief and sorrow could never touch Him; He was far beyond them. Krishna told Draupadi, “This child is the exact replica of Abhimanyu. His eyes are like that of Abhimanyu and so is the face.”

Arjuna could not bear this and shouted, “Yes, the breath too is similar! Abhimanyu is dead and so is this child!”

Krishna smiled and chided Arjuna, “You are a fool, unable to understand what I am saying.” Krishna then ignored Arjuna and continued talking to Draupadi. The latter had full faith in Krishna and His willingness to do anything for His devotees.

In the matter of devotion, women are exemplary. It is the wife that drags the husband to God. God gave the gift of devotion (*bhakti*) to women and wisdom (*jnana*) to men. In court language, whereas men can go only up to the Durbar Hall [where the King holds court], women can go to the inner quarters [where women stay]. In the same way, the devotion of a woman can take her right inside God’s heart, whereas such access is not so easy for a man. Why? Because, compared to women, men have less faith in God and correspondingly also less devotion. Women, on the other hand, have total faith. Arjuna did not believe that Krishna would do anything, but Draupadi had full faith that Krishna would restore the dead child back to life.

The Pandava brothers were all seated there, looking totally crestfallen. Meanwhile, Krishna was continuing His conversation. Arjuna was boiling inside but was unable to say anything. Suddenly, Krishna told Draupadi, “Sister, give me the child.” Draupadi did. Krishna patted the child, and the baby began to cry. The Pandavas were stunned; unbelievable, but the dead child had come back to life! They shouted with joy, while Krishna named the child Parikshit (since He had made them undergo His *pariksha* (test) before giving life to the child).

Arjuna witnessed the miracle. He ran to Krishna, fell at His feet, and hailed Him: “Krishna! *Vamsodharaka*!! [Krishna, the Emancipator of the clan]” Krishna smiled, “Arjuna, just a short while ago you called Me the destroyer of the clan and now you are hailing Me as the Emancipator of the clan. How quickly you change! How fickle you are! How your mind wavers!”

If you say yes, Sai says yes.  
If you say no, Sai also says no.  
This yes and no relate to you,  
But for Sai, It is always Yes, Yes, and Yes!

[Applause.] One moment Krishna was called the destroyer and the in the next He was called the Emancipator. These descriptions relate not to Krishna but to the person using the terms. They reflect the wavering mind of man. **God is** Unchanging and far beyond fluctuations.



Parikshit having regained life, everyone was very happy. All of them were sitting around Krishna. Arjuna moved close to Krishna and gently asked, “Lord, why did You let my son Abhimanyu die at such a young age? I did not even get a chance to see him before he died. Should death come so early? Could You not have let him live a little longer?”

Krishna replied, “O foolish one! You are determining the age of a person by looking at the present body. This age that you are talking of has no meaning really. Birth and death of the body follow according to the law of nature.”

Here is an example that illustrates how one should understand the so-called early or untimely death. Suppose you go to Kashmir. You may not be aware of it, but Kashmir was the home state of Kaikeyi. While in Kashmir, you purchase some woolen cloth in order to stitch a suit. After return, you put the cloth in a cupboard and forget all about the cloth. Ten years pass and you are about to shift your residence. You are packing things for the transfer of residence, and you discover the woolen cloth that you stored away a long time ago. You regret that you forgot about this nice fabric all these years. That very day, you go to a tailor and ask him to stitch a nice suit for you. Soon, the suit is delivered, and you wear it to attend a wedding party. A buffet dinner has been arranged there. You bend down a little with the plate to help yourself. Suddenly you find that your suit gives way and tears [laughter]. You feel sad. You wonder, “Brand new suit; how can it tear like this?” Yes, the suit is indeed new but the cloth is not new; it is old.

Krishna told Arjuna, “Abhimanyu did not die young as you imagine; he was ‘old stock’. In this birth he might have lived only for a few years, but in reality, the one whom you called Abhimanyu was not young at all.”

Arjuna replied, “Lord, I was not aware of such subtleties.”

Krishna smiled, “Yes, My dear son, life and death are both mysteries! You will not be able to understand them.”

### **Experience God and do not try to analyse Him**

It is not possible for anyone to comprehend Divinity. What God does one moment may appear to contradict what He does the next moment. God’s actions are inscrutable, beyond, time, space, and human reason. As Swami often says, “No reason, no season!” It is therefore both meaningless and improper to analyse God’s actions and to interpret them. If God says ‘Yes,’ it shall be so. If He says ‘No,’ it shall be so. That is Destiny! You must accept all this and not argue. To question God’s actions would imply lack of faith.

Suppose right now you go out to the bazaar and tell people there what Swami is speaking about. You tell them that Swami is God. A man in the crowd asks you, “Where is God?” You tell him, “He is there on the stage delivering a discourse.” He argues, “That is not God. God does not exist.” You should then tell him, “If you say that God does not exist, that applies only to you and not to me. For me, God does exist. What right do you have to tell me that God does not exist? To believe in God is my right. If you are destined not to have faith in God, that is your misfortune.” Your faith in God must be strong. If it is, God will surely respond always. If you emphatically declare your firm belief in God, non-believers would automatically shut up and walk away.

You must understand that Creation is full of mysteries. The 11 words starting with *Brahma-nanda* are neither praises of God nor descriptions of God. In fact, they are Names of God.

The celebrated *Gayatri Mantra* has three basic parts.

*Om Bhur Bhuvassuvah, Tatsavitur Varenyam,  
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi,  
Dhiyo Yonah Pracodayat.*

First there is praise; next, there is meditation; finally, prayer: adoration, meditation, and prayer. But the hymn beginning with *Brahmananda*, goes far beyond even the famous *Gayatri*. The words *Brahmananda*, etc., have nothing to do with praise; they are the very Names of God. The *Gayatri Mantra* is the gift of Sage Viswamitra to humanity. It has a basis; it can be analysed; its meaning can be comprehended. But the Divine Principle [to which the words *Brahmananda*, etc., refer] is beyond human reasoning, human analysis, and human understanding as well.

God knows no sorrow, has no pain, and is beyond thought. Sorrow and grief come only to those with thoughts, while the one without thoughts is always happy. **God is** beyond thoughts and is therefore always in Bliss. No matter what people tell Him, Swami always responds by saying, “Santosham, santosham” (meaning ‘I am happy to hear that’). That is because Swami is Transcendental Bliss (*Parama Sukhadam*).

A lady comes to Swami and cries, “Swami, my husband died”. Swami replies, “*Santosham*”. The shocked lady asks, “What Swami! I am telling you that my husband has died and You are saying You are happy!! Are You happy that my husband died?” Swami replies, “No matter what you say, for Swami it is always *santosham, santosham, santosham!*”

Once, a person told Swami, “Our people met with an accident”. Swami said, “*Chala santosham* (very happy)”.

Swami is always happy. What is there to be unhappy about? Whatever has to happen according to destiny, will happen. Why then bother and feel sad about it? Life and death are natural. They are common to all and not meant specifically for this person or that. Therefore, one must calmly face the verdict of destiny and accept with equanimity whatever happens. People suffer not because of destiny but because of desires and attachments. If you have attachments to the things of the world, you are bound to experience joy and sorrow in alternation. Pleasure and pain are an integral part of the dual world.

Everything happens according to the will of God. He gives and He takes back what He wants when He wants. You might have seen railway goods wagons carrying a marking: Date of Return. It means that on the due date, the wagon has to be returned to the parent railway department. The body is like the goods wagon. When it is sent here, a return date is stamped on it though you might not be aware of it. When the due date comes, the body goes back where it came from, that is all. Thus, when there is birth there is also death. The two form a natural pair. So, no one should give way to sorrow on account of death.

There is Bliss in every aspect of life, and **God is** Pure Bliss. Since **God is** in you, you should always be happy. You should ever be full of love. Never allow that love to become polluted or degraded into hate.

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I Am I**I Am I, I Am Atma**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Christmas Discourse

Prasanthi Nilayam

25 December 2009

*The sun appears serene and peaceful,  
The days have become shorter, and  
The cool wind is blowing.*

(Telugu poem)

This festive season brings all prosperity to the people filling the granaries of the farmers with the newly-harvested grains in plenty. Not only the farmers, all people in general feel happy and enjoy this season. People attribute their happiness and prosperity to God.

Where is God? **God is** everywhere. He is omnipresent — in you, above you, below you, and around you. He has no particular name or form. Neither has He birth and death. Only when there is birth will there be death also! Hence, God has no birth, no death! He is present in every living being as *Atma Swarupa* (Embodiment of Divine *Atma*). Man today is unable to realise that *Atma Tattwa* (*Atma* Principle).

Bharat is a sacred land. It has given birth to many noble souls and chaste women.

*This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women, like  
Savitri, who brought her dead husband back to life;  
Chandramati, who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth;  
Sita, who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed,  
Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity.  
This land of piety and nobility attained plenty and prosperity and became the teacher  
of all the nations of the world  
Because of such women of chastity.*

(Telugu poem)

Sri Rama released Sita from the captivity of the demon Ravana, who confined her in Lanka for ten months. Rama took her into His fold after putting her to the test of fire. The fire god presented her before Rama, saying, “Oh! Rama! Sita is a great woman of chastity. She is so much devoted to her husband that she did not look at the face of even one male in all these ten months.” Sita came out of the fire unscathed, and the fire god himself attested to her chastity. One can imagine how great and noble she was! Can there be a parallel to such women in any country in the world?

The country of Bharat (India) is situated in the middle of the seven seas. Every man and woman in this country has to conduct themselves as *Purushothama* (noble male) and *Pativratha*

(chaste woman) respectively. No wonder several Avataras (incarnations) took birth in this sacred land. Great men and women and noble souls may be born in any country. But *Avataras* took birth only in the country of Bharat.

Today, people aspire for everything in the world except God. People leave even their motherland in quest of wealth and money. This is not a positive development, especially for the *Bharatiyas* (Indians), for they are expected to rise above the desire for money. **God is** one who always gives; He never takes. God desires only love from us, nothing else. The country of Bharat is so noble and sacred, but the people of this country are leaving, seeking greener pastures elsewhere. However, those with a pure and unblemished heart are sticking to their native country.

What God expects from His devotee is only a pure and sacred heart.

People ascribe different names and forms to God. In fact, **God is** only one. He is beyond all names and forms. He takes on a name and form according to the wishes and aspirations of a particular devotee. When you contemplate on the form of Jesus and wish to see Him in that form, He manifests before you as Jesus.

*Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). **God is** present in every human being, nay in every living being. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (**God is** in the form of a human being). That is why human values are considered to be so sacred and important. It is not enough to simply have a human body. In keeping with the human form, one should also cultivate the human values of *sathya* (truth), *dharma* (righteousness), *santhi* (peace), *prema* (love) and *ahimsa* (nonviolence).

You should not tell a lie under any circumstances. If you adhere to truth, righteousness will follow. Where truth and righteousness go together, there peace will be. Where there is peace, there will be love too. There can be no place for violence when there is love. Unfortunately, today there is violence everywhere due to the absence of love among people. Whomsoever you come across these days, there is unrest and unrest. People perform *japa* (chanting of God’s Name) and *tapa* (penance) to obtain peace, but there is no peace anywhere. Wherever you see, only pieces, pieces, and pieces!

One has to develop love in order to get peace. First and foremost, one has to develop love. “Love is God, **God is** Love.” “Truth is God, **God is** Truth.” Truth and Love are the embodiments of Divinity, verily. Though **God is** one, people ascribe different names like Rama, Krishna, Govinda, and Narayana to God. The different names and forms ascribed to God are the outcome of the imagination of poets and painters. For example, Ravi Varma portrayed God in different forms based upon his imagination. But God cannot be limited to a particular name and form. All names and forms are His, and He transcends them too! **God is** immanent in all living species including the human beings. The entire creation is the manifestation of Divinity.

God has no desires and aspirations. He is selfless. Everything in the outside world is the reaction, reflection, and resound of your inner being. This is a cloth (showing a handkerchief). Strictly speaking, this is not a cloth; it is a bundle of threads. The threads woven together assumed the form of a cloth. Similarly, the thoughts and desires of a human being make the mind. They, in turn express themselves in the form of speech. The words lead to actions through the sense organs. In the process, man entertains certain bad thoughts and feelings.

Why did God give eyes to a human being? Only to see good. Similarly, the ears are meant to hear good things and the tongue to speak good words. The words you speak must always be sweet and soft and never harsh. Thus, you have to consider every limb and organ in the body given to you by God as sacred and make proper use of it. Such a sacred body has to be dedicated to God and none else. God gives you all that is necessary for your life’s journey. You should therefore install God in the altar of your pure and sacred heart.

**God is** omnipresent. The sky is God and the earth is God. All human beings are embodiments of Divinity. **God is** immanent in every human being in the form of breath (*Soham*). Man has to realise this truth. Only when you realise the true nature of God that can you be considered to have acquired *jnana* (wisdom).

*Jnana* is not mere bookish knowledge. Several educated people have acquired vast knowledge from textbooks, but who is a *jnani* (realised soul) in the real sense? Only the person who has realised, “I am not the body, I am not the mind; I am God verily,” is a real *jnani*.

When you say, “this is my body,” who are you? To whom are you referring? The expression “my body” connotes that you are separate from the body. When you say, “This is my mind,” the mind is separate from you. Similarly, when you say, “This is my *buddhi* (intellect),” it means the *buddhi* is separate from you. In all these expressions, what is that ‘my’? That ‘my’ is ‘I’. This ‘I’ is what was referred to by Jesus Christ as the ego, and it has to be cut. That is the real significance of the cross. You cut the ego.

You are bound by two things: ‘I’ and ‘mine’. That is the human bondage. If you can get released from these two bonds, what remains is ‘you’ only. Now you are with the body. Suppose you have to leave the body tomorrow. At that time, who are you and where are you? You do not know! The body is like a dress; a robe. Once you get rid of attachment to this dress, your true nature will be apparent.

The same truth has been explained in the phrase, “the one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are”. That is the true nature of a human being. When someone enquires who you are, you will answer, “I am so and so.” You will give your name. In fact, that name is given to you by your parents and not by God at the time of your birth.

Suppose you ask God, “Who are you?” He will reply, *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). Every individual should remind themselves, “I am Brahman, I have no other name.” If someone asks, “What is your name?” you should reply, “My name is Brahman.” If you are constantly aware of your true nature thus, that is *Atma Tattwa*. You do not have to contemplate on anything else.

Whenever you come across a friend or acquaintance, you greet him with a *namaskar*. This implies that you are in fact paying obeisance to the Divinity immanent in the individual. Hence, do not entertain the feeling of ‘I’, ‘I’, ‘I’. All these physical bodies are like the roles played in a drama. They change. The world itself is a cosmic drama. You must constantly remind yourself that you are playing your role in the cosmic drama and your real nature is that you are an Embodiment of Divine Self (*Atma Swarupa*). You have any doubts in this regard? (Swami enquired turning to the audience ...). If you are entertaining any doubts, you will be confused.

Unfortunately, today one does not know about one’s own true nature. How then can one know about God? Hence, first and foremost know thyself! Enquire into yourself, “Who am I? Who am

I?” you will realise, “**I am I**, I am *Atma*”, “**I am I**, I am *Atma*”, “**I am I**, I am *Atma*.” If you forget this Divine Self, what remains is ‘deep wine’! Hence, you should become divine.

Rama, Krishna, Govinda, etc. are only references to Divinity in the common parlance. An individual is referred to by several names based upon the relationships at the physical level. One person refers to him saying, “He is my son-in-law.” Another says, “He is my son.” A third person says, “He is my brother.” Thus, one gets into bondage as the relationships increase. From where did this bondage emerge? It is all of your own making.

You marry a girl and say, “She is my wife.” But before marriage, who was she? You do not know. After some years when she departs finally, you do not know anything about her. Thus, you do not know who she was before marriage or where she went after her departure. The wife-husband relationship is only in between.

Hence, do not worry about the past. Past is past and future is uncertain. You do not know, you have no knowledge of, either the past or the future; you are aware of only the present. Hence, live in the present. That is the only reality.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the *bhajan*, “*Hari bhajan bina sukha santhi nahin ...*”)

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## Who Are You? I Am I

*Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba  
Prasanthi Nilayam, 20 October 2004*

Peace has become extinct!  
Truth has become scarce!  
Mind is the cause for both,  
Oh Valiant sons of Bharat!  
(Telugu poem)

### Embodiments of Love!

*Bharatiya* (Indian) does not mean only a person born in the country of Bharat (India). The culture of Bharat is the mother. The country of Bharat is the father. *Bharatiya* is one who has faith in and lives under the care of these parents.

Several noble souls have taken birth in Bharat, followed the great culture of this country, and set examples to others. Sri Sankaracharya is one such great personality who spread the culture of Bharat throughout the length and breadth of the country and earned eternal fame. Adi Sankara taught the philosophy of monism (*advaita*). Three centuries after him came Sri Ramanujacharya, who advocated the qualified monism (*visishtadvaita*) system of philosophy, which emphasised devotion (*bhakti*) and surrender (*prapatthi*) to God. Two centuries after Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Madhwacharya arrived on the scene and propagated the dualism (*dwaita*) system of philosophy emphasising the devotional path to the people vacillating between several systems of philosophy. However, the fundamental principle underlying all the three schools of philosophy is one and the same, that is, *Atma Tattwa* (*Atmic* principle).

The non-dualistic (*advaita*) philosophy of Sri Sankaracharya advocates the oneness of the individual soul (*jiva*) and Brahman (cosmic soul). Qualified monism philosophy of Sri Ramanujacharya presupposes that *jiva* and Brahman are different. Sri Madhwacharya explained that there are, in fact, three concepts, namely, body consciousness (*dehatma bhava*), individualised form of God (*jivatma bhava*), and the universalised soul or the Supreme Self (*Paramatma Bhava*).

Nobody need hold on to a particular school of thought or deride the others. The question of adhering to a particular school of philosophy depends upon the mental framework of the individual. Sri Sankaracharya emphasised that though the cloth is of different varieties, the thread underlying the cloth is one and the same. “The cloth is made of a number of threads woven together,” he explained. One has to recognise the underlying principle behind the three schools of philosophy, namely, *advaita*, *visishtadvaita*, and *dwaita*.

Ornaments are many, gold is one;  
Colours of the cows are many, milk is one;  
Beings are many, the Indweller is one;  
Nationalities are many, humanness is one.

Adi Sankara had a short life span of 32 years. Though the philosophies advocated by Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, and Sri Madhwacharya acquired different names, namely, *advaita*, *visishtadvaita*, and *dwaita*, the underlying nature of the three types is one, that is *Atma*

*Tattwa*. The same can be explained with the example of gold forming the base for ornaments with different names and forms.

Not realising the fundamental unity between the three schools of philosophy, people adhering to the different schools of philosophy derided one another, which gave scope for a number of misconceptions in the world about the country of Bharat. In order to explain the truth *Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma* (one *Atma* dwells in all beings), Adi Sankara gave some examples. He took out an ornament and explained that the metal with which the ornament was made was gold, thus going into the fundamental principle. The same principle was explained in a different way by Sri Ramanujacharya, who emphasised that though gold forms the basis for the ornament, since it has assumed the form of a chain, it should be called a gold chain.

Sri Sankaracharya, while advocating the *advaita* philosophy, quoted the *Vedic* dictum *Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma* (God is one without a second). Sri Ramanujacharya, however, did not agree with this view. His viewpoint was: how could there be an image (*prathibimb*) without an object (*bimba*). He thus explained the oneness of the object and the image, which he termed as *visishtadvaita*, (qualified non-dualism). Another example given in this context was the sugar-cane juice. The juice is extracted from different varieties of sugar cane, and a number of sweetmeats are made out of the juice. Though the juice is one, it has now assumed different forms. While Sri Sankaracharya emphasised the oneness of the sweet juice and the sugarcane, Sri Ramanujacharya dwelt upon the different forms the juice has assumed.

Thus, ever since the times of the three great teachers (*acharyas*) till today, there are a number of arguments and counter arguments between the three schools of philosophy. But present day students do not have faith in any of these three schools of philosophy. They just brush aside these systems as a figment of imagination.

Sugar made out of the sugar cane juice is the main ingredient for making various sweets. The sugar is sweet. Similarly, Brahman is the source and sustenance for the entire universe. Wherever you look, you will find manifestation of the Divine (Brahman) in ever so many forms. The forms change and are illusory in nature.

Brahman alone is the eternal, changeless principle. That is why Sri Sankaracharya has declared, *Brahma sathyam jagat mithya* (Brahman alone is real, the world is illusory). All three great teachers, namely Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, and Sri Madhwacharya, propagated the same principle, that is, *Atma Tattwa*.

The *Upanishads* declare that the entire universe is permeated by the same *Atmic* principle. That truth is contained in the *Upanishadic* dicta, *Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma* (one *Atma* dwells in all beings), *Easwarah sarva bhutanam* (God is the Indweller of all beings), and *Isavasyam idam sarvam* (the entire universe is permeated by God).

The rain, the water that flows into the river, and the sand in the river that sustains it—all are one and only one. Everything is Brahman. Since every object in this universe is Brahman, nothing can be disregarded or ignored. This principle of Brahman is called “divine” in the English language. But many ignorant or cynical persons take it as “deep wine” and take to imbibing intoxicating substances. Disregarding such perversion, we have to realise that the sweetness underlying Divinity is one only. This oneness in the great culture of Bharat has been propagated since ancient times. In keeping with this great tradition, consider everyone, whether it is an ant or an animal or a human being, as verily Brahman.



Some people may have a doubt in this context whether a human being and an animal can be equated. Yes, as far as the *Atmic* principle is concerned. However, the behavioural pattern of the animal is different from that of the human being. Considering this aspect, one may conclude that they are different, but the underlying *Jiva Tattwa* is one and the same. On the basis of this *Jiva Tattwa*, you cannot differentiate at all between the living beings. Thus, *Sarvam Brahmamayam Jagat* (the entire universe is permeated by Brahman).

This truth can be explained by a simple example. This is a white cloth and that is a saffron cloth. Though the colours are different, the cloth is one. The cloth may be of different colours and put to different uses, but the cloth is only one and the same. The cloth is the source. One has to recognise the oneness of the source. Once you recognise the source, all differences vanish in no time. Unfortunately, today, we are giving importance to the names and forms, forgetting the basis and source for all names and forms. As a result, we are undergoing innumerable difficulties and sorrows.

Adi Sankara has explained the monism principle beautifully in his famous *Bhaja Govindam* song thus:

*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam  
Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe  
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale  
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane.*

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

If the end approaches, nothing can save you except the divine Name. Therefore, chant the divine Name. Thus, Sri Sankaracharya exhorted, awakened, and taught the world.

Further explaining the sorrows and difficulties faced by man in his life’s sojourn in this objective world and the need to seek refuge in the divine grace, Sri Sankaracharya composed the following stanza:

*Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam  
Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam  
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare  
Kripayapare Pahi Murare.*

Oh Lord!  
I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death time and again;  
I am experiencing the agony of staying in the mother’s womb.  
It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life.  
Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.

In this context, one has to analyse what is it that is subject to birth and death again and again. The body (*deha*) undergoes this cycle of birth and death, but the *Atma* is eternal. As long as the *Atma* remains in the body as the Indweller, there will be consciousness in the body. The moment the *Atma* leaves the body, it becomes inert (*jada*). This phenomenon is called death. Unable to realise this truth, man subjects himself to sorrow. Birth and death are only for the outer form, not for the *Atma*.

A short story in this context. There was once a philosopher-son, who was learning *Vedas*. By the time he completed his *Vedic* learning, his mother completed forty years of life. She left her mortal body in her 40th year. The son was deeply immersed in sorrow. His guru called him and tried to counsel him explaining, “Whom do you consider as your mother? The body? No, this is not your mother. You are wailing over a dead body, which your mother has left. In fact, the body is right before you. Why should you have to weep? The power of consciousness (*chaitanya shakti*) has left the body. It means that power of consciousness represents your father and mother, not the forms and attachments to those forms. No doubt, it is true that relationship does exist with the physical form for sometime. But thereafter, the body ceases to exist. When you realise the truth, you will understand the futility of the relationship with the physical body.”

The objects may be different, but the source and sustenance for the objects is only one. The same source assumes different names and forms. One should not develop dependence on the names and forms, which are subject to change. This simple truth, based on the *Mooladhara Tattwa*, has been explained by different people in different ways as high sounding philosophy. This has given scope to some misconceptions to a certain extent. In fact, the underlying principle behind the monism philosophy of Sri Sankaracharya and the qualified monism philosophy of Sri Ramanujacharya is one and the same.

### **Embodiments of Love! Students!**

Today, we are taking very lightly such a great and noble philosophy. Sri Sankaracharya’s philosophy is profound in nature and explains the great truth in simple and beautiful poetry. Any amount of explanation will be insufficient to bring out the underlying philosophy in full measure.

Sri Sankaracharya also wrote a great commentary (*bhashya*) on *Bhagavad Gita*. In this commentary, Adi Sankara has explained that there is monism (*advaita*) in duality (*dwaita*) and *dwaita* in *advaita*. Further, the qualified monism philosophy (*visishtadvaita*) contains both *advaita* and *dwaita* concepts as well. Therefore, all three schools of philosophy lead to the same goal, and their underlying meaning is, *Brahma sathyam jaganmithya* (Brahman alone is the truth and the world is illusory).

The whole world appears as containing innumerable names and forms. One should not be enmeshed with these names and forms. It is only when the names and forms are set aside and the underlying source is identified that it is possible to recognise the truth. And that truth is *Tattwamasi* (That Thou Art). That is, *Prajnanam Brahma* (constant integrated awareness is Brahman). That awareness is *Ayam Atma Brahma* (This Self is Brahman). When you analyse the aphorism *Tattwamasi*, it will lead you to the awareness “I am That” and “That I am.” When you are able to realise this truth, you will find that the principle “I” underlies everything in the universe as the principle of unity. We have to recognise that “I” principle, which is universal.

It is a futile exercise to get into arguments and counter-arguments over this matter and waste one’s time. The only aspect you have to realise is “I am Brahman.” When somebody questions you who you are, the proper answer would be “**I am I**,” “I am the word, I am the form, and I am the name.” This “I” represents and explains everything. When somebody questions who you are, do not reply by quoting your name. The name represents the name given to the body. You are not the body. Hence reply, “**I am I**.” Everyone should strive to attain that state of unity.

The *Vedantic* concepts lead to endless arguments and counter-arguments. Do not enter into them. Always be under the awareness “**I am I.**” This “I” principle is beyond names and forms. It represents the Brahma Principle (*Brahma Tattwa*), which is one without a second entity.

When somebody enquires who you are, you reply, “**I am I.**” Similarly, when you ask someone who he is, his reply would be “**I am I.**” Thus, all are “**I am I.**” It is only when you think “I am not I” that there will be several questions.

**Dear students!**

You have to finally make a firm resolve “**I am I.**” Do not identify yourself with the body and say, “I am a child,” “I am a young man,” “I am an old man,” etc. These differences relate to the age factor. What is the next stage after old age? Nobody knows. But the “I” principle exists in the child, youth, and old age. This is the fundamental and changeless principle. Therefore, when someone enquires who you are, you reply, “**I am I.**” If the person is unable to understand this principle, do not bother; hold on to your principle. Only when you develop such firm conviction will you be able to achieve anything in life. The philosophical concepts can be explained in ever so many ways. They contain several meanings.

On 20 October 1940, I made a declaration for the first time revealing my true identity thus:

Know that I am Sai in reality,  
 Cast off your worldly relationships,  
 Give up your efforts to restrain Me,  
 The worldly attachments can no longer bind Me,  
 None, however great he may be, can hold Me.  
 (Telugu poem)

Since I made this declaration on the 20 October, people celebrate this day in a big way. We should not give too much importance to the dates and try to celebrate them —Birthday, Avatar Declaration Day, etc.

Once, Rukmini, the consort of Lord Krishna, invited Him to her palace saying, “Swami! Today is my birthday. Please come for dinner.”

Sathyabhama, another consort of Krishna, who was present on that occasion, was angry. She argued, “If today is your birthday, this is also the day on which I entered the in-laws’ house. Krishna tied the nuptial knot round my neck on this day. Therefore, He should visit my house only, on this day.”

Thus, the day turned out to be a day of quarrel between the two consorts. Lord Krishna, however was prepared to visit both houses. He does not differentiate between them. Thus, one has to recognise the principle of unity in Divinity.

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## Recognise the Fundamental Principle of Oneness

*Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba  
Prasanthi Nilayam, 21 March 2004*

Good and bad coexist.  
None can separate them.  
But one with *sraddha* (steadfast faith) will always experience goodness.  
What else is to be conveyed to this august assembly?  
(Telugu Poem)

### Embodiments of Love!

Today marks the beginning of another new year. Many new years have gone by, but there is no change in the life of man. Why? The reason is that man is not making efforts to experience the principle of Divinity, which is present in all in the form of love. Love is the true form of God. It is your foremost duty to recognise this eternal principle of love.

Today you are in search of Divinity. Where is the need to search for that which is everywhere at all times? You are in search of God because you are unaware that **God is** always with you and in you. You are trying to have the vision of God through meditation. However, do not be satisfied by merely performing such spiritual practices. What is meditation? Adherence to truth is true meditation. The eternal, immortal, wonderful, and blissful principle of Divinity is present everywhere. You should make efforts to realise this truth. This is the royal path to attain the goal of life.

### Recognise your innate Divinity

People are making efforts to realise truth, but their efforts are not yielding the desired result. Divinity is the very embodiment of eternal bliss and is present in all of us. How can you visualise it? Firstly, understand that there is nothing superior to truth in this world. Your foremost duty is to recognise the principle of truth that is present in you. But you are forgetting your innate divinity. You are undertaking a number of spiritual practices (*sadhanas*) to experience Divinity. In fact, you do not need to perform any special spiritual practices to have the vision of God, who is always with you, in you, above you, around you.

### Embodiments of Love!

It is a sign of ignorance to search for God, who is all-pervasive. People perform various spiritual practices such as *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* to have the experience of divinity. What is meant by *samadhi*? It should be termed *samadhi*, meaning equanimity in all situations. Equanimity is, in fact, present in every individual. It is a misconception to think that only those who perform spiritual exercises are capable of attaining it.

Do you go about searching for yourself in the outside world? Such a person can only be called foolish. In fact, you are distancing yourself from your own sacred Self by searching for it outside. This mad search will not lead you anywhere. You are endowed with the sacred principle of love. Wherefrom does it come? Where does it go? It neither comes nor goes. It is always present

in you. You waste your time just in the name of doing spiritual practices. Instead, realise the truth: “**I am I.**” All spiritual practices become superfluous for one who realises this truth.

Where does this “I” come from? It is in you. Without realizing this truth, you search for it outside. It is therefore necessary for every human being to recognize this truth. He is a true spiritual aspirant (*sadhaka*) who realises the divinity present within him. Those who search for it outside follow the wrong path.

Many people made efforts to fathom the Krishna Principle (*Krishna Tattwa*) but none could succeed. Where is Krishna? Where is God? **God is** present within you. Do you ever go in the street and ask others, “Have you seen me?” Try to look within and realise this sacred principle of “I”. You can know it the moment you turn your vision inward. You see all external objects except your true Self when you see with open eyes. Once, Arjuna asked Krishna about his true identity. Krishna said, “Arjuna! I am yours and you are Mine. You and I are one.” We should try to realise this principle of unity.

### **Give up false identification with the body**

The boy who spoke earlier said that he was doing spiritual exercises to attain the vision of God. One need not search for God in some distant corner. *Sarvata Panipadam Tat, Sarvatokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Sruthimalloke, Sarvamavriya Tishthati* (With hands, feet, eyes, ears, heads, and mouth pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). Where is the need to search for God when He is present everywhere? Whatever you see is permeated by God. There is no place or form in which God is not present.

**God is** love and love is God.

You can connect yourself with God only through love.

Develop love and achieve the supreme state of equanimity.

(Telugu Poem)

**God is** present everywhere as truth. The same truth is present in you. Some people think that Lord Krishna was born at a particular place and He left His mortal coil at such and such place. No! This is a misconception. Krishna is everywhere. Whatever you see, it is Krishna. Krishna is in every form, and all forms are divine. Only the names change; **God is** only one. Instead of searching for God outside, close your eyes and see within to know the Divinity immanent in you. Enquire who you are. Do not identify yourself with the body.

Only when you identify yourself with the body does the question of “I” and “you” arise. When this “I” and “you” merge into one, there will be unity. But people are unable to forget “I” and “mine”. Right from your birth, you are accustomed to identifying yourself with the body. Therefore, you are unable to give up your false identification with the body. Once you realise that the same *Atma* is immanent in every individual, the differences of “I” and “you” will vanish.

### **Embodiments of Love!**

Love, truth, peace, and divinity are not different from each other. They are all one. You will be able to realise this truth only when you strengthen the spirit of unity. Love is not something that is acquired from outside. It emerges from within. When you develop and expand love, you will be able to realise the truth that all are one.

(Bhagavan showed His handkerchief) What is this? This is a cloth. It is made up of thread. Thread, in turn, is made out of cotton. Cotton is the basis of the cloth, but cloth is made by weav-

ing the threads. Similarly, the mind is also made up of the threads of resolutions and aberrations (*sankalpas* and *vikalpas*). You should know your real identity by transcending the mind.

### **Embodiments of Love!**

You have to enquire as to what extent you have understood the principle of love, which is uniformly present in all. Man is carried away by his identification with the body, so he perceives diversity in creation. In fact, it is unity alone that is behind the apparent diversity. Whatever differences are there, they are only the creations of your mind. If you want to eliminate these differences and realise the principle of unity in diversity, you have to realise your true nature. You experience diversity when you turn your perception away from this fact of unity. Recognise the principle of unity. You are God. **God is** not separate from you. It is a mistake to consider yourself separate from God. This difference is the result of your deluded vision. When you rectify this defect in your vision, you will realise “**I am I**”.

When you identify Sai Baba with the physical form, you become separate from Him. It is only these feelings of identification with the physical form that create differences between individuals. The feelings of “I” and “mine” are behind all this multiplicity of forms. If you stand before a mirror, you see your image. Even if there are many mirrors, you see the same image. Though the mirrors are many, the image is one. Realise this oneness behind multiplicity.

### **Embodiments of Love! Students! Boys and Girls!**

Try to know the fundamental principle of oneness. If you know this, everything else will become known to you. This world has a plethora of forms but there is one divinity, which permeates all these forms. Know this truth. *Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti* (Truth is one, but wise men call it by many names). You see diversity due to the effect of illusion (*maya*). There exists only unity everywhere, not diversity. It is your illusion that causes diversity. Forget this diversity and contemplate on divinity. You may ascribe any number of names and forms to God but **God is** one.

At one time, Radha realised her oneness with Krishna. But later she was overcome by delusion and started considering herself different from Krishna. This feeling of separateness is a big mistake. Reminding Radha of her true identity, Narada told her that she had no separate identity. It was her mistake that she had identified herself with her name, he said. He added that she was not separate from Krishna, and she was, in fact, Krishna.

### **Embodiments of Love!**

Whatever you see, whomever you come across, consider every form as nothing but the manifestation of divinity. Do not entertain differences of “I” and “you”. You look into a mirror and say that you are in the mirror. In fact, you are not in the mirror. It is only your reflection that appears in the mirror. When you go behind the hill and shout “Oh!”, you will hear the echo of your voice. You may think that someone is shouting at you with the same intensity. But it is not so. That voice is yours and nobody else’s. Similarly, all that you see in the world is only your reaction, reflection, and resound.

It is a mistake to consider the reflection as reality. When you understand the true nature of the reflection, you will know the truth of oneness. Here is a small example. Once, a young cowherd took his cattle to the forest for grazing. While the cattle were grazing, he began singing loudly. The song created an echo from the hills. The innocent boy thought that someone was imitating to make fun of him. He grew angry. After he returned home, he told his mother, “Mother! I will not

take the cattle to the forest tomorrow. There is someone in the forest who is imitating whatever I sing. I feel humiliated.”

The mother said that she would accompany him to the forest the next day. He took her behind the hills and started singing loudly. Again, an echo of the song was heard.

The mother said, “Son, it is not that someone else is repeating your song to make fun of you. Whatever you sing, its echo is being heard by you.” Similarly, you should understand that everything in this world is your own reflection, reaction, and resound.

**Understand the Principle of Unity**

If you want to see God, firmly believe that you are not the body. You identify yourself with the body due to your illusion. Students should try to understand this clearly. All that is seen outside is only a reflection and not the reality.

You see Sai Baba in front of you. You identify Sai Baba with the body. But I am not the body. You and I are one. Once you understand this truth clearly, there will be no difference whatsoever.

If you slap someone on the cheek, it amounts to slapping yourself. If you abuse others, it amounts to abusing yourself. You are bound to face the consequences of your actions. You are the cause of your happiness or suffering. Others are not responsible for it. In fact, there are no others. All are one. It is your own thinking that creates the feeling of separateness in you. You should make efforts to understand your true identity.

You are the very embodiment of love. The principle of love is one and the same in all. You share your love with your children, parents, and spouse. The feeling toward each of them is different but the fundamental principle of love is the same. You should recognize this fundamental truth. The fundamental truth is one without a second. That is the *Atma*.

**Embodiments of Divine Atma!**

The *Atma* is one, not two. Once you recognize the truth that the same *Atma* is present in all, you will be free from all differences and conflicts. Develop firm faith that the same Self is present in all. Understand this principle of unity. Only then can you experience truth. All the students have immense love for Me. They are happy that Baba loves them. Understand that it is only Baba who loves all. (Loud prolonged applause.)

You see differences in individuals. But in My view, all are one. I am you and you are I. Have firm faith in this unity. Only then can you transcend duality. When you enquire deeply, you will be able to understand this truth. Have patience. Do not feel disappointed that you are unable to have the vision of God. When you understand the principle of unity and hold on to it firmly, you become Sai Baba yourself.

You are “divine”. But you are unable to realise it because you are intoxicated with the “deep wine” of worldly desires. All are the embodiments of divinity. I am not different from you and you are not different from Me. We are one. When you go on contemplating on this thought of unity with the Divine, you become one with Him. Then, all differences will disappear and you will attain the experience of unity with God.

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## Who Am I?

*Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 20, Chapter 6  
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba  
Prasanthi Nilayam, 30 March 1987*

The Cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine. They are foolish who, while seeing the handiworks of the Divine everywhere, think that there is no God. Without recognising the omnipresence of God, men seek God somewhere or the other. This reflects the dualistic attitude of the persons who identify themselves with the body and alienate themselves from God. While **God is** omnipresent and can be recognised in the divine manifestations of nature, the body consciousness prevents men from experiencing oneness with the Divine.

How is God to be experienced? The first requisite is purity of heart. All religions have affirmed the basic importance of purity. The aim of all spiritual practices (*sadhanas*) is to achieve peace. Compassion toward all beings is devotion to God.

God cannot be experienced through the ostentatious observance of rituals and worship. Where there is pomp and show there can be no divinity. The bliss of the Divine cannot be found there. As a seed will not sprout on the rocky ground, the bliss of the Divine cannot be realised by worship devoid of humility and sincerity.

All spiritual practices are not pursued for realising the *Atma* (divine Self). There is no need to seek the *Atma*, which is all pervasive and present everywhere. Spiritual practices are performed to get rid of the *anatma* (that which bars the vision of the *Atma*). Man forgets his real nature and loses himself in the consciousness of what he is not. He forgets that he is the *Atma* in reality.

In the state of deep sleep, one is totally unaware of one’s name, form, position, etc. But on waking, one realises that the “I”, of which one is conscious in the waking state, was present in deep sleep too. The purpose of all spiritual practices is to discover the nature of the “I” that is experienced in all different states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

### **Atma is the basis for everything**

Man identifies himself with a particular name and form and builds up all relations on that basis. But how real and permanent are these names and forms? They are all projections of the mind and have an existence only as long as the mind and body remain. The heart represents the *Atma*. It is self-effulgent. The light from the heart (*Atma*) illumines the mind and enables it to see the external world. Without this illumination the mind cannot comprehend the world.

The mind is like the moon, which receives its light from the sun. It has no light of its own. It shines because of the light from the *Atma*. When the sun shines, the moon is hardly visible. Likewise, when there is awareness of the *Atma*, the mind is not perceivable. The *Atma* is the basis for everything.

Men are naive in imagining that the *Atma* is inside the body. The truth is: the body, the mind, the entire cosmos is in the *Atma*. *The Atma* cannot be inside anything else. It is the All. It is the everything. Those who perform *japa*, *dhyana*, or *puja* (reciting God’s name, meditation, wor-



ship), conceiving God as separate from themselves, are victims of dualism. Whatever their scholarship, they are ignorant of their own true nature when they alienate God from themselves. **God is** in the heart of man.

### **Essential objective of spiritual quest**

All man’s spiritual exercises are at the mental level. By these means, the *Atma* cannot be realised. The *Vedas* have declared: *Yatho vaacho nivarthanthe aprapya manasasah* (Whence mind and speech turn back, unable to reach it). Neither the mind nor speech can comprehend the nature of the *Atma*. The mind is turned toward the external by the sense organs. Only by withdrawing it from the sense objects can it be made to develop an inner vision (*antarmukham*).

The “I” principle is present everywhere. It begins with the Divine itself. The first word was *Aham* (“I”). Even the *Pranava* (“Om”) came after *Aham*. Before all creation, *Aham* alone existed. That *Aham* became the many. One who realises the oneness of what he regards as his “I” with the cosmic *Aham* alone knows his Reality. The universal “I” appears under different names and forms in different bodies owing to time and circumstance. Even the same person goes through many changes in form and relationships in life. But the “I” remains unchanged. It is like an actor wearing different disguises, but himself remaining one and the same. The realisation of the unchanging and universal character of the “I” (the *Atma*) is the essential objective of the spiritual quest.

### **Austerities must result in softening of heart**

The sense of duality arises when the “I” (*Aham*) assumes a specific form and name. *Ahamkara* (the ego-sense) is the result of this change in form. Only when one dissociates oneself from name and form can one discover one’s true divine self. To forget one’s essential divinity and identify oneself with a changing and impermanent form is the cause of bondage and sorrow. It is the mind that is the cause of this wrongful identification, because of its involvement with the external world and the impressions received through the senses. When the workings of the mind are understood, the reality of the *Atma*, which is beyond the mind, will be experienced as the One omnipresent, immutable principle.

Duality is an obvious fact of every day life. All *sastras*, *puranas*, and *ithihasas* (spiritual sciences, epics, and ancient legends) have recognised this duality and sought to regulate men’s lives on that basis. As long as men are engaged in activity in the phenomenal world in any capacity, the dualistic attitude is inescapable. All scriptural injunctions are designed to regulate men’s conduct in the phenomenal and the temporal world. The *Vedas* attach great importance to time. The *sastras* prescribe duties in relation to time, circumstance and situation. The science of astrology prescribes what should be done according to changes in time. The almanac (*panchanga*) indicates what are likely to happen on the basis of astrological data. During this new year, *Prabhava*, the indications are encouraging. Out of the nine planets (*grahas*), seven are favourably disposed. The moon is the ruling planet for the year. Mars (*Kuja*) is the Minister. Their influence is powerful this year. Saturn (*Sani*) is weak. There will be no scarcity of food and water this year. Food production will increase substantially.

However beneficial the changes may be in the sphere of natural forces, without a change in men’s outlook and conduct, they will be of no use. Many persons claim that they are observing rigorous austerities (*tapas*). What is the outcome of these austerities? Only when their hearts soften and they show compassion toward the ailing and the helpless will their penance

have any meaning. A compassion-filled heart is the real fruit of *tapas*. All spiritual practices performed by a hard-hearted person are utterly futile.

### **Meditation is implied in all daily chores**

Many undertake meditation as a spiritual exercise and expend many hours on it, But, in fact, meditation is implicit in almost every act that is done from morning till night. Meditation (in the sense of concentration) is implied in all the daily chores like eating, going to work, and attending to business. One is meditating while reading or playing or shopping.

Without concentration no activity of any kind can be done. When concentration is on God, it becomes spiritual meditation. Does such meditation call for a specific time or place? There is no special technique for meditation. By giving meditation some special names, people are forgetting its real significance. For instance, if people do not listen with *dhyana* (one-pointed attention) to Swami’s discourse, they will not remember what Swami said. Even listening calls for *dhyana* It has no specific form. No *dhyana* is possible with a wandering mind.

### **See God in everything you do**

Today, in the name of meditation (*dhyana*), several stunts are being practised. Instead of spending hours in so-called meditation with a mind restlessly hopping from one thought to another like a monkey, it would be better to concentrate on the performance of one’s household, official, and social duties with earnestness and dedication. Is that not meditation? Of what use is it to sit in “meditation” for an hour, when you cannot keep your mind still for a minute? Think about God while carrying on your regular duties. Regard all work as sacred offering to the Divine. See God in everything you do. Instead of following this simple and easy path, people are engaged in all forms of gymnastics and subjecting themselves to various hazards. Devote yourselves to your duties. Meditation is not confined to any one thing. It should permeate every action you do.

Some aspirants wish to seek solitude (*ekantham*). But being alone is not solitude. People go to Hrishikesh, Haridwar, or Tapovanam in search of solitude. Only those who have not understood the real meaning of solitude will resort to such things. There is real solitude (aleness) only when the mind is completely stilled. If while sitting alone in a forest your mind is ruminating on affairs of the world, how can it be called solitude? Without curbing thoughts, loneliness cannot be found anywhere. Either thoughts have to be eliminated or all thoughts should be turned toward the Divine.

Many imagine that they are deriving happiness by enjoying the things of the world. They should examine who is “enjoying” whom. In reality, far from their “enjoying” the things they possess, it is their possessions that are enjoying them. The hatred, anger, envy, and other evils bred by possessions lead only to disease and misery. Why should the body suffer from ills if possessions were really the source of happiness? People are losing real happiness by attachment to things that cannot give them happiness.

### **Set your sight on the Supreme**

Those who have faith in the *Gita* should note that it has clearly declared that this world is ephemeral and “a vale of tears”, and enduring peace and bliss are not to be found by attachment to it. The source of lasting peace and happiness is within ourselves. That is the *Atma* (the

divine Self). It is by realising it that peace and bliss have to be secured. One must constantly develop the consciousness that the *Atma* is everything —the doer, the deed, and the outcome thereof. When consciousness is broadened this way, in due course it leads to Self-realisation. If your vision is broad, your destination will also be of the same magnitude. A narrow outlook can lead only to a narrow alley. If you are immersed all the time in the petty trifles of mundane existence, when will you ever understand the Reality, which is beyond the physical and the mental? Set your sight on the Supreme. The illumination will come in a flash.

Everyone should develop the consciousness that “I am *Atma*. I am *Brahma*.” When one says, “I am *Brahman*” it is evident that there is “I” in *Brahman*. Who is that “I”? “*Brahman*” means pervasiveness. In declaring, “I am *Brahman*,” the consciousness of all-pervasiveness should be developed. *Brahman* is all-pervasive. It is equally present everywhere. You should regard yourselves as all-pervasive, omni-self. Whatever you do, whatever you see, whatever you speak, saturate it with Divinity so that you may be aware of your Reality.

### **Find out what you really are**

The world will exist for you as long as you have the feeling of duality. In the deep sleep state you enjoy the real bliss. You are not aware at that time of your body, your mind, your feelings, your qualities, or your thoughts, but still you exist. That same pure “you” exists in the waking state, the dream state, and the deep-sleep state. In the gross, the subtle, and the causal states “you” exist. In all these states and stages, it is the *Atmic* principle that remains, without undergoing any change.

The physical body, which performs repetition of the name (*japam*) or meditation (*dhyanam*) or various other spiritual practices, is but a water-bubble. The mind, which is based upon this physical body, is but a mad monkey. With the help of this mad monkey mind and this water-bubble body, how can you hope to achieve the permanent *Atma*? *Japa*, *dhyana*, *bhajans*, austerities, sacrifices —these are all methods for temporarily controlling the mind.

But there is one practice that will have a permanent effect, and that is self-enquiry. You should go on enquiring “Who am I? Who am I?” until you reach the stage where you find out who you really are. The enquiry should go on thus, “Here is my body, my mind, my heart, my feelings, my intellect, my memory power. I am not any of these. Someone has praised me. Someone has censured me. But to whom does this pertain? Only to this physical body.” In this way, you have to develop a sense of detachment and a sacrificing nature. How can a physical body abuse another physical body? That is inert, and this is also inert. How can inert things criticize or admonish? They cannot. How can they even worship anything?. They cannot. But then, can *Atma* criticize another *Atma*? That is absurd.

One person who has seen God says, “God exists.” Another person who has not seen God, says, “God does not exist.” If a person has not seen God, how can that person assert that God does not exist? Here, for example, is Nanjundayya. The one who sees Nanjundayya declares that this is Nanjundayya. If you point out Chakravarti to one who knows Nanjundayya, saying, “This is Nanjundayya,” the answer will be, “No, he is not Nanjundayya.” A person who has never seen Nanjundayya cannot say whether Nanjundayya is here or not. Only one who has seen another person is able to declare whether that person is here or not. In the same way, only that person who has seen God and knows God has the authority to declare that God exists. One may assert and the other may negate, but the object itself remains all the same. For both,

God exists because all that is there is only this one *Atma*, this one *Brahman*. *Brahman* is *Atma*, and beyond that nothing else exists.

**Faith and God are one and the same**

Many people aspire for grace, love, devotion, and humility. All these are forms of the *Atma* (divine Self). **God is** not different from faith. Faith and God are one and the same. Love is God, Devotion is God; they are not different entities. What is the meaning of devotion? Devotion is that which enables the unmanifested divine principle to manifest itself in the inner vision of the devotee. Then, for that devotee, nothing else will exist other than He. To reach that stage you must discharge your duties while keeping the permanent entity constantly in mind. You can cross the vast, deep ocean of worldly existence and enjoy the infinite Divinity that is its reality, with the help of a small boat. That boat is the Name of God. In the beginning of the spiritual journey, the name is the basis for progress, but it should not become life-long support, depending entirely on it alone.

Whatever service you are rendering do not feel that you are serving others, but that you are serving God Himself. While taking a bath or giving one to the children, consider that you are doing the purification ritual of washing God Himself. While serving food, consider that you are offering it to God Himself. While giving food to a beggar, consider that God has come in this form and you are serving Him.

It seems that it is a beggar who is asking, but it is the *Atma* who is enjoying the food you give. When you are cutting some vegetables for cooking, consider that you are cutting away your desires and ego with the knife of wisdom. While sweeping the floor don't lament, "O, it keeps getting dirty again and again." Think rather that you are cleaning your own heart. If you are rolling *chapathis* at home, consider what joy it is to roll and knead and expand your heart. In this way, you can consider every activity you undertake as being done for the sake of God. Then where is the need for separate meditation, separate penance or separate worship?

**Love can accomplish everything in the world**

Consider your heart as *Atma*. Soften it and make it full of compassion. That is the only spiritual exercise you need to perform. Narasimhan has told you that so many people are coming to Prasanthi Nilayam from different parts of the world. What brings them here? Are invitations sent? Does anyone ask them to come? It is only on account of the love that is here and felt heart to heart. Through love you can accomplish anything in the world. Consider love as the *Atma* itself. However many scriptures you may read and however many spiritual exercises you may do, if you do not allow your heart to melt with compassion your life will be a sheer waste. All practices have to be directed toward softening your heart so that it will flow with kindness and love. Develop this feeling of compassion and allow it to flow fully and spread among all the peoples of the world.

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## Love All Serve All

### Prema and the Triple Purity

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**Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
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#### Embodiments of divine love!

He who recognises that the *Atma* in him and in all beings is one and the same dwells in the constant presence of God, whether he is a householder or a renunciant, whether he is alone or in a crowd. Everyone has to recognise the divinity that is inherent in all human beings.

The sage Narada declared: *Prema amrithasya svaruupah* (Love is the embodiment of ambrosia). In the mundane world, man considers the four goals of life (the four *purusharthas*) as the means to liberation (*moksha*). This is not correct. Righteousness (*dharma*), material wealth (*artha*), the satisfaction of desire (*kaama*) and liberation (*moksha*) which are considered the four aims of human existence, are not all. There is a fifth aim for mankind which transcends even liberation (*moksha*). This is Supreme love (*Parama-prema*). This Love Principle is divine.

Love and God are not distinct from each other. **God is** love and love is God. It is only when the truth of this Love Principle is understood that the meaning of human existence can be realised. Says a Telugu poem:

The Sai Lord is the embodiment of  
 Love, Who taught the Love Principle,  
 Proclaimed the equality of all beings,  
 And revealed the preciousness of humanness.

In a home where three persons live, if they have harmony amongst them and cooperate with each other, verily that home is heaven itself, where divine bliss reigns. If, on the contrary, the three persons lack harmony and adjustment, dislike each other and behave as enemies, there can be no hell worse than that.

#### Ancients considered triple unity as a form of yoga

Heaven and hell are dependent on the conduct of people. The body is a home wherein reside three entities called mind (*manas*), speech (*vaak*), and limbs (organs of action). True humanness consists in the unity of thought, word, and deed. In Vedantic parlance, this unity was described as *thrikarana shuddhi* (triple purity). True liberation (*moksha*) consists in giving expression in words to the thoughts that arise in the mind and to practise what one says. The ancients considered this triple unity as a form of *yoga*. *Manasyekam, vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahaathmaanam* (Those whose mind, words, and deeds are in complete accord are high-souled beings). *Manas-anyath, vachas-anyath, karmanya-anyath dhuraathmanaam* (The wicked are those whose thoughts deviate from their words and actions).

Hence every man should strive to achieve unity in thought, word, and deed. That is the hallmark of humanness. This profound truth is proclaimed by the Vedantic pronouncement that the body is a temple in which the eternal *Atma* is the Indweller. The *Veda* is dualistic. Vedanta is monistic (*adhwaita*). The essence of Vedanta is the triune unity of thought, word, and deed. In this unity, true bliss can be experienced. It will also demonstrate the spiritual basis of divinity.

### **Vedanta is of no avail if precepts are not practised**

There are today countless numbers of scholars who expound the Vedanta, and they have numerous listeners. The outcome of it all is precious little. This is because there is no practice of the teachings of Vedanta. All study of Vedanta is of no avail if the precepts are not practised.

People have to find out what are the easy methods of putting into practice the precepts of Vedanta. The easiest way is to cultivate harmony in thought, word, and deed. Here is a Telugu poem:

*Can the world's darkness be dispelled by talking about the glory of light?  
Can a diseased man's afflictions be relieved by praising panaceas?  
Can a destitute's poverty be relieved by listening to the greatness of wealth?  
Can a starving man's hunger be appeased by descriptions of delicacies?*

Rather than listening to a ton of precept, it is better to practise an ounce of teaching.

What we have to practise today is something very easy and very subtle. The spirit of service is the royal path to be followed. How is this spirit of service to be cultivated? The *Gita* lays stress on the word friend (*suhrith*). Who is a true friend? Can he be utterly selfless? Will he help you without expecting any return? Whether it be one's mother, husband, wife or son, they love you for their own selfish reasons. A totally selfless friend cannot be found in the world. It is hard to find anyone who renders service totally without self-interest.

God alone is totally selfless as friend and benefactor. God has been described as *suhrith*—a friend who is your *alter ego*. God seeks no reward of any kind. There is no trace of self-interest in Him. God alone can be utterly selfless and loving, expecting nothing in return.

### **Follow the royal road of God's injunctions**

If you ask a friend where he is residing, he will give a certain address. But this address relates only to the residence of the body. The true residence of one is his *Atma* (the Self). This *Atma* is the embodiment of Love. Therefore, you have to dwell in Love and live in Love. You must dedicate your life to that love. If you devote your life to the pursuit of impermanent things, you will only get ephemeral things. You must seek what is lasting and permanent. What is it? It is the injunction of the Lord (*Bhagavath-ajna*). When you take to the royal road of following God's injunction, you will realise all your desires.

You must remember, however, that these desires only bind you the more you cherish them. The bonds get reduced when desires are reduced. There must be a limit to desires.

Similarly there must be restraint in developing attachments. There is grief when a person dies in a family. Is death the cause of grief? No. It is the attachment to the dead person that is the cause of grief. The process of getting rid of attachment has been described in Vedantic parlance as *vairagya* (renunciation). Gradually attachments should be eliminated. In the journey of life the less luggage you carry the greater the comfort you will experience.

It may be asked: “How is it possible to reduce attachments and desires in worldly life?” The answer is: “Carry on your business or other activities in a spirit of dedication to the Divine.” All actions should be done with the conviction that they are dedicated to the Lord. This is an easy path to follow. Consider all actions as actions performed by the power of the Divine, whether it be seeing or hearing or speaking or doing. Without the power of the Divine, can the eyes see or the ears hear?

### **Divine potency is the source of all talents**

The primary requisite for man is to realise the divine potency in him that is the source of all the faculties and talents in him. This is true whether one is an atheist, a theist, or an agnostic. No one in the world can get on without this energy. It may be called by different names. Names are not important. The energy is one. It is this divine energy that directs mankind on the right path. Men should strive to recognise the presence of the Divine even in small things.

In his speech earlier today Anil Kumar spoke about the Sai Organizations. The Sai organizations are carrying on their activities with devotion and dedication. But they do not try to find out what should be the ideal to be achieved. “Are you engaged in this work for your own satisfaction or for the satisfaction of the Divine?” This is the question they should ask themselves.

In this context an incident from the Bible may be recalled. Once, a devotee went to Jesus and asked him: “Oh Lord! What is the power by which one can protect oneself?”

Jesus replied, “Son! When you love God, that power itself will protect you.”

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna asked Krishna, “What should one do to earn the love of the Lord?”

The Lord replied, “You simpleton! You imagine you are loving God. The truth is **God is** seeking a true devotee.”

Crores of people all over the world are in quest of God. But where are they searching for Him? In my view, the very ideal of a quest for God is mistaken. There is no need for you to search for God. **God is** omnipresent. He is everywhere. Devotees imagine they are searching for God. This is not true. It is God who is in search of devotees. “Where is the devotee to be found who is pure in thought, word, and deed?” God is searching for such a devotee.

You need not search for God. **God is** nearer to you than your mother and father. You yourself are divine. How can you go in search of yourself? This is the mistake you commit. When everything is permeated by the Divine, who is the searcher of the Divine? It is because the world has lacked men who could proclaim this Vedantic truth with authentic experience that it has sunk to such degrading levels.

### **Best way to love God is to love all, serve all**

It is needless to search for God. Verily you are the Divine. Strive to realise this truth. There is a simple and easy way. Have the faith that every human being is an embodiment of the Divine. Love everyone. **Serve all**. The best way to love **God is to love all serve all**.

You must love everyone because **God is** in everyone. Every human being is a manifestation of God. On the cosmic stage every man identifies himself with the form and name given to him. But he does not realise what is his true form and name.

Last night you witnessed the film in which Anjalidevi acted the role of Sakkubai. In the film, she appeared as Sakkubai and not Anjalidevi. But both are one and the same person. God takes on a human form and appears as a human being. But when the human being recognises his basic divine nature he becomes the Divine. As long as one thinks one is a mere human, one remains a human. But when one considers oneself as Divine with deep conviction, one will be transformed into the Divine.

### **See the cosmos through the glass of spirituals oneness**

Hence, thoughts and feelings determine what you are. Change your thoughts. If you give up your worldly outlook and view the world from the spiritual point of view, the *vishvam* (world) and the Vishnu (Divine) will become one. Therefore, change your viewpoint. Instead of altering his *drishti* (vision) man wants to change *srishti* (creation). No one can change creation. It is one's vision that has to be changed.

If you wish to experience oneness,, you have to see the cosmos through the glass of spiritual oneness (*ekatma-bhava*). Otherwise, the world will appear as a bewildering multiplicity because you will be seeing it through the glasses of the three qualities (*gunas*): purity-calmness (*sathwa*), restlessness (*rajas*), and inertia-ignorance (*thamas*). Put aside these three glasses. Wear the glass of *ekatma-bhava*, the feeling of unity in spirit, Love is one. “The Supreme is One though, the wise call it by many names.”

The Divine has to proclaim this unity when God comes in human form and lives and moves among human beings. The Divine has no likes or dislikes. He has no distinction of “mine” and “thine”. He is beyond praise or censure. How, then, should the Divine (in human form) conduct Himself? Everyone should understand this.

### **Swami and devotees**

Many bemoan the fact that Swami does not speak to them despite their frequent visits. “Is Swami angry with us?” they ask. These are not mental aberrations. They are due to total ignorance. Such questions arise in their minds only when they have not understood Swami's real nature. I have no antipathy toward anyone. I do not hate anyone. All are mine. And I belong to everybody. But in dealing with devotees, I have to behave like a doctor who prescribes a specific diet for each patient. For instance, there is a patient suffering from diabetes. He should not consume sweets. If a devotee feels, “I enjoy sweets, why should the Sai Mother prohibit me from eating sweets?”, the answer is that it is for his own good. If Swami did not have the patient's well-being in view, He would let him suffer by giving him sweets. It is out of love for the devotee that the Sai Mother denies sweets to him. Swami adopts these different regimens in the interest of curing the devotees' ailments.

There are others with a different kind of grievance. For instance, the students often complain that Swami does not talk to them because He is angry with them. I have no anger toward anyone. Whether you believe it or not, I do not know what anger means. But, occasionally, I appear as if I am very angry. This is unavoidable, because without such assumed behaviour on my part, the students will not heed my words. I tell them to behave in a certain way. Some students heed my words and try to act up to them. Some others go against my injunctions. In such a situation, I have to ensure respect for my words. Of what use is it to speak to those who attach no value to my words? I don't intend to devalue my words.



Truth is the life of the plighted word. My words bear the imprint of truth. I cannot depart from truth. I don't speak to those who attach no value to My words. This should be realised by those who complain that Swami does not talk to them. When people heed My words, I am ready to help them in every way and confer happiness on them. I do nothing for my own sake. This is My truth.

### **Everything I do is for your sake**

The super-speciality hospital was built at the cost of many crores. Was it for my sake? Similarly, the university was established by spending crores of rupees. For whose sake? Is it for my sake? This magnificent hall (attached to the *mandir*) was erected to protect devotees from heat and rain. Am I sleeping in this hall? Everything I do is for your sake. I am surprised that you do not recognise this. Can devotees be so lacking in intelligence? There is no trace of selfishness in Me anywhere. I have no fear of any sort. Only the guilty man is racked by fear. I have done no wrong to anybody and so I have no fear. But I am subservient to devotees.

Not realising this truth some people imagine that Swami is angry or ill-disposed toward them. Get rid of such mistaken feelings. Be convinced that whatever Swami tells you is for your own good and act up to it. I gain nothing by your good behaviour. I don't lose anything by your misconduct. Because I love you, I do not want you to suffer from the consequences of your misconduct.

### **Understand God's love**

Turning to God's love, let me make it clear that 99 percent of devotees do not understand what this *prema* means. This love is construed in a worldly sense. This leads them astray. The attachment between husband and wife, between mother and child, between friends, between kith and kin—all are loosely described as *prema* (love), but these attachments are the result of temporary relationships and are by their nature transient. *Prema is Thrikaala-abaadhyam* (Love is that which lasts through all the three categories of time—the past, the present, and the future). Such love can exist only between God and the devotee and cannot apply to any other kind of relationship.

It is not easy for you to comprehend the true nature of God's love. You are aware only of worldly attachments, which are subject to ups and downs. What is liable to such changes cannot be called love. True love is unchanging. It is Divine. Love is God. Live in love.

Embark on this path of love. You are liable to feel elated over trivial pleasures or depressed over petty losses. God's love is permanent and unvarying. Try to understand that love. How is it to be done? By cultivating the feeling that whatever happens to you, whether pleasant or unpleasant, is for your own good. When you have that firm conviction, the value of God's love for you goes up.

Most people feel the boundless joy of God's love as long as they are in the presence of Swami. But this feeling evaporates once they are in the environment of the outside world. You must see that the same sacred environment exists wherever you may be, by carrying your devotion wherever you go and spread the divine message to every nook and corner of the country. Chant the name of the Lord wherever you are—in the village, in the street, in every home, and in your speech and songs. This is the way to ensure that your love of God remains unshaken and unabated.

God derives no benefit from this, since He has no desires. He wants nothing. It is only for your own good. “*Uddhareth Atmanaa Athmaanam*” (Elevate yourself by your own self-effort). Failing to recognise this truth, many people imagine that Sai Baba is holding *akhanda bhajans* (continuous devotional singing) and celebrating various festivals to glorify his name. They are utterly foolish persons. Sai Baba seeks nothing from anyone. You improve yourselves. Become better. Experience your bliss. Make your lives sublime. Utilize these festivals and devotional activities for this purpose.

### ***Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram***

*Embodiments of love!* Since love is verily your form, manifest it in every way. Share it with others. The Lord is the Indweller of the Heart (*Hridayavaasi*).

*Sarvabhootha-dharam shaantham*  
*Sarvanaama-dharam Shivam*  
*Sath-chith-aanandha roopam adhvaitham*  
*Sathyam Shivam Sundharam*

The sustainer of all beings, Peace incarnate,  
 The bearer of all names, Goodness incarnate.  
 Embodiment of Being-Awareness-Bliss, the One without a second.  
 He is Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

The Greek philosopher Plato —the teacher of Aristotle, under whom Alexander studied— declared three things as fundamental verities: truth, goodness, and beauty. These are the same terms as *Sathyam, Shivam, Sundharam*, used by the Indian sages to describe the Divine. Thus in all religions and philosophies through the ages, these three have been declared as the forms of the Divine. Love is the form of the Divine. *Dharma* (righteousness) is the form of the Divine.

### **Mother and motherland are greater than heaven**

The first impulse that emanated from man was *prema* (divine love). All other things came thereafter. Every child that is born develops immediately love for the mother. Every child tries to recognise at the outset the mother and the father. In the same manner, every individual should recognise the land of his birth and his cultural heritage (*samskrithi*). One’s nation and one’s culture should be revered as one’s parents. The nation is one’s mother. One’s culture is the father. This profound truth was proclaimed by Rama when he declared: “The mother and the Motherland are greater than Heaven itself.” Love the mother. Love your country’s culture. These are the two primary duties of every man. They should be the main aims of life.

When people follow this path of truth and righteousness, love will sprout naturally in their hearts. All knowledge and scholarship are of no avail if there is no practice of virtue. Practise at least one of the teachings and experience joy.

*Embodiments of love!* Devotees from East and West Godavari, Guntur, and Krishna districts rejoiced in the celebration of what they described as the Golden Jubilee of the Sai Movement. There is no need to seek a reason for experiencing joy. *Sarvatha sarvakaaleshu sarvathra Harichinthanam* (Always, at all times and in all places contemplate on Hari). Make every moment a holy day. Invest every word with the power of a *mantra* (sacred formula). Sanctify the ground you tread on. Make this the mission of your life. Without wasting a single mo-

ment, use all the time you can find to spread the message of the Lord’s name to every nook and corner of India.

**Desires can be reduced by chanting God’s name**

Today we are witnessing corruption, violence, wickedness, and malpractices everywhere. The basic reason for all these is selfishness. Insatiable desires are at the root of these evils. By chanting the Lord’s name, desires can be reduced, while legitimate wishes get fulfilled.

Sakkubai prayed and yearned to go to Pandharpur for *darshan* of Panduranga. She endured all kinds of troubles and indignities and earned the Lord’s grace. How can you get God’s grace without undergoing trials? You know what severe processes gold goes through from the crucible onwards before an ornament is made. There can be no happiness without pain. When you desire the welfare of someone, you must be prepared to let him face the ordeals which are necessary before he can experience what is good for him. Pleasure and pain go together in this world. In the *Gita*, the Lord says He is both the *kshetra* (the body) and the *Kshetrajna* (the Indwelling Knower).

What people have to learn today is to give up attachments to the things of the world and seek the love of God. When one cultivates the love of God, renouncing worldly things becomes as simple as leaving hold of a handkerchief. Clinging to property is difficult. Giving it up is easy when people have understood the meaning of God’s love. Let people, wherever they may be, in villages or towns, cultivate faith in God, develop love and share it with one and all. Then they will experience ineffable bliss. Liberation will not come through meditation or penance. Love is the only means. When you render service with love, it will become meditation, penance and all else. Love is the fifth *Purushartha*, the supreme goal of life. Love is also the panacea for all the ills that afflict society today. Hate is the cause of all ills. Hence hatred should be banished, as declared by the *Gita*.

Don’t give room for any evil feelings in your heart, which is the seat of God. Dedicate your minds to God. In due course, you will merge in-the Divine and become one with God.

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## Service to Man is Service to God

**Sathya Sai Speaks vol 37, chapter 1**  
**Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
**1 January 2004**

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 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, every day is a festival day. Therefore, it is essential that we consider every minute of 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. Only the present is real. The 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 that man should engage in is service to 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 fellow human beings. There is no greater spiritual practice (*sadhana*) than such service.

Considering the nine paths of devotion, namely listening (*sravanam*), singing (*kirtanam*), contemplating on Vishnu (*Vishnusmaranam*), serving His Lotus Feet (*Padasevanam*), salutation (*vandanam*), worship (*archanam*), servitude (*dasyam*), friendship (*sneham*), and self-surrender (*Atmanivedanam*) 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 onward. Service is more important than *bhajan* and all other spiritual disciplines.

## 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 worshipping God through service (*karmopasana*). *Karmopasana* is the only means by which human life can be sanctified. We are building several temples. We are undertaking various spiritual exercises. But, all these spiritual exercises can give us only temporary satisfaction, not eternal joy. Our ancient *rishis* (sages) 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 fellow human beings.

The ancient culture of Bharat (India) 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). Only through suffering can happiness be achieved.

You should undertake service. In fact, the hands are given to you to serve humanity. Hands that serve are holier than 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* (spiritual disciplines). 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 to present 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! 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* (sacrifice). 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, 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). Do 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 *hridaya*. *Hrid + daya = hridaya*. Only when you cultivate compassion in your heart can it be called *hridaya*. Therefore, cultivate the quality of compassion. Any service you undertake with a compassionate heart 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 of five 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* (sages) have proclaimed, *Daivam manusha rupena* (God incarnates in the form of a human being). Of what use is it to worship the unseen God while at the same time causing suffering to the living beings around us? Every human being that 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 salutations (*pranams*) to somebody, to whom does it go actually? You are not merely offering salutations 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 individualized soul (*jiva*) in the human body. That is the real service to God (*Daiva seva*). 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 body (*deha*) is made up of five elements (*mrinmaya*). The divinity residing as Indweller therein is consciousness (*chinmaya*). 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.”

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 onward, 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 some time, elections were held in America. He was persuaded by his friends and well-wishers to run for election. 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 him. 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 ran for election. He scored a spectacular victory and was elected 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.”

The mother 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, 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 children earn today? Nothing. They simply waste the money earned by their parents. They bring bad name to their parents. This is not what 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 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’s 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 for undertaking good and beneficial activities for the society. One should conduct himself with good behaviour and good habits. Only then will one 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 pray for peace chanting “*Santhi, Santhi, Santhi.*” But do they get peace? No. They are engulfed in disappointment and despair. Therefore, 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 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 spiritual discipline. In fact, it is so easy to practise. Leaving aside this spiritual discipline 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 and pain 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* (Indians) 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 truth (*sathya*) and righteousness (*dharma*) with love. Love alone can protect you.

**Embodiments of Love!**

Why are you given 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* (tune), and *thala* (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 *Bharatiyas*. Every individual born in the country of Bharat is sanctified. We do not need heaven. Let’s participate in *seva* (service) while 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, *Sarvadharmam 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.

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## Quenching the thirst

*Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 13, Chapter 19*

*Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

*Brindavan, 6 March 1977*

The responsibilities of the selfless service organization (*seva dhal*) are of a high order. It has to lead the members, and through them all mankind, along the path of spiritual effort (*sadhana*), which takes the individual from the position ‘I’ to the position ‘We’. This has given the *seva dhal* the importance it deserves. One can realise it only when one delves deep into its significance. You have to sublimate all work as worship and try to fill every moment of your lives with that outlook. Only then can you justify your membership in this Organisation.

Through activity man attains purity of consciousness. In fact man has to welcome activity with this end in view. And why strive for a pure consciousness? Imagine a well with polluted and muddy water so that the bottom of the well cannot be seen. Similarly within man’s heart, deep down in his consciousness, we have the divine Spirit (*Atma*). But it can be cognised only when the consciousness is clarified. Your imaginings, your inferences, your judgements and prejudices, your passions, emotions and egoistic desires muddy the consciousness and make it opaque. How, then, can you become aware of the *Atma* that is at the very base? Through selfless service (*seva*) rendered without any desire to placate one’s ego and with only the well being of others in view is it possible to cleanse the consciousness and have the *Atma* revealed.

### **By doing selfless service, you serve your own best interest**

So, for whose sake are you performing *seva*? You are doing *seva* for your own sake. You are engaged in *seva* in order that you may become aware of the *Atma* in you, in order that you may discard the allurements of your ego, in order to know yourself and to get the answer to the question that torments you, namely, “Who am I.” You do not serve others, you serve yourselves; you do not serve the world, you serve your own best interest.

You may ask: how is it possible to transcend the ego through *seva*? By saturating with love, work can be transformed into worship. When the work is offered to God, it gets sanctified into sacramental worship (*puja*). This makes it free from ego. It is also freed from the earthly desire for success and the earthly fear of failure. You feel that when you have done the work as best as you can, your worship is accomplished. It is then for Him who has accepted the worship to confer on you what He considers best. This attitude will make the work unattached (*nishkaama*). Regular practice of this discipline will render the consciousness clear and pure. It will promote pure consciousness (*chitthashuddhi*). Without this primary equipment how can man ever hope to scale spiritual heights? Almost all the great sages of the past spent the early years of their lives in spiritual practices that would ensure a pure consciousness. However prospective your career might be, however much you might accumulate the wherewithal of a comfortable life, to whatever heights of authority you might have climbed through the exercise of your intelligence, your gains shall be nil unless your every activity is suffused with the Divine purity inherent in the consciousness.

### **You get blessed or punished due to your own acts**

I shall illustrate this point. Take an ordinary postal envelope. Upon it, in golden ink, write the address of a person in very artistic calligraphy. Insert a beautifully worded letter full of amazing sentiments, and then drop it into a post-box. What happens to it? It will not move even a yard away from that box.

Now take a mere post card, the cheap unimpressive thing. Write the address with no special care. Scribble the news you like to convey. Affix a stamp and drop it into the same box. Watch what happens! The artistically ornamental envelope is inert, while this inartistic, cheap, document travels a thousand miles towards the person indicated. Therefore, whatever may be the uniqueness or importance, the furor or attractiveness, the *seva* that you do can yield no fruit if it is done without a pure thought (*chittha*).

Your yearning to do *seva* and your enthusiasm while doing *seva*, are rescuing you from harm. **God is** the witness. God has no desire to bless, nor anger to induce Him to punish. You get blessed and punished as a result of your own feelings and acts. *Yath bhaavam thath bhavathi*. As you think and behave so it becomes.

*Bad deeds never yield good,  
Good deeds never breed bad.  
Neem seeds never yield mangoes,  
Mango seeds never breed neems.*

Hence a person might be *an* expert in many fields of ‘knowledge’ or a master of many material skills and accomplishments, but without inner cleanliness, his brain is a desert waste or a massive stone with no trace of love, mercy or expansive virtue.

### **Rituals seldom purify man’s consciousness**

Of the nine steps in spiritual practice (*sadhana*) as laid down in the *Bhakti Sutras* (aphorisms on devotion), leading to the realisation of the self, *dhasyam*, or the attitude of a servant to do *seva*, is quite near the final goal; it is the eighth step. The study of texts, the renouncing of wealth in charity, the repetition of the name or the chanting of psalms and hymns may be good exercises to sanctify the mind and to avoid falling into evil ways and ruinous pastimes, but they seldom purify the consciousness of man. Instead they serve mostly to bloat the ego and instill pride and promote a competitive craving for superiority. You may be sitting in the *bhajan* hall and loudly singing in chorus, but your mind may get involved in anxiety about the pair of sandals you have left outside the hall. Always at the back of the mind there is fear of the loss of the sandals; this vitiates the *bhajan* and makes it a barren show.

### **Seva done to a suffering being reaches the Lord**

The spiritual practice of *seva* is quite distinct. In *seva* you devote all your energy and attention to the task at hand, for it is a dedicated task. You forget the body and ignore its demands. You set aside your individuality and its prestige and perquisites. You pluck your ego by its roots and cast it away. You give up your status, conceit, your name and form, and keep all thought (*chittha*) pure.

Whatever the task you are performing, renounce your personal individuality and share its travails and troubles, its fruits and benefits, with God. You need not bring in God from some-

where outside you; He is in you, all the while. This truth must be your own discovery, your own treasure, your own strength. This is the grand purpose of the Selfless Service Organization (*Seva Dhal*). That is why the *Seva Dhal* is assigned a high place in the Sathya Sai Organisation.

A pious person once proceeded from Kasi to Rameshwaram, at the other end of this vast country. He was carrying with him some holy Ganga (Ganges) water to be mixed with the sea at Rameshwaram. That would be the consummation of his long and arduous pilgrimage through many a holy place and many a sacred river. While half way through, he saw by the side of the road a donkey in the last throes of life, since it was too incapacitated to move toward some source of water to quench its thirst. Its dry tongue and rolling eyes indicated the agony of extreme thirst. The pilgrim was so moved by the tragic sight that he poured the precious Ganges water he had with him down the throat of the distraught animal. Moments later, the donkey recovered and could gain enough strength to pull itself out of the grip of death.

Seeing this, the companion of the pilgrim asked him, “Master! The sacred water you brought from Kasi had to be offered to the ocean at Rameshwaram. Why did you commit this sacrilege by pouring it into the mouth of this despicable animal?”

The pilgrim replied, “But I have poured the holy water in the ocean Itself, don’t you see?”

Any *seva* done to a suffering individual being (*jiva*) reaches the Lord Himself. and can never be a sacrilege, for *seva* to the *jiva* is *seva* to the *Dheva* (Divinity). Always be firm in that belief.

### **The Play enacted by Shiva and Parvathi**

Millions come to Kasi as pilgrims. It is said that those who see Kasi will not be born again. One day at Kailasa, Parvathi asked Siva, “Lord, I heard it said that all those who visit Kasi, where there is a celebrated shrine for your worship, will attain Kailasa and stay on there in your presence. Millions are coming to Kasi, but is this place big enough to accommodate them all?”

Siva replied, “All the millions cannot come to Kailasa. I’ll design a play and make clear to you who among the millions can come. You, too, have a role to act. Do as I direct you to.”

Parvathi became an old hag of 80 and Shiva a rickety old man of 90. The old woman had the old man on her lap, right at the main entrance of the famous Siva shrine of Vishweshwara, and she implored in piteous tones the pilgrims who passed by on their way to the temple, “My husband is terribly thirsty. He is about to die of thirst. I cannot leave him and go to the river Ganga to bring him water. Will any of you pour a little water down his throat and save his life?”

### **There is no prayer more fruitful than *seva***

The pilgrims were coming up from the steps to the river’s edge after their ceremonial bath in the holy river, their clothes still wet and clinging to their bodies. Some of them lamented that their peace was disturbed by the sight of this pathetic couple. “We have come for *darshan* of the Lord, and look what meets our eye.” Some flatly ignored her cries and lifted their noses in the air. Some said, “Wait. Let us finish the worship inside the temple and then we shall bring the Ganga (Ganges) water for you.” No one offered to bring the needed help to the aged patient.

Just then, a robber who was hurrying into the temple to pick a few pockets, heard the plaintive voice of old woman and halted near them. He asked her, “Mother, what is the matter?”

She replied, “Son, we came to this place to have *darshan* of Lord Vishweshwara of Kasi, but

my husband has fainted out of sheer exhaustion. He might survive if some one will bring a little Ganga water and pour it down his throat. I cannot leave him here and go for water. Please help me and earn the merit.”

The robber was moved into compassion. He had a little Ganga water in the hollow gourd he had with him. He knelt down near the dying person on the lap of the old woman, but the woman stopped him saying, “The moment the Ganga water wets his throat, my husband may die; he is in the last stage of living. Therefore speak a word of truth and pour the water. The robber could not understand what she meant, so she explained, “Speak, within his hearing, some good deed that you have done in your life, and then pour the water In his mouth.”

That created a problem for the robber. He was at his wits end. He could not quite comply. He said, “Mother I have, in truth, not done any good deed so far. This present act, the offering of water to this thirsty man, is the very first good deed I am responsible for.” And saying this, he placed the gourd at the lips of the old man and gave him mouthful.

Just at the moment, the couple disappeared and in their placed stood Shiva and Parvathi, blessing the robber. Shiva said, “Son, life is to be dedicated for the service of others and not devoted to the exclusive interests of oneself. Howsoever many wicked deeds you might have done so far, for your selfless offering of Ganga water with truth on your tongue, We bless you with this Vision. Remember there is no morality higher than truth; there is no prayer more fruitful than *seva* (selfless loving service.)”

**Three stages of enquiry into *Brahmam***

On the royal road to spiritual realisation, there are three stages as mentioned in the scriptures: *karmajijnasa*, *dharmajijnasa* and *Brahmaj-jnasa*. *Jijnasa* means deep inquiry. A person becomes fit to inquire into *Brahman* and succeed in that inquiry only when his consciousness has been trained and shaped by inquiry into the modes of activity and mores of conduct —the *karma* (action) and *dharma* (righteousness)— which clarify and purify. He who discriminates well before engaging in any activity will naturally be righteous in conduct and behaviour.

Good *karma* will automatically lead to good *dharma*. Take the example of home-made coconut *chutney*. It is tasted only after it is ground and got ready, and when it is eaten you find out whether salt has been added or not. Then, if you discover that the salt is not enough or that it has not been added, you have to add the needed quantity to make it tasty; but you will not add salt before eating a small amount. Hence the three stages are (i) grinding and getting the *chutney* ready, (ii) eating it, and (iii) adding the needed salt. The preparation is the *karma*, the eating is the *dharma* and the adding of salt to make it tasty and sustaining, is *Brahman*. Act, dedicate, and adore- —that is the way to acquire a pure consciousness.

An act dedicated as an offering to the God resident in all becomes as sacred as the highest *seva*. Devote yourselves to this *seva*. *Avatars* (divine incarnations) of God are engaged in *seva*; that is why *Avatars* happen. Hence, when you offer *seva* to mankind, the *Avatar* will naturally be pleased and you can win Grace. This is a great chance you have as members of the Sathya Sai Seva Organization (*Seva Dhal*). I hope you will make the best use of this chance. I bless you that you may.

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