

SATHYA SAI SEVA

The Vedas are inspired by the holy spirit of Divine Mercy; they seek to transmit to humanity the secrets of a happy life here and of liberation forever. They reveal the essence of the Divine Glory. They are the source of spiritual knowledge over the millennia for all mankind. The Vedas and the intellect, which man is endowed with as a gift from God to separate good from evil, are the means by which the culture of this land is to be preserved and promoted.

When the *Vedic* treasure house is explored with intelligence, the *Atma-tatwa* (essential nature of the Self) becomes clear, and when that is recognised man becomes eternally happy and full of peace. This treasure was slighted and neglected as a result of the fascination for outlandish ways of life, but for some years the feeling of reverence and the readiness to repent have appeared among the people.

This conference is itself a sign of revival. You are allotted the task of bringing once again to the homes of the people the message of *Atmic* strength and *Atmic* unity. Transmuting "man" into "God" and experiencing that *ananda* (bliss) is the one and only achievement to which life is to be devoted. The efforts you make in your own places are directed to bring this goal into the awareness of each person.

Of course, there are in existence many organisations and societies engaged in distributing various cures for the "spiritual ills" of their constituents, and therefore a question may arise about the need for this additional institution. The need

has arisen to emphasise the basic and essential discipline which is practical and universal, as prescribed for ages for the revelation of the Divine in man.

Bharatiya Culture Has to Be Fostered First

The entire universe is pictured as but the body of Vishnu by the *Vedas*. And *Bharat* (India) is as the eye of the universe, the reason being that she has the most correct vision of the cosmos in the context of time. The mother desires that the son should uphold the honour of the family; the son should uphold the fair name of the mother and father. So, every Indian has to learn and practise the spiritual science that the sages of this land have explored and discovered.

However, due to hostile forces, evil company, and ignorant fascination, Indians have neglected this foremost duty. The infection has come and it is well settled in the organism. Now it has to be cast out. This conference and the organisations you represent are attempts to cure that illness. The purpose is the same, whatever the name – *Prasantha Vidwanmahasabha*, *Sathya Sai Seva Samithi*, *Sathya Sai Seva Dal* or *Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali*.

The first aim is to foster and cultivate *Bharatiya* culture. Let its validity be examined through actual living and one's own discovery of its values, and communicated to others by those who have experienced the peace and joy derivable from it. I do not want the extolling of the drug by persons who have not been themselves cured by it.

Today, in the very land where this culture grew and flourished, immorality and corruption have destroyed happiness and contentment. Many condemn these things but those are the very persons who commit the wrongs they deplore. Those who profess to lead the people are themselves led astray by the temptation to fall. So, the very first ideal you must keep in mind when you start and run these organisations is do not crave status or authority or position, do not allow any pomp or show and do not compete for publicity or recognition or praise.

Unity Consciousness Is the Heartbeat of India

Duty is God. Do it and be content. You may have yearnings towards self-aggrandisement and plans to fulfil them; I know that some people have already devised plans for getting into official positions. But, you must subdue and destroy those desires. Following My instructions without demur is the best plan. While engaged in service (*seva*), it is wrong to yield to lower cravings or to follow one's own impetuosity. The *Vedas* declare that it is only by *thyaga* – renunciation, surrender and submission that immortality can be acquired.

In the history of India, you must have noticed that all the great movements and empires were motivated by spiritual undercurrents, not by political or economic stresses. It is only after the advent of the East India Company that politics and the struggle for political power predominated. You must make politics subservient to the need to promote and perfect the fundamentals of Indian (*Bharatiya*) culture.

The universe is the body of God; in the body, the Unity Consciousness is *Bharat*, the *Eka-bhaava* (feeling of Oneness). "*Ekam Sath*" (The Reality Is One), the *Vedas* declared aeons ago! That is the heartbeat of *Bharat* today. This is the reason why sages, saints, Divine personages and incarnations of God appear here and proclaim their mes-

sage to mankind from this land. The precious message is now being exported but very little is used inside the country. That is the tragedy.

Sai Organisations Must Promote Faith in God

For the influence available from positions of authority and for acquiring and accumulating power, individuals talk ill of others and breed hate. From dawn till dusk and dusk till dawn, the chief occupation of people today is finding fault with others, trying to publicise the faults in others. This state of things is an insult cast on the face of our ancient culture. It springs from the craving for cheap popularity and temporary fame.

Your organisations must endeavour to promote faith in God. If that base is absent, then worship, *bhajan*, *puja* and good works all become meaningless automatic rituals done under social compulsion. Inner transformation, which is the fruit, can be acquired only when these are done with faith. Faith can grow only from the root of inquiry. Faith is made firmer by inquiry. You must encourage inquiry by the members whom you contact and welcome their efforts to gain first-hand experience.

Man strives to provide himself with food, clothing and housing for the sake of the body but he must also provide himself with some things to keep the mind healthy and happy. It is the mind that conditions even the body. The mind is the instrument, the flywheel, and the thickest comrade of man. Through it, one can either ruin oneself or save oneself. Regulated and controlled, and channelled properly, it can liberate, but wayward and let loose, it can entangle and bind fast.

Try to find out when exactly man is having peace, full-undisturbed peace. You will see that he is at peace only during *sushupti* (deep sleep). For, at that time, the senses are inactive, the mind is inert and unattached to the senses or their targets. So, when senses are made ineffec-

tive to drag the mind out, man can attain peace. That is the real *sadhana*, the basic *sadhana*: the withdrawal of the senses from the objective world (*Nivrithiimarga*).

Two Fangs That Make the Individual Poisonous

Train the mind to dwell on the inner equipment rather than the outer attractions. Use the mind to cleanse the feelings, impulses, attitudes, tendencies and levels of consciousness. Let it not accumulate dirt from the outer world and deposit the dirt within itself. If it is attached to work (*Pravrittimarga*), the consequences of work get attached to it. Unattached work is the purest; it does not encumber the mind with elation or disappointment. "I did it" and "This is mine" are the two fangs that make the individual poisonous. Pull out the fangs and the snake can be handled and played with as a pet.

These organisations must be vigilant to see that egoism and the sense of personal possession, pride, or achievement do not invade them. That is the goal to be kept in view.

When an organisation is started, it has to lay down for itself certain rules and regulations. But our rules are of a different nature altogether. Our rules emphasise that members must first prac-

tise what they stand for. Whatever you desire others to do, you must first put into daily practice sincerely and with steadfastness. You must do *bhajan* regularly and systematically before you advise others about the efficacy of *bhajans*. When you want to be honoured by others, you must learn to honour them first.

Bhagawan Is the Medicine for *Bhava-roga*

Service has become a word of common currency, but its value is very much reduced by the hypocrisy of the users. Really speaking, only those who are afflicted with agony, equal agony, at the sight of pain and suffering, distress, or disease have the right to offer service, for they are not serving others, they are serving themselves, serving to remove, as fast and as intelligently as they can, their own agony.

Service to others is the medicine one needs to alleviate the distress that fills one at the sight of distress in another being. Feel that you are serving yourself, that you are curbing your own ego. Otherwise, service heightens your self-esteem and develops a sense of superiority, which are both harmful spiritually.

Food is the medicine for the illness of hunger and drink for the illness of thirst. For the dis-



Hill View Stadium

ease of *bhava-roga* (birth-death cycle), *Bhagawan* is the medicine. For the disease of desire, *jnana* is the specific. For the disease of doubt, despair, and hesitation, which are the occupational diseases of *sadhakas*, the most effective remedy is *paropakara* (doing good to others). For the major infection of *asaanthy* (anxiety), the course of treatment is *bhajan*. It is to provide these remedies to the sufferers that the organisation has to dedicate itself.

A spiritual organisation is really above all rules and regulations; the realm of the *Atma* is beyond the limits of regulations. In this sense, rules are either meaningless or superfluous in Sathya Sai Organisations. But at least to satisfy the law of the land dealing with associations of this kind, some rules have to be adopted.

For example, who can be members of these organisations and what are their qualifications? Of course, firstly, they must be eager aspirants for spiritual progress. Secondly, they must have full faith in the Name that the organisation bears and in spreading that Name, in the manner suited to its message and majesty. And, finally, the member must have won recognition as a good person. That is all the qualification needed, nothing else counts. There is no need to have money or land, scholarship, influence, authority or official position.

An Oath Must Be Taken from the Very Depths of the Heart

If you have the three qualifications mentioned, I assure you, even if you have no place in any organisation bearing My Name, you will have a place here (Baba indicated His Heart as the place where they will be accepted). The organisations must be such that members find them congenial places to deepen their *sadhana*, to cultivate their virtues and to overcome their ego by contact with workers who are free from the least trace of that deadly poison. If this is achieved, their success is certain.

Secondly, what are the duties of members and office-bearers? You know that the State requires you to take a solemn oath when you take up an office or enter upon an assignment. Similarly, each member and office-bearer must take an oath from the very depths of the heart before engaging themselves in the activities. "Swami, save me from any act of commission or omission which will affect adversely the three qualifications You have laid down. Bless me with the skill, intelligence, and enthusiasm necessary for the task I am dedicating myself to carry out for my own uplift. Guide me along the correct path; shower on me Your grace so that I may earn a fair name in this attempt; guard me from temptation and wrong steps."

When you rise from bed at dawn, pray thus. At night, when you go to bed, ponder over your activities during the day, examining whether you went against any of the conditions of membership, and if any wrong was committed unconsciously, pray that it may not happen again. Decide to dedicate yourself in this manner, with these ideals for the work ahead.

Do Not Develop Fanaticism in Sai Activities

Another point I want to emphasise is this: There are many other organisations with spiritual objectives in this land that are run under different names and attached to other names and forms of God, like Rama or Krishna. You know that Indian culture insists that you should offer reverence to all the names and forms of the One Godhead.

In your organisations, there may be some who insist that only *Sai Bhajans* should be sung, only the name and form of Sathya Sai be used. This is a great mistake. You are thereby dishonouring Sai. If you attach yourself to Sai and detach yourself from Krishna, you get a *plus* there and a *minus* here – the resultant gain is zero. In this matter, do not develop fanaticism or sectarian-

ism. Others may have these but that is no reason why you should meet them with the same failings. Try your best to avoid such infection. When the other organisations require help, go and help them. This will make them realise the loving universal nature of your attitude.

Again, do not encourage differences based on region, language, religion or any such flimsy grounds. For example, people who exaggerate these differences argue in Madras that only Tamil songs should be sung or in Andhra Pradesh that only Telugu songs should be sung. If such ideas are entertained, they will undermine the *Adhyatmik* (spiritual) outlook, the attitude of unity and oneness that is the keynote of the spirit. This is a field where inner joy, inner satisfaction and internal purity are more important than outer expression.

I do not like collection of funds. But, since some expense has to be incurred, I have to allow it under very stringent conditions. Each organisation has as members (of the *Samithi*) about ten or fifteen persons. Whatever expense they decide to incur for the work of the *Samithi* (Organisation), they have to collect among themselves without seeking help from those outside the circle. They have, of course, to contribute according to their capacity and limit the work to the resources they can pool among themselves.

A Word of Warning on Collecting Funds and Spending

Do not plan beyond your capacity and move about with lists from person to person to get funds. By this, the institution gets a bad name, and you too will not be spared. You may say, "But, when Swami comes to our place, we must spend a lot on reception arrangements." No, I do not need grand decorations, huge *pandals*, arches, flags and such paraphernalia. I require only a microphone to communicate My advice to the people. Even a chair is superfluous! I can talk standing. Spend sparingly for the minimum

needs and do not involve yourselves in expensive luxury. I would like you to spend any extra money that you have for the feeding of the poor or for any similar beneficial object.

Attempts are being made in many places to build Sathya Sai *Mandirs* (halls of worship). But Sathya Sai will be happy if He is installed in your hearts; that is the *Mandir* I like, not those. When you seek to build that other *Mandir*, you have to go about seeking donations. Religion has declined in this land due to this donation seeking and donation giving. Really speaking, the most precious donation is a pure mind; give that to the organisation and it will shine.

I shall tell you a method by which the extra funds you may need for any undertaking the *Samithi* has in view are to be collected. Estimate beforehand what the expense will be. Suppose it comes to a thousand rupees, give that information to the fifteen members and fix a day when they shall all meet. That day, keep a locked box with a slit in the lid in an inner room and let everyone go alone into the room and deposit in the box whatever he feels he can. He can come away without depositing anything; he has the freedom to do so, there is no compulsion.

If funds are collected with the knowledge of the rest, a person who is unable to give as much as another may feel humiliated and so this is the best method. When all have finished their turn, let the box be opened and the amount counted. If it falls short of the estimate, divide the shortfall among all members equally and collect the share from each. If there is some surplus, keep it for the next occasion.

Fund Collection Campaign Will Lead to Calumny

Do not have lists, appeals, receipt books and all the cumbrous complex of fund collection campaigns. That way will lead you to stratagems, falsehoods, competition and calumny. Do it in

this quiet and sacred manner, suited to the holy objectives you have.

Some delegates suggested that sub-committees be formed and recognised. But that will increase the number and so give room for more mistakes. Let the responsibility be on a few dedicated persons. The District President must see that small associations in the villages are given proper guidance and help to carry out the task undertaken by them. He must send to those villages, exponents of *Vedic* culture in order to instruct and inspire them. Attempts should also be made to spread spiritual knowledge and instil the yearning for spiritual *sadhana* among students and youth.

Do Not Set Limits on Celebrations of Holy Days

Sathya Sai Seva Samithis have to bear in mind the word 'Seva' and take up Seva work enthusiastically. Seva must be directed towards the removal of physical distress, the alleviation of mental agony and the fulfilment of spiritual yearning. Some regions are affected by floods, some by drought, and so the *Samithi* must make efforts to bring relief to the sufferers from these and other natural calamities.

The *Bhajan Mandalis*, *Satsangs* and *Bhakta Mandalis* that are now established must spread the message of *Namasmarana*, *Bhajana*, and *Nama-sankeerthana* at all times and in all places. Jayadeva, Gouranga, Thyagaraja, all of them moved through the bazaars and streets singing *bhajans* and songs about the glory of God, and their ecstasy filled *lakhs* and *lakhs* of people with Divine fervour.

Yesterday, someone read out a list of Holy Days that the associations were to celebrate. That list mentioned *Shivaratri*, *Navaratri*, Swami's Birthday and *Guru Poornima*. But you must also celebrate the birthdays of the *Mahatmas* who led man to the God within him, and also all days held holy

by your brothers. Do not set limits on these celebrations and these days. Make every day a Holy Day and fill it with the recollection of God and His Messengers.

Establish unity among yourselves first and do not seek faults in others or excellence in your own selves. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man – have full faith in this and fill every act of yours with that reverence and love. Meet together once a week or once a fortnight or at least once a month. Have someone discourse to you, or engage in *bhajan* or study or *dhanya* and experience the thrill of spiritual comradeship. Every member of the association must have some item of work allotted to him and he must be present whenever such meetings are held, unless of course it becomes physically difficult.

I must tell you about another point also. Wherever you are, whatever work you do, do it as an act of worship, an act of dedication and an act for the glorification of God, who is the inspirer, the witness and the Master. Do not divide your activities as "These are for my sake" and "These are for the sake of God." Even if you divide zero by zero, you get one.

When you work, there should be no remainder; nothing should remain over. See all work as one. You should not, the *Shastras* say, leave any remainder or balance in debts, in disease, in vengeance against enemies or in the cycle of birth-death. Finish all, down to the last. They should not recur again. If you offer all activities at the feet of the Lord and free them from any trace of egoistic attachment, the consequence will not bind you – you are free, you are liberated and you have *Moksha*.

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